Ethnic Israel is a dominant theme in Scripture, particularly as it pertains to the future. Paul divulges some key elements in his own Spirit-inspired thinking on this subject in Rom 11:25-27. He looks forward to a time of salvation for the Jewish people by divulging hitherto unrevealed details about their future, i.e., their salvation will follow the bringing in of a prescribed number of Gentiles. Currently beset by a partial spiritual hardening toward God, a significant group of Jews will experience a future repentance and salvation. This will come at some future point in the church age, perhaps as one of the series events that will compose Christ's second coming. Paul adduces proof of this salvation with two quotations from Isaiah. Through this significant passage God's future program for Israel becomes clearer than before.

*****

Significant contemporary interest surrounds the subject of the Jewish nation. Israel's prominent and permanent place throughout the Bible has been a focus of dispensational theology. A recognition of this prominence is one of the marks distinguishing that system from covenant theology that has often assumed that Israel's privileges and promises have been transferred to the church. The crux of the matter

---

1After a successful pastorate in a midwestern city for a number of years, Michael Vanlaningham answered God's call to return to the classroom for further training in the study of God's Word. It is with great pleasure that the staff of TMSJ makes available in the following essay the fruit of some of his study.
is. Does Israel have a future? The future of Israel is a focal point from both secular and biblical perspectives, a subject that requires understanding for anyone attempting to discern present trends and their relationship to theological themes. Romans 11:25-27 is one of the key Scriptures that teach about this subject. It is worthy of the closest scrutiny in a quest for information on this vital subject.
The following discussion will examine the Romans passage to ascertain Paul's concept of the future of Israel by investigating the hardening of Israel (v. 25a), the identity of "all Israel" (v. 26), the timing of Israel's salvation (v. 26), and the manner of the salvation's accomplishment (vv. 26b-27).

ROMANS 11:25 THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING ISRAEL'S SALVATION

An explanatory gr (gar, "for") links Rom 11:25 closely with 11:24 and the reasoning of the passage up to v. 25. In 11:7-10, Paul has described the divine perspective regarding a hardening that has afflicted the non-elect of Israel, accounting for their rejection of the Messiah. In 11:11-24, Paul has argued that this hardening of Israel has given the Gentile world an opportunity to be recipients of blessings from the Messiah.

While the primary emphasis in this section is the relationship of the salvation of Gentiles and very few Jews, there are hints woven throughout it that Israel "has not stumbled so as to fall" (11:11), that Paul's ministry to the Gentiles would provoke the Jews to envy so that they would seek their own Messiah (11:14), that there would be a restoration of Israel that would be "life from the dead" (11:15), that there was the promise of a spiritual restoration of Jews because of the presence of some who had accepted their Messiah (11:16), and finally, that the Jews could be grafted in once again if they did not persist in their unbelief (11:23).

The explanatory gar beginning v. 25 develops the hints of a possible future restoration of the Jews, and how this restoration fits with God's historical plans for salvation of the Gentiles.

The phrase ou ... ulv mw gnoen, delfo (ou ... thel hymas agnoein, adelphoi, "I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren," v. 25) occurs in other connections in Paul to highlight what he is about to say and to ensure the full attention of his readers.

---

2 Leon Morris, The Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988) 419.
3 Scholars are divided on the identification of the "first-fruits" (11:16). Some view them as a reference to the patriarchs (Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1951] 397; Morris, Romans 411-12), or to Christ (suggested, though not held by C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Book of Romans [New York: Harper, 1957] 216). Either of these options is defensible; but it seems preferable to see the first-fruits as a reference to the Jewish remnant of Paul's day (Barrett's preferred view [Romans 216]). Earlier in Chapter 11, Paul used himself as proof that God had not permanently cast off all of His people, and supports this contention with an appeal to 1 Kgs 19:10 ff.

Furthermore, parx (h aparch) is used by Paul in Rom 16:5 and 1 Cor 16:15 for the initial converts of his ministry in a particular area, suggesting that those first-fruits were viewed as a foreshadowing of a greater redemptive work of God in a geographical area (cf. Dan G. Johnson, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 11," CBQ 46 [1984]:98-99). The figures of the root and the branches complicate the interpretation of 11:16. While the first-fruits may be the remnant, Nils A. Dahl (Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977] 151) and C. E. B. Cranfield (The Epistle to the Romans [2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979] 2:564) suggest that the metaphor of the root seems to refer to the patriarchs, from whom all Israelites descend. Paul draws upon the continuity of the Israel of his day with the patriarchs as proof of an eventual spiritual restoration for all Israel.
In the expression na m te [par'] aytoi miyimoi (hina m te [par'] heautois phronimoi, "that you not be wise in your own estimation," v. 25), the writer reiterates briefly the warning against arrogant thinking toward the Jews on the part of the Gentile believers in the Roman church (cf. v. 20). 6ina (Hina, 'That') expresses his purpose in revealing the mystery regarding the hardening of Israel.  He was supremely concerned that Gentile believers understand that Israel was not "finished" in the program of God, having been replaced by Gentile believers. Paul opposed a smug attitude in the church against Jewish constituents, especially in light of the Jewish role in God's future plans.

ROMANS 11:25B  THE MEANING AND IDENTITY OF "MYSTERY"

One of the more difficult points of interpretation in 11:25-27 is the meaning and identification of τοῦ μυστρίου (to mystrion, "the mystery"). The earliest known uses of the word are in works related to the Greek mystery religions. These denote secret rites or teachings known only by the initiated of a religious cult. Later the word spoke more generally of a secret of any kind. Its only uses in the LXX are eight occurrences in Daniel, where Daniel spoke of an eschatological secret pertaining to what God has decreed for the future (Dan 2:28). A similar usage was in the Jewish apocalyptic writings, where it also designated a divine secret of God that He alone discloses through revelation at the appointed time. The Jewish background of the word influenced Paul more strongly than the Greek.

Complicating the understanding of "mystery" in v. 25 is the use of the word in the NT to refer to spiritual truths revealed in the OT, but revealed in the OT with varying degrees of obscurity. In the case of the rapture of the church, called a "mystery," it is not a new revelation but rather the fulfillment of something already contained in the OT. Paul and the church are the beneficiaries of this revelation because they are those who have ears to hear.
mystery in 1 Cor 15:51, no unequivocal OT revelation treated this event (thus making it very obscure, even hidden). No clear explanation of this event occurred prior to its unveiling to Paul and thus to the church.

Some truth related to a mystery may be the subject of revelation in the OT, but the mystery itself is hidden until at God's appointed time it becomes a manifest event. Ephesians 3:4-5 reflects this "present-in-the-OT-but-unclear, then clarified-in-the-NT" use of mystery, as does Romans 16:25-26. Extrabiblical support for this understanding of mystrión is in the Dead Sea Scrolls (especially 1QpHab. 7:4, "[To the Teacher of Righteousness] God made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets," and CD. 3:12-14, "[God was] revealing to them [the righteous remnant of the Qumran community] the hidden things in which all Israel had gone astray") where the mystery is revelation from God regarding the clarification of spiritual truths already revealed in the OT. These parallels illumine Paul's use of mystrión in Romans 11:25. The OT had much to say regarding the Messiah and the inclusion of Gentiles in blessings through the seed of Abraham, but God gave further revelation to deepen the knowledge of His people regarding broad OT themes present.

It was not new revelation that Gentiles would be blessed through the seed of Abraham (cf. Gen 12:3; etc.), nor was it new revelation that God could harden the Jews (cf. Romans 11:8-9 where Paul cites Deut 29:4; Isa 29:10; Ps. 69:22-23). Therefore, neither of these points is identifiable as Paul's mystery in v. 25.

