
ZIONISM IN PAULINE LITERATURE

*Does Paul Eliminate Particularity for Israel and the Land
in His Portrayal of Salvation Available for All the World?*

David Rudolph



About eighty-five years after Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, Justin Martyr wrote in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, “And hence you [Trypho] ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation [the Jewish people] have been *transferred* to us [Christians].”¹ Perhaps the most articulate proponent of this “*transference* theology” today is N. T. Wright, who has spent the last forty years writing about the relationship between the church and Israel in Paul’s theology. Wright argues that through the coming of Christ, God’s relationship with the Jewish people has been reconfigured so that Israel’s covenant blessings, responsibilities and calling have all been “transferred” to the church as a whole, thus resulting in the erasure of divinely given Jewish boundary markers of identity. Or to put it in more politically correct language, these boundary markers have all been universalized:

In Rom. 5–8 Paul develops the picture of the church in terms belonging to Israel. This transfer is achieved in two stages. First, Israel’s calling, responsibilities

¹Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 82. In the oldest extant commentary on Paul’s letter to the Romans (ca. AD 246), Origen argues that Israel’s blessings have been transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles: “Through the whole text of the epistle . . . the Apostle has taught how the highest religion has been *transferred* from the Jews to the Gentiles, from circumcision to faith, from the letter to the spirit, from shadow to truth, from carnal observance to spiritual observance.” Origen, *Commentaire sur l’Épître aux Romains, tome 4: Livres IX—X*, trans. Caroline P. Hammond Bammel and Luc Bresard, *Sources chrétiennes*, 555 (Paris: Cerf, 2012) (emphasis added).

and privileges have been taken over by the Messiah himself, alone: second, what is true of the Messiah is reckoned to be true of his people. . . . In him all believers, without distinction of race, inherit all that was Israel's. . . . Paul, in line with Old Testament prophecy, claims that God's glory has been taken away from Israel according to the flesh and given to the community of the new covenant. . . . The Christian is the true Jew. . . . The first five verses of the chapter [Rom 5:1-5] thus set out the grounds of assurance in terms of the transfer of Israel's privileges to the church. . . . What Israel should have done, the Messiah has done alone. Having therefore taken Israel's task, he (and hence his people) inherit Israel's privileges. . . . We have seen that Paul explicitly and consciously transfers blessings from Israel according to the flesh to the Messiah, and thence to the church. . . . In the same way, Gal. 2-4 argues precisely that the worldwide believing church is the true family of Abraham, and that those who remain as "Israel according to the flesh" are in fact the theological descendants of Hagar and Ishmael, with no title to the promises. . . . It is not therefore without a touch of bitter irony, reminiscent of Phil. 3.2ff., that he [Paul] transfers the name "Israel" to the church.²

In line with this transference theology paradigm,³ Wright argues that the temple, Jerusalem and the land of Israel are all covenantal blessings that were "superseded" (to use Wright's term!)⁴ through the coming of Christ. Based on this supersessionist reading of Paul, Wright goes on to describe Christian

²N. T. Wright, "The Messiah and the People of God: A Study in Pauline Theology with Particular Reference to the Argument of the Epistle to the Romans" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1980), 135-37, 139-40, 193, 196. "In Romans 5-8 Paul argues that all of Israel's privileges have now been transferred, via the Messiah, to the worldwide people of God, the true family of Abraham. . . . Christians are the new humanity ([Rom] 5.12ff.), God's sons ([Rom] 8.12ff.), inheriting God's glory ([Rom] 8.18ff.), his covenants and law ([Rom] 7.1-8.11), his promises to the Patriarchs ([Rom] 4) and so offering to God the true worship of Israel (Phil. 3.2ff.). That this list fits so well with Rom. 9.3ff. is again indicative of the whole shape of Paul's argument." N. T. Wright, "Justification: Its Relevance for Contemporary Evangelicalism (1980)," in *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 32, 32n59.

³Wright's brand of supersessionism is reviewed in Douglas Harink, *Paul Among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology Beyond Christendom and Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003), 151-207, and in Michael G. Vanlaningham, "An Evaluation of N. T. Wright's View of Israel in Romans 11," *BSac* 170 (April-June 2013): 179-93.

