

THE ISAIANIC INFLUENCE ON PAUL'S UNDERSTANDING OF ISRAEL'S SALVATION AND RESTORATION IN ROMANS 11:26–27

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This article explores the influence of Isaiah upon Paul's theology of Israel's future salvation and restoration. As Paul describes Israel's rejection of the gospel, he details that this is a partial hardening, an observation he makes in light of Isaiah 24–27 and 59–60. These texts which recount the glorious future for Israel are woven together in Paul's writing as he envisions a future hope because of God's gracious choice. God will not abandon the people He has chosen but will redeem them and bring them to Himself. This glorious future stirs Paul to preach the gospel and devote himself to prayer, the essential tasks of the biblical missionary.

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Introduction

This article examines the embedded hope within Paul's statement "all Israel will be saved" in Romans 11:26, which he supports with two passages from Isaiah: Isaiah 59:20–21 and 27:9. In these Isaianic texts, the prophet envisions a future in which God's triumph over sin and evil is fully consummated, bringing redemption to its ultimate fulfillment. Central to these passages is the restoration of Israel in the Promised Land. While recent scholarship has increasingly accepted the concept of Israel's future conversion to Christ, many hesitate to affirm Israel's physical restoration to the land, arguing that such an implication is inconsistent with the overarching narrative of Scripture. This article challenges that perspective, arguing that Paul, in Romans 9–11, develops and expands Isaiah's vision of restoration, demonstrating through his citations from Isaiah 59 and 27 that Israel's restoration occupies a central and indispensable role in God's redemptive plan. To accomplish this goal, this article will demonstrate first that Romans 9–11 centers on Israel's role in the gospel and God's plan of salvation. Second, it will explore Paul's understanding of Israel in relation to the biblical storyline and Romans 9–11. And third, it will show how Paul's understanding was shaped by the eschatological hope

of Isaiah. Fourth, this eschatological hope is anchored in the two texts that Paul references (Isa 27; 59). For both Paul and Isaiah, Israel's salvation is inseparably tied to her restoration. When Israel is restored, shalom—peace, wholeness, and flourishing—will not only return to Israel but also extend to the entire cosmos, fulfilling God's ultimate redemptive purposes for His people and all creation. By aligning with the Isaianic hope and the Jewish expectations articulated in the Old Testament prophets, Paul affirms the faithfulness of God's Word, declaring that it has not failed (Rom 9:6a). After demonstrating the future restoration and salvation of Israel, this article will conclude with reflecting on several implications for missions and missiology.

Paul, the Gospel, and Romans 9–11

Paul's extensive use of OT Scripture is evident throughout his writings. His letter to the Romans contains the highest concentration of OT references¹ in his writings. These references are clustered in three major passages (Rom 4:1–25; 9:1–11:36; and 15:1–12), each intricately tied to the gospel message. The predominant theme of these passages is God's redemptive plan to form a unified, diverse people encompassing all ethnicities—Jews and Gentiles—demonstrating the inclusivity and universal scope of the gospel.² In the gospel, diversity and unity coexist harmoniously.

The Gospel and Israel

Rather than attempting to eliminate or diminish diversity, Paul identified sin—not ethnicity—as humanity's fundamental problem (Rom 3:1–31).³ God executes His eternal plan of salvation through the gospel, which Paul discusses in Romans 9–

¹ By "references," I describe both direct quotation or allusion. For definitions of these terms, see G. K. Beale, *Handbook of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 29–40. For an in-depth analysis of Paul's direct citations and allusions from the OT, see Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 150–187. Also, for a thorough presentation of Paul's citations, see D. Moody Smith, "The Pauline Literature," in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars*, eds. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 268–72.

² Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing With Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 143.

³ William S. Campbell argues that portraying the God of Israel, who sent His Messiah to save the world, as opposed to ethnic diversity is both theologically untenable and inconsistent even with a modern understanding of a diverse world. Acknowledging humanity's diversity has always been integral to theological thought and is essential for addressing historical and cultural differences justly. Paul should not be viewed as harboring a negative or ambivalent attitude toward Jews and Judaism, as is sometimes suggested. Rather, Paul's mission as the apostle to the Gentiles (*ethnē*) aligns with God's broader redemptive purpose, affirming the distinct identities of both Jews and Gentiles in Christ. Paul's vision for unity did not seek to erase diversity but embraced it as a vital component of God's plan for reconciliation through Christ (William S. Campbell, *The Nations in the Divine Economy: Paul's Covenantal Hermeneutics and Participation in Christ* [Maryland: Fortress Academic, 2018], 129–52). Contra August H. Konkel's position, which asserts that for Paul, the concept of "Israel" is a single reality shaped by God's mercy and election, transcending ethnic boundaries, which means it took a new definition including not only Jews but Gentiles as well ("What is the Future of Israel in Romans 9–11," in *The Letter to the Romans: Exegesis and Application*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Francis G. H. Pang [Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018], 116–18).

11. As Brian J. Abasciano observes, Romans 9–11 “completes the exposition” of the epistle’s central theme introduced in Romans 1:16–17, that the gospel is God’s power to save Jews and Gentiles.⁴ In these chapters, Paul highlights the divine order (*taxis*) within God’s ontological economy of mutual blessing,⁵ underscoring the gospel’s proclamation “to the Jew first” (Rom 1:16c).⁶ By highlighting this divine order, Paul addresses confusion regarding Israel’s role in God’s redemptive plan (Rom 11:13–14, 25), and responds to questions about God’s faithfulness to His promises to the nation (Rom 9:6; 11:2).⁷ As salvation is “from the Jews” (John 4:22c), Paul seeks to highlight the Jewish roots of the gospel, making its relationship to Israel a central theological necessity within God’s redemptive plan. Consequently, as C. E. B. Cranfield argues, the Jewish emphasis in Romans 1:16c necessitates a thorough examination of how Israel fits within that plan.⁸

Such an examination is essential for interpreting the identity and role of Israel in the OT and addressing the theological tension between God’s covenant faithfulness and her current state of unbelief. It also reconciles the Christian hope expressed in Romans 8:28–39 with Israel’s present hardening.⁹ Paul needed to clarify the cause of Israel’s enmity toward the gospel and demonstrate how this enmity would ultimately be resolved when “all Israel will be saved” (Rom 11:26).¹⁰ To address these issues,

⁴ Brian J. Abasciano, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:1–9: An Intertextual and Theological Exegesis*, edited by Mark Goodacre (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 31.

⁵ Soulen writes, “Viewed in light of distinction between Israel and the nations ... biblical ontology takes the form of an economy of mutual blessing, in which God summons the households of creation to receive God’s blessing in the company of another,” *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, 121.

⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer correctly perceives, “The priority of the Jew is acknowledged not only because the gospel was first preached to the Jews, but because God promised his gospel through the prophets of old in the sacred Scripture of the Jews (1:2), thus destining it for his chosen people, and through them for all others” (*Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008], 257).

⁷ William S. Campbell provides a balanced perspective on the audience addressed in Romans 9–11. While Paul’s primary concern in these chapters is Israel—whom he refers to as his “kinsmen according to the flesh” (Romans 9:3)—he simultaneously makes a critical distinction between Israel as a nation and the Gentiles. Throughout these chapters, Paul’s focus shifts to addressing the arrogance of the Gentiles (11:13–14, warning them against boasting over Israel’s apparent rejection. Thus, while Israel remains central to Paul’s theological argument, he directs much of his admonition toward the Gentiles, urging humility and an understanding of their place in God’s unfolding redemptive plan (*Unity and Diversity in Christ: Interpreting Paul in Context* [Cambridge: James Clarkes & Co, 2017], 157–68).

⁸ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 2:445.

