

The Role of Israel Concerning the Gentiles in the Context of Romans 11:25–27¹

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In Romans 11—or, in its broader context, chs. 9–11—Paul engages in a specific theological concept: that of the eschatological redemption of Israel with participation by the non-Jewish nations. It is a concept that has the coming of the Messiah as its focal point.² This matter largely concerns the religious status and

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² On Jewish messianic ideas and notions, see: Marion Wyse, *Variations on the Messianic Theme: A Case Study of Interfaith Dialogue* (Judaism and Jewish Life; Brighton: Academic Studies Press, 2009), 185–195; William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998); idem, “Messianism in the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha,” in idem, *Messianism among Jews and Christians: Twelve Biblical and Historical Studies* (London/New York: T&T Clark—Continuum, 2003), 35–64; John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 11–12; idem, “Messianism and Exegetical Tradition: The Evidence of the LXX Pentateuch,” in *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Culture*, ed. J. J. Collins (JSJSup 100; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 58–81; James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992); Jacob Neusner,

identity of the Gentiles — non-Jewish nations (ἔθνη)³ — in Jewish restoration theology, an eschatological scenario that Paul describes as a “mystery.” The aim of this article is to examine the core of this “mystery” by reading Paul within his Jewish context. My intention is to evaluate this notion as found in a key passage of Paul’s message, namely Romans 11, taking into consideration its broader context in chapters 9–11. I will first present a brief outline of Second Temple Jewish eschatological notions, especially the notion of an end-time redemption of Israel that was to include the participation of the Gentiles. Then, owing to space limitations, I will concern myself only with Romans 11, a text which is very characteristic of and offers an instructive example of Jewish eschatological notions of the Second Temple period, but which is nevertheless unique in its content, since it offers us Paul’s own notion of the eschatological participation of the Gentiles in the end-time redemption of Israel.

Jewish Eschatological Notions: Some General Remarks

Jewish eschatological notions developed rapidly after the destruction of the kingdom of Judah in the sixth century BCE, and this development culminated in the Second Temple period. The tragedy of the loss of national kingship helped to transform the notion of the ruling Davidic king (Ps 2:7; 2 Sam 7:12–16; cf. 1 Chr 17:11) into one of an eschatological period of awaiting him, while still maintaining Davidic royal ideology. In the subsequent period, Davidic eschatological messianism increasingly comes to the fore, ultimately representing the primary Jewish messianic expressions, with the previous messianic notions becoming a core part of Jewish eschatology.⁴ Of course, since the Jewish messianism of the Second Temple period is a highly pluriform phenomenon, and given that the very Davidic version of eschatological messianism was widespread (besides other messianic images and notions of the period, which should be taken into account),

William S. Green and Ernest S. Frerichs, eds., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³ The term “Gentiles” is derived from the Latin *gens*, nation. Its meaning “non-Jew” is derived from the biblical tradition, where the word “nations” (עַמִּים, ἔθνη) was commonly used to refer to non-Jews. See: Terence Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (To 135 CE)* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 5; BAGD 218; LSJ 480.

⁴ In a general sense, when using the term “messianism,” we mean primarily the expectation of God’s designated messianic figure appearing in the eschatological age. For more detail, see František Ábel, *The Psalms of Solomon and the Messianic Ethics of Paul* (WUNT 2.416; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 46–47, including notes.

it remains a matter of debate when precisely and to what extent the idea of a messianic king from the line of David entered Jewish thought. Yet regardless of that question and its possible answers, it is clear that such a notion is already present in various passages of the Jewish scriptures, including the Hebrew Bible.⁵ In this context, it must be added that not all eschatological notions during this period were centered on the Messiah (e.g. Isa 43:16–21), but rather were undeveloped and did not achieve any level of prominence.⁶ However, Jewish messianism played a significant role in the self-understanding of Jewish Christ-followers missionizing among non-Jews.⁷

In any case, all these concepts reflect the experiences of the Jewish population living in Judea and Galilee, as well as those in the Diaspora living among a non-Jewish population. Importantly, these reflections also had to relate to the long-anticipated fulfillment of God's promises of final redemption and salvation of Israel. In places where Jews lived in proximity to non-Jewish nations

⁵ On this question, see Joseph L. Trafton, "What Would David Do? Messianic Expectation and Surprise in Ps. Sol. 17" in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, ed. Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle (EJL 40; Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 159–161. On the approach to messianism in a broader sense, see Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel, from Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah*, trans. William F. Stinespring (New York: Macmillan, 1955); James H. Charlesworth, "From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 3–35.

⁶ See e.g. Georg Fohrer, *Messiasfrage und Bibelverständnis* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1957), 356.

⁷ See Matthew V. Novenson, "Jewish Messiahs, the Pauline Christ, and the Gentile Question," *JBL* 128.2 (2009): 373 (357–373), who convincingly argues for a significant role for Jewish messianism in the self-understanding of the mission of Jewish Christ-followers among non-Jews, especially Paul's mission. A very interesting view of this topic is offered by Joshua W. Jipp in his book *Christ Is King: Paul's Royal Ideology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), one which considers Paul's depiction and understanding of Christ in relation to the ancient institution of kingship. This is a highly significant approach, especially in terms of Paul's understanding of God's righteousness in the Christ-event (the doctrine of justification) as set out in Romans. As Jipp remarks in this regard, "I suggest a reading of Paul's righteousness-language in Romans that takes seriously his initial claim that God's gospel is revealed in the events of the resurrected and enthroned son (1:1–4). This provides the *initial* justification for my claim that ancient kingship discourse, particularly the association between kings and justice, may facilitate a more coherent interpretation of Paul's righteousness language." Jipp, *Christ Is King*, 212. Emphasis original.

(Gentiles), they were obliged to consider, among other aspects, the status of these nations before the God of Israel — the one, universal deity, the only God.⁸ Jews living in the first-century Greco-Roman world interacted daily with non-Jewish people. Of course, the *modus vivendi* varied depending on the local geopolitical situation that was bearing upon the relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish people in an area. As is well known, the Jewish communities in the Diaspora had in many cases achieved a comfortable coexistence with the local non-Jewish majority in Gentile cities.⁹ However, the situation in the territories with a majority Jewish population, primarily in Judea (particularly at the turn of the era but also during the first century CE), was more complicated, often resulting in tensions and conflicts, and ultimately even in open revolt.¹⁰

The End-Time Redemption of Israel with Eschatological Participation of the Gentiles

All these situations and experiences also had to be reflected upon theologically in order to answer questions about the relationship between the Gentiles—non-Jewish nations—and the only God. At a minimum, as Terence Donaldson remarks, “Jews believed that this God had chosen them out of all the nations of

⁸ Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 1–2.

⁹ On the interaction between Jews and non-Jews in the Hellenistic world, see: Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1998); John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed. (BRS; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000); Paula Fredriksen, “The Question of Worship: Gods, Pagans, and the Redemption of Israel,” in *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 175–201; Neil Elliot, “The Question of Politics: Paul as a Diaspora Jew under Roman Rule,” in Nanos and Zetterholm, eds., *Paul within Judaism*, 203–243.

¹⁰ The worsening situation in Galilee and Judea was increasingly reflected in the Diaspora, which resulted in the violent hostility of local populations toward Jews. Regarding these tensions, Josephus and Philo mention several instances of anti-Jewish riots and violence perpetrated on Jewish urban populations at the outbreak of the first revolt: in Alexandria (Philo, *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*, Josephus, *Ant.* 18.8.1), in Caesarea (*J.W.* 2.18.1; 7.8.7), in Ptolemais (*J.W.* 2.18.5), in Damascus, (*J.W.* 2.20.2; cf. 7.8.7), in Gaza and Anthedon (*J.W.* 2.18.1), in Ascalon (*J.W.* 2.18.5), in Hippus and Gadara (*J.W.* 2.18.1, 5), and in Scythopolis (*J.W.* 2.18.3–4; 7.8.7; *Life* 6). For more detail, see Paula Fredriksen, “Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2,” in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, ed. Mark D. Nanos (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 254, including notes.

the world to be a special people, that the will and the ways of this God had been revealed uniquely in Israel's scripture, that the God who had created the cosmos was nevertheless uniquely present in the Jerusalem temple, and that despite the Jews' temporal misfortunes, eventually Israel would be vindicated and exalted to a position of preeminence over all other nations."¹¹ This reflection drives us to form a specific theological conception of the eschatological redemption of Israel, one involving the participation of the non-Jewish nations.¹²

However, in this context it must be emphasized that the non-Jewish nations are not always treated positively in Jewish eschatological traditions and notions. In the Jewish scriptures, there are texts describing the fate of Gentiles negatively and depicting them as Israel's enemies or idolaters who must be punished and defeated together with idolatry itself (e.g. Isa 29:8; 49:22–23; 54:3; Jer 30:11, 16; Ezek 17:11–21; Mic 5:6–14; 7:16–17; Joel 4:9–21; Zeph 2:1–3, 9–15; 1 En. 91.9; Sir 36:1–10; Bar 4:25, 31–35; Sib. Or. 3.415–440, 669, 761; Pss. Sol. 17:24.30; 1QM 12.10–13). Gentiles are sometimes described as those who will be subservient to Israel or as submissive witnesses to Israel's vindication (Isa 18:7; 60:1–22; 66:18–21; Hag 2:21–22). Other notions present the eschatological inclusion of Gentiles in Israel as a consequence of the restoration and redemption

¹¹ Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 2. In this book, Terence Donaldson focuses on Jewish writings of the Second Temple period and synthesizes them by identifying four distinct patterns of universalism that arose out of the four broad textual categories of sympathizing, conversion, ethical monotheism, and eschatological participation. For further explanation of the term “universalism” as used by the author with regard to the world of late antiquity, especially in connection to Jewish “universalism,” see Donaldson, in the introduction to *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 1–13.