Two viable options for the content of the mystery remain. Possibly what

---

8Markus Bockmuehl, Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity (Tübingen: Mohr, 1990) 170. Robert Gundry hints at the fact that the rapture is new revelation in the NT, not found in the OT (The Church and the Tribulation [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973] 14).
10Ephesians 3:4-5: "And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed [w nn pekalfuh]. . . ." While it has been argued that the particle w carries no comparative sense (i.e., the mystery was not known at all previously as it is now known; cf. C. C. Ryrie, "The Mystery in Ephesians 3," BSac 123 [1966]:29), the fact that the OT contains a significant amount of teaching regarding the blessing of Gentiles along with Jews weighs against seeing truth related to the mystery in Ephesians 3 as something entirely new. Though the OT foresaw the future blessing of Gentiles with Jews, it did not, however, predict the joining together of the two groups in one body, the church, as was revealed to Paul according to the Ephesians 3 passage. For an interpretation of w with a comparative force, cf. Harold W. Mare, "Paul's Mystery in Ephesians 3," Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society 7 (1965):83-84.
11It may be instructive that the other occurrence of "mystery" in Romans (16:25-26) refers most likely to the "Christ event," which cannot be viewed as completely new revelation.
13Chrys Caragounis, The Ephesian Mysterion: Meaning and Content (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1977) 104 n. 24; Mare, "Mystery" 83-84.
Paul calls the mystery is the way the hardening of the Jews relates to the salvation of the Gentiles. Ridderbos maintains that the mystery pertains to the "back and forth" fashion in which the salvation is effected, beginning first with the Jews, then after the divine hardening, encompassing the Gentiles whose blessings from salvation in turn provoke the Jews to jealousy and consequently salvation in Christ as well. The "back and forth" characteristic applies, but it is discussed in 11:11-24, with v. 25 contributing nothing new to it.

A second option is preferable. What is new both in the context of Romans 11 and in salvation history is the order of salvation of the Gentiles and of "all Israel." The salvation of Israel will not occur until the "fullness of the Gentiles has come in." This understanding of mystrion has much in its favor. It fits well with the concept of "mystery" as new revelation or as an extensive development and clarification of previously given revelation. What is not new is the blessing of the Gentiles and the hardening of the Jews; what is new (not seen in the OT but revealed here) is the sequence of salvation for Jews and Gentiles. This view finds further support in toto (tuto, "this") which probably looks forward to the dependent clause introduced by ti (hoti, "that"), which in turn designates the remainder of vv. 25-27 as the content of that mystery.

ROMANS 11:25C `THE HARDENING OF ISRAEL

The phrase ti p mroyw t lIsral ggonen (hoti prsis apo merous t Isral gegonen, "that hardness in part has happened to Israel") furnishes the first element of the mystery. The concept of hardening comes frequently in the OT and in the literature of Early Judaism. In the NT, prsw (prsis, "hardness") occurs only two other times (Mark 3:5; Eph 4:18). In both instances it refers metaphorically to hardness of heart (the hard-heartedness of the Jewish witnesses of Jesus' ministry and the hard-heartedness of Gentiles alienated from God, respectively). In 11:25 it means "dullness, insensibility, obstinacy," conveying the notion of a condition that leaves part of Israel unresponsive to the gospel and excluded from salvation. God is the agent behind the hardening (cf. 11:8, uew [ho theos, "God"]).

---

19Cf. especially the hardening of Pharaoh in Exod 4:21; 7:3; 9:12. See also Ps 95:8; Isa 6:10; 63:17.
21BAGD, 732.
The Extent of the Hardening

The phrase \( \text{apo merous} \) ("in part") expresses the extent of the hardening. The precise meaning and syntactical relationship of this phrase has engendered much debate. One of the problems associated with the phrase is determining whether it is adjectival, adverbial, or temporal in force. There is evidence for an adverbial use in the fact that \( \text{apo merous} \) is roughly like the Classical use of phrases such as \( \text{kat merous} \) ("according to a part") and \( \text{meros ti} \) ("some part"), and on this basis, according to Tholuck, "cannot well signify anything else but in part . . . ." The preposition \( \text{p} \) ("in"), when used with substantives in Classical Greek, commonly has an adverbial force. Furthermore, \( \text{apo merous} \) is roughly parallel to the \( \text{tinew} \) ("some, certain ones") of 11:17, and stands somewhat in contrast to \( \text{pas Isral} \) ("all Israel") of 11:26.

Ksemann maintains that \( \text{apo merous} \) is adjectival and connects it with \( \text{prsis} \), with the resulting sense "a partial hardening has come upon Israel." This connection finds support in 11:7 through the reference to the hardening upon non-Christian Jews alone, leaving Jewish Christianity unaffected by the hardening. Yet this is weak in that Paul apparently deals extensively with the numeric expanse of the hardening rather than intensively with its severity.

The temporal interpretation of \( \text{apo merous} \) is probably the least defensible. Hodge maintains that the phrase is temporal in Rom 15:24 and that \( \text{archi hou} \) ("until") (11:25), which is also temporal, supports the same understanding of \( \text{apo merous} \). Against a temporal understanding, however, is the emphasis of Paul throughout Romans 11. It is arguably more natural to understand the phrase to refer to numbers rather than time. Also, the position of the phrase and its apparent antithesis to \( \text{pas Isral} \) speak against such a temporal force. A temporal interpretation of \( \text{apo merous} \) is unlikely in 2 Cor 1:14 and 2:5, suggesting that Paul usually intends the phrase to be non-temporal. If he had temporal matters in mind, he possibly would have used a phrase like \( \text{to nyn} \) ("the present") instead.

Although the problem is difficult, the adverbial force has stronger support. A further issue relates to the phrase. Should \( \text{apo merous} \) connect with \( \text{ggonen} \)?

---


24 Ernst Ksemann, \textit{Commentary on Romans} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 313.


26 Lenski, Romans 720. For the points supporting a numerical emphasis of Paul in this context, cf. especially the 7,000 of 11:4; the remnant in 11:5; the o loipo in 11:7; the phrase \( \text{tin j atn} \) in 11:14; the "first-fruits" and "root" in 11:16; and the parallel between \( \text{t plrvma} \) in unn and \( \text{pw 1Isral} \) in 11:26.

27 Ksemann, Romans 313.

It is preferable to see the phrase modifying **gogenen**, a verb (based on other Pauline usage), but a choice of any of the three options does not affect the essential meaning, since interpreters choosing different connections have reached the same conclusion: only a part of all the people of Israel are hardened.

**The Time-frame for the Hardening**

A time-frame for this hardening is suggested by the clause \( xri \ o \ . \ . \ . \ eslu \) (\( achri \ hou \ . \ . \ . \ eiselth \), "until . . . has come in"). The phrase (\( achri \ hou \)) is a shortened form of \( xri \ \to \ \chi rnoy \ . \ . \ . \) (\( achri \ tou \ \chi rnoy \ h \ . \ . \ . \), "until the time at which . . ."). The precise nature of its temporal force has been a subject for strenuous debate. It appears to denote a time after which the hardening of Israel will cease, bringing a change in her spiritual condition. NT usage of the phrase elsewhere may overturn this understanding, however. In a number of passages it can plausibly mean "while" or even "during and after," implying the possibility in the present passage that the

---

29This view is maintained by Cranfield, Romans 2:575; Meyer, Romans 446; Michel, Rmer 280; Joachim Jeremias, "Einige vorwiegend sprachliche Beobachtungen zu Rm 11.25-36," in Die Israelfrage nach Rm 9-11 (ed. Lorenzo de Lorenzi; Monographische Reihe von 'Benedictina,' vol. 3; Rome: St. Paul's Abbey, 1977) 195. This view is probably the best based on the other four Pauline uses of the phrase in which \( \pi \ \mu r\gamma \omicron \ \nu \) modifies the verb. Cf. Rom 15:15 (tol\( \lambda h\)rteron \( \delta \ \gamma r\acute{a}c\)a \( mn \ \pi \ \mu r\gamma \omicron \ \nu \), "But I have written boldly to you on some points"); Rom 15:24 (\( mn \ \pi r\omicron \ \pi \ \mu r\gamma \omicron \ \nu \ \mu p\lambda\eta\omicron \upsilon \), "after I have enjoyed your company for a while"); 2 Cor 1:14 (ka\( \acute{u}\)w ka, \( \pi \gamma n\nu t\)e \( mw \ \pi \ \mu r\gamma \omicron \ \nu \), "just as you partly did understand us"); and 2 Cor 2:5 (\( \ell e\)ph\( k\)en \ . \ . \ . \ \pi \ \mu r\gamma \omicron \ \nu \), "someone has caused sorrow . . . in some degree").

30A. Rese, "Die Rettung der Juden nach Rmer 11," in L$ Aptre Paul: Personale, Style et Conception du Ministere, (ed. A. Vanhoye; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986) 427; Cranfield, Romans 2:575; Morris, Romans 420; Kseemann Romans, 313; de Boor, Rmer 268; Nygren, Romans 404; Barrett, Romans 223; and Hendriksen, Romans 378. This view is supported by the context (11:7, \( o \ \lambda o\i p\)o \( p v r\upsilon h\)san), and by the apparent contrast with \( \nu w \ \nu s\omicron \) in 11:26. Thus the limits of the hardening are delineated, and Jewish Christianity is not affected by it. Also, Romans 11 says earlier that not all the Jews were hardened, supporting the view that only part of Israel has been affected during this age.