⁹ Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2:46–47. Cranfield argues that there can be no satisfactory interpretation of the OT without addressing the phenomenon of Israel. The Epistle to the Romans, being deeply concerned with interpreting the OT, would be incomplete if it did not tackle the question of Israel’s role in salvation history. Also, the relationship between God’s faithfulness and Israel’s unbelief (Romans 3:1ff) necessitates a thorough discussion. Paul must address Israel’s place in God’s plan because it is intrinsically linked to the question of God’s trustworthiness and covenant faithfulness. Furthermore, the discussion in Romans 8:28–39 on the certainty of Christian hope and God’s purpose naturally leads to addressing Israel’s apparent exclusion from this purpose. If God’s plan for Israel has been frustrated, it undermines the basis of Christian hope and questions the reliability of God’s promises.

¹⁰ For Paul, it is crucial to affirm God’s faithfulness as an intrinsic dimension of His righteousness and to underscore that Israel’s protological election in the OT will be validated by their eschatological priority at the Parousia and the consummation of God’s triumph. In this way, the elective priority of Israel, as established

Paul incorporates nearly half of his OT references in the letter in chapters 9–11,¹¹ aiming to affirm the harmony between God's Word in Scripture, Israel's future, and his gospel message.

Romans 9–11 Defines Israel's Role

If Romans 9–11 “provides a paradigm of redemptive history with regard to this age and the unfolding of God's redemptive purpose for Israel and for the world,”¹² then attempting to redefine Israel's identity and role in a manner inconsistent with OT Scripture—as it would have been understood by its original audience—risks introducing theological inconsistency. In addition, if Romans 9–11 does not support the consistency of God's Word regarding Israel with the gospel message, it would imply that God's Word has failed (Rom 9:6a). This, in turn, would suggest either that God is unfaithful to His covenant promises to Israel (Rom 3:2–3; 9:4–6; 11:1–2a; 11:29) or lacks the power to fulfill them (Rom 11:23).¹³ Furthermore, as Hays observes, “If Paul's reading of Scripture in these chapters is flimsy, then there is little hope for his proclamation to stand.”¹⁴ Such flimsiness would not only call into question Paul's understanding of Scripture but also undermine his credibility as an apostolic interpreter of God's Word, ultimately casting doubt on the trustworthiness of his gospel among his audience, both Jews and Gentiles.

In summary, Romans 9–11 is fundamentally concerned with the *Israelfrage*—the theological question of Israel's role and future in God's redemptive plan—by addressing her past, present, and future in relation to the gospel and covenantal promises. Contrary to Herman Ridderbos' assertion that Paul teaches “the church . . . has taken the place of Israel, and national Israel is nothing other than the empty shell from which the pearl has been removed,”¹⁵ Paul in these chapters carefully engages Scripture to demonstrate otherwise. It is untenable to claim that Paul would redefine Israel's identity in a context where he consistently distinguishes Jews and Gentiles and argues against the church supplanting Israel.¹⁶ Paul's argument is firmly rooted in the overarching biblical storyline, emphasizing that God's redemptive plan includes the ultimate restoration of national Israel. The birth, promises, purposes, and the existence of Israel are central aspects of the biblical storyline.

in Romans 1:16; 9:4–5; 11:2a; and 11:28 is ultimately confirmed in Romans 11:26. See, J. C. Baker, “The Faithfulness of God and the Priority of Israel,” *Harvard Theological Review* 79 (1986): 14.

¹¹ According to the UBS 5th edition, 60 verses in Romans contain direct quotations from the OT, with four confluents, bringing the total number of distinct quotations to 64. In addition, the UBS 5th edition documents 88 allusions and parallels within the letter. Notably, 32 of these quotations and allusions occur in Romans 9–11, demonstrating that nearly half of the OT references in Romans are concentrated in this section. This underscores the theological importance of Romans 9–11 in Paul's argument regarding Israel's place in God's redemptive plan.

¹² Fred G. Zaspel and James M. Hamilton Jr., “A Typological Future-Mass-Conversion View,” in *Three Views on Israel and the Church: Perspectives on Romans 9–11*, ed. Jared Compton and Andrew David Naselli (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018), 99.

¹³ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 64.

¹⁴ Hays, 64.

¹⁵ Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 354–355.

¹⁶ Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 275–76.

Paul, Israel, and the Biblical Storyline

Central to this storyline is the Christ-event, which serves as the pivotal moment dividing the old and new epochs.¹⁷ For Paul, the Christ-event is the central moment in salvation history signaling the fulfillment of OT promises and inaugurating a new era of salvation. In Romans, Paul outlines the trajectory of redemptive history¹⁸ by addressing the four major components that encapsulate the biblical storyline: creation, fall, salvation, and restoration.¹⁹ For Paul, salvation history is central to understanding God's work in creating, sustaining, calling humanity to repentance and faith, and redeeming, while also pointing toward the consummation of all things.²⁰

Abraham and Salvific Provisions to Israel

Within this grand narrative, Israel's role remains pivotal. As John Goldingay notes, the OT "tells us who God is and who we are through the ongoing story of God's relationship with Israel."²¹ In other words, the entire OT centers on Israel, the God of Israel, and their relationship with the world. Implied, as Soulen aptly observes, is that "apart from Israel, Gentile would not exist."²² For Paul, God's relationship with Israel provides the framework for understanding His redemptive purposes in history for the nation, the nations, and the cosmos. This relationship is mediated through God's covenantal provisions with Israel.

H. J. Kraus writes, "By way of Abraham and Israel God enters into the world of the nations."²³ In His divine providence, God often chooses to mediate His blessings to people through others. Within the grand narrative of Scripture, the covenant made with Abraham reveals God's promise to bless the nations *through* Israel (Gen 12:1–

¹⁷ Mark J. Keown, *Discovering the New Testament: An Introduction to its Background, Theology, and Themes: The Pauline Letter*, Volume 2 (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 401.

¹⁸ Abner Chou demonstrates how Paul's citation and interpretation of Scripture is deeply rooted in redemptive history. He shows how Paul integrates the OT storyline into his Christological understanding of God's plan, showing that the church, though a mystery previously unrevealed, continues the same redemptive trajectory seen throughout the OT, Gospels, and Acts. Paul's writings reflect this big-picture perspective, showing that his ministry, theological discussions, and actions are part of God's unfolding plan, especially in relation to the inclusion of Gentiles and the eventual salvation of Israel (*The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and the Apostles* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018], 167–77).

¹⁹ In Romans 1:20, for instance, Paul highlights that God, as the Creator, reveals His eternal power and divine nature through the created world. The fall is addressed in Romans 1:21–23 and 5:12, where humanity's disobedience leads to sin and death. Salvation, found in Christ's sacrifice, is discussed in Romans 3:23–24, 5:8, 6:23, and includes the salvation of Israel in Romans 11:26. The theme of restoration is captured in Romans 8:18–21, 29–30, where creation and humanity await final redemption and renewal. See also, Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God* (Silverton, OR: Lampion, 2017), 22–23; Michael J. Szigel, *The Fathers on the Future: A 2nd Century Eschatology for the 21st Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2024), 15–27.

²⁰ Robert W. Yarbrough, "Salvation History (Heilsgeschichte) and Paul: Comments on a Disputed but Essential Category," in *Studies in the Pauline Epistles: Essays in Honor of Douglas J. Moo*, ed. Matthew S. Harmon and Jay E. Smith (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 188.

²¹ John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Gospel*, vol. 1 (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 30.

²² Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, 130.

²³ H. J. Kraus, *The People of God in the Old Testament* (New York: Association, 1958), 27.

3; 18:8; 22:18), specifically by providing salvation through Christ (Rom 1:2–3).²⁴ These blessings, however, are not confined to spiritual provisions but also extend to physical provisions. As Christopher J. H. Wright puts it, “All that God did in, for, and through *Israel* ... had its ultimate goal the blessing of all nations of *humanity* and the final redemption of all *creation*.”²⁵ As the OT storyline unfolds, the Abrahamic covenant emerges as foundational to “the story of God’s action through a chosen people to restore harmony to creation by their being a blessing to all the earth’s people (Gen 12:3).”²⁶

The salvific provisions of the Abrahamic covenant, in this way, are “holistic; that is, they cover the whole of human life and experience: physical, material, social, personal (including mental and emotional), political and cultural, and religious.”²⁷ This renders the core of salvation fundamentally *restorative*, transcending the forgiveness of sins and the avoidance of judgment. It involves the repair and reversal of the effects of the fall, restoring both humanity and all creation to God’s original purpose (Gen 1–2; Rom 8:19–22).²⁸ From a biblical perspective, salvation and restoration are intimately interconnected at every level.