⁴For a discussion of the history and definition of the term *supersessionism*, see Matthew A. Tapie, *Aquinas on Israel and the Church: The Question of Supersessionism in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 9-24; R. Kendall Soulen, "Supersessionism," in *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 413-14; and Michael J. Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 17-40.

Zionism as a "soi-disant 'Christian' apartheid" that should be rejected. He writes in his essay "Jerusalem in the New Testament":

In Romans 4:13 Paul says, startlingly, "The promise to Abraham and his seed, that they should inherit the world." Surely the promises of inheritance were that Abraham's family would inherit the land of Israel, not the world? Paul's horizon, however, is bigger. The Land, like the Torah, was a temporary stage in the long purpose of the God of Abraham. It was not a bad thing now done away with, but a good and necessary thing now fulfilled in Christ and the Spirit. It is as though, in fact, the Land were a great advance metaphor for the design of God that his people should eventually bring the world into submission to his healing reign. God's whole purpose now goes beyond Jerusalem and the Land to the whole world. . . . The Temple had been superseded by the Church. If this is so for the Temple, and in Romans 4 for the Land, then it must *a fortiori* be the case for Jerusalem. . . . Jesus' whole claim is to do and be what the city and the temple were and did. As a result, both claims, the claim of Jesus and the claim of "holy land," can never be sustained simultaneously. . . . The only appropriate attitude in subsequent generations towards Jews, the Temple, the Land or Jerusalem must be one of sorrow or pity. . . . The responsibility of the church in the present age is to anticipate the age to come in acts of justice, mercy, beauty and truth; we are to live "now" as it will be "then." We can only do this, of course, insofar as we have got quite clear in our minds that there is no going back to the old lines that demarcate human beings (race, colour, gender, geography, etc.). That is to say, among other things, that there can and must be no "Christian" theology of "holy places" (on the model or analogy of the "holy places" of a religion that has an essentially geographical base), any more than there can be a "Christian" theology of racial superiority on the model or analogy of a religion that has an essentially racial base. To that extent, "Christian Zionism" is the geographical equivalent of a *soi-disant* "Christian" apartheid, and ought to be rejected as such.⁵

⁵N. T. Wright, "Jerusalem in the New Testament," in *Jerusalem Past and Present in the Purposes of God*, ed. P. W. L. Walker (Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1992), 67, 70, 73-75. Wright's polemic could be construed as an unintended Christian theology of ethnic cleansing that stigmatizes Jewish boundary markers of identity, including those that are mentioned in the Scriptures as God-ordained, leading ultimately to the elimination of Jewish presence in the church. This result is not mere theory but the historical footprint of Christian transference theology since the time of Justin Martyr. As Michael Wyschogrod puts it, "In fact, throughout the centuries, Jews who entered the Church very quickly lost their Jewish identity. . . . In short, if all Jews in past ages had followed the advice of the Church to become Christians, there would be no more Jews in the world today. The question we must ask is: Does the Church really want a world without Jews?"

It is not an overstatement to say that a growing number of Christians are sympathetic to Wright's view. But is this transference reading of Paul correct? Would "the circumcised apostle"⁶ nod approvingly at Wright's attempted synthesis of Paul's perspective on this subject? Or would Paul view the notion of a first-century expiration date on Jewish election as a distortion of his teachings? The bottom-line question is, does Paul eliminate particularity for Israel and the land in his portrayal of salvation available for all the world?

This essay maintains that Paul's gospel does *not* eliminate such particularity and that a compelling case can be made on the basis of Paul's writings for the perpetuity of Jewish particularity. I will begin by discussing several Pauline passages that are often quoted by transference theology proponents to contend that Paul opposed Jewish particularity. Then I will present arguments in support of the view that Paul upheld the continued election, gifts and calling of the Jewish people.

Does the Church believe that such a world is in accordance with the will of God? Or does the Church believe that it is God's will, even after the coming of Jesus, that there be a Jewish people in the world? . . . If, from the Christian point of view, Israel's election remains a contemporary reality, then the disappearance of the Jewish people from the world cannot be an acceptable development." Michael Wyschogrod, "A Letter to Cardinal Lustiger," in *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. R. Kendall Soulen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 207-8.