¹² A different approach to Jewish Second Temple universalism, as well as the patterns of the eschatological relationship between Israel and the non-Jewish nations, is offered by Malka Z. Simkovitch in his book *The Making of Jewish Universalism: From Exile to Alexandria* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2017). From an examination of available Jewish Second Temple literature, Simkovitch discerns two kinds of universalism. One originated in biblical prophetic literature, where four models of relationship between Israel and non-Jews are to be differentiated: the Subjugation model, the Standard-Bearing model, the Naturalized Nations model, and the Universalized Worship model. The last-mentioned universalism stresses the feasibility of non-Jewish nations acknowledging and worshipping the only God. Of these models, only the fourth—developed in the post-exilic period—offers a truly eschatological vision characterized by religious freedom and the universal acknowledgment of the only God. The second kind of universalism is one that arose in the late Second Temple period and that emphasizes the ethical principles of conduct that are common to all peoples, and thus presumes the universal accessibility of a relationship with the God of Israel, without any demand to form part of Israel as a Jew.

of Israel (e.g. Isa 2:2–4/Mic 4:1–3; Isa 19:18–25; 25:6–8; 45:18–25; 56:7; 60:5–6; 66:19; Zech 8:21–23; Tob 13:11; 14:5–7; Pss. Sol. 17:31–41; Sir 36:11–17; 1 En. 90.30–38; 91.14; Sib. Or. 3.616, 702–723), resulting in the observance of the Torah by Gentiles as well (Isa 2:2–4; Philo, *Mos.* 2.43–44; T. Levi 18.9; T. Naph. 3.2; Sib. Or. 3.791, 757–758; 5.264). Yet there also are occurrences where the inclusion of Gentiles with Israel does not assume their observance of the Torah (Isa 25:6–10; Zech 8:20–23; Pss. Sol. 17:28, 34; Sib. Or. 5.493; Tob 14:5–7; 1 En. 90.30–38; 2 Bar. 72). Instead, Gentiles will renounce their idols and sinful ways, turn to the God of Israel, and worship God as people sharing in the blessing of the coming age (Isa 2:20–21; Jer 16:19–20).¹³

Given this ambiguity of the biblical and non-biblical material, an important question arises about the precise status of these non-Jewish participants in the eschatological redemption of Israel. This question also has bearing on Paul’s message in Romans 11, of course, in connection with all the preceding as well as the subsequent sections of the epistle.¹⁴ Paul’s message as a whole makes clear that the incorporation of non-Jewish Jesus-followers into Israel does not mean that they will become end-time proselytes, but rather that they will continue to exist as non-Jews following Jesus as the Christ, alongside Israel.¹⁵ The question, then, is what this situation is supposed to entail for both sides: the non-Jewish Christ-followers and Israel as a whole. It seems clear from Paul’s message in Romans that

¹³ See Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 501–505.

¹⁴ The consideration that chapters 9–11 must not be taken out of context of the whole epistle is of great importance for a proper understanding of Paul’s message in this letter, as Christoph Stenschke also stresses: “Rom 9–11 cannot and must not be taken out of the overall context of the letter. The letter can neither be understood without these chapters, as they prove to be an essential component of Paul’s gospel (only on the surface can one move directly from Rom 8:39 to 12:1), nor can these chapters be taken out of the overall argument and be understood in isolation, although this has been done frequently.” Christoph Stenschke, “Jewish Believers in Paul’s Letter to the Romans,” *Neotestamentica* 52.1 (2018): 3 (1–40).

¹⁵ In regard to the question about the precise status of the non-Jewish participants in the eschatological redemption of Israel, Terence Donaldson asks, “[A]re these basic identities somehow to be transformed in a more fundamental way, along with other categories of the created order?” See in Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 503. On this question, see also: T.L. Donaldson, “Proselytes or ‘Righteous Gentiles’? The Status of Gentiles in Eschatological Pilgrimage Patterns of Thought,” *JSP* 7 (1990): 3–27; Fredriksen, “Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles and Apocalyptic Hope,” 235–260; Wolfgang Kraus, *Das Volk Gottes: Zur Grundlegung der Ekklesiologie bei Paulus* (WUNT 85; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996).

the gospel — God’s work and sacrifice in Jesus Christ, interpreted by Paul himself as the beginning of the universal reconciliation — works and takes effect to the benefit of both groups. But how are we to understand it, and how can we account for Paul’s describing this eschatological scenario as a “mystery”? In the following, I will try to examine and evaluate this question in more detail.

Conceptualizing Romans 11 in the Context of End-Time Redemption of Israel

As stated above, Romans 11 — in its broader context, chapters 9–11 — makes a specific example of Jewish eschatological notions in the later Second Temple period.¹⁶ The text expresses the beneficiary status and inheritance of the Gentiles in the story of Israel’s restoration and redemption, although Paul considers this issue in a unique way which differs markedly from the majority of such conceptions. Despite this uniqueness, it is evident that Paul’s notion falls into the category of the eschatological participation of the Gentile nations in the end-time redemption of Israel,¹⁷ i.e. that they are to abandon idolatry and turn to worship Israel’s God and thus will have a share in the blessing of the age to come.¹⁸

Moreover, this chapter is a passage of particular relevance for understanding Paul’s message as a whole.¹⁹ Chapters 9–11 have been addressed in

¹⁶ Donaldson remarks that there is no reason to believe, contrary to the opinion that was common in an earlier generation of scholarship, that “by the later Second Temple period traditional expectations of an eschatological pilgrimage of the nations to Zion had attenuated and Jewish attitudes concerning the place of Gentiles in Israel’s end-time restoration had become much more negative [. . .] there is considerable evidence, both from Judea and from the Diaspora, for the Jewish belief that, when God should act in a final way to vindicate Israel and to establish the anticipated era of righteousness and peace, Gentiles would abandon their own sinful ways, turn to the God of Israel, and thus be granted a share in the blessing of the end time.” Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 501, including notes.

¹⁷ Donaldson calls this broad textual category “Participants in Eschatological Redemption.” See Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 1–13, 499–505.

¹⁸ Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 11.

¹⁹ For a thorough exegetical analysis of this passage of Romans (9:1–11:36), including a review of other relevant literature, see: James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* (WBC 38B; Dallas, TX: Word, 1991 [1988]), 517–704; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 555–723; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996), 547–744; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB33; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 539–636. On the exegetical analysis of Rom 11:25–29, see also Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul’s Letter* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 239–288.

countless articles and books that have taken into consideration and made a thorough semantic analysis of each word, phrase, and textual nuance. Similarly, the aforementioned chapters have been weighed up with regard to various aspects of Paul's eschatological scenario, all in order to solve the conundrum of God's dealing with Israel, as well as the Gentile nations through the Christ event. Despite the widely accepted opinion that Romans is addressed to the communities of Jesus-followers in Rome, Jewish as well as Gentile believers (cf. 1:7),²⁰ I side with the opinion of those scholars who argue for the addressees of the epistle being exclusively Gentile.²¹ Paul's formal address, including the contents of the epistle encompassing both Jews and Gentiles, form part of Paul's rhetorical purposes related to the rounding-off of his ministry in the east, delivering the Jerusalem offering, and organizing the Spanish mission with the involvement of the Roman congregations (15:14–33).²² The prospective success of Paul's intents, especially to gain support for his Spanish mission — perhaps the ultimate purpose of the epistle and Paul's plan to visit Rome²³ — but also for the Jerusalem offering,²⁴ turned on

²⁰ See Stenschke, "Jewish Believers in Paul's Letter to the Romans," 7; Jewett, *Romans*, 113; Michael Wolter, *Der Brief an die Römer: Teilband 1 Römer 1–8* (EKKNT VI/1; Ostfildern: Patmos; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Theologie, 2014), 28–56, 96–97; Michael Theobald, *Der Römerbrief* (EdF 294; Darmstadt: WBG, 2000), 29–35.