God’s Faithfulness to Salvific Provisions for Israel

If the storyline of the OT reveals that God’s consummative work is to restore the fullness of life to Israel, the nations, and all creation,²⁹ central to this plan is God’s covenantal faithfulness to Israel. As Soulen writes, “God’s historical fidelity toward Israel is the ‘narrow gate’ that opens on the new creation.”³⁰ Israel’s protology, thus, is intrinsically linked to her eschatology, the eschatology of the nations and the cosmos. Brent E. Parker, however, by pointing to the various titles, designations, and imagery that describe Israel and her vocation, concludes that the term “Israel” can extend beyond a purely nationalistic, ethnic sense.³¹ While vocation provides a fuller understanding of Israel’s role, it does not eliminate, alter, or replace its core nationalistic, ethnic identity; rather, it just explains it. If biblical Israel were to cease

²⁴ Gen 12:1–3; 18:18; 22:18; Isa 49:6–26; Luke 1:67–79; 2:25–29; Rom 4:13, 18; 16:20; Gal 3:6–9, 16, 29.

²⁵ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 395 (emphasis in the original).

²⁶ Howard A. Snyder, *Salvation Means Creation Healed: The Ecology of Sin and Grace* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 124.

²⁷ Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 131.

²⁸ J. Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 79. Also, Howard A. Snyder, *Salvation Means Creation Healed*, 65–164.

²⁹ Israel: Isa 27:6; 49:6; 60:1–3; Jer 31:33–34; Ezek 37, the nations: Isa 2:2–4; 19:23–35; Zech 8:22–23, and all of creation: Isa 11:6–9; 65:7. See Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational & Non-Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 236.

³⁰ Soulen, writes, “The movement from creation (Gen 1–11) to covenant (Gen 12:1ff.) at the beginning of time is balanced at the end of time by a movement from covenant to creation. God’s eschatological *shalom* encompasses not only Israel and the nations and all who have died, but animals, mountains, streams, and indeed a new heaven and a new earth (Isa 11; 65:17ff; 66:22).” Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, 133. (emphasis in original).

³¹ Brent E. Parker, “The Israel-Christ-Church Relationship,” in *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course Between Dispensational and Covenantal Theologies*, eds. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2016), 54.

to exist, or her national identity were not preserved, the biblical vision of consummation would be disrupted, as this vision culminates with nations from all over the world gathering alongside Israel to worship Yahweh in Jerusalem.³² Israel's elective purposes, therefore, extend to the consummation, affirming her indispensable role in God's redemptive plan (Isa 19:23–25).

Israel's election is unchanging coming “with no ‘expiration date.’”³³ God's choice of Israel is rooted in His sovereign love and will, revealing deep mysteries of His character and purposes (Deut 7:6–8). At its core, the unfolding narrative of salvation history reveals that “God has chosen Israel in order to bring *shalom* to the whole creation,”³⁴ and this shalom is realized through a restored Israel. To view the church, formed of both Jews and Gentiles, as the “new restored Israel”³⁵ in Christ risks blurring the prophetic vision of the eschaton—a vision where Israel's unique role as God's covenant people remains distinct. Peter R. Ackroyd rightly emphasizes that the “new Israel” emerges from the transformative experience of restoration, much like the “old Israel” was shaped and defined by the events of the exodus.³⁶ Collapsing the distinction between Israel and the nations risks undermining God's covenant faithfulness to Israel, which is essential to the blessings of the nations within salvation history.

This salvation history narrative shapes the writings of Paul.³⁷ The apostle carefully builds upon the divine revelation given to the prophets, integrating the new revelation he received into the framework of the old.³⁸ In Paul's theological framework, each stage of revelation builds upon and points forward to the next, without annulling, reinterpreting, or redefining the previous stage.³⁹ Unconditional

³² J. Gordon McConville, *Isaiah*, eds. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2023), 246–247.

³³ R. Kendall Soulen, *Irrevocable: The Name of God and the Unity of the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2022), 93.

³⁴ Snyder, *Salvation Means Creation Healed*, 127.

³⁵ Parker, “The Israel-Christ-Church Relationship,” 63–67.

³⁶ Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C.* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 131.

³⁷ One of the key differences between how NT writers, such as Paul, read the OT compared to their non-Christian Jewish contemporaries is the adoption of a salvation-historical framework. Paul specifically emphasizes reading the pivotal moments in OT history in their chronological sequence, especially in light of the Christ-event, drawing interpretive insights from that order. This approach reflects Paul's reliance on the unfolding nature of redemptive history, as seen elsewhere in, for instance, Romans 4, where the sequence of events holds theological significance. See, G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, “Introduction,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), xxvi.

³⁸ Chou elaborates on three key elements to demonstrate that the apostolic hermeneutic is in continuity with the OT prophetic tradition. First, the introductory formulas used by NT authors reflect a deliberate connection to the language and authority of OT prophets. Second, their self-descriptions as spokesmen of God emphasize their role within the same divine commission, aligning themselves with the prophetic office. Finally, their intertextual practices, where they frequently engage and interpret OT texts, reveal a deep alignment with the prophetic tradition rather than charting an independent or divergent course. This continuity underscores the coherence of Scripture and the unity of divine revelation (*The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers*, 125–54).

³⁹ Contra George Eldon Ladd whose position on Israel and the church revolves around the idea of continuity between OT Israel and the NT church. Ladd argues that Paul sees the church as the *true Israel of God*, continuous with OT Israel, and that the church has inherited the promises given to Israel through Christ, the Messiah. In this view, the church represents the people of God, and the redemptive work of Jesus

OT prophecies and promises, if unfulfilled even in the NT era, must still be fulfilled to their original recipients, as the progression of revelation cannot negate such promises.⁴⁰ This progressive unfolding of God's redemptive plan regards Scripture as a continuous, interconnected narrative from creation to consummation, in which Israel remains Israel—an ethnic nation—and her covenantal promises remain intact.⁴¹ If Israel, as Soulen argues, plays a role in the eschaton by serving as “the instrument by means of which God heals the fundamental conflict between God and creation,”⁴² then redefining Israel to mean something other than the ethnic nation of the OT would create a disjointed storyline.

As a devout and learned Jew, Paul diligently sought to demonstrate that the Christian message aligned with the testimony of Scripture, especially concerning the nature and actions of Israel's God, including the promise of His *mercy* toward Israel in the last days.⁴³ Like the OT prophets, Paul understood God's salvific and restorative mercy as inseparable from His covenant faithfulness to Israel. Therefore, Paul employs Israel's Scripture in Romans 9–11 to address Israel's role, status quo, and destiny according to the overarching biblical narrative. Paul's assurance is rooted in the fact that Israel, “from the standpoint of God's choice ... are beloved for the sake of the fathers” (Rom 11:28b).

As Cranfield explains, “The ground of Paul's certainty that the Jews are still beloved of God, though under His wrath because of their unbelief and opposition to the gospel, is the faithfulness of God, that faithfulness, steadfastness, reliability, without which God would not be the righteous God He is.”⁴⁴ This faithfulness serves as the driving force behind Paul's entire argument in Romans 9–11. Accordingly, Paul's aim is to affirm that “the word of God has not failed” (Rom 9:6a), encapsulating his endeavor to demonstrate from Scripture God's enduring mercy and covenantal commitment to Israel.

