

THE DELIVERER FROM ZION
THE SOURCE(S) AND FUNCTION OF PAUL'S CITATION IN
ROMANS 11:26-27

Christopher R. Bruno

Summary

This article argues that Paul's Old Testament citation in Romans 11:26-27 includes Isaiah 59:20-21, 27:9, and 2:3. For Paul, Christ's first advent inaugurates the fulfilment of these Isaianic prophecies; therefore, the salvation of 'all Israel' is not an exclusively future reality. The theme of Gentile blessing also accompanies these prophecies. Therefore, Paul expects that Gentile inclusion is part of the fulfilment of the promises to Israel. The implications of this argument are that the majority position of 'all Israel' in v. 26 as a reference to the future salvation of ethnic national Israel is untenable and that the emphasis on Gentile inclusion found earlier in Romans continues throughout the epistle.

1. Introduction

Few, if any, passages in the Pauline corpus are either more fascinating or more complex than Romans 9–11. Many pages of commentary have been devoted to these three chapters, but an interpretative consensus has yet to be reached. The climax of this section is found in Romans 11:26-27. Here Paul concludes with a dense summary of his argument supported by a patchwork of OT quotations, asserting that indeed 'all Israel will be saved' (καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται).

Although many have laboured over the precise meaning of the phrase 'all Israel will be saved,' it is equally crucial to note Paul's OT support for this statement, for it is here that the background of Paul's argument finds its fullest expression, and careful consideration of

Paul's use of the OT can potentially yield valuable insight into his argument here.

We will begin by noting the two primary passages that Paul draws from to support his argument: Isaiah 59:20-21 and 27:9. Underlining indicates portions of the text quoted in Romans 11:26-27.¹

Romans 11:26-27

ἦξει ἐκ Σιῶν ὁ ῥυόμενος, ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ.
καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἢ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς
ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν.

Isaiah 59:20-21 LXX

καὶ ἦξει ἕνεκεν Σιῶν ὁ ῥυόμενος καὶ
ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ
καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἢ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη
εἶπεν κύριος τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐμὸν ὅ
ἐστιν ἐπὶ σοί καὶ τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἔδωκα
εἰς τὸ στόμα σου οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπη ἐκ τοῦ
στόματός σου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος
τοῦ σπέρματός σου εἶπεν γὰρ κύριος
ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα

Isaiah 59:20-21 MT

וְבָא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל וְלִשְׁבִי
פָּשַׁע בִּיעֲקֹב נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה
וְאֲנִי זֹאת בְּרִיתִי אִתָּם
אָמַר יְהוָה רוּחִי אֲשֶׁר
עָלֶיךָ וְדִבְרֵי אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי
בְּפִיךָ לֹא־יִמוּשׁוּ מִפִּיךָ
וּמִפִּי זֶרַע וּמִפִּי זֶרַע
זֶרַעךָ אָמַר יְהוָה מֵעַתָּה
וְעַד־עוֹלָם

Isaiah 27:9a LXX

διὰ τοῦτο ἀφαιρεθήσεται ἡ ἀνομία
Ἰακώβ καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν ἡ εὐλογία
αὐτοῦ ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι αὐτοῦ τὴν
ἁμαρτίαν

Isaiah 27:9a MT

לְכֵן בְּזֹאת יִכָּפֵר
עוֹן־יַעֲקֹב וְזֶה כָּל־פְּרִי
הַסֵּר חֲטָאתוֹ

In his 1992 monograph on Paul's use of Scripture as well as in a subsequent article, C. D. Stanley argues that the conflation of these texts in Romans 11:26-27 was not original to the hand of Paul.² Rather, Stanley argues, the emphases of the Isaiah conflation run contrary to

¹ In addition to omitting καὶ from the beginning of the verse and between ῥυόμενος and ἀποστρέψει in Isa. 59:21, Paul transposes the word order of αὐτοῦ and ἁμαρτίας from LXX Isa. 27:9 and changes the pronoun from the singular to the plural, most likely to parallel the plural pronoun αὐτοῖς in LXX Isa. 59:21. He also changes the singular noun ἁμαρτίαν to the plural ἁμαρτίας. Most significantly, he alters ἕνεκεν Σιῶν to ἐκ Σιῶν.

² Cf. C. D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture. Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992): 166-71 and 'The Redeemer will Come ἐκ Σιῶν: Romans 11:26-27 Revisited' in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, eds. C. A. Evans and J. A. Sanders (JSNTS 83/SSEJC 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), especially 123-26.

Paul's argument in Romans 11; therefore, 'it seems more likely that Paul has appropriated a traditional proof-text from either the Jewish synagogue ... or Jewish Christian apologetics.'