²¹ See, among others, William S. Campbell, *The Nations in the Divine Economy: Paul's Covenantal Hermeneutics and Participation in Christ* (Lanham/Boulder/New York/London: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2018), or Andrew A. Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 53–68, 261–264.

²² From the point of view of these purposes, it is understandable that Paul asks his non-Jewish addressees to pass his greetings also to the Jewish members of the Roman congregations (16:3–16). See Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 9–13.

²³ Most scholars acknowledge the importance of Paul's missionary plans in the West to the purpose of his epistle. See: Werner G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 17th ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1975), 305–307; Philipp Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975), 181–184; Peter Stuhlmacher, "The Theme of Romans," in *The Romans Debate*, ed. Karl P. Donfried, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 333–345; Markku Kettunen, *Der Abfassungszweck des Römerbriefes* (AASF; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1979), 138–141, 168; Jewett, *Romans*, 87–89.

²⁴ Several scholars, such as Jakob Jervell and Ulrich Wilckens, emphasize the role of the Jerusalem offering as the most important factor in the writing of Romans. For more detail, see Jakob Jervell, "The Letter to Jerusalem," in Donfried, ed., *The Roman Debate*, 53–64; Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 3 vols. (EKKNT 6; Zürich: Benziger, 1978–1982), 1:44–46; 3:129–130. See also Ernst Fuchs, *Hermeneutik*, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1970), 191; Nils Dahl, "The Missionary Theology in the Epistle to the Romans," in idem,

the reconciliation of the situation in the congregations, particularly on resolving the conflicts or discrepancies between Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus as the Christ.²⁵ All of this helps to conceptualize the rhetorical situation of the epistle.

Romans 11 can be considered an eschatological declaration of God's righteousness and its triumph concerning the gospel mission to both Israel and the Gentiles.²⁶ Paul begins with a depiction of the situation of Israel (11:1–10), split into two parts — the minority consisting of Christ-believers, “the current remnant” of Israel, and the hardened majority which has rejected the gospel. Here, Paul anticipates that God himself will take away the hardening of this non-believing majority of Israel; this being so, the “the current remnant” of Israel, and the present situation of the hardening of most of Israel, represent an intermediate stage in God's final purpose to redeem the whole of Israel, the hope which Paul argues for in the next stage of the passage (11:11–24) and which Paul describes as a “mystery.” He there rehearses the end-time salvific scenario in relation to its last act, which is what he describes as the mystery: the restoration of Israel that serves to show the irrevocability of God's gifts and calling (11:25–36).

Beyond reasonable doubt, Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Gal 1:15–16), regarded the addressees of his message—the Gentile believers in Christ—as the vessels of the fulfillment of the Jewish eschatological expectations, namely the long-awaited time when evil powers and their destructive nature will be eliminated and God's righteousness established, when God's promises to Israel will be fully realized, and when the non-Jewish nations, or at least some portion

Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1977), 77 (70–87).

²⁵ Since the Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus as the Christ met together as subgroups of the larger Jewish communities in Rome, Paul had to resort to conventional wording, using the determiner “all” in connection with God's call to Israel and the nations to be his beloved, in the formal address at the opening of the epistle (1:1–7; cf. 1:13; 11:13–14; 15:15–16 with the explicit references to Paul's Gentile addressees in the context of his authority as the Apostle to the Gentiles). See Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 76–84; idem, *Reading Romans within Judaism. Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos*, Vol. 2 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 5–6.

²⁶ Robert Jewett calls this section “the triumph of divine righteousness in the Gospel's mission to Israel and the Gentiles,” and counts it as the third of four proofs of the thesis made in the epistle about the Gospel — it being the powerful embodiment of the righteousness of God — as well as having implications for the Roman congregations. See Jewett, *Romans*, 555–723. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 518, aptly characterizes this section as “a carefully composed and rounded unit with a clear beginning (9:1–5) and end (11:33–36), and with 9:6a giving the text or thesis to be expounded.”

of them, will abandon their gods (idols) and will worship the God of Israel. They will then also share in the promised blessings of the age to come (Isa 2:2–4 [Mic 4:1–3]; 56:7; see also 18:7; 25:6; 60:5–6; 66:19; Hag 2:21–22; Zech 8:22).²⁷ Regardless of the diversity of Jewish notions and traditions regarding Israel’s eschatological restoration and the status of Gentiles in this process,²⁸ Paul clearly holds the most positive version of the scenario, “one in which Gentiles are included in the redemption and participate in the blessings.”²⁹

In view of limitations of space, as well as of the focus of this article, my main concern here is Rom 11:25–32, which deals with the mystery of salvation of both Israel and the Gentiles, and which serves “to explain the allusion in 11:23–24 about the future engrafting of Israel alongside Gentile converts into the holy olive tree.”³⁰ Paul’s concern is not only with Israel’s salvation but rather the entire world “with respect to the power of the gospel to overcome otherwise irresolvable barriers.”³¹ The pericope is made up of two halves. The first (11:25–27) is a disclosure of the mystery, with Paul’s declaration supported by a four-line prophecy concatenated from Isa 59:20–21 and Isa 27:9 (v. 26–27). The second is a theological explanation of the significance of this insight for salvation history (11:28–32). In this regard, it must be emphasized that the 11:25–32 represents the climax not only of 11:11–32 but of the entirety of Rom 9–11. Paul’s non-Jewish addressees are intended to learn from this unfolding mystery that they are merely *part* of God’s salvation-historical purpose, which will have its end in the salvation of Israel. By the same token, Paul’s declaration serves to the Gentile believers in

²⁷ See the contributors to Nanos and Zetterholm, eds., *Paul within Judaism*: Mark D. Nanos, “The Question of Conceptualization: Qualifying Paul’s Position on Circumcision in Dialogue with Josephus’s Advisors to King Izates,” 105–152; Caroline J. Hodge, “The Question of Identity: Gentiles as Gentiles—but also Not—in Pauline Communities,” 153–173; “The Question of Worship: Gods, Pagans, and the Redemption of Israel,” 175–201; Neil Elliot, “The Question of Politics: Paul as a Diaspora Jew under Roman Rule,” 203–243; Kathy Ehrensperger, “The Question(s) of Gender: Relocating Paul in relation to Judaism,” 245–276; Terence L. Donaldson, “Paul within Judaism: A critical Evaluation from a ‘New Perspective’ Perspective,” 284–298.

²⁸ For more detail, see Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 499–505.

²⁹ Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 500.

³⁰ Jewett, *Romans*, 695. In the analysis in this section, I follow mostly Jewett’s commentary (694–712).

³¹ Jewett, *Romans*, 695.

Christ as a kind-hearted warning to stop deluding themselves, thinking that they are superior to Jews or that they can replace Israel.³²

Paul's focus on a universalistic view of salvation is here called a "mystery" (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο) that calls for a divine disclosure (cf. 1 Cor 2:6, 10, 14; 4:1; 7:7; 15:51; 2 Cor 12:1–4; 1 Thess 2:6–7).³³ Despite its mysteriousness, it does correspond directly with that Jewish eschatological notion that focuses on the restoration of Israel as the path to the restoring and saving of all nations.³⁴ Even given his Christocentric revision of the events (Rom 9–11; especially 11:25–26), Paul is aware that this process began with Israel, and in particular with a group of Jewish believers in Christ who in Paul's view constitute "the current remnant of Israel."³⁵ However, what is novel, and to a considerable extent even contradictory to all known Jewish notions about the eschatological restoration of Israel, is Paul's assertion that the salvation of Gentiles is not a side effect or consequence of Israel's redemption — which was to happen first — but quite the opposite. As he words it, first the full number of the Gentiles will come in, and only then, and in such a manner, will all Israel be saved. It is for this reason that the two parallel statements

³² See Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 713.

³³ For the semantics, meaning and usage of the word μυστήριον in Greco-Roman religion and apocalyptic Judaism and various branches of early Christianity, see: Bornkamm, "μυστήριον, μύεω," *TDNT* 4:803–27; H. Krämer, "μυστήριον," *EDNT* 2:446–49; Michael Wolter, "Verborgene Weisheit und Heil für die Heiden. Zur Traditionsgeschichte und Intention des 'Revelationsschemas,'" *ZThK* 84 (1987): 300–303; Markus N.A. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (WUNT 36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 24–126; E. Elizabeth Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9–11* (SBLDS 109; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 163; Dieter Sänger, "Rettung der Heiden und Erwählung Israels. Einige vorläufige Erwägungen zu Römer 11,25–27," *KD* 32 (1986): 112–115.

³⁴ Philo, *Mos.* 2.43–44; *Sib. Or.* 3.702–723. See Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 219; idem, "Jewish Christianity, Israel's Stumbling and the *Sonderweg* Reading of Paul," in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29 (2006): 27–54.