God reveals his mercy through salvific acts. Bruce Corley highlights that Paul's extensive use of the theme of divine mercy in Romans 9–11 parallels the Hebrew term *hesed* (*hesed*), emphasizing God's steadfast love and covenant loyalty. Despite Israel's covenant-breaking, which brought judgment, God's *hesed* ensures the

fulfills the promises made to Israel. Ladd points out that Paul's use of the OT is not about a direct one-to-one fulfillment of prophecy but rather integrating the new redemptive events into the broader stream of OT redemptive history (*A Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Donald A. Hagner, Revised ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 432–34). In contrast, John S. Feinberg's approach, rooted in progressive revelation, maintains a more distinct separation between Israel and the church. Feinberg argues that unconditional OT promises made to Israel, especially those unfulfilled in the NT, must still be fulfilled to Israel specifically. While he acknowledges that some prophecies may apply to the church, the original promises to Israel cannot be canceled or subsumed into the church's identity (“Systems of Discontinuity,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments: Essays in Honor of S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.*, edited by John S. Feinberg [Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988], 76).

⁴⁰ Feinberg, “Systems of Discontinuity,” 76.

⁴¹ See, Michael J. Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel? A Theological Evaluation* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2010), 92–101.

⁴² Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, 115.

⁴³ Stanley, *Arguing With Scripture*, 1.

⁴⁴ Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2:582.

restoration of Israel (11:25–26).⁴⁵ The OT consistently underscores God's mercy toward Israel in the past providing a strong theological basis for expecting the same mercy in the future.⁴⁶ For Paul, the theme of mercy assumes an eschatological dimension when applied to Israel.⁴⁷ Paul's hope, thus, is rooted in God's character and unwavering covenantal faithfulness to Israel.

In summary, for Paul history is fundamentally salvation history, with his exegesis firmly grounded in the biblical storyline and Israel's central role to the unfolding of God's redemptive plan. In Romans 9–11, where Israel's role and future have become points of confusion, Paul meticulously employs a wide range of scriptural references to reaffirm Israel's standing as a nation. His convictions rest on "his stubborn insistence on God's enduring faithfulness to his covenant people Israel."⁴⁸ Paul's objective is to reconcile Israel's current unbelief with God's unwavering promises, demonstrating from Scripture that Israel remains integral to God's redemptive purposes and the ultimate consummation of history—a biblical hope he thoroughly substantiates through the prophecies of Isaiah.

Paul, the Prophecy of Isaiah, and Restoration Eschatology

Paul demonstrates a profound theological affinity for the prophecy of Isaiah,⁴⁹ as evidenced by his frequent references to this prophet throughout his writings.⁵⁰ Isaiah stands out as "the most substantively important scriptural source for Paul,"⁵¹ significantly shaping his theology concerning Israel and the nations in the eschaton. As Hays explains, "Isaiah offers the clearest expression in the Old Testament of a universalistic, eschatological vision in which the restoration of Israel in Zion is accompanied by an ingathering of Gentiles to worship the Lord."⁵²

⁴⁵ Bruce Corley, "Jews, the Future, and God (Romans 9–11)," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 19 (1976): 46. For a thorough study on the concept of "mercy" in Romans, see Ligita Ryliškytė, "God's Mercy: The Key Thematic Undercurrent of Paul's Letter to the Romans," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 81 (2019): 85–105.

⁴⁶ E.g., Exod 34:6–7; Deut 4:31; Ps 103:8–10; Isa 54:7–8; Hos 2:23; Ezek 36:22–24; and Mic 7:18–19.

⁴⁷ Ultimately, whether for Jews or Gentiles, all are saved by God's mercy, but Israel's experience of mercy is especially rooted in God's covenant promises, making clear that their future salvation and restoration are, in the end, entirely acts of mercy (Rom 9:22–24; 11:30–32). Also, His mercy toward Israel is a reaffirmation of His covenant with them, showing that His faithfulness will eventually lead to their restoration (Romans 11:26–27). See Baker, "The Faithfulness of God and the Priority of Israel in Paul's Letter to the Romans," 14.

⁴⁸ J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 5.

⁴⁹ John F. A. Sawyer, *Isaiah Through the Centuries*, Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries, eds. John F. A. Sawyer, Christopher Rowland, Judith Kovacs, and David M. Gunn (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 3.

⁵⁰ Romans contains the highest concentration of quotations from and allusions to Isaiah. Out of the 21 references to Isaiah in Romans, 15 are found in chapters 9–11 alone. See Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 150–51. For an overview of Paul's use of Isaiah, see Steven P. Sullivan, *The Isaianic New Exodus in Romans 9–11: A Biblical and Theological Study of Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans* (Silverton, OR: Lampion, 2007), 106–22. Furthermore, Isaiah himself is explicitly named as a speaker four times in Romans 9–11 and one time in Romans 15: Romans 9:27–28; 9:29; 10:16; 10:20–21; 15:12.

⁵¹ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 162.

⁵² Hays, 162.

Several observations can be drawn from Hays' comment. First, Isaiah's vision of the eschatological kingdom maintains clear distinctions between national identities and does not depict a "new Israel" that incorporates both believing Jews and Gentiles in Christ.⁵³ If one essential aspect of defining a nation is an "identifiable ethnic core,"⁵⁴ Isaiah preserves this identification when Israel is restored in the eschaton. Second, another defining feature of a nation is its "historic homeland."⁵⁵ When God dwells in Zion, the city is *not* "changed and transformed" into "the whole new creation,"⁵⁶ but remains distinct as the historic and beloved city of God.⁵⁷ The term "Zion" has consistently retained this topographical denotation throughout various eras of biblical history.⁵⁸ In Isaiah, from a macrocosmic perspective, the entire cosmos constitutes the realm of God's kingdom; however, from a more focused vantage point, Zion serves as its microcosm and capital, the designated place where God will dwell as King.⁵⁹ Isaiah preserves the distinct identities of people and place in the eschaton without redefining or transforming them.

This view of the eschaton makes Isaiah a foundational source for Paul's articulation, particularly in Romans, where he engages with his eschatological vision to expound on God's redemptive plan for Israel and the nations. Isaiah shaped Paul's framework of restoration eschatology.

Restoration Eschatology and the New Exodus

Restoration eschatology is a post-exilic belief that addresses Israel's hope of salvation and restoration. As Michael F. Bird elucidates, it is "the belief that God would intervene and establish a better dispensation for Israel in light of circumstances that did not reflect the grand promises of peace and prosperity pledged in Israel's sacred traditions."⁶⁰ The core tenets of restoration eschatology include: "the re-establishment of the twelve tribes, the advent of a messianic figure (or figures) to defeat Israel's enemies and reign in righteousness, a new or purified temple, the establishment of pure worship and righteous people, the return of Yahweh to Zion, abundant prosperity, a renewed covenant and the subjugation or admission of the Gentiles."⁶¹ These eschatological hopes, grounded in Isaiah and the prophets, were so pervasive across Jewish sects that they represented a collective and widely shared

⁵³ Contra the conclusions of Andrew T. Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom: A Thematic—Theological Approach*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 40, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 197.

⁵⁴ Kim, *The Multinational Kingdom in Isaiah*, 9–16.

⁵⁵ Kim, 9–16.

⁵⁶ Contra the conclusions of Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 468.

⁵⁷ Ps 87:23; 132:13–14; Isa 2:3; 62:1–2; Joel 3:16–17; Zech 8:3.

⁵⁸ Jon D. Levenson, "Zion Traditions," *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1098–99.

⁵⁹ Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom*, 198.

⁶⁰ Michael F. Bird, *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 26. Also, Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 29–33.

⁶¹ Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 27. For further elaboration on these themes and their interpretive background, see Pablo T. Gadenz, *Called from the Jews and from the Gentiles: Pauline Ecclesiology in Romans 9–11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 41–56.

vision for Israel's future restoration.⁶² At its heart, restoration eschatology encapsulates Israel's hope of a *new exodus*.