Shui Lun Shum notes that Stanley supports his claim with four important features of the citation as it stands in Romans 11. First, the term 'covenant' (διαθήκη) indicates an emphasis on the covenant concept.³ Second, 'the plural ἁμαρτίαι is also uncommon in Paul.'⁴ Third, the quotation from Isaiah 59 is interrupted at an unusual point; that is, it would fit Paul's theology better if he had included the 'my spirit' (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐμὸν) clause.⁵ Finally, the shift from of ἕνεκεν Σιών to ἐκ Σιών contributes nothing to Paul's argument. Since 'the expectation that Yahweh would bring salvation to his people and establish his rule ἐκ Σιών is expressed in a variety of LXX contexts,' it is likely that either the underlying Hebrew text or a later Greek manuscript was assimilated to this expectation.⁶

These four points have been analyzed and found wanting by Shum,⁷ so we need not rehearse all of these points here. By way of summary, however, we may note Shum's responses to all four before turning our attention more fully to the last.⁸ First, Shum notes that the mere use of the word 'covenant' does not imply a strong emphasis on the concept here. Furthermore, Paul's limited use of 'covenant' by no means undermines its importance to his theology. The covenant is implicit in much of Paul's writing.⁹ Second, the plural sins (ἁμαρτίαι), although also less frequent in Paul, is by no means absent.¹⁰ Paul may have had specific sins in mind (i.e. unbelief, self-reliance, and disobedience); therefore, this change seems to fit his purpose in the present context.¹¹ Third, Shum argues that the sudden shift from Isaiah 59 to 27 does not undermine Paul's argument here, but rather 'effectively and

³ Stanley, *Paul and Language*: 169.

⁴ Stanley, *Paul and Language*: 169

⁵ Stanley, 'The Redeemer will Come' in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*: 124.

⁶ Stanley, *Paul and Language*: 167.

⁷ Shui-Lun Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

⁸ This paragraph summarises Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*: 236-39.

⁹ As N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991): xi, suggests, 'covenant theology is one of the main clues ... for understanding Paul.'

¹⁰ Cf. Rom. 7:5; 1 Cor. 15:17; 1 Thess. 2:16.

¹¹ We might also add Paul might simply have changed the number to parallel to the plural noun ἀσεβείας from Isa. 59:21.

emphatically' supports it.¹² That is, since Paul's emphasis here is on salvation and forgiven sin rather than the giving of the Spirit, including the extra clause would unnecessarily confuse the argument. In response to Stanley's fourth point, Shum proposes that there is no reason not to think that Paul himself, drawing on the eschatological expectation for salvation to come 'from Zion' (ἐκ Σιῶν), is responsible for the change here.¹³

If we accept Shum's argument, then we are left with the question of why Paul uses these particular texts in the way that he did. It is clear that Paul is relying on a form of the LXX, even against the MT.¹⁴ Although there are several minor differences between Paul's form of the text and the LXX, as we have noted above, the most significant is the change of ἔνεκεν Σιῶν to ἐκ Σιῶν. As both Stanley and Shum concede, the phrase ἐκ Σιῶν is common in the LXX, representing the eschatological movement of YHWH from a restored Zion to the nations. Therefore, it is likely that this is an intentional alteration, possibly rooted in another OT passage. Shum is probably correct to argue that the change to ἐκ Σιῶν came from Paul; however, he does not go far enough in speculating exactly why this change was made in the present context. Although there are several possible sources for the

¹² Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah*: 238.

¹³ There is no strong LXX evidence for the reading ἐκ Σιῶν in Isa. 59:20. A' and Σ' read this phrase תִּי סִיּוֹן. As noted above, the MT, Targum, and Peshitta read לְצִיּוֹן. 1QIsa^a reads אֵל צִיּוֹן. Several minor Greek manuscripts follow Paul with the reading ἐκ Σιῶν. Stanley's claim in *Paul and Language*: 167, that minor manuscripts with the ἐκ Σιῶν reading 'might preserve valuable evidence for the reading of Paul's biblical text,' seems to be special pleading. Cf. J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul 'In Concert' in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002): 284-85 for more discussion of textual issues. It is highly likely, therefore, that this change comes from the hand of Paul.

¹⁴ The LXX Isa. 59:20-21 differs from the MT in that the participle לְשָׁבִי is translated as the finite future transitive verb ἀποστρέψει. This change indicates a stronger emphasis to the Deliverer's action. Also, the preposition ל is rendered ἔνεκεν. Although explanations for this change differ, a shift from ל to אֵל, which in turn may have been mistakenly copied as עַל may best explain this shift. Targum Isaiah 59:20 reads וייתי ולא תב. מרודיא דבית אמר יוי לאוריתא לְצִיּוֹן פְּרִיק. 'And he will come to Zion as Redeemer, to return the rebels of the house of Jacob to the Law, says the LORD,' translation in Bruce D. Chilton, *Aramaic Bible Volume II: The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus, and Notes* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1987). The Syriac Peshitta has a similar reading. Thus, both the Targum and the Peshitta, like the LXX, employ transitive verbal forms.

phrase ἐκ Σιών, the phrase occurs only once in the book of Isaiah: Isaiah 2:3.¹⁵

Romans 11:26-27

ἤξει ἐκ Σιών ὁ ῥυόμενος, ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ.
καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἢ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς
ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν.