³⁵ As remarked by John Barclay concerning "the gift-language" in Rom 9–11. See John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 450. Anders Runesson and Mark Nanos suggest the term "Apostolic Judaism" as applicable to the early Jesus movement, along with other known terms such as "Pharisaic Judaism," "Essene Judaism," and "Sadducean Judaism." See Anders Runesson, "The Question of Terminology: The Architecture of Contemporary Discussions on Paul," in Nanos and Zetterholm, eds., *Paul within Judaism*, 67–68; idem, "Inventing Christian Identity: Paul, Ignatius, and Theodosius I," in *Exploring Early Christian Identity*, ed. Bengt Holmberg (WUNT 226; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 72–74.

about Israel's "hardening" (πώρωσις — obtuseness)³⁶ in v. 25 are followed by a mysterious declaration of the future salvation of all Israel (v. 26), confirmed by scriptural proofs from Isa 59:20–21 and Isa 27:9 (vv. 26–27).³⁷ The rest of the pericope (11:28–32) contains a theological argument explaining "the relevance of this mystery in terms of the gospel's global mission."³⁸

The Mystery of Romans 11:25–26

The primary focus of the mystery rests in vv. 25–26, which are the culmination of Paul's understanding of God's purpose with the eschatological restoration of Israel: that a hardening of Israel is part of God's purpose, and nevertheless that once the full number of the Gentiles has come in, all Israel will be saved.³⁹

Οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο, ἵνα μὴ ἦτε [παρ'] ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι, ὅτι πώρωσις ἀπὸ μέρους τῶ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται, καθὼς γέγραπται· ἤξει ἐκ Σιῶν ὁ ῥύόμενος, ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ.

So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are, brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved; as it is written, "Out of Zion will come the Deliverer; he will banish ungodliness from Jacob." (NRSV)

We have seen that Paul describes this eschatological scenario as a mystery. It could equally be said that it is a "new doctrine"⁴⁰ expressed in the form of an oracle by Paul, deriving his authority from God. Paul defends his viewpoint by reference to Isa 59 and 27 (vv. 26–27; cf. Jer 31:33–34 [38:33–34 LXX]). However, the source

³⁶ Mark D. Nanos understands the meaning of the term πώρωσις as "callousness." For discussion of the meaning of the term, see Mark D. Nanos, "'Callused' Not 'Hardened': Paul's Revelation of Temporary Protection Until All Israel Can Be Healed," in *Reading Romans within Judaism. Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos*, Vol. 2 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 153–178. Published originally in *Reading Paul in Context: Exploration in Identity Formation: Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, ed. J. Brian Tucker and Kathy Ehrensperger (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 52–73.

³⁷ Jewett, *Romans*, 695. See also Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 677.

³⁸ Jewett, *Romans*, 695–696. Quotation taken from 695.

³⁹ See Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 519.

⁴⁰ Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 170–175.

and interpretation of this oracle are a persistent conundrum, with a wide range of hypotheses offered to resolve them. While the description of this mystery is evident in three distinct clauses (vv. 25b–26a), what is not clear is the real “core” of the mystery. In other words, we are faced with a question as to why Paul describes it as the mystery at all. There is a wealth of scholarly opinions on this matter.

For example, the identity of the mystery has been argued to be the fact of Israel’s hardening itself (Ferdinand Hahn); its partialness and temporariness (Otto Kuss, John Murray, Heinrich Schlier); the prospect that all Israel will be saved (Otto Michel, Charles E.B. Cranfield); that Israel will be saved in the same way that Gentiles are (Craig Cooper); or alternatively, the three clauses all constitute parts of the mystery (“a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and so all Israel will be saved”) without further distinction among them (Frederic L. Godet, Joseph Fitzmyer, Otfried Hofius).⁴¹ Michael Wolter supposes that Paul’s reason for presenting his viewpoint as the revelation of a “mystery” is the discrepancy between Paul’s confidence in God’s final intervention for the hardened majority of Israel on the one hand and his bafflement on the other as to how this might happen.⁴² For Christoph Stenschke, it is the salvation of all Israel which is here revealed as a mystery, and it will even include the restoration of creation as a whole.⁴³ Kathy Ehrensperger, in her excellent paper “The ‘Mysterion’ in Romans 11:25–36: No Mystery But a Space for Reconciliation,” taking into consideration the contextuality and particularity of each of Paul’s epistles, analyzes the function of this “mystery” “in relation to the drawing of group boundaries between Jewish and non-Jewish traditions.”⁴⁴ Ehrensperger dwells on the fact that although Paul

⁴¹ For more detail, see Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 716.

⁴² Michael Wolter, “Ein exegetischer und theologischer Blick auf Röm 11.25–32,” *NTS* 64 (2018): 123–142.

⁴³ Stenschke argues: “The salvation of all Israel, revealed as a mystery, will also affect non-human creation. God’s faithfulness to Israel (‘the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable’; 11:29) will apply to all of his creation, which, together with Israel, is in view throughout the OT and early Judaism in blessing and in judgment.” See Christoph Stenschke, “Human and Non-Human Creation and Its Redemption in Paul’s Letter to the Romans,” *Neotestamentica* 51.2 (2017): 261–289 (quotation taken from 286).

⁴⁴ Kathy Ehrensperger, “The ‘Mysterion’ in Romans 11:25–36: No Mystery But a Space for Reconciliation,” in idem, *Searching Paul: Conversations with the Jewish Apostle to the Nations. Collected Essays* (WUNT 429; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 319–337. An earlier version was presented as part of the discussions of the “Focus Group ‘Secret’ of the Käthe Hamburger Kolleg ‘Dynamics in the History of Religions,’” University of Bochum, in 2013.

declares openly the content of this “mystery,” he does not explain why he calls it a “mystery.” It follows that this device has a strategic function in Paul’s rhetoric: particularly, to create some “blank space” of “mystery” so as to prevent the non-Jewish Christ-followers in Rome from boasting and developing a superior attitude to Jews and Christ-followers, as well as those outside the Christ-movement. This is a major requisite for bonding the diverse traditions. Although Paul explains why “all Israel will be saved,” and although by using the passage’s scriptural references he indicates something about this divine activity, “he does not present a scenario for ‘how’ this is supposed to happen, nor does he consider it necessary to define the identity of ‘all Israel.’”⁴⁵ Regardless of the reason Paul does this, and whether he does it unconsciously or intentionally, the significant factor is, as Ehrensperger states, that “exactly this apparent non-definition of ‘all Israel’ (which indicates clarity on Paul’s side) and the non-description of any scenario of the salvation of Israel has created a vacancy which took on the function of the blank space of a secret in the contact zone of diverse traditions.”⁴⁶ After all, Ehrensperger concludes, “[t]he blank space left vacant by Paul in Rom 11:25–36 is directed at the recognition of God’s sovereignty and wisdom and the limitations of human comprehension. The vacant space is God’s. Human recognition and respect for this may open ways to reconciliation in the trajectory of Pauline hopes and visions.”⁴⁷

Remarkable in regard to the scriptural references given in the pericope is the observation that this “mystery” is not entirely dependent on scriptural exegesis, since the reversed sequence of the eschatological scenario (first the Gentiles, then all Israel) that Paul develops in vv. 25–26 seems to be contrary to the LXX citations.⁴⁸ In view of this, some scholars argue that this oracle is derived from Paul’s spiritual interpretation of Scripture,⁴⁹ others that it is an answer to

⁴⁵ Ehrensperger, “The ‘Mysterion’ in Romans 11:25–36,” 334.

⁴⁶ Ehrensperger, “The ‘Mysterion’ in Romans 11:25–36,” 334.

⁴⁷ Ehrensperger, “The ‘Mysterion’ in Romans 11:25–36,” 337.

⁴⁸ Hans Hübner, *Gottes Ich und Israel. Zum Schriftgebrauch des Paulus in Römer 9–11* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 113–115, Seyoon Kim, “The ‘Mystery’ of Rom 11:25–26 Once More,” *NTS* 43 (1997): 412–415 (412–429); Jewett, *Romans*, 698. Ulrich B. Müller, *Prophetie und Predigt im Neuen Testament* (SNT 10; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1975), 230, suggests that the mystery may have originated in connection with 1 Thess 2:14–16. Stated by Jewett, *Romans*, 698, including notes.