For Israel, the original exodus event serves as the foundational, identity-defining moment in her history.⁶³ In this pivotal event, God's covenantal faithfulness, His power to deliver, guide, protect, judge, and restore is vividly displayed.⁶⁴ Yet, as Israel falls into idolatry, she faces the consequences of disobedience—subjugation by foreign powers and exile from the promised land.⁶⁵ To regain God's favor, Israel must repent and return to Yahweh (Deut 28–30).⁶⁶ Israel's collective repentance sets in motion the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan, ushering in times of refreshing, the coming of the Messiah, and the full realization of the blessings promised in the Abrahamic covenant.⁶⁷ OT prophets framed Israel's ultimate return from exile as a new exodus, heralding a new and lasting era of divine redemption.⁶⁸ This era “will be parallel to Israel's earliest history, a new exodus resulting in a new Israel and a new covenant.”⁶⁹

Like the first exodus, the new exodus is not only about deliverance from whatever impedes Israel's relationship with God, but also about her flourishing and well-being in the land.⁷⁰ It promises the full restoration of *shalom*—wholeness, peace, and prosperity—in covenantal communion with God.⁷¹ In this way, the new exodus ushers in the Messianic age, marking the end of Israel's exile and bringing unprecedented fertility and abundance to the land.⁷² It foretells a period of secure habitation, agricultural fruitfulness, abundant prosperity, and Messianic *shalom*. In essence, the new exodus encapsulates Israel's restoration in its fullest and most comprehensive sense, along with its profound implications for the cosmos.

⁶² E. P. Sanders provides extensive extrabiblical literature that supports the concept of Jewish restoration eschatology. He categorizes his citations into three sections: non-biblical literature from the pre-Roman period that continued to be read and used, Palestinian literature of the Roman era, and Diaspora Jewish literature. See, E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief: 63 BCE–66 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 473–86.

⁶³ Rikk E. Watts, “Exodus Imagery,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophet*, edited by Mark J. Boda and Gordon J. McConville (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 205.

⁶⁴ Numerous poetic and prophetic texts reflect on the Exodus, using it as a paradigm for God's redemptive actions and covenantal faithfulness. Examples include passages such as Ps 78:12–53; 105:23–45; 106:6–12; Isa 11:15–16; Jer 7:22; 34:13; Ezek 20:5, 36; Hos 2:15; 11:1; Amos 3:1; as well as Mic 6:4; 7:14–15.

⁶⁵ The following passages form a consistent theme in Deuteronomy, where idolatry leads to exile and scattering, serving as both a warning and a consequence for Israel's disobedience: Deut 4:25–27; 28:36, 63–64; 29:24–28.

⁶⁶ Cf., Isa 59–60; Jer 24:6–7; 29:12–14; Ezek 36:24–28; and Hos 14:1–4.

⁶⁷ Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 39–41.

⁶⁸ Nicholas G. Piotrowski, “The Exodus,” in *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. G. K. Beale, D. A. Carson, Benjamin L. Gladd, and Andrew David Naselli (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2023), 237.

⁶⁹ Bill T. Arnold, “Old Testament Eschatology and the Rise of Apocalypticism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, ed. Jerry L. Walls (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 28.

⁷⁰ Middleton, *A New Heaven and New Earth*, 86. Also, Piotrowski, “The Exodus,” 237.

⁷¹ Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, 130–31. E.g., Isa 2:4; 11:1–9; 35:1–10; 54:10; Ezek 34:25–31; 37:26; Zech 9:9–10; Mic 4:1–8; Joel 3:18.

⁷² Antonine DeGuglielmo, “Fertility of the Land in the Messianic Prophecies,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, no. 3 (1957): 307.

Israel's return from the Babylonian exile did not bring about the idealized restoration she had longed for. Post-exilic prophets such as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi reaffirmed this reality, pointing to Israel's glorious restoration as a future hope yet to be realized.⁷³ Consequently, Israel came to perceive herself as living in a state of ongoing exile, a condition that defined her status quo. This enduring state shifted her expectations of deliverance and restoration from the present to the eschatological age to come.⁷⁴ N. T. Wright explains, "The present age is still part of the 'age of wrath'; until the Gentiles are put in their place and Israel, and the Temple, fully restored, the exile is not really over, and the blessings promised by the prophets are still to take place."⁷⁵ Peter R. Ackroyd describes the new age as one "of cosmic significance"; it "involves not simply the final establishment of God's promises to Israel, but a complete renewal of the life of the world."⁷⁶ This comprehensive transformation will be brought about through the new exodus.

The new exodus stands as the solution to Israel's exilic condition, providing the pathway to her permanent restoration with profound implications for the nations and the entire cosmos.⁷⁷ Isaiah weaves restoration promises so thoroughly into his prophecy, leading several scholars to propose the new exodus as the prophet's dominant theme.⁷⁸ In Isaiah's prophecy, Yahweh is depicted as a Redeemer (kinsman) who restores Israel—His "family"—and assumes responsibility for purchasing her back.⁷⁹ Yahweh will also return as a *divine warrior* to subdue primordial chaos, asserting His universal kingship from Zion, safeguarding Israel from all natural or historical threats to its security and welfare by ushering in a new era (Isa 24–27; 59–60).⁸⁰

Isaiah's portrayal of Yahweh's victorious actions culminates in the final restoration of Israel,⁸¹ where the promises of the new covenant are fully realized.⁸² This realization is "a reversal of the words of doom on the basis of the bond with his people which God is willing to maintain."⁸³ In this new era, a Davidic king will reign,⁸⁴ and

⁷³ C. Marvin Pate et al., *The Story of Israel: A Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 99–103.

⁷⁴ N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1992), 301.

⁷⁵ Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 270.

⁷⁶ Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 251.

⁷⁷ Piotrowski, "The Exodus," 238.

⁷⁸ Faith Elizabeth Lund, "'Out of Egypt': The Exodus Motif in the New Testament," (PhD Dissertation: Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2018), 51. Also, Sullivan, *The Isaianic New Exodus in Romans*, 28–33.

⁷⁹ Prevallet, "The Use of the New Exodus in Interpreting History," 143.

⁸⁰ Theodore Hiebert, "Divine Warrior," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 878.

⁸¹ Scott C. Ryan, "Cosmic Conflict and the Divine Warrior in Paul's Letter to the Romans," (PhD Dissertation: Baylor University Press, 2017), 115–157.

⁸² Jeremiah 31:31–34 outlines the promises of the New Covenant for Israel, including an internal transformation where God's law is written on their hearts, a restored personal relationship, a universal knowledge of God, and the full forgiveness of sins. (C.f. Isa 55:3; 59:20–21; and Jer 32:40)

⁸³ Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 61.

⁸⁴ Isa 9:6–7, 11:1–5, Jer 23:5–6, 33:14–17.

Zion, refashioned in all its glory, becomes the center of the universe,⁸⁵ reflecting the fulfillment of God's redemptive purposes for Israel, the nations, and all creation.

In summary, Isaiah profoundly shaped Israel's eschatological hope, portraying Yahweh as the coming King and divine warrior who will save and restore Israel to the land, reign from Zion, and ultimately set all things right. This restoration, however, is contingent upon Israel's repentance. Once restored, Israel's renewal will bring unprecedented blessings for the entire world. Isaiah 59 and 27 vividly capture these eschatological events. Paul, drawing on these prophetic texts, integrates Isaiah 59:20–21 and 27:9 into Romans 11:26, emphasizing the promise of Israel's salvation and its global impact (Rom 11:12, 15). In the Jewish worldview of Paul's time, salvation was understood as the fulfillment of past divine promises culminating in future restoration.⁸⁶ There is no compelling evidence to suggest that Paul deviated from this perspective regarding Israel that Isaiah emphasized.

Paul, Isaiah 59 and 27, and Israel's Restoration in Romans 11:26

Like the prophet Isaiah, Paul, in Romans 11:26–27, uses Scripture to build upon and reinforce the continuity of the biblical storyline rather than fragment it.⁸⁷ In revealing the *μυστήριον* (mystery) about Israel in Romans 11:25,⁸⁸ Paul ensures that “the storyline continues in a straightforward way,”⁸⁹ not contradicting but building upon previous revelation. This continuity reflects Paul's Jewish interpretive assumptions, which affirmed the internal consistency of Scripture, the significance of every inspired word, the absence of secondary meanings, and the necessity of interpreting each passage within its context.⁹⁰ These interpretive assumptions challenge the view that “the OT authors intended to communicate typologically,”⁹¹ a perspective that, as Mark W. Karlberg argues, “rules out any additional literal fulfillment of the land promise in a future restoration of national Israel subsequent to

⁸⁵ Isa 2:2–4, 60:1–3, 19–22, 65:17–19. See also, Elaine Marie Prevallet, “The Use of the New Exodus in Interpreting History,” *Concordia Theological Monthly*, no. 37 (1966): 140–41.