31Dunn, Romans 2:679; Corley, "Jews" 52 n. 48. Paul is still looking at the nation as a whole (according to this view), and this unified whole is blinded somewhat. This is the most natural connection of the phrase (it is argued), is a grammatically permissible use of the prepositional phrase as an adverb, and denotes a quantitative limit, indicating that only a part of Israel is affected. While this is a defensible position, it is probably not the best option for several reasons. First, as it was mentioned above, Paul usually uses \( \pi \ \mu r\gamma \omicron \ \nu \) as a modifier of the verb, not a noun as this view requires. Second, this interpretation is not altogether clear. "A partial hardening" is taken by Dunn et al. as a reference to part of Israel being affected; but "partial hardening" seems to be understood better as "a hardening of low intensity," and the context suggests that this is probably not Paul's point. Meyer (Romans, 446) maintains that the phrase should be understood extensively in light of \( o \ \lambda o\i p\)o in 11:7, and \( t i n\)ew in 11:17, and not intensively as is the sense demanded by a connection with \( p v r\omicron \upsilon \).

32Zerwick and Grosvenor, A\-nalysis 2:485.

33E.g., Heb 3:13, "But encourage one another day after day as long as [while] it is still called Today \([ \chi r\lambda \omicron \ \nu \ t \ \sigma m\omicron \ \kappa a\ell\alpha\i t\)ai]\); Acts 27:33, "And . . . until [while] the day was about to dawn \([ \delta \ \omicron \ \mu r\alpha \ \mu r\omicron \ \nu \ \gamma r\iota \ \mu e\iota \ \eta \nu \ \gamma n\没见过\)\), Paul was encouraging them all to take some food"; and Luke 21:24, "and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled \([ \chi r\iota \ \nu \ t \]"
hardening of Israel does not stop when the fullness of the Gentiles arrives, but rather that it continues during and after the fullness comes in. In other words, achri hou may not refer to a new spiritual "beginning" for Israel after a future point (the fullness of the Gentiles); instead, it may refer to prevailing circumstances for Israel even after the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

This view of achri hou has been challenged. Murray contends that though it may mean "while" in some contexts, in Rom 11:25 that meaning is unnatural, especially in light of the aorist eslu (eiseth, "has come in"). He writes,

In every other instance in the New Testament, whether used with the aorist or future, the meaning "until" is the necessary rendering and indicates a point of eventuation or a point at which something took place (cf. Acts 7:18; 1 Cor. 11:26; 15:25; Gal. 3:19; Rev. 2:25). Hence in Rom. 11:25 it would require a departure from the pattern to render the clause other than "until the fulness of the Gentiles will come in". The context makes this the necessary interpretation of the force of the clause in question.

Also opposed to the meaning of "while" for achri hou are the verses cited to support that interpretation. The most that can be said from these passages to
support the contention of DeCaro, Robertson, and Woudstra is that the hardening of Israel may briefly overlap the coming in of the Gentiles' fullness, only to be canceled shortly thereafter. Hence, in Rom 11:25, achri hou points to a time (the arrival of the fullness of the Gentiles) after which the hardening of Israel will cease.

Identifying the "fullness of the Gentiles" has been difficult for interpreters. BAGD prefers the meaning "fulfilling" or "fulfillment" in Rom 11:12 (cf. Rom 13:10 also), but stipulates that some prefer "that which is brought to fullness or completion, full number, sum total, fullness, superabundance of something" in that verse (cf. Rom 15:29; Col 1:19; 2:9 also). BAGD prefers the meaning "fulfilling" or "fulfillment" in Rom 11:12 (cf. Rom 13:10 also), but stipulates that some prefer "that which is brought to fullness or completion, full number, sum total, fullness, superabundance of something" in that verse (cf. Rom 15:29; Col 1:19; 2:9 also).38

Space considerations permit only a presentation of conclusions regarding the use of this word in Paul's writings. In his classic essay on plrma, Lightfoot writes,

Substantially one meaning runs through all the passages hither quoted from St. Paul. In these plrma (plrma) has its proper passive force [that which is filled, rather than that which fills], as a derivative from plnon (plroun, "to fill") 'to make complete.' . . . It is . . . the full complement, the plentitude, the fulness.39

When analyzing Rom 11:25, he adds that the word refers to "the full number, the whole body."40 But even with this conclusion, the precise meaning of plrma in connection with tnn unn (tn ethnn, "the Gentiles") in the verse is contested.

The "fullness of the Gentiles" has been interpreted in two ways: qualitatively and quantitatively. (1) In a qualitative sense it refers to the full blessings of the Gentiles. This view finds support in the contrast of 11:12 between to plrma and the spiritual conditions of t parptma (to paraptma, "the transgression") and t eq chthma (to h eq ch eq chma, "loss, defeat"). Neither provides a suitable opposite to pl eq ch eq chma if it is understood in an arithmatic sense of "full number."41

(2) A second view is that the "fullness of the Gentiles" is quantitative, referring to the "full number" or the "numerical whole" of the Gentiles, though it probably does not encompass every individual Gentile. Rather it denotes a large representation of Gentiles from throughout the world. This is the preferred view with several scholars42 and finds support in Paul's frequent discussion of numbers.

Pharaoh ascended the throne of Egypt (Acts 7:17-18) and will happen for the observance of the Lord's Supper after Christ's second coming (1 Cor 11:26) and for Christ's rule following the subjection of His enemies (1 Cor 15:25; cf. 15:24).

38BAGD, 672.
39J. B. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (rpt. of 1879 ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959) 260-61 [transliteration and translation added].
40Lightfoot, Colossians 260.
41Murray, Romans 2:94-95; Morris, Romans 420.
A few important references from Early Judaism reflecting the apparently common belief in an eschatological conversion of a large number of Gentiles add credence to this position.43  Deciding between the two options is not easy, but the second has a somewhat stronger case. Even Murray recognizes that pl \( \varepsilon \iota \sigma \varepsilon \lambda \theta \varepsilon \ \theta \iota \nu \sigma \theta \alpha \mu \alpha \) does not exclude a numerical connotation and that a combination of the views may be preferable to excluding one or the other.44 Besides, understanding pl \( \varepsilon \iota \sigma \varepsilon \lambda \theta \varepsilon \ \theta \iota \nu \sigma \theta \alpha \mu \alpha \) in a numeric sense with spiritual overtones provides an adequate rejoinder to the objection that to pl \( \varepsilon \iota \sigma \varepsilon \lambda \theta \varepsilon \ \theta \iota \nu \sigma \theta \alpha \mu \alpha \) does not provide a logical contrast with to parapt \( \theta \iota \nu \sigma \theta \alpha \mu \alpha \) and to h \( \iota \nu \sigma \theta \alpha \mu \alpha \) in 11:12. The better interpretation sees Paul as pointing to the spiritual conversion of a large number of Gentiles.

This conclusion does not resolve all the problems with the phrase "the fullness of the Gentiles," however. Those who embrace a quantitative understanding of the phrase disagree about the manner and time in which this fullness is reached. This issue is closely related to the timing of the salvation of all Israel that is more fully discussed below.