Isaiah 2:3 LXX

καὶ πορεύονται ἔθνη πολλὰ καὶ
ἐροῦσιν δεῦτε καὶ ἀναβῶμεν εἰς τὸ
ὄρος κυρίου καὶ εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ
θεοῦ Ἰακώβ καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν τὴν
ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ πορευσόμεθα ἐν αὐτῇ
ἐκ γὰρ Σιών ἐξελεύσεται νόμος καὶ
λόγος κυρίου ἐξ Ἱερουσαλημ

Isaiah 2:3 MT

וְהָלְכוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים
וְאָמְרוּ לָבוּ וְנַעֲלֶה
אֶל־הַר־יְהוָה אֶל־בַּיִת
אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וַיְרַנּוּ
מִדְרָכָיו וְנִלְכְּדָה בְּאַרְחֻתָיו
כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תּוֹרָה
וְדְבַר־יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַם

In this article, I will argue, based on the context of both Romans and Isaiah, that Paul intentionally alludes to Isaiah 2:3 together with Isaiah 59:20-21 and Isaiah 27:9. I will begin by arguing that a plausible case can be made for this allusion. This will be followed by a short analysis of Paul's method of incorporating all three Isaiah texts into his argument in Romans 11. Finally, we will discuss how a more complete understanding of how these three passages function as the ground of Paul's statement 'all Israel will be saved' will aid in the interpretation of this difficult passage.

2. Isaiah 2 in Romans 11:26

In *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, Richard Hays introduces seven criteria for judging echoes and allusions of the OT in the NT.¹⁶

¹⁵ The construction ἐκ + Σιών occurs 10 times in the LXX (Ps. 49:2; 52:7; 109:2; 127:5; 133:3; 134:21; Amos 1:2; Micah 4:2; Joel 4:16; Isa. 2:3). Thus Paul could be referring to a number of OT contexts. Thomas Schreiner, *Romans* BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998): 619, argues for an allusion to Ps. 13:7; N. T. Wright, *Romans* in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2002): 692, argues in favour of Deut. 33:29. It is certainly possible that some of these texts could have been in Paul's mind; I will argue that the programmatic themes of Isaiah in Isa. 2 make this text a more likely allusion.

¹⁶ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989): 29-33.

In what follows, I will present a brief argument, based on Hays' criteria, in favour of positing an allusion to Isaiah 2:3 in Romans 11:26. In adopting those criteria to Paul's use of the OT in Romans 11:26, a persuasive, although not incontestable, case can be made that Paul was intentionally alluding to Isaiah 2:3 in this text.¹⁷

The first of Hays' criteria is availability. Although some may argue that Paul's access to Isaiah was limited, it is extremely likely that he would have had access to the entire book of Isaiah during some part of his life.¹⁸ Therefore, the first test is easily passed. The next test is volume. That is, what is the degree of syntactical overlap? Although actual overlap is limited to two words, it is still present.¹⁹ Since there are only two words from Isaiah 2 actually imported into this text, we can neither deny nor affirm an allusion to Isaiah 2 on the basis of this test.

Hays' third criterion is recurrence. Here we must admit that Isaiah 2:3 itself does not occur anywhere else in the Pauline corpus. The near context of this text, however, is found in Paul's quotation of Isaiah 1:9 in Romans 9:29. The fact that Paul infrequently cites Isaiah 1–39 makes it difficult, on the basis of this test, to affirm the use of Isaiah 2 here. His infrequent use of this text, however, also makes it difficult to disprove a citation here, for subtle allusion to less-used, but nonetheless familiar texts, are difficult to prove or to disprove.

The next criterion is thematic coherence. This test, perhaps like none other, substantiates the Isaiah 2:3 allusion. As we will see below, Romans 9–11, Isaiah 59:20–21, 27:9, and 2:3 all centre on similar themes: God's faithfulness to his covenant people, the inclusion of the

¹⁷ Although this is certainly not the place to respond fully to C. D. Stanley's arguments about the ability of Paul's audience to comprehend his biblical allusions, the simple fact that Paul clearly intertwines Isaiah 27 and 59 here hints that he intended his audience to carefully consider his OT citations and the context in which they are found. For a synopsis of Stanley's position, cf. C. D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004): 38–61.