William S. Campbell calls into question Christian attempts like Wright's to equate equality with sameness, and distinction with discrimination: "What Paul intended by differentiation between ethnic groups should, however, certainly not be construed as discrimination against any of the groups under discussion. Differentiation and discrimination are two very different activities and should not be confused. . . . Getting rid of human difference is often a cloak for a cultural imperialism. . . . The biblical understanding of the impartiality of God in Romans is in no sense an anti-Jewish perspective, but one that ensures the mercy of God equally for Jew and gentile. And the acknowledgment of this blessing, emanating from the house of Israel, requires two very specific responses from gentiles in Christ. The first is that they recognize that their election in Christ is secure only on the basis of the prior election of Israel and, secondly, that this status brings with it the obligation that gentiles learn what it means to be gentiles in Christ. . . . It is indeed ironic that the heritage of Paul in Judaism that stresses the impartiality of God should somehow become misconstrued to mean that Christ followers should discriminate against the very people whose heritage gave Paul the convictions to oppose all discrimination." William S. Campbell, "No Distinction or No Discrimination? The Translation of Διαστολή in Romans 3:22 and 10:12," *TZ* 4, no. 69 (2013): 353, 368, 370; see also William S. Campbell, "Differentiation and Discrimination in Paul's Ethnic Discourse," *Transformation* 30, no. 3 (2013): 157-68.

⁶In his magnum opus *History of the Jews*, Heinrich Graetz describes Paul as "the circumcised apostle," a sarcastic designation intended to highlight the Ebionite view that Paul, a circumcised Jew, purportedly taught first-century Jews not to circumcise their children or keep the Torah. See Graetz, *History of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1893), 2:367.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST PARTICULARITY

The Promised Land has been universalized in Christ. In his book *Jesus and the Land*, Gary Burge claims that Christ universalized the Promised Land and that this is explicitly stated in Paul's words, "For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith" (Rom 4:13). Burge, building on Wright,⁷ reasons that Paul's use of the expression "inherit the world" rather than "inherit the land of Judea" indicates that the land promise was reconfigured and no longer in force: "The formula that linked Abraham to Jewish ethnic lineage and the right to possess the land has now been overturned in Christ. Paul's Christian theology links Abraham to children of faith, and to them belongs God's full domain, namely, the world."⁸

Transference theology proponents often consider Romans 4:13 to be the clearest statement in Paul's writings that the particularity of the land promise was voided after the coming of Christ.⁹ The case for this, however, is surprisingly weak. First, Romans 4:13 does not say that the Jewish "right to possess the land has now been overturned in Christ" as Burge contends. To suggest this is to read into the text something that Paul does not actually say.

Second, Burge does not substantiate his assumption that for Paul the universal is better than the particular. The Pauline corpus does not support a Baurian view that Judaism is defective because of its particularism.¹⁰ The fact of the matter is that there is much in Paul's letters (e.g., Rom 9-11; 15) that envisions the universal and particular coexisting in God's kingdom, a view consistent with

⁷Wright, "Jerusalem in the New Testament," 67.

⁸Gary M. Burge, *Jesus and the Land: The New Testament Challenge to "Holy Land" Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 85-86.

⁹E.g., Oren R. Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land: The Land Promise in God's Redemptive Plan* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 131.

¹⁰E. C. Baur viewed Christianity as a universal religion that transcended the particularism of Judaism: "What is it in Christianity that gives it its absolute character? The first and obvious answer to this question is that Christianity is elevated above the defects and limitations, the one-sidedness and finiteness, which constitute the particularism of other forms of religion. Here then we meet again the characteristic feature of the Christian principle. It looks beyond the outward, the accidental, the particular, and rises to the universal, the unconditioned, the essential . . . the all-commanding universalism of its spirit and aims. . . . [Paul was] the first to lay down expressly and distinctly the principle of Christian universalism as a thing essentially opposed to Jewish particularism." Baur, *The Church History of the First Three Centuries* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1878), 33, 43, 47. See James D. G. Dunn, "Was Judaism Particularist or Universalist?," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, part 3, vol. 2, *Where We Stand: Issues and Debates in Ancient Judaism*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 57-73.

the eschatological model in Paul's Jewish Bible (cf. Deut 32:43; Rom 15:10). Paul's ideal is not the erasure of Jewish distinctiveness but Jews and Gentiles relating to one another in a spirit of interdependence and mutual blessing, which leads to mutual humbling and praise to God (Rom 11:11-32; 15:7-27).