One of the factors in determining the time of the arrival of Gentile fullness is the correct understanding of the verb \( \varepsilon \iota \sigma \varepsilon \lambda \theta \varepsilon \ \theta \iota \nu \sigma \theta \alpha \mu \alpha \) (v. 25). Though e eq \( \iota \sigma \varepsilon \lambda \theta \varepsilon \ \theta \iota \nu \sigma \theta \alpha \mu \alpha \) has the basic meaning of "come in/into," "go in/into," "enter," the term's significance in the present context is not completely clear. The verb occurs in the Gospels in reference to entering the Messianic Kingdom or eternal life,45 so many scholars take the phrase \( \varepsilon \iota \sigma \varepsilon \lambda \theta \varepsilon \ \theta \iota \nu \sigma \theta \alpha \mu \alpha \ \tau \iota \nu \sigma \theta \alpha \mu \alpha \ \varepsilon \iota \sigma \varepsilon \lambda \theta \varepsilon \ \theta \iota \nu \sigma \theta \alpha \mu \alpha \ \tau \iota \nu \sigma \theta \alpha \mu \alpha \ ) ("the fullness of the Gentiles come in") to refer to the fulfillment of God's purpose in bringing the Gentiles into the Messianic Kingdom.46 Yet several reasons make this

---

43 See note 25 above.
45 One of the problems with Murray's view (that the fullness of the Gentiles refers to their full blessings) is that it is difficult to determine just what is meant by this. If it does not entail some sort of numerical enlargement, then the statement is meaningless in the present context. Whenever a Gentile finds salvation in Christ, he receives all the blessings to which Christ entitles him, including the promise of glory (Rom 8:29-30). Paul is referring to more than this as Murray himself concedes. The fullness must involve not only full spiritual blessings, but full spiritual blessings for a numerically large number of Gentiles.
46 BAGD, 232.
48 This is the view of Sanday and Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902) 335; Morris, Romans 419-20; Cranfield, Romans 2:680-81; Corley, "Jews" 52. Corley maintains that the phrase refers to the completion of the gospel mission among the Gentiles, thus giving a view slightly different from the "Kingdom" view of the other
view unsatisfactory. Though εἰσέρχομαι is used frequently for entering the Kingdom or eternal life, the majority of its 194 NT occurrences have no eschatological technical sense. More importantly, Paul uses εἰσέρχομαι elsewhere only in Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 14:23, 24, with neither passage containing eschatological connotations. With a thorough discussion of the timing of the fullness of the Gentiles and the salvation of all Israel yet to follow, this much can be concluded: it is preferable to understand εἰσέρχομαι in a non-technical, non-eschatological sense. The more defensible sense in 11:25 is the one suggested by Black who says it is better to view Paul's use of εἰσέρχομαι as parallel to its use in the LXX for the Hebrew אב (אובא, "he comes"), which means simply "has come," "has arrived," and so "has been realized." In summary, Paul does not use the verb in an eschatological sense, and the context, while referring to events future to Paul, does not refer unequivocally to the future Messianic Kingdom or eternity as the other view requires, further proof of which will follow below. The verb refers to the arrival of the fullness of the Gentiles with no allusion to the Gentiles entering the Kingdom or eternity.

**ROMANS 11:26-27**

`THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF SALVATION`

*The Manner of Salvation*

With the phrase καὶ ἑορτάζω (καὶ ἑορτάζω, "and thus") (v. 26) Paul changes from the order and time of salvation in 11:25 to consider primarily the manner of the salvation of all Israel in 11:26-27.

Viewing 11:26-27 as instruction about the manner of salvation of the Jews presupposes a modal, non-temporal use of ἐορτάζω (ἑορτάζω, "thus") which is problematic. Some scholars maintain the phrase is best understood temporally, resulting in the following sense: "There will be a time of hardening until the fullness of the Gentiles arrives, and then all Israel will be saved." Classical Greek usage supports the temporal explanation of καὶ ἑορτάζω, as does NT usage in Acts 17:33. In Paul it is probably temporal in 1 Cor 11:28; 14:25; 1 Thess 4:17. Further support for the temporal view comes in the deictic ἀρχή ἑορτάζω scholars mentioned in this note. But Corley also assigns a semi-technical eschatological force to the verb, and for this reason he is listed here with the others.


50Black, Romans 147. Cf. Mark 9:28; Luke 7:6; 14:23; Acts 1:13; 3:8; 5:21; 9:12, 13:14, etc. Black does not appear to assign an eschatological sense to the verb, but does not make himself clear on whether or not an eschatological sense is warranted. Cf. also Johannes Munck, Christ & Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9-11 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967) 132, who says that Paul does not use εἰσέρχομαι in the same eschatological way it is used in the gospels. However, in Acts 14:22, Luke does use this word with an eschatological sense in quoting Paul ("Through many tribulations we must enter [εἰσελθεῖν] the kingdom of God.").

51Cf. Xenophon, Ἀνάβασις 3.4.8; Epictetus, Dissertationes 4.8.13 (LSJ, 112).

52Ksemann, Romans 313.

53Corley, "Jews" 53-54.
The Future of Israel...

The temporal understanding has several important drawbacks, however. The passages from Paul cited as possibly temporal can be as easily (and perhaps more favorably) understood as non-temporal. 1

On a modal view of \( \text{otvw} \) in 1 Cor 11:28, cf. C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) 273 (his translation “that [in the previously-mentioned manner] is how he should eat” implies a modal interpretation); in 1 Cor 14:25, cf. Charles Hodge, A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians (rpt. of 1857 ed.; Carlisle, Penn.: Banner of Truth, 1983) 298; and in 1 Thess 4:17, cf. F. F. Bruce, 1 & 2 Thessalonians (WBC, vol. 45; Waco: Word Books, 1982) 103. In Robertson’s opinion not a single one of the seventy-three occurrences of houts in Paul can be viewed as certainly temporal. 1

In Robertson’s opinion not a single one of the seventy-three occurrences of houts in Paul can be viewed as certainly temporal. 1

Robertson, “Future” 221. In addition, in the nine places where Paul writes kai houts in the same order as 11:26, no temporal understanding is probably justified. 1

1Rom 5:12; 11:26; 1 Cor 7:17, 36; 11:28; 14:25; 15:11; Gal 6:2; 1 Thess 4:17. As already mentioned, Rom 11:26; 1 Cor 11:26; 14:25; 1 Thess 4:17 are disputed, but are probably not temporal as some claim. On the basis of these observations, a purely temporal force to the phrase is improbable.

The key word in the previous statement is purely. A number of credible scholars maintain that though houts on its own is not temporal, the context virtually infuses such a sense into it in v. 26 because of the strong sequential emphasis surrounding houts. Therefore, houts is probably best understood as modal and not primarily temporal, but it is modal with a temporal ambiance. 1


A further problem associated with kai houts \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \) is determining whether it is retrospective (looking back to what Paul has written in v. 25) or prospective (looking ahead to vv. 26 ff.). Jeremias refers houts \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \) back to v. 25 and the hardening of Israel, the salvation of the Gentiles, and the reversal in order of salvation (Gentiles preceding Jews). He says that to construe the adverb with kau \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \) (kath \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \), "thus as") (v. 26), which follows, is contrary to typical Pauline syntax. 1

Jeremias, "Beobachtungen" 198-99. See Jeremias’s treatment for the details. Cf. also, for the same perspective (that \( \text{otww} \) is retrospective), Dieter S \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \)anger, "Rettung der Heiden und Erw \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \)ung Israels: Einige vorl \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \)ufige Erw \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \)ungen zu R \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \) \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \)mer 11:25-27," KD 32 (1996):107-8; and Ulrich Wilckens, Der Brief an die R \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \)mer (EKK, 3 vols.; Z \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \)rich: Benziger Verlag, 1980) 2:254-55. But a review of other uses of the \( \text{otww} \) . . . ka (houts . . . kai, "thus . . . also") construction, including those in Paul, divulges that they do not shed much light on the problem. 1

In Luke 24:24 (ka eron \( \text{otww} \) kauw ka a gynakew epon), the \( \text{otww} \) clearly refers to what precedes, as is the case in Eph 4:20 (\( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw}\)m \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \) d e \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \) x o \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \) w e \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \) w \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \) m \( \text{O(\(\overline{\sigma}\))tvw} \) t eq
The Identity of the Saved

Regarding the identification of "all Israel," there are two basic views. One view, held by John Calvin, refers the expression to the church as the new spiritual Israel, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. An appeal made to Gal 6:16 ("the Israel of God") supports this view, but the more probable interpretation of the Galatians passage fails to support this conclusion. A consistent interpretation of Old and New Testaments requires that the two peoples be distinguished from each other.

A second view on the meaning of "all Israel" is better here. "All Israel" in v. 26 must have the same sense as "Israel" in 11:25 ("a hardness has come in part on Israel"). The context requires that Isra be understood to refer to ethnic Israel, mentioned in 11:23 ("if they [ethnic Israel] do not continue in unbelief") and 11:30-32 in a contrast between Gentiles and Jews.