⁸⁶ Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 300.

⁸⁷ Isaiah skillfully engages previous sacred texts, particularly the Torah and Psalms, weaving them into his prophetic message with a unique lyrical style that enhances their relevance for his audience. He integrates Israel's foundational stories—creation, exodus, and covenant—into a vision of restoration. This layered use of tradition creates a dynamic narrative that aligns Isaiah's message with the overarching biblical storyline of God's redemptive plan. See Gary Edward Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Guide* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021), 215–219.

⁸⁸ The mystery consists of three key components: first, a partial hardening has occurred to Israel; second, this hardening will persist until God's work with the Gentiles is complete; and third, in this manner, all Israel will be saved. See, Michael J. Vlach, “A Non-Typological Future-Mass-Conversion View,” in *Three Views on Israel and the Church: Perspectives on Romans 9–11*, ed. Jared Compton and Andrew David Naselli (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018), 63.

⁸⁹ Vlach, “A Non-Typological Future-Mass-Conversion View,” 63.

⁹⁰ Contrary to the common perception of Paul's exegesis as somewhat arbitrary, David Instone-Brewer's extensive study of first-century Jewish scribal practices offers substantial, albeit indirect, evidence supporting Paul's contextual engagement with the OT. By examining over a hundred exegeses preserved in rabbinic literature likely originating before 70 CE, Brewer's research suggests that any assumption of Paul's indifference to the contextual subtleties of his scriptural citations may, in fact, overlook his role as a precise and deliberate first-century Jewish exegete. See, David Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 163–71.

⁹¹ Zaspel and Hamilton Jr., “A Typological Future-Mass-Conversion View,” 75.

or alongside the messianic fulfillment.”⁹² However, as Michael Vlach suggests, if “Scripture lays out a storyline whereby Israel, Israel’s land, nations, temples, physical blessings, and other tangible matters are important,” then “types in the Bible do not overturn the significance of these.”⁹³ Based on his interpretive assumptions, Paul would align with, rather than go against, the flow of the biblical storyline.

Paul cites the OT to clarify how the biblical storyline unfolds. Given Paul’s familiarity with Isaiah, it is reasonable to argue that his conflation of Isaiah 59:20–21 and 27:9 in Romans 11:26–27 was both deliberate and essential to explaining and supporting the overarching biblical storyline. These two Isaianic texts share key themes—as described below—that align with Paul’s theological argument, suggesting that his combination of them was an *ad hoc* synthesis aimed at affirming Israel’s future salvation.⁹⁴ Beneath Paul’s citations lies a rich historical and theological context, one saturated with the hope of restoration eschatology.

Context of Isaiah 59 and 27

Isaiah 24–27 and 59–60 also share significant theological, intertextual, and thematic parallels concerning Israel, the nations, and the cosmos, with Israel as the central focus.⁹⁵ In both sections, Isaiah preserves Israel’s national identity without transforming it into a “new Israel” that includes Gentiles. Isaiah envisions a future kingdom where Israel and the nations coexist in harmony, worshiping Yahweh in Zion. These passages present a unified storyline in which Yahweh, depicted as the divine warrior, delivers Israel from sin and exile, regathers the scattered people, and reigns victoriously from Zion.⁹⁶

In their context, Isaiah 59 and 27 are fundamentally eschatological. Shum observes that Isaiah 59:20–21 and 27:9 “resemble each other considerably in that each envisions Israel’s eschatological *revival* and *re-acceptance* by Yahweh, characterized by the removal of the nation’s lawlessness and ungodliness.”⁹⁷ They predict a complete, national transformation and renewal of Israel, intricately tied to the inauguration of the new exodus. However, as noted above, the new exodus necessitates Israel’s collective acknowledgment of the sins that have estranged her from God, followed by a genuine return to Him in repentance. Only then, as outlined in Deuteronomy 30:1–10, does God intervene redemptively.⁹⁸ Isaiah 59 prophetically encapsulates this process, presenting a structure with three distinct parts: the indictment of Israel’s sin (vv. 1–8), Israel’s confession (vv. 9–15a), and God’s intervention through a Redeemer (vv. 15b–21).⁹⁹ At the heart of this chapter is the

⁹² Mark W. Karlberg, “The Significance of Israel in Biblical Typology,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 31, no. 3 (1988): 259–60.

⁹³ Michael J. Vlach, *Dispensational Hermeneutics* (Las Vegas, NV: Theological Studies Press, 2023), 92.

⁹⁴ Shum, *Paul’s Use of Isaiah*, 239.

⁹⁵ For a detailed exegesis and synthesis of these chapters, see Cherif Arif, “The Eschatological Influence of Isaiah 59:20–21 and 27:9 on Paul in Romans 11:26–27 Supporting the Future Salvation and Restoration of National/Ethnic Israel” (PhD. Dissertation: The Master’s Seminary, 2023), 220–318.

⁹⁶ Sullivan, *The Isaianic New Exodus in Romans 9–11*, 361.

⁹⁷ Shum, *Paul’s Use of Isaiah in the Letter to the Romans*, 240. (Emphasis mine)

⁹⁸ Sullivan, *The Isaianic New Exodus in Romans 9–11*, 370.

⁹⁹ Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 497.

role of the Redeemer, Israel's Messiah,¹⁰⁰ who will intervene decisively in history to reclaim, redeem, and restore the nation.

Isaiah 27 describes similar themes, focusing on God's dealings with Israel's exilic condition and its ultimate resolution in the eschaton. Within its eschatological context,¹⁰¹ Isaiah 27:9 highlights two key truths: Israel's exile will come to an end, and her sins will be atoned for. Moo observes how Isaiah 27, like Isaiah 59:20–60:7, predicts Yahweh's deliverance of "Jacob"—Israel—from exile and sin, restoring the scattered people to their own city, Zion.¹⁰² Israel's exile is intended as a disciplinary measure within the framework of her covenant relationship with Yahweh.¹⁰³ Through this exilic condition, God orchestrates the atonement of Israel's sin. Gary V. Smith clarifies, "This does not mean that suffering brings atonement of sin, but that the process of suffering brings a person to the place where sins are recognized and confessed so that God can forgive them."¹⁰⁴ Thus, national recognition of sin and repentance become indispensable steps in Israel's lasting transformation and thus restoration.

Israel's transformation, as Paul declares, involves submission to God's righteousness in Christ (Rom 10:3–4). Isaiah 59:12–15 depicts Israel confessing her unrighteousness, caused by her iniquities and spiritual blindness, which prompts God's intervention to bring salvation. His intervention is certain (59:16). Israel's estrangement from God will come to an end, and all will be set right through her full restoration (60–62). Paul House explains that, "If the people's renewal depended on themselves, their leaders, and their allies all would be lost. Since Yahweh has determined to set things right, however, hope abides. He will redeem.... He will send the Messiah as His covenant. He will renew His people."¹⁰⁵ Paul reflects this radical change in Romans 11:12, envisioning Israel's *πλήρωμα* (fullness),¹⁰⁶ a condition that signifies the reversal of her *ἥττημα* (failure).

¹⁰⁰ Isaiah 59 presents a unified vision of the Messiah, the Servant, and the new Davidic King as central to the fulfillment of God's eschatological covenant (59:20–21). The covenant, entirely initiated by God, is embodied in the Servant, who acts as a "covenant to the nations" (Isa 42:6; 49:8) and brings restoration to Israel and the Gentiles. Anointed by the Spirit, the Davidic Messiah fulfills this role, proclaiming God's truth with divine authority and establishing a kingdom of righteousness and peace. The Servant's faithful ministry produces a transformed "offspring," comprising repentant followers from Israel and the nations, justified by his sacrificial work (Isa 53:10–11). This eschatological renewal culminates in the complete restoration of creation, fulfilling the promises of the Davidic covenant and showcasing God's sovereignty, grace, and ultimate plan for redemption. See Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 605–6.