Third, Burge presumes that in Paul's thought when something takes on new or additional meaning in Christ that the "fulfillment" ipso facto cancels out the validity of the prior practice or institution. However, Burge offers no evidence to support this presupposition, and there are a number of texts that would call it into question. Consider the Pauline view that marriage points to the relationship between Christ and the church (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:21-33), and yet marriage is not overturned through the coming of Christ. God continues to call men and women to be married (1 Cor 7:1-40; Col 3:18-19). Or consider Paul's present-tense affirmation of temple worship in Romans 9:4 ("the glory . . . the worship") and Luke's account in Acts 21:17-26 that Paul entered the Jerusalem temple and participated in offerings,¹¹ or Paul's prophecy in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 about the man of lawlessness who "takes his seat in the temple of God," even while Paul considered his own body and the church to be temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21-22). Similarly, Romans 4:13 indicates that the Abrahamic promise ultimately points to Christ and the church, but this does not necessarily imply that the particular territorial dimension of the Abrahamic promise has been "overturned."

Fourth, Burge asserts that "Romans 4:13 is the only place where the apostle refers explicitly to the promises for the land given to Abraham."¹² However, Paul may not have the land specifically in view in this passage; he may be speaking

of people. In his article "Abraham as 'Heir of the World,'" Nelson Hsieh concludes that in Romans 4:13 Paul is focusing not on the land but on Abraham's descendants:

I have shown that the context of Rom 4:13 is focused upon the OT promises of descendants ([Rom 4:]17-18, quoting Gen 17:5 and 15:5), not the OT promises of land (e.g. Gen 12:7; 13:15; 17:8). Finally, I have shown that κόσμος can refer to persons as well as land, and that κληρονόμος does not always refer to inheriting land, but can also refer to inheriting righteousness, life, persons, etc. This understanding of Rom 4:13 is appropriately called the "inheritance of many nations" view. Abraham is not inheriting land, but inheriting people—namely, his innumerable spiritual descendants from all the nations of the world. According to this view, Rom 4:13 has nothing to do with the OT land promises and thus neither affirms nor expands the OT land promises. It is about the worldwide nature of Abraham's descendants; it is not about the worldwide nature of Abraham's land promise. Thus, Rom 4:13 simply has nothing to say about the land promise.¹³

Boyd Luter concurs that "the flow of this entire passage is clearly about people and faith, not land. Thus, Romans 4 cannot be legitimately used to argue for the replacing of the Land Promise to Israel in the New Testament."¹⁴

Fifth, in Second Temple Jewish literature, there are numerous statements similar to Romans 4:13 that describe Abraham as heir of the world. Gerhard Visscher surveys these texts in his monograph *Romans 4 and the New Perspective on Paul*:

In Hebrew scriptures, there is no statement to the effect that Abraham would be heir of the world. However, as Schreiner has pointed out (*Romans*, 227), both in the Hebrew scriptures (cf. Pss. 2, 22, 47, 72; Isa. 2:1-4; 19:18-25; 49:6-7; 52:7-10; 55:3-5; 66:23; Amos 9:11-12; Zeph. 3:9-10; Zech. 14:9) and in Second Temple Literature, the universal character of the promise to Abraham was stressed. In Sir 44:19, Abraham is described as "the great father of a multitude of nations . . . and Sir 44:21 speaks of how the Lord swore to give him offspring as numerous as the dust of the earth and the stars of the sky, and he would "give them an inheritance from sea to sea and from the Euphrates to the ends

¹³Nelson S. Hsieh, "Abraham as 'Heir of the World': Does Romans 4:13 Expand the Old Testament Abrahamic Land Promises?" *MSJ* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 95-110.

¹⁴A. Boyd Luter, "The Continuation of Israel's Land Promise in the New Testament: A Fresh Approach," *Eruditio Ardescens* 1, no. 2 (2014): 13 (an expanded unpublished version of the article).