⁴⁹ Otto Betz, “Die heilgeschichtliche Rolle Israels bei Paulus,” *ThBei* 9 (1978): 20 (1–21); Hans Hübner, *Gottes Ich und Israel. Zum Schriftgebrauch des Paulus in Römer 9–11* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 113, 121; Otfried Hofius, “All Israel Will be

Paul's prayer for Israel's redemption in Rom 10:1,⁵⁰ and still others that the mystery is Paul's experience of the revelation of Christ at the time of his calling to apostolic mission among the Gentiles.⁵¹ All of these options raise serious questions; therefore, as Jewett remarks in this connection, "[e]fforts to specify the precise source of this oracle have not been successful."⁵² Jewett observes that if we also reckon the texts from Isa 6 and 49 as being among the sources reflected in Paul's references to his calling to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and if we bear in mind that there is material in those chapters concerning the hardening of Israel,⁵³ we should suppose that for Paul himself, this would be the foundation of his understanding of the Isaianic vision, to be fulfilled in reverse order.⁵⁴ However, this option too is very hypothetical and unconvincing.⁵⁵ For Jewett:

Saved': Divine Salvation and Israel's Deliverance in Romans 9–11," in *The Church and Israel: Romans 9–11: The 1989 Frederick Neumann Symposium on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, ed. Daniel Migliore (PSBSup 1; Princeton, NJ: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1990), 33–38 (19–39); Franz Mussner, "'Ganz Israel wird gerettet werden' (Röm 11,26). Versuch einer Auslegung," *Kairos* 18 (1976): 249–251 (241–55); Karl Olav Sandnes, *Paul—One of the Prophets? A Contribution to the Apostle's Self-Understanding* (WUNT 2.43; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 180–181; Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 174–175; Winfrid Keller, *Gottes Treue—Israels Heil. Röm 11,25–27. Die These vom "Sonderweg" in der Diskussion* (SBB 40; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1998), 124. Stated by Jewett, *Romans*, 698, including the notes.

⁵⁰ Müller, *Prophetie*, 225–232; Dieter Zeller, *Der Brief an die Römer. Übersetzt und erklärt* (RNT; Regensburg: Pustet, 1985), 198; Sandnes, *Paul*, 178; Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 2:254.

⁵¹ Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (WUNT 2.4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981), 74–99; idem, "The 'Mystery' of Rom 11:25–26 Once More," *NTS* 43 (1997): 412–415, 420–429 (412–429).

⁵² Jewett, *Romans*, 698. For more detail, see 698–699, including the notes.

⁵³ Here, Jewett is referring to Kim's theory ("Mystery," 412–415) that "is based on his interpretation of 1 Cor 1:6–10 concerning the divine plan of salvation, which was a development of the theophanic call patterned after Isaiah 6 and 49." Stated by Jewett, *Romans*, 698.

⁵⁴ Jewett, *Romans*, 698–699, remarks: "Could Paul have not identified himself along with those zealous Jews, rendered obtuse so as to oppose the Christ? When one takes Rom 10:4 into account, describing the dilemma of zealous Jews who reject Christ, an insight available to Paul at the moment of his conversion could well have been in view." See also Kim, "Mystery," 421–422.

⁵⁵ In this regard, Kim, "Mystery," 421, states that Paul does not explicitly refer to these texts while describing his vocation to the apostolic ministry "because they were not the primary sources of the 'mystery,' but only confirmation of it." Stated by Jewett, *Romans*, 698.

it is best to acknowledge that Paul's use of the word "mystery" in this context reflects the perspective of a mystic whose "revelation experiences" remain partially beyond analysis."⁵⁶ In this regard, James D.G. Dunn explains that "Paul intended the word "mystery" in a more specialized sense — not just a religious secret (far less a secret rite), but mystery as *eschatological* mystery, mystery as insight into the events of the end time, into how salvation-history is going to reach its destined climax, into how God is soon to fulfill his final purpose for his people. [. . .] God had revealed the solution to him, perhaps through the scripture he is about to cite, though it is equally possible that the verses were seen to have such a full eschatological significance only in the light of this revelation received independent of them."⁵⁷

Also coming into focus in this context are the texts dealing with the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles.⁵⁸ Although Rom 11:11–26 seems to anticipate a future day of salvation for all Israel, there is but little indication, whether in Romans or elsewhere, that Paul expects any grand pilgrimage of the nations on the other side of the parousia.⁵⁹ Although there is some degree of probability that Paul is also working with this notion (Isa 60–61; also 2:2–4; Mic 4:1–5; Amos 9:11–12; Zeph 3:8–10; Zech 2:11 [LXX 2:15]; Tob 14:4–7), since it is clear that Rom 15:16–19 exhibits numerous parallels with that concept, the

⁵⁶ Jewett, *Romans*, 699, including note 44. For a detailed exegesis of this section, see *ibid.*, 698–702.

⁵⁷ Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 690. Emphasis original.

⁵⁸ This view is still widespread in recent discussion. To give one notable example, Ed Parish Sanders in his book *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 171, claims that "Paul's entire work, both evangelizing and collecting money, had its setting in the expected pilgrimage of the Gentiles to Mount Zion in the last days." See also Markus Barth, *The People of God* (JSNTSup 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1983); Paula Fredriksen, *Paul: The Pagans' Apostle* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2017); Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, *Heidenapostel aus Israel* (WUNT 62; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992); Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville, KY: WJK, 1994).

⁵⁹ The exception would be Paul's financial collection project (Rom 15:25–27). "This material gift to the saints in Jerusalem [. . .] is an appropriate way for non-Jewish Christ-believers to acknowledge their indebtedness, since they, as *ethnē*, 'have come to share in their spiritual blessings.'" Donaldson, "Paul within Judaism", 292.

majority of scholars reject this view.⁶⁰ For example, Matthew V. Novenson argues convincingly against appealing to that motif in the interpretation of Paul's mission among the Gentiles, emphasizing that "[t]here is nothing here about the gentiles making pilgrimage to Zion, but everything about their being subjected to the messiah."⁶¹ This point explains the significance and the key role of the messianic concept within Paul's Gentile mission, as well as the sense of phrases such as *ὑπακοή ἐθνῶν* (Rom 15:18) and *ὑπακοή πίστεως* (Rom 1:5; 16:26). All of this helps us better to understand this topic in the context of Paul's Gentile mission.

Reversal of the Eschatological Scenario — A Possible Solution

Taking into consideration the vast range of opinions and the puzzling complexity of the solutions proposed, there is little chance of bringing something substantially new to the discussion here. Moreover, my opinion that the primary meaning of this mystery is the reversal of the sequence of salvation of Israel and the Gentiles is not an entirely new one. It was argued for by Reidar Hvalvik in 1990,⁶² who in this regard emphasized the significance and function of Paul's combined quotation from Isa 59:20f and 27:9. His position, however, that "the salvation of

⁶⁰ For argumentation in favor of this suggestion, see Lionel J. Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel: How Paul's Jewish Identity Informs His Apostolic Ministry, With Special Reference to Romans* (BZMW 205; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 114–15 and others of the mentioned authors. For a skeptical view in this regard, see Donaldson, "Paul within Judaism", 284–93.

⁶¹ See Matthew V. Novenson, "What Eschatological Pilgrimage of the Gentiles?" (forthcoming publication). I follow and quote from the draft version of Novenson's paper presented during the second Bratislava conference which took place in September 2019 as a part of the research project entitled "Paul within Judaism — New Perspectives" (see note 1).

⁶² Reidar Hvalvik, "A 'Sonderweg' for Israel: A Critical Examination of a Current Interpretation of Romans 11.25–27," *JSNT* 38 (1990): 87–107. In his article, Hvalvik states a comprehensive critique of the theological option that Jewish conversion constitutes a *Sonderweg* for Israel. Other critical views are presented by W.D. Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," *NTS* 24 (1977): 28–29 (4–39); Dieter Sänger, "Rettung der Heiden und Erwählung Israels. Einige vorläufige Erwägungen zu Römer 11,25–27," *KD* 32 (1986): 117–119 (99–119). For various aspects of this issue in more detail, see Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 725–726. In this regard, Jewett notes that although Paul's formulation lacks any indication that Jewish conversion constitutes a *Sonderweg* for Israel, "this remains a legitimate theological option that takes account of post-Pauline developments." Jewett also emphasizes that "[i]t is, in any event, clear that in Paul's mind the identity of Israel would not be erased by accepting Christ as the Messiah." For more detail, see Jewett, *Romans*, 702, including the notes.

the Gentiles will take place *prior* to and will be a *condition* of ‘all’ Israel”⁶³ has been criticized by other scholars precisely for that reversal of the eschatological order.⁶⁴ Yet, this is the very reason for my arguing in favor of this conundrum as being simply Paul’s description of the paradoxical reversal of the eschatological scenario: as the Gentiles attaining salvation first, and only then all Israel. Indeed, it is a mystery, since it opposes the customary and majority understanding of the eschatological redemption of Israel. Although Paul, in arguing for this reversal of sequence, does not quote exactly any of the aforementioned end-time redemption texts, it is clear that his scenario falls into this category of Jewish eschatological notions.