¹⁸ The scribes at Qumran preserved the entire text of Isaiah in 1Q Isa^a. The entire text of Isaiah was therefore almost certainly preserved at the Jerusalem temple. Given Paul's association with the temple earlier in his life, there is little doubt he would have had access to the entire Isaiah text at some point, and may have preserved large portions of it, both by manuscript and by memory.

¹⁹ Although LXX Isa. 2:3 inserts the preposition γάρ between ἐκ and Σιών, this would have posed no real difficulty in Paul's appropriation of the text.

nations, and the salvation of Israel.²⁰ In many ways, Isaiah 1:1–2:4 is paradigmatic for the book of Isaiah. It is not surprising to find an allusion to this text when Paul is drawing together the similar themes found in both Isaiah and his letter to the Romans. These texts clearly indicate God’s plan for a single, albeit multi-ethnic people, in the fulfilment of his promises.

The fifth test is historical plausibility. This is a question of whether Paul could really have intended to use this text to produce the effect in question. In our case, this seems quite likely. Regardless of whether many of his readers would have caught this subtle allusion, Paul’s extensive knowledge of Scripture and careful thematic reading of Isaiah 1–2 certainly makes this allusion possible, if not likely.

The sixth criterion is a comparison of the proposed allusion to the history of interpretation. In our case, although none have placed as strong an emphasis on Isaiah 2 as found here, there is support for an allusion to the tradition found in this passage in our text.²¹ The final criterion for Hays is satisfaction. That is, how well does the proposed allusion fit, and does it make sufficient sense in the context? It seems that the contexts of Isaiah 59:20-21, 27:9, 2:3, and Romans 11:25-27 are at least similar, if not referring to the same event: the fulfilment of YHWH’s promises to his people. The plausibility of this final criterion will become more apparent as we discuss the texts below.

3. Paul’s Method of Incorporating the OT

With at least a tentative argument for an allusion to Isaiah 2:3 in place, we are now in a position to examine Paul’s method of integrating these texts into his argument in Romans 11.

²⁰ Cf. Wagner, *Heralds*: 286, who notes the similarities between Isa. 27, Isa. 59, and Rom. 11.

²¹ After completing this article, I found that Thomas Aquinas cites Isa. 2:3 as a parallel to “from Zion” in Rom. 11:26 (cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolas S. Pauli lectura* 918, translated by Eugene F. Rogers, Jr in “Selections from Thomas Aquinas’s Commentary on Romans,” in *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Stephen E. Fowl; Blackwell Readings in Modern Theology [Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997]: 330-31). More recently, Wright, *Climax*: 250, cites Isa. 2:3 as one of the texts alluded to here. Cf. Wagner, *Heralds*: 284-85, who also cites this text, among others, as part of the tradition that Paul was utilising. Also see n. 15 above for other options.

3.1 *Isaiah 59*

Isaiah 59:20-21a provides the framework for Paul's OT quotation. In Isaiah 59, Israel laments the fact that YHWH's salvation has been slow to come. The reason for this slowness, however, is not YHWH's failure, but rather Israel's sin. Therefore, YHWH must act to defeat his enemies and remove Israel's sin. When he does so, not only Israel, but also the whole world will behold his glory. As a result, there will be some from both ethnic Israel and the Gentile world who together benefit from YHWH's saving action and share in his everlasting covenant.²² In Isaiah 59:20-21, Isaiah prophesies, 'a deliverer will come to Zion and he will banish ungodliness from Jacob.' In this chapter we see three themes that are crucial in understanding Paul's reading of Isaiah in Romans 11:1) YHWH wins the victory over his enemies (vv. 16-17); this leads to 2) the renewal of the covenant and the return of YHWH to Zion (vv. 20-21). Furthermore, 3) a blessing for the nations accompanies this saving action of YHWH.

It is crucial to see that Paul here interprets the prophecy of the deliverer coming to Zion as fulfilled in Christ.²³ The majority of Christian commentators accept the fact that Christ is fulfilling the role of YHWH here.²⁴ Most commentators also argue, however, that Paul's

²² The nations witnessing the saving action of YHWH is a prominent theme in Isa. 56–66. The result of their witness takes two forms: they will either tremble before the wrath of YHWH (64:2) or they will submit to YHWH, assume righteous character, and in some way benefit from his promises. In the latter case, the role of the nations often seems to be as servants in the kingdom of YHWH (60:6-14; 61:5). In 59:19, both the fear of YHWH and the glory of YHWH extend from the east to the west. In other words, the fear and glory of YHWH will cover the whole earth when he accomplishes the judgment on his enemies. Thus, there is a benefit extended to the nations when YHWH works to save Israel.

²³ The possibility of interpreting Isa. 59:20 messianically is found in *b.Sanh* 98a; cf. *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Sanhedrin* tr. by Jacob Shachter and H. Freedman ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1969). This text, however, almost certainly did not influence Paul, nor Paul it.