¹¹"Rom 9:4 refers to the temple cultus as a central and continuing privilege of the Jews. . . . Since Paul's communities are gentile and the concerns of his letters are gentile, he has little opportunity to mention Jerusalem, the temple, and the Jewish situation. When he does refer to these institutions, however, he assumes their continuing validity." S. K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 130-31. Cf. Bruce Longenecker, "On Israel's God and God's Israel: Assessing Supersessionism in Paul," *JTS* 58, no. 1 (2007): 27-29. For a discussion of Paul's possible motive(s) for participating in temple worship according to Acts 21, see David J. Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews: Jewish Contours of Pauline Flexibility in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 53-72.

¹²Burge, *Jesus and the Land*, 85. The land promise is reiterated hundreds of times in the Tanak, Paul's Bible, which the apostle regarded as "God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16). "Arguing from the absence of the term 'land' . . . is a dubious argument from silence. One might just as well argue against the validity of repentance from the absence of the term in the Gospel of John, or against the importance of love from the term's absence in the Acts of the Apostles." Barry E. Horner, *Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007), 225.

of the earth.” It is especially in the extrabiblical literature that the idea seems to grow that Abraham would inherit the world. According to *Jub.* 22:14, Abraham gives a blessing to Jacob which includes the wish that he “inherit all of the earth.” According to *Jub.* 32:19, Jacob receives the promise from God at Bethel: “And I shall give to your seed all of the land under heaven and they will rule in all nations as they have desired. And after this all of the earth will be gathered together and they will inherit it forever.” In 2 *Bar.* 14:13, the righteous are said to leave this world, confident “of the world promised to them” and in 2 *Bar.* 51:3, the righteous will one day “acquire and receive the undying world which is promised to them.” According to 1 *En.* 5:7, the elect “shall inherit the earth.” Given all these references, Paul does not seem to be sounding a note too far removed when he refers to Abraham and his offspring “inheriting the world.”¹⁵

These first-century Jewish texts not only highlight the universal dimension of the Abrahamic promise but also assume the continuation of Jewish particularity in the eschaton.¹⁶ For example, in Jubilees 22:14, Abraham blesses Jacob with the words, “May you inherit all of the earth.” Notably this passage is located between Jubilees 22:11 and Jubilees 22:15, where Abraham says to Jacob, “May nations serve you, and all the nations bow themselves before your seed. . . . May He renew His covenant with you that you may be to Him a nation for His inheritance for all ages.”¹⁷ Given Paul’s emphasis in Romans 2–3 and 9–11 on

the present-tense election, gifts and calling of the Jewish people, it is reasonable to assume that in Romans 4:13 he echoes the normative view of his day that the Abrahamic promise included universal and particular elements. Mark Forman arrives at the same conclusion in his study *The Politics of Inheritance in Romans*:

But how does all of this relate to the phrase Paul uses in Rom. 4:13, “inherit the world”? Within the tradition surveyed above, there does seem to be the implication that the Abrahamic promise was always intended for the entire world, not exclusively for Israel. As Scott observes, “The Abrahamic Promise sets in motion a trajectory whose ultimate fulfillment takes place in the time of Israel’s Restoration, when Israel will again become a great nation, and all nations (i.e. all those listed in the Table of Nations) will be blessed in Abraham and his seed.” . . .

References to Israel’s future “inheritance” of *the world* are scattered throughout the Intertestamental literature, as is the more general concept of Israel in relation to the nations. . . . Amidst these references, however, there is one book in particular, the *Book of Jubilees*, which has much to offer to an understanding of “inherit the world” in Rom. 4:13 and the tradition which this stems. There are several reasons why *Jubilees* is especially instructive. To begin with, there are three direct references to the inheritance of Israel: inherit “the land” ([*Jub.*] 17:3); “inherit the earth” ([*Jub.*] 22:14); and “gain the entire earth and inherit it forever” ([*Jub.*] 32:19). In itself, this makes these references particularly illuminating for a reading of Rom. 4:13. But what adds to the import of these phrases is the broader framework within which the word inheritance is used: the land of Israel, together with the role it fulfills within the purposes of God, is one of the primary concerns of *Jubilees*. In other words the concept of inheritance takes its place within the broader expectation of Israel’s future. This is not to say that Rom. 4:13 should be understood exclusively in relation to *Jubilees* but that the use of inheritance here does bear close resemblance to Romans and is therefore instructive. . . .