Beyond this conclusion four options for the sense of "ethnic Israel" remain. (1) One is that ethnic Israel refers to the elect among the Jews saved throughout the entirety of the church age. This finds support in the progressive salvation of increasing numbers of Jews throughout this age concurrently with the salvation of Gentiles. When the full number of the Gentiles comes in, then the full number of...
According to Horne, to view 11:25-32 as referring to the future salvation of national Israel (Israel as a whole, as a nation) disregards the entire thrust of Romans 9-11, a context where Paul adamantly denies that salvation is afforded to the nation (i.e., all ethnic Israel) as such. Horne writes,

I would state therefore in summary that when Paul states that 'all Israel shall be saved' he means to refer to the full number of elect Jews whom it pleases God to bring into his kingdom throughout the ages until the very day when the full number of the Gentiles also shall have been brought in. In keeping with the context, 'all Israel' means 'the remnant according to the election of grace' (11:5), not the nation in its entirety.60

This view has several weaknesses. If "all Israel" is simply the elect from ethnic Israel who are saved along with the Gentiles throughout the age, special revelation to Paul in the form of a myst 

\[\text{mysteq} \frac{\text{eq}}{\text{erion}} \text{(v. 25)}\]

is pointless, since it was clear to him and everyone else even superficially familiar with Christianity in the first century that some Jews were being saved. Also militating against this view is the consideration that the salvation of all Israel comes at a particular point in time as indicated by achi hou \[\text{eiselth} \text{eq} \frac{\text{O}(-,|,e)}{\text{eq} \text{O}(\text{v. 25})}\], as well as by the future \[\text{svu eq} \frac{\text{O}(|,h)\text{setai}}{\text{eq} \text{O}(-,o)\text{th eq} \text{O}(-,e)\text{setai}} \text{"will be saved" (v. 26).61\]

To conceive of "all Israel" as elect Jews saved throughout the church age is unconvincing.

(2) A second option associated with "ethnic Israel" is to refer it to Israel as a whole. Some scholars maintain that "Israel" in Romans 9-11 denotes the Jewish people as a totality, and not the multitude of individual Jews. The main support of this view is that the saved in "all Israel" consist in both the believing remnant and the hardened remainder of Israel. Paul is looking forward to a time when not only the remnant but those of Israel who have strayed will be saved. Furthermore, the concept of "Israel as a whole" finds support in the fact that pas Isra \(\text{eq} \frac{\text{O}(-,e)}{\text{eq} \text{O}(\text{v. 25})}\) stands in contrast to the le eq \(\text{leimma} \text{(leimma, "remnant") of 11:5 and tinew (tines, "some, certain ones") of 11:17.62\]

Several deficiencies in the view are apparent, however. First, "Israel as a whole" is rather ill defined. Several maintain that pas \(\text{Isra eq} \frac{\text{O}(-,e)}{\text{eq} \text{O}(\text{v. 25})}\) refers to Israel

---

59William Hendriksen, Israel in Prophecy (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968) 44.
60Horne, "Meaning" 334; cf. also Hoekema, Bible 144, 146.
61That the salvation of Israel takes place at a specific point of time in the future is argued by Stanley E. Porter, who writes,

In the logic of the argument here, Paul claims that the hardness has come and will last until such time when the fullness of the Gentiles may come (Aorist Subjunctive). . . . The future form \[\text{svusetai}\] is used parallel to the Subjunctive, here designating a logically subsequent event in relation to another projected event . . . , with the added assurance that if the fullness of the Gentiles enters then the salvation of Israel is expected (Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood [Studies in Biblical Greek, vol. 1; New York: Peter Lang, 1989] 435).

62Cf. Longenecker, "Answers" 96-97; Munck, Christ & Israel 136; Stuhlmacher, "Interpretation" 557; Dahl, Studies 153; BDF, par. 275(4), p. 143; W. D. Davies, "Paul" 16 n. 2; Dunn, Romans 2:681.
as a whole, but not every individual Jew is included in the salvation. If by this they mean that enough of the individuals in future Israel have exercised faith in Christ to say that the nation or people as a whole are saved, then this is an acceptable view. Otherwise, their definition is incongruous. Second, as will be argued under the third view below, pas Isra eq \( \text{\O(~,e)} \) was used in the LXX to refer to a group of Jews, with the size of that group left unspecified. Hence, to say that pas Isra eq \( \text{\O(~,e)} \) means "the people or nation as a whole" may be unjustifiably specific based on LXX usage. Third, this view is shaped by some (e.g., Stendahl and Dunn) to argue that Paul's goal was not to maintain a sense of individualism in the future salvation of the Jews, but to affirm the salvation of the Jewish people as a consolidated group. In Stendahl's case, the salvation of the entire group is distinct from the individuals' exercise of faith in Jesus Christ. This approach is difficult to sustain in light of repeated emphasis on individuals in Romans 9-11.

(3) A third option, the strongest of the first three, is that "all Israel" refers to a future group (of unspecified size, though probably a majority) of elect Jews alive at the time of the fullness of the Gentiles. A number of considerations support this. In his helpful study of "all Israel" in 1-2 Chronicles (LXX), Osborne has derived some intriguing observations from a survey of thirty-four uses of the phrase. In his record of the United Kingdom, the Chronicler used "all Israel" to describe the support David had from the Jewish people before his coronation (1 Chr 11:10; 12:38), the soldiers of Israel (1 Chr 19:17), Israel's civic and military leaders (1 Chr 15:25, 28), and the consolidated kingdom over which David reigned (1 Chr 14:8). In relation to the Divided Kingdom, the phrase was used for the group that was to participate in the crowning of Rehoboam (2 Chr 10:3) and for Judah alone (2 Chr 12:1). It was apparently "... used specifically for those who are loyal to the king and the cult of Yahweh, and the people from the Northern Kingdom are included if they meet the criterion." For the period of the fall of the Northern Kingdom through the exile, "all Israel" was used corporately for the whole nation whose sins needed to be expiated through sacrifice (2 Chr 29:24; cf. also 31:1) and for those who were loyal to the the Lord (2 Chr 35:3).

Osborne concludes,

This term usually means those people who attach themselves to the Davidic house and to the worship of Yahweh. ... The term always has the theological meaning of "the people of God." `All Israel' in its final definition is a term signifying the representatives of Israel who attach themselves to the Davidic figure, the king, in an expression of loyalty. This suggests that in Romans 11:26a `all Israel' is a term designating a majority of people loyal to the messiah, the

\[\text{E.g., Longenecker and Davies.}\]
\[\text{E.g., the testimony of Paul himself as proof that God has not rejected His people [11:1]; the first-fruit and the root [11:16]; the individual branches that are broken off [11:17]; and the opening verses of the entire three-chapter section [Rom. 9:1-5] in which Paul expresses intense concern regarding the salvation and condemnation of individual Jews (Piper, Justification 38-48, 54).}\]
\[\text{Osborne, "Background" 285-86.}\]
\[\text{bid., 87.}\]
Davidic figure. It is a collective word used for a whole people who may or may not have saving faith. It never has an individualistic connotation.67

Osborne's findings require a number of qualifications. First, his final two statements in the otherwise helpful quotation above are in a sense true. "All Israel" is collective, and hence does not always refer (in the OT) to saved individuals. But many passages in 1-2 Chronicles and other OT passages in which "all Israel" occurs, do specify what kinds of individuals make up "all Israel" (i.e., tribal leaders, military leaders, soldiers, etc.). "All Israel" may refer to a group, but individualistic connotations are not absolutely eclipsed.

Second, the picture painted by the OT use of "all Israel" is neither as simple nor as attractive as Osborne makes it.68 In 1-2 Chronicles pas Isra eq \(\text{\textit{e}}\)l may refer to those loyal to the king or to the Lord, but in Judg 8:27, for example, "all Israel" played the harlot and pursued idolatry. A further example is 1 Sam 13:20: "all Israel" was forced to have its tools sharpened by the Philistines. "All Israel" might even be inclined to help de-throne David (2 Sam 17:13). In 1 Kgs 12:16, "all Israel" (here restricted to the northern tribes) rejects Rehoboam as king and stones A\(\text{	extbf{do}}\)ram, the king's representative (1 Kgs 12:18). These excerpts indicate a more fluid use of "all Israel" than Osborne implies.