²⁴ Although Paul uses ῥυόμαι to refer to actions done both by the Father and Jesus, the connection with the removal of sin makes a reference to Jesus more likely. For other arguments in favour of a reference to Jesus here, cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans Volume 2* ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979): 578; J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans, Volume 2* WBC (Dallas: Word, 1988): 692; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996): 727; Florian Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus* (FRLANT 179; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998): 99-100. This interpretation, coupled with the christocentric nature of faith in Rom. 11, effectively answers those who argue that Paul is proposing an alternate covenant for the Jews. Cf. Scott J. Hafemann, 'The Salvation of Israel in Romans 11:25-32: A Response to Krister Stendahl,' *Ex Auditu* 4 (1988): 38-58.

reference to Isaiah 59 points forward to the Parousia. Dunn's argument is representative of this view: 'since he [Paul] refers the scripture to the eschatological climax he would not be thinking of Jesus' previous historical association with Jerusalem, rather of his Parousia from heaven to Jerusalem or from heavenly Jerusalem (cf. again 1 Thessalonians.1:10; also Galatians 4:26). This is the first and only time Paul speaks of Christ's second coming in this letter.'²⁵ Reidar Hvalvik, however, has convincingly answered this line of arguing. First, to argue from the parallel to 1 Thessalonians 1:10, which uses ῥυόμαι to refer to the second coming, is not decisive. The word appears in a number of Pauline contexts that do not refer to the second coming (2 Corinthians 1:10, Romans 15:31, Colossians 1:13). Second, the eschatological tone and future tense of the passage does not demand a reference to the Parousia. Pauline eschatology does not exclusively refer to the events surrounding the second coming of Christ. For Paul, the coming of Christ marked the beginning of the eschatological era.²⁶ Thus as Hvalvik notes, 'The Deliverer has already come from Zion (cf. 9:33) ... God's truthfulness towards his promises are seen in Christ's first coming.'²⁷

Another common argument in favour of the Parousia interpretation is the change from ἔνεκεν Σιών to ἐκ Σιών in v. 26.²⁸ According to this line of argumentation, Zion refers to the heavenly Jerusalem from which Christ will descend, and ἥξει is a genuine future verb.²⁹ The problem with the former argument is that throughout the book of Isaiah, Zion, although transformed from an immoral city to a holy city, is consistently an *earthly* location.³⁰ Paul's quotation reflects the original Isaiah context, and the original context of Zion in Isaiah 59 is clearly not an ethereal heavenly city, but a more tangible earthly location. Thus, ἐκ Σιών likely refers to the deliverer's (or his message's) movement out from Jerusalem/Israel. Both here and in Isaiah 2, Zion represents the crucial role of the Jewish people as the focal point of God's action and/or revelation. Paul's reference to Zion,

²⁵ Dunn, *Romans*: 692.

²⁶ Cf. Don N. Howell, Jr, 'Pauline Eschatological Dualism and Its Resulting Tensions,' *Trinity Journal* 14 (1993): 3-24, for more on the role of inaugurated eschatology in Pauline theology.

²⁷ Reidar Hvalvik, 'A 'Sonderweg' for Israel', *JSNT* 38 (1990): 92-93.

²⁸ Hvalvik, 'A 'Sonderweg' for Israel': 93 notes this common argument.

²⁹ Schreiner, *Romans*: 619 advances both of these arguments.

³⁰ Cf. Webb, 'Zion in Transformation,' 68-69.

then, fits well with the context of Isaiah, in that he interprets it as a reference to the Jewish people as the focal point and/or source of revelation from God.³¹ Thus, Jesus, as the representative of the Jewish race, is likely the referent of Zion for Paul.

The argument in favour of the Parousia reading is further answered through appeal to the context of Romans 9–11. In these chapters, Paul is clearly arguing for a decisive salvation-historical shift with the coming of Christ. He is the τέλος of the Law (10:4), the means by which the promised salvation of Israel is realised (10:9), and therefore the object of the faith that determines whether one is a partaker of the ‘rich root of the olive tree’ (11:17-24). This shift is the result of what God has done to fulfil his promises to Israel through Christ. The OT promises of salvation have been fulfilled through Christ; therefore, Paul views Isaiah 59 as an already fulfilled prophecy that is continuing to be applied to the people of God during his ministry (and beyond).³² Furthermore, the decisive removal of sin in Pauline theology was clearly accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ.³³ For Paul, the defeat of YHWH’s enemies ultimately entails the defeat and removal of sin. Thus, the prophecy of a redeemer coming to Zion and removing the sin of Jacob was fulfilled in Christ, and now the message of Christ is going out from its source among the Jews.