Therefore, I would argue that this reversal itself does appear to be a theologically acceptable solution. Furthermore, its relevance is endorsed by other scholars. For example, William S. Campbell emphasizes: “What had to be changed was not the certainty of eschatological blessing, but only the sequence of events. It was this perception, however it came to Paul — as a mystery revealed or otherwise — that affirmed his mission to the nations, giving it a specific function in relation to the salvation of Israel.”⁶⁵ Douglas Moo remarks that some Jewish scriptures predict the eschatological time when the Gentiles will join in the worship of the only God, and others suggest that the glory of the Lord revealed in Israel will stimulate the Gentiles’ interest, but “wholly novel was the idea that the inauguration of the eschatological age would involve setting aside the majority of Jews while Gentiles streamed in to enjoy the blessings of salvation and that only when that stream had been exhausted would Israel as a whole experience these blessings.”⁶⁶

⁶³ Hvalvik, “A ‘Sonderweg’ for Israel,” 99. Emphasis original.

⁶⁴ See e.g. Albert L.A. Hogeterp, “The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation: A Re-reading of Romans 11:25–32 in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez*, ed. Anthony Hilhorst, Émile Puech and Eibert Tigchelaar (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), 654 (653–666). Hogeterp states: “It is the thesis of this article, that, while a ‘Sonderweg for Israel’ stands rightly criticized [*a reference to Hvalvik’s article*], a close reading of Paul’s theological thought and a re-reading of this passage in light of the Scrolls may fine-tune our understanding of Paul’s salvific message for both Jewish and Gentile believers, rather than one taking precedence over the other [*here, Hogeterp is arguing contra Hvalvik’s position*]. Since the focus of Rom 11:25–32 is on all Israel’s salvation, a re-reading in comparison with Qumran texts could add new and relevant angles of thought about mystery and revelation, salvation and the final age.”

⁶⁵ Campbell, *The Nations in the Divine Economy*, 232.

⁶⁶ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 716–717.

Since an expectation that all Israel will be saved was widely held among Second Temple Jews, Paul is certain that her hardening is only temporary and will ultimately be overcome when the full number of the Gentiles has come to divine grace through God's work and the sacrifice of the Messiah Jesus. This reading brings out the sense of the phrase ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ (v. 25b), especially since the verb εἰσέρχομαι ("come in") is without an object. Taking into consideration Paul's missionary intent toward Spain as set out in the epistle, the "full number of the Gentiles" is likely to be taken as including Paul's prospective Hispanic converts.⁶⁷ If so, then the role of the Jerusalem offering also comes into view as a significant factor behind the writing of the epistle. Quite apart from its being a social gesture, the collection is primarily of theological significance.⁶⁸ It expresses, and moreover proves, the real character of the community (κοινωνία) between the Gentile nations in Christ (ἔθνη) and Israel, in the context of Paul's depiction of the "pure saints" in Jerusalem who still lived in poverty and who continued to worship the God of Israel in the temple: the eschatological remnant of Israel. By giving this monetary gift for the "pure saints" in Jerusalem, the Gentile believers participate in the worship (λειτουργεῖν) of the God of Israel, the only God.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ For more detail on the interpretation of the meaning of the phrase "until the full number of the Gentiles has come in," see Jewett, *Romans*, 700, including the notes.

⁶⁸ See Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. Frank Clarke (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1959 [German original 1954]); Keith F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy* (SBT 48; Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1966); Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1992 [German original 1965]); Burkhard Beckheuer, *Paulus und Jerusalem* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1997); Richard N. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 310–16; Brian J. Tucker, "The Jerusalem Collection, Economic Inequality and Human Flourishing: Is Paul's Concern the Redistribution of Wealth, or a Relationship of Mutuality Wealth (or Both)?," in *Canadian Theological Review* 3/2 (2014): 61 (52–70).

⁶⁹ For example, David J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles. Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts* (WUNT 2.248; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 9, proposed five different views of the collection's significance: "(a) an eschatological event, (b) an obligation imposed by the Jerusalem leaders, (c) an ecumenical offering, (d) material relief, and (e) worship, the collection representing a non-Jewish offering to God." The last of these is Downs's preferred view. Stated by Campbell, *The Nations in the Divine Economy*, 165–166. The emphasis on the collection and Paul's use of varied cultic terminology has led Kathy Ehrensperger to consider the collection as being designed to meet a cultic deficiency experienced by non-Jewish Christ-followers after they had abandoned cultic practices associated with idolatry. See Kathy Ehrensperger, "The Ministry

Regarding the salvation of Israel (πάς Ἰσραήλ σωθήσεται), the sum of Paul's earlier references in Romans suggests that he understands Israel ethnically. Since the word πᾶς means "all," "any and every entity out of a totality," and because v. 27 goes on to argue that the sins of "all" of Israel will be taken away, and since moreover v. 32 concludes that God will show mercy "to all," it seems most likely, as Jewett has suggested, "that Paul's 'mystery' was believed to include all members of the house of Israel, who, without exception, would be saved."⁷⁰ Mark Nanos remarks in this regard: "Indeed, with the initiation of the gentile mission the 'fulness of the Gentiles begins,' step two, 'and thus, in this way, all Israel will be saved,' even as the prophets foretold: The Deliverer will come from Zion to regather the dispersed children of Israel, Jacob will be restored, and the gentiles will be drawn to the light and worship the One God of Israel as their own, as the One God of all the nations."⁷¹

Another element which becomes prominent in this reading is the final scriptural citation in the pericope, drawn from Isa 59 and 27, which furnishes scriptural proof of Paul's disclosure of the mystery of Israel's future salvation (11:26b–27). This especially sheds light on Paul's arrangement and intentional adjustment of the Isaianic prophecy in order to conform to his theologizing in this new context.⁷² I will not deal with this issue in detail; in view of the intent and purpose of this article, it suffices to emphasize that the changes Paul makes to this citation, particularly his deletion of the connective καί ("and") and his exchange of ἐνεκεν Σιῶν ("for the sake of Zion") for ἐκ Σιῶν ("from Zion"), are elucidated when we take into consideration the historical setting and rhetorical character of this Pauline epistle.⁷³ The more significant of these emendations is the change from ἐνεκεν to ἐκ, an issue which several important articles have engaged with; their

to Jerusalem (Rom 15.31): Paul's Hopes and Fears," in *Erlesenes Jerusalem: Festschrift für Ekkehard W. Stegemann*, ed. Lukas Kundert and Christina Tuor-Kurth (Basel: Friedrich Reinhard Verlag, 2013), 338–352. Stated by Campbell, *The Nations in the Divine Economy*, 166–167, including note 79 (186).

⁷⁰ For more detail on the interpretation of this question, see Jewett, *Romans*, 701–702, including the notes. (Quotation taken from 702.) See also Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans*, 239–288.

⁷¹ Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans*, 287. Emphasis original.

⁷² For thorough analysis of this issue, including the discussions ongoing in this regard, see Jewett, *Romans*, 702–706; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 727–729; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 682–684.

⁷³ See Jewett, *Romans*, 703 including notes.

authors have argued for a discrepant pre-Pauline reading of the Isaianic oracle.⁷⁴ Regardless of the actual reason for this change — whether Paul is citing a hitherto undiscovered form of this Isaianic text or whether it is an intentional change occasioned by the rhetorical purposes of the epistle as a whole — the citation in this part of the epistle serves Paul to emphasize and prove the eschatological salvation of all Israel.

Paul here expresses very clearly the core of his theologizing. The Gentile believers in Christ are justified by God's sacrifice in Christ Jesus, an event that Paul places directly in relation to the Temple cult offerings as a way of explaining his theology (Rom 3:21–31; cf. Gal 3:13–14). In Christ, these Gentile believers are free from bondage to idolatry (cf. Gal 2:15; 5:19–21), as well as being free to disregard the criteria of distinction and discrimination established under the constraints of the dominant cultural systems, and through love are free to serve one another (Gal 5:1,13).⁷⁵ The Christ-gift must be expressed in practice and conduct. Now, they enjoy the freedom to follow a different system of values informed by the quality of social commitment, which is love (Rom 12:9–21; 13:8–10; cf. Gal 5:13–6:10).⁷⁶ They now become a part of God's people, along with Israel:

⁷⁴ See especially Berndt Schaller, “ΤΙΕΠΙ ΕΚ ΣΙΩΝ Ο ΡΥΟΜΕΝΟΣ: Zur Textgestalt von Jes 59:20f. in Röm 11:26f.,” in *De Septuaginta. Studies in honour of John William Weavers on his sixty-fifth birthday*, ed. A. Pietersma and Claude Cox (Mississauga, ON: Benben Publications, 1984), 201–206. Schaller argues (203) that the LXX wording of Isa 59:20–21 with ἔβλεπεν would have served Paul's theologizing more adequately, since his purpose was to prove that Israel would not be excluded, and the Christological issue of coming “from Zion” he considers to be irrelevant. Schaller is thus explaining this change by the hypothesis of textual corruption of εἰς Σιών (“to Zion”) to ἐκ Σιών, arguing that when the two uncials IC are read as a K, εἰς becomes ἐκ, which would mean that it is probably a pre-Pauline reading. Similarly arguing for a pre-Pauline reading of ἐκ Σιών is Dietrich-Alex Koch, “Beobachtungen zum christologischen Schriftgebrauch in den vorpaulinischen Gemeinden,” *ZNW* 71 (1980): 176 (174–191).