¹⁰¹ The structural marker *וַיְהִי בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא* (on that day) appears four times in Isaiah 27:1, 2, 12, and 13, while *בַּיָּמֵי הַבָּאִים* (in the days to come) appears once in 27:6. These markers, common in prophetic literature, point to a distant future event. They also serve to make Isaiah 27 a cohesive unit, with verse 6 functioning as its thematic center.

¹⁰² Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 743.

¹⁰³ Lev 26:33–34; Deut 28:64–65; Jer 30:11; Ezek 20:37–38.

¹⁰⁴ Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1–39*, The New American Commentary, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2007), 463.

¹⁰⁵ Paul R. House, *Isaiah: A Mentor Commentary* (Ross-shire: Mentor, 2018), 2:606–7.

¹⁰⁶ The New Jerusalem Bible and the NET Bible translate the word *πλήρωμα* (pleroma) as "restoration" to capture the theological significance of Israel's reversal from failure to fullness.

At the heart of the biblical storyline, Israel's πλήρωμα represents “nothing less than a restoration of Israel as a people to faith, privilege, and blessing,”¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, the atonement of Israel's sin in Isaiah 27:9 marks her transition from alienation to renewed communion with God, transforming her condition from exile to restoration (27:12–13).¹⁰⁸ In sum, Isaiah 27, particularly in the vineyard song (27:2–6),¹⁰⁹ portrays a reversal of Israel's status—from a state of ailment to one of permanent healing and flourishing. This transformation, with evident cosmic consequences,¹¹⁰ is brought about through Yahweh's intervention and sovereign initiative.¹¹¹ Isaiah 27:12–13 “conclude both chapter 27 and the larger corpus, chapters 24–27, on a note of promise and restoration of the people of Israel on Mount Zion.”¹¹² Hoping in God's promises necessitates the assurance that these promises cannot fail. Paul held firmly to this hope.

Israel's Eschatological Hope and Paul's Missiology

The realization of Israel's eschatological hope, as presented in Isaiah 59 and 27, aligns closely with Paul's mission as an apostle to the Gentiles. In Romans 11:13–14, Paul emphasizes his ministry as a means to provoke Israel to jealousy (Rom 11:11), drawing on Deuteronomy 32:21 (also cited in Romans 10:19), a passage that profoundly shapes his view of God's plan of salvation.¹¹³ Moses' song in Deuteronomy 32 influenced Paul not only in its motif of jealousy but also in its themes of Israel's election, fall, and ultimate salvation, alongside the inclusion of the Gentiles.¹¹⁴ For Paul, the present salvation of some Israelites serves as a foretaste of Israel's ultimate restoration, when, as envisioned in Deuteronomy 32:43 (also cited in Romans 15:10), both Israel and the nations will together praise God in Zion—a vision further elaborated in Isaiah 60–62. This led James M. Scott to perceive that, “the restoration (salvation) of Israel is the driving force of Paul's whole endeavor,

¹⁰⁷ John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 2:79. The New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) and the New English Translation (NET) both convey the nuance of πλήρωμα by translating it as “restoration,” effectively capturing its theological significance.

¹⁰⁸ J. Gordon McConville, *Isaiah*, ed. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2023), 312.

¹⁰⁹ Isaiah 27:2–6 presents a hopeful song symbolizing God's care for His vineyard, representing Israel, in contrast to an earlier depiction of destruction (5:5–6). The song is a celebration of God's future goodness to Israel. In this passage, also, God promises unwavering protection, nurturing, and fruitfulness for the vineyard, eliminating threats like thorns and briars, which symbolize opposition to His work. See Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 458–61.

¹¹⁰ The restoration of Israel involves the reconciliation of the nations to God (Isa 25:6–7), the defeat of death (25:8), the destruction of Leviathan (27:1), and the flourishing of Israel, which will be acknowledged by the entire world (27:6, 12–13).

¹¹¹ Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*, 241.

¹¹² Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library, ed. William P. Brown, Carol A. Newsom, and Brent A. Strawn, 1st ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 194.

¹¹³ Richard H. Bell, *Provoked by Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9–11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 285.

¹¹⁴ Bell, *Provoked by Jealousy*, 285.

and the nations participate in that restoration.”¹¹⁵ Like many of his contemporaries,¹¹⁶ Paul articulates his expectation through a fervent hope and prayer for Israel’s ultimate salvation (Rom 10:1).

Paul’s hope for Israel’s salvation is rooted in the assurance that God’s call to the nation is irrevocable (Rom 11:26, 29). The adjective ἀμεταμέλητος (irrevocable), describing Israel’s calling, denotes “something one does not take back.”¹¹⁷ When God calls, the determination to save is irreversible. His calling is rooted in His eternal decree, yet His salvation occurs in time as He effectually calls those whom He has chosen. In Romans 9–11, the future tense of σώζω (to save) portrays Israel’s salvation as still in the future.¹¹⁸ Scott contends that σώζω inherently echoes “OT expectations of Israel’s restoration.”¹¹⁹ Notably, the Septuagint (LXX) of Isaiah, Paul’s primary source of citations in Romans 9–11, also employs σώζω in the future tense within contexts anticipating Israel’s restoration.¹²⁰ Accordingly, Israel’s soteriology transcends the present age, envisioning her future salvation as “the eschatological denouement that will do full justice to God’s righteousness and the plight of his chosen people.”¹²¹ This ultimate denouement finds its expression in the fulfillment of Israel’s OT restoration promises.¹²² Israel’s salvation is incomplete without her restoration.

Furthermore, as Isaac W. Oliver argues, Paul’s closest companion, Luke, articulated Israel’s salvation in comprehensive restorative terms—encompassing freedom from exile and all forms of oppression, whether spiritual, physical, political, social, or economic.¹²³ Luke, recognized as an Isaianic scholar, demonstrates a deep awareness of Isaiah’s context and broader theological message, as reflected in his frequent quotations and allusions to the book.¹²⁴ Luke’s view of Israel in the eschaton encompasses the fulfillment of restoration promises. It is unlikely that Paul held a contrary or even slightly differing view. For both, Luke and Paul, “the divine promises of restoration recorded in the Jewish Scripture would in the end be fulfilled to Israel in the manner that concerned Israel.”¹²⁵ Paul and Luke’s shared perspective highlights God’s unwavering integrity in fulfilling the promises He made to Israel through His covenants (Rom 9:4–6), emphasizing the consistency of His redemptive plan.

¹¹⁵ James M. Scott, “And then All Israel will be Saved (Rom 11:26),” in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, ed. James M. Scott (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 521.

¹¹⁶ Stefan C. Reif, “Some Notions of Restoration in Early Rabbinic Prayers,” in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, ed. James M. Scott (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 281–304.

¹¹⁷ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 53.

¹¹⁸ The verb σώζω is used five times in Romans: 9:27; 10:9; 10:13; 11:14; and 11:26.

¹¹⁹ Scott, “And then All Israel will be Saved (Rom 11:26),” 522.

¹²⁰ Arif, “The Eschatological Influence of Isaiah 59:20–21 and 27:9 on Paul in Romans 11:26–27,” 389–97.

¹²¹ Robert W. Yarbrough, “The Theology of Romans in Future Tense,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, no. 11 (2007): 54.

¹²² For more evidence supporting the future restoration of Israel in Romans 11, see Arif, “The Eschatological Influence of Isaiah 59:20–21 and 27:9 on Paul in Romans 11:26–27,” 406–30.

¹²³ Isaac W. Oliver, *Luke’s Jewish Eschatology: The National Restoration of Israel in Luke–Acts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 140.

¹²⁴ David Seccombe, “Luke and Isaiah” *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. G. K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 248–56.

¹²⁵ Oliver, *Luke’s Jewish Eschatology*, 146.