3.2 *Isaiah 2*

Since the prophecy of the deliverer coming has been fulfilled in the coming of Christ, Paul next incorporates an allusion to Isaiah 2. Isaiah 2:1-4 is a poetic description of what the world will be like when YHWH restores Israel.³⁴ A restored Zion, in which YHWH’s presence

³¹ Ellis, *Use of the Old Testament*: 123 n. 5 argues that the change of prepositions here results from Paul views of the Church ‘as σώμα Χριστοῦ and ναὸς θεοῦ,’ from ‘which the redeemer goes forth.’ This view, however, overcomplicates the interpretation of Zion.

³² Wright, *Romans*: 691, notes, ‘Even a glance at the contexts of the passages Paul actually quotes—which is usually, as we have seen, an excellent guide to his meaning—will show that he intends these biblical quotations to describe once more the same process of God’s dealing with Israel’s (and the world’s) sins that has already been described in 9:24-26 and especially 10:6-13, with 2:25-29 and 8:1-11 in the immediate background.’

³³ Cf. Rom. 3:22-26, where Paul explicitly connects the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sins.

³⁴ This text is repeated verbatim in Micah 4:1-3. For more on this parallel, cf. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66* AB Vol 19b (New York: Doubleday, 2003): 190-91; John

will once again dwell, will become the centrepiece of the earth. The nations will stream to Zion because they will finally know that YHWH is the Lord over all the earth (v. 2). V. 3 provides the reason that the nations will stream to YHWH in that day: the Torah will go out from Zion (ἐκ . . . Σιὼν). The prophet looked forward to an era when the teaching of the Law would extend from Zion to the world and an ingathering from the nations would stream from the world to Zion.³⁵ This worldwide extension of YHWH's word would accompany the era of peace and prosperity for which Israel longed—and which YHWH promised to provide. Along with this poetic picture of a restored nation, the latter half of the chapter details YHWH's victory over his enemies. Thus, just as in Isaiah 59:1) YHWH wins the victory over his enemies, (vv. 12-22), 2) YHWH returns to Zion (v. 2a), and 3) a blessing for the nations accompanies this saving action of YHWH (vv. 2b-4).

Earlier, in Romans 10, Paul says that Jesus has taken the place of Torah in the life of the nation.³⁶ Isaiah 2 speaks of the Torah going out to all nations resulting in an era of peace and prosperity for Israel. Paul interprets this prophecy in terms of the gospel going out from Zion to the nations in Romans 11. Instead of the Torah as it stood in the OT era going out to the nations, the word about the goal of the Torah, Jesus the Messiah, goes out to the world by means of the word of Christ (Romans 10:17); therefore Christ fulfils the role of Torah here. In a similar manner, instead of Israel as a corporate whole being the means by which the nations would see YHWH, Jesus is the means by which the nations would come to YHWH. The deliverer goes out from Zion to

N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39* NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986): 115-16.

³⁵ Oswalt, *Isaiah*: 118, argues that Zion here has become 'a symbol of God's self-revelation through history' and the source of true salvation for men. This symbolism, however, does not demand that Zion should be viewed in strictly spiritual terms.

³⁶ Israel defined herself in relation to the Torah. It was the constitution of the nation and the means by which each Israelite related to God, his fellow Israelites, and the world. According to Paul, Christ fulfilled the intention of the Torah; in Paul's reading of Deut. 30, therefore, Christ has taken the place of doing the Torah. Therefore, Christ has in some sense assumed the all-important role of Torah in the nation's life. Cf. Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T&T Clark, 2004): 437, who comments, 'Essentially, the purpose of [Paul's] rewriting is to substitute faith in Christ for the doing of the commandment.' Regardless of the accuracy of Watson's contention that 'Paul is imposing an *a priori* christology,' his conclusion on the Christ-for-Torah substitution is accurate.

the nations;³⁷ therefore Jesus also fulfils the role of Israel as the means of bringing the nations to YHWH.³⁸

3.3 *Isaiah 27*

Rather than emphasising the internalisation of the Spirit and the word of God as found in the rest of Isaiah 59:21, Paul describes the salvation found here in a quotation from Isaiah 27:9. In so doing, he continues his emphasis on the connection between the covenant and forgiven sin.³⁹ By importing this text, Paul emphasises the fact that God's faithfulness to his covenant is demonstrated in forgiving sin.⁴⁰

In Isaiah 27, we find ourselves in familiar territory. After a discussion of her punishment, the restoration of Israel is found in v. 9. 'By this' (בְּזֵאת) Israel's sin will be forgiven and her hope will be restored. The demonstrative pronoun here probably refers to the action of YHWH toward Israel. By the love and compassion of YHWH, the iniquity of Jacob will be taken away. In the final verses of Isaiah 27, the author returns to the theme of the expansion of Israel and the worldwide reign of YHWH. Although vv. 7-11 focus on Israel proper, those verses are bracketed by prophecies of the extension of Israel to include the entire world. Although those who are outside of Israel will face punishment, the structure of the chapter extends an invitation for people from all nations to become part of Israel. In v. 12, all of the sons of Israel will finally dwell in the borders of the land that were promised to Abraham.⁴¹ V. 13 implies that the gathered sons of Israel will include many from foreign lands.⁴² Thus, v. 13 coincides with v. 1; in

³⁷ Syntactically, therefore, ἐκ Σιῶν in Rom. 11:26 connotes separation. The Redeemer and his message are extended from the physical Jerusalem and the Jewish people to the Gentile world.