Finally, it may be possible to take the diverse uses of "all Israel" and find a common denominator that is more all-encompassing than Osborne's rather incomplete synthesis. As one investigates the many occurrences of "all Israel," a meaning no more technical than "the Jews" emerges specifically, the Jews who are in the immediate context of the phrase "all Israel."69 Thus "all Israel" could be the Jews that made up a relatively small group of soldiers (1 Kgs 11:16), the Jews who buried Samuel (1 Sam 25:1), the Jews who were in close proximity to Korah at his demise (Num 16:34), and the Jews who, with King Rehoboam, apostatized (2 Chr 12:1). Second Sam 3:37 is an especially interesting use of pas Isra eq \(\text{\textit{e}}\)l: "So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the will of the king to put A\(\text{\textbf{b}}\)ner the son of Ner to death." Note the distinction between "all the people" (p eq \(\text{\textit{e}}\)w eq \(\text{\textit{e}}\)w \(\text{\textit{e}}\)w \(\text{\textit{e}}\)w \(\text{\textit{e}}\)w \(\text{\textit{e}}\)w [pas ho laos]) and "all Israel" (pas Isra eq \(\text{\textit{e}}\)l). The author could have written simply "all Israel" instead of using both "all the people" and "all Israel," but he apparently wanted to distinguish between those more intimately associated with and in closer proximity to King David, pas ho laos (cf. 2 Sam 3:31, 32, 34, 35, 36), and a wider group, pas Isra eq \(\text{\textit{e}}\)l.

(4) A fourth option in the meaning of pas Isra eq \(\text{\textit{e}}\)l in Rom 11:26 is seemingly a more defensible interpretation of the phrase. The above data shows that Paul intended the phrase to convey nothing more than this: "And thus the Jews (i.e., as suggested by the context, those who are alive and have faith in Christ
at the time of the fullness of the Gentiles) will be saved. Hence, pas Isra eq \ 0 (~,e)l contains no hint of the size of the group (a majority, or Israel as a whole), but instead is simply a non-specific statement that Jews in the future will be saved. This group of Jews is probably at least a majority because their salvation was such a consuming hope for Paul and a minority remnant would not have satisfied his longings. But from the wide range of usage in the OT, pas Isra eq \ 0 (~,e)l cannot be pressed to yield such a specific understanding.

The Time of Israel's Salvation

The verb s eq \ 0 (~,o)th eq \ 0 (~,e)setai provides a natural occasion to consider more fully the time of Israel's salvation and the fullness of the Gentiles. Four opinions regarding when these events take place have surfaced: (1) in Paul's immediate future; (2) throughout the church age; (3) at a time in the more remote future, but still during the church age; and (4) at the second coming. View 2 was discussed above in connection with the first explanation of pas Isra eq \ 0 (~,e)l (i.e., that it refers to Jews saved throughout the church age), and was found to be unsatisfactory.

(1) The first option is that Paul envisioned the fullness of the Gentiles and salvation of Israel taking place in his own immediate future. Aus offers one of the most articulate defenses of this position. He envisages Paul as anticipating the fulfillment of the many OT prophecies regarding the Gentiles who come to Jerusalem in Messianic days. Romans 15:16 portrays Paul as foreseeing that his ministry in Spain would be the fulfillment of these OT prophecies (Isa 60:1-3, 9; 66:18-20; Ps 72:8-11).

However, Aus's work has several serious methodological flaws. First, he apparently has misread his OT texts (p. 241). He holds that Paul's offering of the Gentiles in Jerusalem would usher in the second coming, but in Isa 60:2-3; 66:19-20, it is the second coming that results in the gathering of Gentiles, Jews, and their offerings to Jerusalem. Second, he draws some unwarranted inferences, claiming that in Rom 15:16 the "offering of the Gentiles" is the Gentiles themselves (appositional genitive) because Paul is thinking of the eschatological doctrine of such an offering (pp. 236-37). He fails to demonstrate this eschatological element in Romans 15, however, and is reasoning circularly. He also avers that the "fullness of the Gentiles" in 11:25 and the offering of the Gentiles in Rom 15:16 are "intimately tied" (p. 242), but fails to show clues from either passage to demonstrate the connection.

Third, Aus maintains that Paul's collection for the Jerusalem church (including not only a sizeable amount of money, but also an impressive number of Gentile converts, thus fulfilling the prophetic "gathering" motif) had definite

---

70As an aside from this exegetical study, it is interesting to note how this identification of "all Israel" coincides with a premillennial return of Christ to establish on earth a kingdom in which the Jewish people will play the leading role.

eschatological overtones (pp. 261-62), though Paul never mentions these when discussing the collection. One must ask how Aus can discern that these eschatological hopes were important to Paul without Paul ever mentioning them. Fourth, Aus has Paul revising OT motifs so completely as to make them unrecognizable. Instead of the Messiah coming (Isa 60:2; 66:15-17, 19-20), restoring the nation Israel (Isa 60:2), gathering Gentiles (Isa 60:3; 66:18) who in turn gather dispersed Jews to Jerusalem (Isa 66:19-20), Aus's reconstruction has Paul (a Jew) leading Gentiles to Jerusalem (Rom 15:16) in hope of bringing about the end (Rom 11:25c) and the Messiah's return. It is problematic to perceive of Paul as fulfilling any OT prophecies when what he was doing was so diverse from the OT. Finally, Rom 11:14 (σαῦτα ἐξ αὐτῶν καὶ Χριστός) shows Paul's hopes to be high, but probably not so grandiose as Aus suggests. This view is fraught with enough problems to remove it from consideration.

(2) See the first view regarding the meaning of πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ discussed above.

(3) The third view, that the fullness of the Gentiles and all Israel's salvation takes place in the more remote future but during the church age prior to the second coming, is based on four inferences of the Romans text. [1] In Rom 11:12 and 15, the restoration of the Jews will have an amazing impact on the world for an indeterminate time following this restoration. This weighs against the fourth view below which interprets these events as taking place at the second coming. [2] In Rom 11:23, the key for the "in-grafting" of the Jews is faith. There is no clear indication in the context of 11:25-27 that this faith is sparked by observing the second coming of Christ. Rather, faith may be sparked as it is in Romans 10, through hearing the preached Word of God.

[3] The salvation of all Israel entails the forgiveness of sins which is based on a covenant, according to 11:26b-27. In the NT the New Covenant, of which Paul was a minister (2 Cor 3:6) is probably the covenant intended in this passage. If the New Covenant is in view, it is difficult (though surely not impossible) to see how the salvation of all Israel and the fullness of the Gentiles can take place at a time other than during the church age. [4] Finally, in Rom 11:30-31, the deictic indicators ποτέ . . . νῦν . . . νῦν . . . νῦν (;; ) are crucial to a correct understanding of the timing of the fullness and salvation. Dunn rightly sees these as a reference to the salvation-historical division of epochs, with ποτέ expressing the pre-Christ era and νῦν expressing the arrival of Messianic

72This is Aus's observation ("Traveling Plans" 261-62).
73For Paul's statement of his goal for the collection, cf. 2 Cor 8:13-15, where he says that the collection is designed to meet pressing physical needs in the Jerusalem church.
74Journet, "Destinies" 85.
75To be sure, Journet's point can support the view that the second coming is in mind; if Israel is blessed at the second coming, then those blessings can continue to have an impact on the whole earth even into the millennial kingdom (assuming a premillennial eschatology). But the remaining arguments taken together with this one make the second coming difficult to connect with the salvation and fullness if it consists only of a single event.
The final disputed nyn\textsuperscript{1}. The second nyn of 11:31 has a spotty MS tradition, giving rise to the use of brackets in the NA\textsuperscript{26} and the UBS\textsuperscript{X}, with a "D" rating in the latter. But there is evidence to suggest that it was the original reading. All three readings ( eq \O(\text{,}y)\text{steron}; n eq \O(;,y)n; omit) have reasonably strong MS support. Following the critical apparatus of NA\textsuperscript{26}, eq \O(,y)\text{steron} is supported by diverse text types: 33 is an excellent MS with largely Alexandrian readings as is the Sahidic; 365 is largely Caesarean or Western. This reading is also ancient, with the Coptic originating in the third or fourth century and finding wide acceptance in geographically diverse places (Egypt = Sahidic; the West = 365).

The omission of n eq \O(;,y)n is supported by the proto-Alexandrian and very ancient p\textsuperscript{46} (copied ca. A.D. 200), the later Alexandrian A (from the fourth century), the second corrector of D (Western text), the Western and later F and G (both from the ninth century), and C as well as most Old Latin and many Syriac (Byzantine text-type) MSS. These MSS also indicate a wide acceptance from Egypt to Syria to the West.

The inclusion of n eq \O(,y)n has strong MS support as well. The great ' is joined by B in a strong proto-Alexandrian reading (and these are ancient as well: ' is from the fourth century, B from the fifth). D* is a Western text originating probably in the sixth century but it has numerous singular readings and should be used with caution in resolving textual problems. The Bohairic apparently was based on a similar Greek text to B, giving Alexandrian readings.