Accordingly, despite Israel's hardening, Paul remains confident in Israel's future salvation, standing on the assurance that God has not forsaken His people whom He foreknew (Rom 11:1). Paul's confidence is rooted in the conviction that "divine foreknowledge and reversal of election would be a contradiction in terms."¹²⁶ It is implausible that God's election could fail or fall short of achieving its purposes. Accordingly, Paul views Israel's hardening as both partial and temporary.¹²⁷ While the majority of Israel has rejected the gospel, a small *λεῖμμα* (remnant) remains, chosen and preserved by grace (Rom 11:5), serving as a testament to God's faithfulness and the warrant of His redemptive plan.

For Paul, the preservation of the remnant extends beyond the present, anticipating a future in which the remnant transforms into a nation, fully devoted to worshiping Yahweh, as envisioned in Isaiah 59 and 27. In this way, the remnant functions as the firstfruits, guaranteeing the promise of a full harvest. While the existence of the remnant reflects a present judgment, this judgment is not final but destined to be reversed. The remnant, therefore, is a temporary phenomenon that points to a future reality when God's redemptive work for Israel is completed, serving as a testimony to His sovereignty and mercy.¹²⁸ As Gottlob Schrenk observes, the remnant plays a critical role in God's plan of salvation, contributing to "the re-adoption, the salvation of all Israel."¹²⁹ Thus, Israel's hardening is not permanent; it endures only "until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (Rom 11:25). At that appointed time, Paul declares "all Israel will be saved" (11:26), signaling the end of Israel's hardening and the full realization of God's enduring covenant promises of restoring the nation, as promised in Isaiah 59 and 27.

Conclusion

Isaiah 59–60 vividly portray the realization of a radical, national transformation of Israel with far-reaching international and cosmic implications. Isaiah 59:20 aligns this transformation with Yahweh's coming to judge, redeem, and reign as King from Zion. As the centerpiece of Isaiah 56–66, Isaiah 60 emphasizes two key dynamics of Yahweh's kingship: first, Zion is established as the dwelling place of Yahweh's radiant glory, where His majesty is magnificently displayed; second, the unmatched splendor of Yahweh's glory draws all nations to Zion, where they offer praise and tribute, acknowledging Him as the supreme and universal King.¹³⁰

This vision reflects a multinational paradigm of the messianic kingdom, maintaining national and territorial distinctions between Israel and the nations.¹³¹ In this way, Isaiah 59–60 suggest an inaugurated new exodus, culminating in "the

¹²⁶ Michael A. Grisanti, "The Progress of God's Program for Jews and Gentiles as Pictured in Romans Eleven" (ThM Thesis: Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986), 39.

¹²⁷ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 621.

¹²⁸ Lester V. Meyer, "Remnant," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 671.

¹²⁹ Gottlob Schrenk, "Λεῖμμα," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 203.

¹³⁰ Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom*, 106.

¹³¹ Kim, *The Multinational Kingdom in Isaiah*, 88–92.

enthronement of Yahweh in a restored Jerusalem-Zion.”¹³² This hope is echoed in Isaiah 24–27,¹³³ where Yahweh’s enthronement through a righteous Davidic king brings restoration on personal, national, and global scales.¹³⁴

Paul’s conflation of Isaiah 59:20–21 and 27:9 highlights his focus on Israel’s restoration and God’s unwavering faithfulness to redeem His people.¹³⁵ This is not a reliance on isolated proof texts but a reflection of Isaiah’s comprehensive vision of restoration, a theme reinforced by other prophetic writings. Paul further demonstrates that Israel’s future πλήρωμα (fullness) will bring extraordinary blessings to the world, aligning with Isaiah 27:6, which envisions the thriving of the nation, and its fruit will fill the whole world.¹³⁶

For such a radical societal and cosmic transformation to occur, God must “restore Israel to the promised land, rebuild cities, and make Israel’s new status a witness to the nations.”¹³⁷ In other words, Israel’s restoration is the initial step of cosmic consummation (Rom 11:15). As part of this cosmic consummation, the OT anticipates Gentiles ultimately streaming to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh following Israel’s restoration and establishment in the land.¹³⁸ In this way, Paul harmoniously explains the biblical redemptive narrative, aligning with Isaiah, the OT prophets, and the themes of restoration eschatology.

In summary, as Wagner puts it, “In both Isaiah 24–27 and Isaiah 59–60, God’s victory is complete. Israel is finally reconciled to her God, nevermore to stray, and never again to suffer judgment of foreign oppression and exile.”¹³⁹ By highlighting Israel’s future redemption twice in Romans 11:26–27 (Isa 59:20 and 27:9), Paul emphasizes the complete removal of Israel’s sin and its implications.¹⁴⁰ These chapters encapsulate a vision of redemption through Jewish eyes, encompassing deliverance from all forms of evil—“evil of body and soul, evil in creation and civilization.”¹⁴¹ For Israel, therefore, salvation is both future and holistically restorative.

In Romans 9–11, Paul constructs a compelling biblical case for Israel’s salvation, meticulously exegeting and quoting OT texts, particularly from Isaiah. Paul’s exegetical method exemplifies the essence of exegesis: understanding a passage’s context to discern its role within the immediate biblical text and the overarching

¹³² Rikki E. Watts, “Consolation or Confrontation? Isaiah 40–55 and the Delay of the New Exodus,” *Tyndale Bulletin*, no. 41 (May 1990): 34.

¹³³ God comes to reign in Zion (24:23; 25:6–10; 27:12–13), cleanses His people from sin (26: 16–19; 27:9–11), delivers them from oppression, and gathers the scattered back to Zion (27: 12–13). As in Isaiah 60, Gentile nations are depicted as either participating in Israel’s worship and blessings (24: 14–16a; 25:6–10a) or opposing the Lord and facing His wrath (24:1–13,17–22; 25:10b–12; 26:11, 21). See, Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 295.

¹³⁴ Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: T&T Clark, 2000), 2–3.

¹³⁵ Scott, “And then All Israel will be Saved (Rom 11:26),” 490.

¹³⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 194.

¹³⁷ Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 2.

¹³⁸ See, Robert Saucy, “Does the Apostle Paul Reverse the Prophetic Tradition of the Salvation of Israel and the Nations?,” in *Building on the Foundations of Evangelical Theology: Essays in Honor of John S. Feinberg*, ed. Gregg R. Allison and Stephen J. Wellum (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 66–91.

¹³⁹ Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 295.

¹⁴⁰ Shum, *Paul’s Use of Isaiah*, 240.

¹⁴¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 29.

biblical storyline. In essence, Paul's use of these Isaianic passages in Romans 11:26–27 builds on his indebtedness “to the larger story Isaiah tells about God's passionate commitment to restore Israel to himself.”¹⁴²

Like Isaiah, Paul longed for the day when “all Israel will be saved,” viewing it as the culmination of God's redemptive plan through the Deliverer. For Paul, “Israel's ‘Deliverer’ is the Christ of the Parousia, the messiah who will come in the glory of God and whose name is Jesus.”¹⁴³ Paul's hope for Israel's restoration is an extension of a hope anchored in a divine promise—one firmly rooted in the unchanging character of God, His prophetic promises, and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, Israel's promised Messiah, Redeemer, and King.

So how does Paul's hope for Israel's restoration influence one's missiology? First, Paul's view of Israel's future motivated his proclamation of the gospel. Paul's preaching to the Gentiles throughout his life was magnified by the need for the Jewish people to accept their Messiah in faith. His ministry provoked the nation to jealousy before God (Rom 11:11). The coming salvation and restoration of the nation fueled his evangelistic efforts. And in similar fashion, the proclamation of the gospel to the ends of the earth, to Gentile nations, is the appointed divinely means to stir up His chosen people to saving faith.

Second, the future restoration of Israel supported Paul's prayer for the unbelieving Jews (Rom 10:1). Because God had not forsaken His people, Paul's prayer was aligned with God's will. The purpose of God to save Israel and the nations through the work of missions and the preaching of the gospel fuels intercessory prayer for redemption of the lost. These two themes, evangelistic proclamation and prayer for the lost are supported by Paul's belief in the future restoration and salvation of the nation Israel.

¹⁴² Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 280.

¹⁴³ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 35.