⁷⁵ Nils Dahl notes: “But they should serve one another in love and thus keep the commandment in which the whole law is fulfilled (5:13–14),” in Nils A. Dahl, “Paul's Letter to the Galatians: Epistolary Genre, Content, and Structure,” in Nanos, ed., *The Galatians Debate*, 137. The “new,” or rather special, identity reveals the true nature of Paul's own vision of communal life in the Galatian churches (Gal 5:13–6:10) and explains what Paul really means by his paradoxical interpretation of freedom as slavery (5:13). See Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 423–446. See also idem, *Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 152–154, 156, 166–169. See also Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 428–430.

⁷⁶ See Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 423–442. Mark Nanos remarks in this context that they are now “already members in full standing apart from becoming proselytes, that is,

not proselytes, nor God-fearers, but a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15), part of the eschatological community of Israel and the Gentile (non-Jewish) nations.

Paul’s rhetoric implies that the Gentiles in Christ have adopted Jewish attributes but remained Gentiles of a special sort.⁷⁷ Their special identity has been gained not by ethnic transformation but instead through an entirely new way of life.⁷⁸ Their faithfulness and trust (πίστις) in the gospel has become a foundation for their new conduct (δικαιοσύνη). As Paula Fredriksen interprets it: “Their *pistis* in Christ (steadfast confidence that he had died, been raised, and was about to return) righteoused them (through the conferring of *pneuma*, ‘spirit’) so that they could ‘fulfil the Law,’ meaning, quite specifically, the Law’s Second Table, *dikaïosynē*.”⁷⁹ Gentiles now have a share in God’s blessing given to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 22:16–18) and can expect the ultimate restoration and redemption of Israel. Their separateness is a deliberate part of God’s eschatological plan for the redemption of Israel and, through Israel, also for the redemption of other nations.⁸⁰

members of Israel, for the ‘new creation’ community of God is the community of Israel and the nations: in Christ the awaited age has dawned.” Mark D. Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul’s Letter in First-Century Context* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 155.

⁷⁷ See Hodge, “The Question of Identity,” 172.

⁷⁸ This means voluntary affiliation with the Jewish *politeia* (way of life), as Josephus describes: ὅσοι μὲν γὰρ θέλουσιν ὑπὸ τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἡμῖν νόμους ζῆν ὑπελθόντες δέχεται φιλοφρόνως οὐ τῷ γένει μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ προαιρέσει τοῦ βίου νομίζων εἶναι τὴν οἰκειότητα τοὺς δ’ ἐκ παρέργου προσιόντας ἀναμίγνυσθαι τῇ συνηθείᾳ οὐκ ἠθέλησεν (*Ag. Ap.* 2.210).

⁷⁹ See Fredriksen, “The Question of Worship,” 190–194 (175–201; quotation from 194; emphasis original). From this, it can be deduced that Paul’s notion of justification concerns the objective reality of qualitative righteousness (cf. Rom 12:1–2, 9–21; 13:8–14; cf. Gal 5:13–14, 22–25; 6:1–10). Chris VanLandingham argues for this interpretation in *Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 272–332. See also Ábel, *The Psalms of Solomon and the Messianic Ethics of Paul*, 199–210, 265–284.

⁸⁰ Hodge, “The Question of Identity,” 172–173. However, it must at the same time be emphasized that this special identity of Paul’s non-Jewish converts as proclaimed by Paul was, from the perspective of indigenous cultures and most probably also that of Jewish communities, generally unknown, and therefore it remained very suspicious, especially because Paul’s non-Jewish communities of Christ-followers were prohibited from such idolatry, in contrast to the God-fearers (*sebomenoi* or *phoboūmenoi*), who were attached to synagogues and permitted to continue their cultic practices. On the other hand, proselytism was a known, legal, and generally an accepted form of changing one’s identity. In this

It follows that for Paul, it is messianic ethics that play the crucial role as regards his non-Jewish converts. This being so, we should also take into consideration here other significant Second Temple Jewish eschatological texts, especially the Psalms of Solomon 17 and 18.⁸¹ These chapters pertain to the Second Temple end-time redemption writings that anticipate the hope and blessing of the end of this age, not only for the pious Jews but also — at least partially — for Gentiles.⁸² This significant aspect might also be instrumental in Paul's eschatological scenario, in which the incorporation of Gentiles into Israel is one of the key aspects (Rom 11:13–24). Notwithstanding the hypothetical nature of this supposition, I have reached the view that Paul is essentially following the same emphases in this pericope as are found in Psalms of Solomon, and in particular God's righteousness and mercy in the context of the end-time redemption of Israel with participation by Gentile nations, centered on the concept of the coming Messiah. Moreover, the Psalms of Solomon contain a messianic notion related to the Davidic Messiah (Pss. Sol. 17) that constitutes the climax of the whole hymnbook. Therefore, just as in the Psalms of Solomon, so also in Paul's message the emphasis is on the quality of everyday life and its holiness, understood to mean the right behavior which allows believers to

regard, William Campbell remarks very aptly that the prohibition of idolatry results in them "experiencing an identity deficiency." Campbell, *The Nations in the Divine Economy*, 8.

⁸¹ In particular, Pss. Sol. 17 draws on a number of Jewish scriptural expectations concerning the future Davidic ruler (2 Sam 7:12–14; Ps 2:2, 7; Isa 9:4–7 [LXX 9:3–6], 11:1–7, 11–14; 4Q252 [4QCommGen A] 6 V 1–5; 4Q285 [4QSM] 7 1–5; 4Q174 [4QFlor] 1–2 I 11). Relevant Qumran texts are given in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*, 6 vols., ed. Donald W. Parry and Emmanuel Tov (Leiden: Brill, 2004–2005), 1.244–45, 2.2–3, 110–111. As Lionel Windsor remarks in this connection, much of the key vocabulary of Pss. Sol. 17 also occurs, in similar formulations, in Paul's description of the gospel of Christ (Rom 1:2–7). See Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel*, 132–33; John J. Collins, "Jesus, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Qumran-Messianism*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, Herman Lichtenberger, and Gerbern S. Oegama (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 104–105; Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, trans. G. W. Anderson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), 308–311.

⁸² See Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 140–141. In the authentic Pauline epistles, we find direct analogies to this hymnbook only in Romans (the Pss. Sol. 4:25 in Rom 8:28; Pss. Sol. 8:28 in Rom 3:3; Pss. Sol. 9:5 in Rom 2:5; Pss. Sol. 14:2 in Rom 7:10; Pss. Sol. 15:8 in Rom 2:3; Pss. Sol. 17:1 in Rom 2:17). In my opinion, this consideration is especially significant when considering the wording of Paul's key theological thoughts. For more detail, see my book *The Psalms of Solomon and the Messianic Ethics of Paul*, especially 256–284, where I engage this topic in depth.

maintain the status of being righteous before God.⁸³ This attitude was common to most of the Jews of Paul's day, especially being cherished by the Pharisees, and it is also visible in the Psalms of Solomon.⁸⁴ Therefore, it is not surprising that Paul also demanded this pattern of conduct of his Gentile converts. The importance of this emphasis of Paul's is also attested to by the Psalms of Solomon, with their climactic final two chapters (Pss. Sol. 17–18), which taken as a whole confirm the psalmist's emphasis on messianic ethics. Now, one substantial aspect of Paul's emphasis on messianic ethics now comes to the fore: the preparation of the righteous believers for Christ's parousia and the last judgement. Within this notion — particularly in Pss. Sol. 18:5, where Israel's state of holiness and righteousness results from the last judgement — we can also find an interpretative basis for Paul's messianic ethics.⁸⁵ God's justice and righteousness in correlation must be transferred, by placing faith in the value and significance of Christ's sacrifice, to the level of a reciprocal relationship (see Rom 12:1). This has to be visible in the manifestation of love, which is for Paul the expression of the fullness of the law (Rom 13:8–10).

I thus suggest that it is legitimate to ask also about the influence of the Psalms of Solomon, especially chapters 17–18, on Paul's line of reasoning in Romans, above all in chapters 9–11. In any event, the very existence and popularity of Jewish eschatological notions concerning the coming of “the day of Messiah” and the Last Judgment, including those that are found in Pss. Sol. 17–18, but also in other Second Temple writings, allow for the possibility that Paul was familiar with these notions.