From the MS evidence, n eq \O(;,y)n should probably (with great caution) be accepted as original. But when coupled with the transcriptional probability, the caution may be eased somewhat. Of the three readings, the one that may have given rise to the others is probably n eq \O(;,y)n. Metzger writes, "The difficulty in meaning that the second occurrence of n eq \O(;,y)n seems to introduce may have prompted either its deletion or its replacement by the superficially more appropriate eq \O(,y)\text{steron}" (A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament [Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1971] 527). Furthermore, n eq \O(;,y)n is also the harder reading (cf. Zerwick and Grosvenor, Analysis 2:486). From a scribe's perspective, it makes less sense to say that Israel was now being saved when in fact this was not the case. Hence a possible substitution of eq \O(,y)\text{steron} for n eq \O(;,y)n, or else a complete omission. It is difficult to see how the omission could be original since it makes fine sense without any other additions, and is thus less likely to give rise to the other two readings. Also, eq \O(;,y)\text{steron} is cogent by itself as well, making it difficult to see how it could give rise to n eq \O(;,y)n.

In light of its solid MS evidence (including antiquity and geographical diversity), the likelihood that n eq \O(;,y)n gave rise to the other readings, and the fact that it is the harder reading, the second n eq \O(;,y)n of 11:31 should be preferred as the original reading and with slightly less reticence than Metzger expresses. should not be understood in a manner any different from the preceding two; Gentiles are being saved now, during the present age; Israel is hardened now, during the present age; and Israel is saved now, during the present age. No special eschatological sense for the final nyn is justifiable. Therefore, the three occurrences of nyn refer to the gospel era, the interim period before the second coming dimmed by the salvation of Israel. Corley writes,

It cannot be stated with precision whether this episode culminates in the parousia or merely precedes it in time; however, the time period for the fulfillment of the prophecy has its modus operandi in gospel proclamation and its terminus ad quem at the return of Christ.\textsuperscript{11}

The weaknesses of the third view lie in the nature of the evidence for it. Its supporting arguments are admittedly inferential, with one of them, the fourth,

\textsuperscript{76}Dunn, Romans 2:687.
\textsuperscript{77}Corley, "Jews" 56; cf. also Robertson, "Future" 227.
relying on a disputed textual variant.

(4) A fourth view of the timing of the fullness of the Gentiles and the salvation of all Israel, one not too distinguishable from the third, is that these events take place at the very moment of the second coming of Christ to earth. This is a popular view with interpreters, and a fair amount of evidence has been proffered to support it. The context makes it probable that Paul is looking at the spiritual restoration of Israel as a whole at the end, making this salvation an eschatological event in the strict sense. Perhaps this coincides somewhat with Matt 10:23b and the conversion of all Israel will occur at the end of the age. Apocalyptic literature in its anticipation that the eschaton would follow the repentance of all Israel also supports this explanation. In addition, the future-tense verbs in 11:26-27 bolster this view. Further, the quotations from Isaiah, being from eschatological/apocalyptic sections of that book, support a reference to the second coming of Christ. Also, eq O(2,r) eq O(/,y) omai (hryomai, "I deliver") is used in 1 Thess 1:10 to refer to Christ at His second coming; why not here? Finally, the phrase eq O(1,e) k Si eq O(/,v)n (ek Si eq O(/,o)n, "from Zion") in 11:26b is probably a reference to the Messiah coming from the heavenly Jerusalem at His second coming.

Several points vitiate this view, however. The future tense verbs may be understood as reflecting a future sense to Isaiah, but not to Paul. For Paul these verbs could refer to an already realized fulfillment of the Isaianic prophecies rather than to a fulfillment yet future to Paul.  

For Paul the Deliverer has already come from Zion (cf. 9.33). This is clearly seen if one compares Rom. 11.28 with 15.8. In 11.26-28 the salvation of all Israel is linked with the promises to the fathers (cf. also 9.5), and in 15.8 Paul tells how these promises have been confirmed when Christ became a servant to the circumcised. This means that God's truthfulness toward his promises is seen in Christ's first coming.  

---

78Cf. Bockmuehl, Mysterie 173; de Boor, Rmer 268; Stuhlmacher, "Interpretation" 561; Schmithals, Rmer brief 2:404; Dunn, Romans 2:682; Munck, Christ and Israel 134, 137; Jacob Jervell, "Der unbekannte Paulus," in Die Paulinische Literatur und Theologie (Sigfred Pedersen, ed.; Gttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) 45; W. D. Davies, "Paul" 27; Wilckens, Rmer 2:256; Ksemann, Romans 314; Cranfield, Romans 2:578; Daniel P. Fuller, Gospel & Law: Contrast or Continuum? The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 188, 190.  

79Cf. Cranfield, Romans 2:557. Dunn (Romans 2:682) avers that the salvation of all Israel will take place at the final salvation, i.e., the redemption of the body and the restoration of all of creation (Rom 8:19-23; 11:12).  


81Wilckens, Rmer 2:256.  

82Stuhlmacher, "Interpretation" 561 n. 31.  

83Corley, "Future" 55; de Boor, Rmer 268; Schmithals, Rmer brief 404.
Hvalvik also argues that ἐκ Σιν may have been a pre-Pauline reading so that Paul did not change the LXX ἀνέκα Σιν (ἀνέκα Σιν, "on account of Zion") to suit his needs.\(^1\) \(^{1}\)Cf. the brief discussion of this in the section below on "The Scriptural Proof of Israel's Salvation." But by the phrase ἐκ Σιν Paul may have meant simply that the Messiah would come in His humanity from the Jewish people (Rom 9:5),\(^1\) \(^{1}\)E. Johnson, "Matthew," in Expositor's Bible Commentary (vol. 8, Frank E. Gabelein, ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 487-88 and Robert H. Gundry, Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 474, these scholars miss the point in Matt 23:39 o m me dhte p' rti vw n epete. The residents of Jerusalem will not see Christ until their Ps 118:26-like confession. The order of events is not that they will not see Christ until they see Christ (which, though hopelessly tautologous, is an integral part of the posttribulationism), but that they will not see Christ until the Jews of Jerusalem acknowledge Him as being from God. After that acknowledgment Christ will return to the Jewish people, but not before. So their change of heart transpires before Christ's return as a necessary prerequisite to it, not while He is returning as posttribulationism requires. To be more specific than this is to import theological presuppositions not readily supported by the text.

The Scriptural Proof of Israel's Salvation

A consideration of the purpose of the OT citations from Isa 59:20-21 and 27:9 (Rom 11:26b-27) is in order. Hvalvik argues that these verses should not be seen as speaking of the time of Israel's salvation, but rather as the ground for the statement καὶ ὑπὲρ Ἰσραήλ σώσηται (καὶ ὑπὲρ Ἰσραήλ σώσηται, "and thus all Israel will be saved").\(^1\) \(^{1}\)Hvalvik, "Sonderweg" 95. Hvalvik probably overstates his point somewhat, however. The τὰν carries some deictic force, so that a temporal understanding cannot be completely ruled out. But for the most part he is correct. These verses use the OT to show that God will save
Israel just as Paul also has said. Paul’s citation of the two passages from Isaiah are designed to strengthen his case for the restoration of Israel. His use of these verses from Isaiah are important to his argument.

An important change from the LXX in Paul’s use of Isa 59:20 (alluded to above in the discussion of the fourth view of the timing of the salvation) is the switch from neken (heneken, “for the sake of,” “to”) to the use of k (ek, “from,” “out from”).