³⁸ Therefore, *contra* Stanley, *Paul and Language*: 166, who claims 'there is nothing in the present context to indicate that Paul attributed any significance to the preposition ἐκ in his quotation from Isa. 59:20,' there is ample evidence for a deliberate alteration.

³⁹ Cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2: 578-79; Moo, *Romans*: 729.

⁴⁰ In Romans, therefore, forgiven sin is both judicial, as described in Rom. 3:22-26, and covenantal, as described here. There is therefore a close link between covenant faithfulness and the righteousness of God in Romans.

⁴¹ Gen. 15:18, cf. also Exod. 23:31, Josh. 1:4, Ps. 72:8.

⁴² Although the reference to Assyria makes it possible that this is a reference to the return from exile of ethnic Israelites, other factors make it more likely that this is a reference to foreigners joining themselves to Israel. If the prophet was referring only to ethnic Israelites returning from exile, Assyria and Babylon would be the most likely referents. By referring to Egypt, which lay just outside of the western border of the promised land, and Assyria, which lay just outside the eastern border, the implication

v. 1, YHWH will win the victory over his enemies by the great sword; in v. 13, YHWH will gather his people from all over the world to worship him at Mount Zion.⁴³

In Isaiah 27, YHWH wins his glorious victory and as a result Israel's sin is finally removed, and the nation is restored. Like Isaiah 59 and 2, in Isaiah 27, there is a clear inclusion of the Gentiles when the YHWH acts to fulfil his covenant with Israel. Therefore, both Jews and Gentiles have their sins forgiven in Isaiah 27:9. For Paul, Christ is the means by which God will forgive the sin of both Jews and Gentiles. In his application of this text, Paul once again sees the OT promises here as fulfilled in Christ, and benefiting the nations.

We can summarise the common themes from these three texts as follows:

	<u>Isaiah 59</u>	<u>Isaiah 2</u>	<u>Isaiah 27</u>
YHWH returns to Zion / the covenant is renewed	vv. 20-21	v. 2a	v. 6
YHWH's victory over his enemies / removal of sin	vv. 16-17	vv. 12-22	vv. 1, 9
Accompanying blessing for the Gentiles	vv. 18-19	vv. 2b-4	vv. 12-13

4. Paul's Use of the OT

We are now in a position to summarise some of our findings on Paul's use of the OT in Romans 11:26-27. I have argued that Paul interpreted the prophecies found in Isaiah 59:20-21, Isaiah 2:3, and Isaiah 27:9 as fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Paul cites these texts as fulfilled prophecy—YHWH has returned to Zion, dealt with the sin of his people and renewed the covenant; and he has done so in the person of Jesus Christ. The citation of these passages in Romans 11:26-27 does not look forward to the Parousia of Christ, but rather looks back to the already finished work of Christ. In citing these passages, Paul is intentionally drawing on contexts that refer to an inclusion of Gentiles when the promises to Israel are fulfilled. Paul's argument throughout Romans 9–11 is quite similar, in that he forcefully argues for the

is that those from outside Israel will join with the people of God 'in that day' when the trumpet is blown and YHWH finally wins the victory.

⁴³ Motyer, *Isaiah*: 225.

inclusion of unexpected members and/or Gentiles into the people of God from the very beginning of Israel's history.⁴⁴ For Paul, the fulfilment of YHWH's promises to his people—his faithfulness to the covenant—is realised in the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles into the people of God through the work of Christ, the deliverer who has come to Zion and is now going out from Zion to the nations.⁴⁵ Therefore, the end-time pilgrimage of the nations to Zion has already begun, but it is happening in an unexpected manner.⁴⁶

5. All Israel and the Salvation of God's People

The logic of Paul's argument in this section points toward the inclusion of both Jew and Gentile in the people of God. Paul's use of the OT in this passage also supports this Jew-Gentile inclusion. In Paul's mind, Jesus the Messiah fulfilled the Isaiah prophecies, and the benefits of these promises—the return of YHWH to Zion, the renewal of the covenant, and forgiveness of sins—belong to all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, regardless of ethnicity.