The Paradox of Divine Activity in Fulfillment of Israel's Divine Vocation

Regardless of what particular interpretation we accept, it is beyond doubt that Paul considers his mission among the Gentiles to be part and parcel of Israel's divine vocation.⁸⁶ Despite the diversity of Second Temple Jewish notions and traditions regarding Israel's eschatological restoration,⁸⁷ Paul holds to the most positive

⁸³ See Mikael Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters* (CBNTS 26; Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1995), 200.

⁸⁴ See Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous*, 158–170.

⁸⁵ See VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification*, 139, including n. 249.

⁸⁶ For this issue in connection with Rom 9–11, see especially Lionel J. Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel: How Paul's Jewish Identity Informs His Apostolic Ministry, With Special Reference to Romans* (BZNTW 205; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 195–254.

⁸⁷ For more detail, see Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 499–505.

version of the scenario, “one in which Gentiles are included in the redemption and participate in the blessings.”⁸⁸ Typically, as mentioned above, this notion presumed that the restoration of Israel would precede, and at the same time would enable, the deliverance of the Gentiles.⁸⁹ For Paul, Israel’s hardening becomes a means for Gentile salvation; it is a “part of her role in God’s worldwide purposes through Christ.”⁹⁰

Paul is aware of the potential for misunderstandings of this revision, as well as of the significance of his own Jewish divine vocation. Nevertheless, Paul’s notion still accords with the notion of the eschatological restoration of Israel being the path to the restoration and salvation of all nations, since, for Paul, this process has now commenced with Israel, and in particular with a group of Jewish Christ-believers, the eschatological Jewish remnant.⁹¹ Most probably, the reason for and the very basis of this Pauline revision is the *interim* between Christ’s resurrection and the *parousia*, as well as his value-redirected ζῆλος as one “according to knowledge” (ἐπίγνωσις; 10:2). The Gentiles (non-Jews) in this scheme receive their particular identity as those who in Christ are justified by God, and whose separateness is part of God’s eschatological purposes for the redemption of Israel, and through her also of other nations: the worldwide “reconciliation.”⁹² For Paul, this is a key objective, and at the same time serves as confirmation that “the end of the ages has dawned with the resurrection of Christ (though within the midst of the present age, and thus awaiting additional elements to arrive in full).”⁹³ All of this means the fulfillment of Paul’s divine vocation, which by the same token means fulfilling Israel’s role in God’s universal purposes. As Lionel Windsor aptly remarks in this context, Paul considers his apostolic mission to be “*his way of being Jewish*.”⁹⁴ Or, as William S. Campbell remarks in this regard, “the intertwined destiny of Israel and the nations in Christ became a foundational pillar in Paul’s

⁸⁸ Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 500.

⁸⁹ Philo, *Mos.* 2.43–44; *Sib. Or.* 3.702–723. See Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 219; idem, “Jewish Christianity, Israel’s Stumbling and the *Sonderweg* Reading of Paul,” *JSNT* 29 (2006): 27–54.

⁹⁰ Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel*, 247.

⁹¹ See Campbell, *The Nations in the Divine Economy*, 231–233. See also Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 450.

⁹² See Hodge, “The Question of Identity,” 172–173.

⁹³ Nanos, “The Question of Conceptualization,” 142–143.

⁹⁴ Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel*, 248. Emphasis original.

eschatology that would render his authenticated self-understanding best described as ‘a Jewish apostle to the nations for the sake of the glory of God.’”⁹⁵

Most of Paul’s Jewish contemporaries understood Israel’s divine role primarily as being to keep and teach the precepts of the Law of Moses — the “light” given to Israel — and thus to serve as an exemplary witness to God’s power and wisdom revealed to the whole world (Ps 119:105; Isa 2:2–5; 51:4–5; cf. Sir 24:23–24; Wis 18:4; see also Philo, *Somm.* 1.175–178; *Spec.* 1.320–323).⁹⁶ While Paul does not deny the central idea of this notion — the Torah as a light for the nations — he does understand and interpret it differently. Paul is aware of the universal human subjection to sin, and thus of the universal human inability and failure to keep all the precepts of the Torah. Even Jews, who have the Torah and thus enjoy substantial epistemological privilege, do not always and everywhere respond rightly to the Torah’s requirements (cf. Rom 2:9–13, 17–24; 3:3–8, 9–20; 9:4–5, 11:11–31).⁹⁷ Therefore, Paul is convinced that the purpose of the Torah was to testify to the gospel of Christ, since Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection is considered to be the objective, and thus also the fulfillment, of the Torah (Rom 10:4). Paul interprets the notion of a “light to the nations” in accordance with the closest parallels to this expression that occur in Isaiah, where “the Servant of the Lord” himself is said to be a “light to the nations” (Isa 42:6–7; 49:6).⁹⁸ Paul identifies himself as the “servant of the Lord” (Isa 40–55; especially 49:1–7), and the “light to the nations” (Isa 42:6–7; 49:6).⁹⁹ He has a “zeal” for God’s gospel, preaching to and calling upon the addressees of his message to do likewise, to

⁹⁵ Campbell, *The Nations in the Divine Economy*, 232–233.

⁹⁶ Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel*, 158–159.

⁹⁷ For more detail, see Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel*, 140–194.

⁹⁸ Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel*, 159.

⁹⁹ In this regard, another important question comes to the fore: does Paul regard the Messiah Jesus to be the primary fulfillment of the Servant of the Lord prophecies and does he himself reflect this in his ministry among the Gentile nations? This possibility cannot be ruled out, especially given the fact that the figure of the “Servant of the Lord” described in Isa 40–55 represents Israel too and her divine vocation with respect to the Gentile nations, including a decisive eschatological role for that divine vocation toward the non-Jewish nations. Since Paul considers Jesus’s death a sacrifice by God, an event that Paul places directly in relation to the Temple cult offerings, and since the Christ-event therefore must have a substantial and decisive role not only for Israel but also — and indeed especially — for the non-Jewish nations, then it seems that Paul considers Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, as the primary Servant of the Lord, active in a ministry in which Paul himself is participating, particularly among the Gentile nations.

emulate his “good zeal.” For Paul, then, Jewish identity and vocation was expressed primarily in preaching the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles.¹⁰⁰ By this means, Israel’s divine vocation is being fulfilled.

Conclusion

The above analysis of Rom 11, centering on vv. 25–26, shows that Paul’s thoughts pertain to specific Second Temple Jewish eschatological notions, particularly to the category of the eschatological participation of the Gentiles in the end-time redemption and salvation of Israel, with one of the key factors — and indeed the primary factor — being the question of identity, Jewish as well as non-Jewish. Moreover, be it only implicitly and without exact scriptural citations, Paul’s message as a whole belongs to a group of only a few texts of the Second Temple period that seem explicitly to envisage the continued existence of the identity of Gentiles as Gentiles. Paul’s rhetoric implies that the Gentiles in Christ remain Gentiles of a special sort, since they have adopted Jewish attributes, meaning that they have acquired a new identity by a new manner of life.

Whereas in most Jewish eschatological texts the redemption of the *ethnē* follows the restoration of Israel (cf. Tob 14:6; *1 En.* 90.30–38; Zech 8:20–23), in Paul’s scenario the inclusion of the *ethnē* is made possible by the failure—or, to be more precise, the hardening—of Israel (Rom 11:25–26). Nevertheless, Paul’s vision is fully eschatological and still falls within the bounds of Jewish eschatological expectations concerning Israel’s role toward the Gentiles. Paul’s gospel claims that the end of the ages has dawned with the resurrection of Christ, even though that event still falls within the midst of the present age, and thus holds that additional elements are yet to arrive in full: in the parousia. In Paul’s scenario, Gentiles have a share in God’s blessing imparted to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 22:16–18), and thus they can expect an ultimate restoration and redemption of Israel. Despite this, scholars are right to suggest that Paul “sees himself in the tradition of the prophets who call gentiles to Jerusalem on the Day of the Lord, when ‘all the nations shall stream to [the Lord’s house]’ (Isa. 2:2).”¹⁰¹

Paul’s unique messianic notion resulted in a special status for the Gentile believers in Christ. They are a part of the eschatological community of Israel and the nations (Gentiles). All these aspects of Paul’s message in Rom 11 confirm the variedness of Jewish eschatological notions in the period, including the diversity of Jewish messianic conceptions. As such, they reflect the experiences that the

¹⁰⁰ Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel*, 248.

¹⁰¹ Hodge, “The Question of Identity,” 168. See also Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel*, 136.

Jewish people had gained from daily encounters with non-Jewish nations, and express Jewish hopes and expectations in relation to God's promises given to Israel. Each of these notions is distinct and expresses the background of a particular author or a school of thought, including the theological perception of the events, happenings, and experiences in question. All of these considerations help us not only to understand better the variedness and complexities of Second Temple Judaism but also to avoid stereotypes by offering us a more nuanced perspective on the Jewish aspects of any New Testament text.