1 Four items differentiate the MT, the LXX, and Romans in these verses. (1) In Isa 59:20, compare the phrase log, oy ‘u (“a Redeemer will come to/for Zion”) with the LXX ka eq Ol(h) jei eq Ol(6,e) neken Si eq Ol(?),y)v eq Ol(2,0) eq Ol(2,r) y eq Ol(3,o)menow (“a Redeemer will come for the sake of/ to Zion”) and Rom 11:26 eq Ol(1,e) k Si eq Ol(?),v)n . . . (“from Zion . . . ”). (2) Also compare the MT boq eq Ol(1,;) eq Ol(a,y) eq Ol(e,B) ; eq Ol(a,c) eq Ol(e,f) y eq Ol(E,b) eq Ol(A,v) eq Ol(1,1)u (“and those who return from ungodliness/ transgression in Jacob”) with the LXX ka eq Ol(4,i) eq Ol(‘,a) post eq Ol(3,e)cei eq Ol(‘,a) sebe eq Ol(3,i)aw eq Ol(‘,a) p eq Ol(4,o) 1ak eq Ol(‘,v)b (“and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob”) and Rom 11:26b, which reads the same as the LXX. (3) In Isa 59:21, the MT reads < eq Ol(A,/)o’ y eq Ol(I,/)y eq Ol(I,r) eq Ol(‘,B) /O’z y eq Ol(I,n) eq Ol(‘,1) ’ eq Ol(a,w) (“and as for me, this is/ will be my covenant with them”) in comparison with the LXX and Rom 11:27a, both reading ka eq Ol(4,i) a eq Ol(‘,y)th a eq Ol(‘,y)t0 eq Ol(‘@,i)w eq Ol(‘,h) par eq Ol(‘,e) mo eq Ol(‘,y) diau eq Ol(‘,h)kh (“and this is/ will be the covenant with them from me”). (4) In Isa 27:9, the MT reads boq eq Ol(1,;) eq Ol(a,y)>r eq Ol(1,;) r eq Ol(a,p) eq Ol(U,k) eq Ol(‘,y) /O’z eq Ol(‘,B) , eq Ol(E,k) eq Ol(A,l) (“therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered/ atoned for/ removed”), and the LXX has eq Ol(6,o) tan af eq Ol(3,e)vmai a eq Ol(‘,y)t0 eq Ol(‘,h)n eq Ol(‘,a) mart eq Ol(3,i)an (“when I remove his sin”) in comparison to Rom 11:27b which reads eq Ol(6,o) tan eq Ol(‘,a) f eq Ol(3,e)vmai t eq Ol(‘,a)w eq Ol(‘,a) mart eq Ol(3,i)aw a eq Ol(‘,y)t eq Ol(‘,h)n (“when I remove their sins”). On these differences, Archer and Chirichigno are probably right (if not overly simplistic) in saying, “Thus we have a conflate quotation, with four minor variants that do not greatly affect the sense . . . .” A great deal could be said about the variations between the texts and how Paul’s emendation of the LXX and MT indicates his thoughts in this passage. Schaller has examined the possibility of a variant Greek OT text which Paul may have been following, concluding that Paul did not simply adjust the text to fit it to his purposes, but probably relied on a variant.84 This is possible (Schaller’s arguments are cogent), but it is speculative and does not resolve anything.

In 11:26 Paul draws from Isa 59:21a the promise of the New Covenant. Rather than continuing to cite the rest of 59:21, which tells of the promise of the Spirit, Paul shifts to Isa 27:9, emphasizing a different aspect of the New Covenant, namely, the forgiveness of sins. The theme of forgiveness fits better with Paul’s argument for the restoration of Israel than a reference to the gift of the Spirit; Paul has emphasized Israel’s parapt eq Ol(‘,o)ma and h eq Ol(‘,e)tt eq Ol(‘,e)ma (11:12) and her eq Ol(‘,a) pist eq Ol(3,i)a (apistia, “unbelief”) (11:23), and the need for forgiveness is strong in this chapter. Hence, the shift away from Isa 59:21b to Isa 27:9 is

The Master's Seminary Journal

explicable. So Paul's use of the prophecies of Isaiah fits well with the essential thrust of his argument in Romans 11.

Paul's use of ἐξ ἔγγυτος ἐλευθερίας (hryomenos, "deliverer") is significant to some scholars. Getty notes that whenever Paul uses the verb ἀφροδίτη, he uses it in reference to God (Rom 7:24; 15:31; 2 Cor 1:10). No doubt Isaiah used it with God as its referent, suggesting that God, and not Christ, is in view in 11:26. However, the rabbis apparently saw Isa 59:20 as Messianic (cf. b.Sanh. 98a), and it is hard to believe that Paul would have used it referring to any other than Christ.

The phrase ἐξ ἔγγυτος ἐλευθερίας sebe ἐξ ἐναντίων ἐπιθετον ἰακ (apostrepsei asebeias apo Iak) 11ak eq 10(O,~)b, "will turn ungodliness away from Jacob" is an important link with Romans 4. Hvalvik writes,

These words in the quotation are significant particularly because they form a link to Rom. 4, the great chapter concerning justification by faith. In 4.5 Paul is speaking about the God `who justifies the ungodly (τὸν ἀσέβη) [τὸν ἀσέβη]") and it is the same God who speaks in the quotation from Scripture. In 4.7 Paul quotes from Ps. 31.1 the word about those `whose sins (τὰ ἁμαρτίαι) are covered"it is they who are justified by faith, without works. These connecting lines clearly indicate that when Paul speaks about the salvation of Israel in 11:25-27, he refers to justification of the ungodly and justification by faith. Israel's salvation is thus nothing else but salvation sola fide and sola gratia.

Thus the Isaiah quotations fit well again with Paul's Romans emphasis on salvation from sin and ungodliness by grace through faith.

In 11:27a, the phrase καὶ ἐπὶ ἐναντίων ἐπιθετον ἰακ (καὶ ἐπὶ ἐναντίων ἰακ) par' emou δια τὰ ἐναντία ἐπιθετα ἰακ ἐπὶ ἐναντίoν ἐπιθετoν ἰακ (καὶ ἐπὶ ἐναντίoν ἐπιθετoν ἰακ) par' emou ἐναντίων ἐπιθετoν ἰακ (καὶ ἐπὶ ἐναντίoν ἐπιθετoν ἰακ) par' emou δια τὰ ἐναντία ἐπιθετα ἰακ ἐπὶ ἐναντί oν ἐπιθετoν ἰακ (καὶ ἐπὶ ἐναντί oν ἐπιθετoν ἰακ) par' emou δια τὰ ἐναντία ἐπιθετα ἰακ, "and this is the covenant from Me with them") is best understood as referring to the New Covenant of New Testament times. Piper writes that the phrase "... certainly refers to the 'New Covenant' which Paul construes as a promise of the salvation of all Israel." This issue does not necessarily bear on the timing of the fullness of the Gentiles or of the salvation of all Israel (surely a salvation that might take place at the second coming would be a

---

86 Dunn, Romans 2:682; Wilckens, Rmer 2:257; Tholuck, Romans 389.
87 E. Johnson, Function 128; Zeller, juden und Heden 259. One might view 1 Thess 1:10 as support for the second-coming view of the conversion in Romans 11. Since the Lord Jesus Christ "delivers from the wrath to come" and this deliverance is eschatological, then perhaps the salvation of all Israel also should be located at the second coming. But 1 Thess 1:10 refers to those who are already saved and are awaiting His coming, and does not speak of a mass conversion at that time. Furthermore, though the deliverance spoken of in 1 Thessalonians is future, it is based upon the finished work of Christ at His first advent. This fits well with the interpretation given in this essay: all Israel will be saved in the future, but this salvation is based not on the second coming of Christ but on His first coming.
88 To whom does 1Iakb refer? It is never used in the NT for the church; the reference here must be to Jews. Cf. P. Richardson, Israel 128-29.
89 Hvalvik, "Sonderweg" 96 [transliteration and translation added]; cf. also Cranfield, Romans 2:578.
90 Piper, Justification 20; cf. also Black, Romans 148; Corley, "Future" 55.
"New Covenant" salvation). The greater emphasis of Paul's teaching regarding salvation under the New Covenant points more to salvation during the church age and through the gospel proclamation of the church than to salvation at the second coming, though all the phases of the latter cannot be completely ruled out.

PAUL'S PICTURE OF ISRAEL SUMMARIZED

In Romans 11 Paul sought to curtail any spiritual arrogance the Gentile believers in Rome might feel in comparing themselves with Jewish believers. He did this by disclosing new revelation he had received regarding the spiritual destiny of the Jews. He pointed out the obvious: a large number of first-century Jews (and, by implication, subsequently throughout the church age) were temporarily hardened. After some future point when a large, divinely determined number of Gentiles will have been saved (probably some time prior to or in conjunction with second-coming events), a (presumably) large number of Jews will be saved through the finished New Covenant ministry of Christ. This is apparently what Paul conveys in the three difficult verses, Rom 11:25-27.

A number of issues emerge from the exegetical conclusions of this study. How does the passage relate to suggestions that Paul taught two ways of salvation, one for the Jews and another for the Gentiles? What does this future salvation contribute to the future of national Israel? What is the locus of the people of God—the church or Israel? What is the contribution of 11:25-27 to theodicy? How does it further an understanding of eschatology as a whole? Further studies will hopefully supply answers to these and other questions.

91Cf. 1 Cor 11:26; 2 Cor 3:6-18.