The interpretation of this passage suggested here, therefore, excludes the majority opinion that 'all Israel' in v. 26 refers to the ethnic nation Israel in its entirety. If Paul is drawing on contexts in which Jew and Gentile are included in the people of God and arguing that these texts have been decisively fulfilled in the work of Christ, his argument cannot point to a future fulfilment of these texts that is contemporaneous with the salvation of ethnic Israel. This then leaves us with two possible interpretations of 'all Israel.' First, 'all Israel' is the remnant of elect ethnic Israelites. Although the promises of God extend to both Jews and Gentiles who have faith in Messiah, Paul's particular reference to 'all Israel' being saved designates the salvation of a limited number of elect ethnic Israelites. In this scenario, the phrase 'all Israel will be saved' is another step in Paul's argument, but

⁴⁴ Frank Thielman, 'Unexpected Mercy: Echoes of a Biblical Motif in Romans 9–11' *SJT* 47 (1994): 169-81.

⁴⁵ Wright, *Climax*: 236, is on target, therefore, is saying, 'Only by such a process—Israel's unbelief, the turning to the Gentiles, and the continual offer of salvation to Jews also—can God be true to the promises to Abraham, promises which declared *both* that he would give him a worldwide family *and* that his own seed would share in the blessing.' [*italics original*].

⁴⁶ *Contra* Wilk, *Die Bedeutung*: 69, who delays the 'Völkerwallfahrt zum Gottesberg' until the Parousia.

on the same temporal and rhetorical level as the hardening of most of the nation and the salvation of Gentiles.

The second option for ‘all Israel’ is that it is a reference to all believers, both Jew and Gentile. The promises of God extend to both Jews and Gentiles who have faith in Messiah. When Paul says Israel will be saved, he is referring to *spiritual* Israel. In this second option, ‘all Israel will be saved’ is not so much a new step but rather a summary of the argument: the Gentiles being grafted into the people of God and Jewish jealousy that leads to faith in Messiah is the way that ‘all Israel’—the worldwide people of God—will be saved.⁴⁷

It is difficult to determine which interpretation of ‘all Israel’ is best.⁴⁸ Focusing too much on the interpretation of this phrase has probably led some interpreters away from seeing the meaning of this text and Paul’s intention for the OT quotation. Rather, it is much more important to see that Paul appeals to the testimony of Isaiah in Romans 11:25-27 to bolster his argument for Jew-Gentile inclusion.⁴⁹ Therefore, while Paul’s conclusion to this section in 11:28-32 focuses on the salvation of ethnic Jews, he concludes his argument in 11:32 by commenting once again on God’s mercy toward all.⁵⁰

Paul argues throughout Romans 9–11 that the promises of God were never given to all ethnic Israelites. The OT indicates that the promises would extend beyond Israel to include the nations. In history, Jesus Christ has fulfilled the role of both YHWH and Israel; in him the promises come together and find their fulfilment. Therefore, the new

⁴⁷ *M. Sanh* 10.1 says, ‘All Israel will have a share in the world to come (כל ישראל (יש להם חלק לעולם הבא)’. Cf. *Mishnayoth* Vol IV Order Nezikin (New York: Judaica Press, 1963): 285. In this text, however, ‘all Israel’ is immediately qualified and limited. Therefore, it seems that there was some precedent within Judaism to redefine ‘all Israel’ according to ethical, rather than ethnic, boundaries. This text, however, makes no mention of Gentile inclusion; it is therefore not necessarily a parallel to Paul’s use of ‘all Israel’ in Rom. 11:26.

⁴⁸ Some, such as Robert Vasholz, ‘The Character of Israel’s Future in Light of the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants’ *Trinity Journal* 25 (2004): 40, argue against the possibility of Israel referring to anything other than the nation as a corporate whole on the basis of Paul’s usage throughout Rom. 9–11. In Romans 9:6, however, Paul clearly draws a distinction between physical and spiritual Israel, making Vasholz’s argument unnecessary.

⁴⁹ Thus, it is best to see the Isaiah citation as a support for the whole process of vv. 25-26, and not simply as a support for 26a. *Contra* Wilk, *Die Bedeutung*: 67.

⁵⁰ The difficult statement in v. 28 (κατὰ μὲν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐχθροὶ δι’ ὑμᾶς, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ἀγαπητοὶ διὰ τοὺς πατέρας) need not be construed as an endorsement of the future salvation of corporate ethnic Israel, but rather the continued inclusion of ethnic Israelites in the people of God.

covenant blessings that some first century Jews expected to come to the whole nation are only granted to those who are connected to the Messiah. There is therefore no single ethnic group that can claim exclusive rights to the promises of God; union with Christ is the only factor—he is the centrepiece of God’s work in history. Paul’s argument is consistent with his theology throughout Romans; God has indeed been faithful to his promises to his people and all those who have faith in Christ are the beneficiaries of those promises.