to mean the entire earth. But then the midrash becomes very concrete; ‘They shall possess the High Mountain of Israel [forever] and shall enjoy [everlasting delights] in His Sanctuary.’ See 4QpPs 37.2 and 3. Also CD 1.7–8; 3.7, 10; 13.21 for *’eres* as the Land of Israel. See also *War Scroll*, 1QM 19.4–5, ‘Fill your land with glory and your inheritance with blessing.’ The next line reads, ‘Rejoice greatly O Zion, O Jerusalem show yourself with jubilation. Rejoice, all your cities of Judah.’” Robert Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 278n10.

¹⁵Gerhard H. Visscher, *Romans 4 and the New Perspective on Paul: Faith Embraces the Promises* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 198–99, 197n. Citing Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 227.

¹⁶“Here we see once again the twin foci of the book [*Jubilees*]:—particularism (the focus on Israel) and universalism (the focus on the world)—coming to expression in a harmonious way. The positive effects of Israel’s restoration are expected to spill out over the borders of the Land to the rest of the world. . . . The universalistic strains in the book are completely subordinated to its particularistic emphasis on Israel and the Temple in the Land.” James M. Scott, “The Land of Israel in the *Book of Jubilees*,” in *On Earth as in Heaven: The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of Jubilees* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 208–9. Cf. Doron Mendels, *The Land of Israel as a Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature: Recourse to History in Second Century BC Claims to the Holy Land* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 57–88. This both/and emphasis in Second Temple Jewish literature with respect to the universal and particular is overlooked in Yohanna Katanacho, *The Land of Christ: A Palestinian Cry* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 41–42; Peter W. L. Walker, “The Land in the Apostles’ Writings,” in *The Land of Promise: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Philip Johnston and Peter Walker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 87; and Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 134–35.

¹⁷At Qumran the land promise was viewed as having both a spiritual and a territorial meaning. “In a brief midrash on Psalm 37 found at Qumran the phrase ‘possess the land’ was interpreted to refer to the ‘congregation of [God’s] elect who do His will.’ Here ‘possess the land’ seems to have become a metaphor for a good and holy life. Elsewhere in the commentary ‘land’ is taken

Similar to the OT tradition, *Jubilees* conveys the idea that first Zion will be renewed and then the rest of the earth will similarly be restored. . . .

All of this suggests, therefore, that in using the phrase “inherit the world” Paul stands in continuity with this Intertestamental literature. In these texts the language of inheritance takes its place within a wider perspective of the descendants of Israel and the relationship which they will one day have with the whole earth.¹⁸

Sixth, the Second Temple Jewish concept that Abraham would be “heir of the world” is likely rooted in Genesis 22:17-18, where the Lord declares that Abraham’s descendants will possess the cities of their enemies: “I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. *Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed*, because you have obeyed me” (NIV, emphasis added).¹⁹ Similarly, Isaiah 54:1-3 (cf. Gal 4:27) states, “Sing, O barren one. . . . Your descendants will possess the nations.” The LXX word for “possess” is κληρονομέω, a cognate of κληρονόμος—the term Paul uses in Romans 4:13 for “heir.”

In using the expression “heir of the world,” Paul may also have in mind Genesis 26, where the Lord says to Isaac, “I will give you *all these lands* [plural]”:

Do not go down to Egypt; settle in the land that I shall show you. Reside in this land as an alien, and I will be with you, and will bless you; for to you and to your descendants I will give *all these lands* [*kāl-hā’ ārāsōt*], and I will fulfill the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and will give to your offspring *all these lands* [*kāl-hā’ ārāsōt*]; and all the nations of the earth shall gain blessing for themselves through your offspring, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. (Gen 26:2-5)

Later, the Lord confirms to Jacob that he will not only inherit the land promised to Abraham but that nations and kings will come from him:

God said to him [Israel], “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; *a nation and a company of nations* [*gōy ūqhal gōyim*] shall come from you, and

¹⁸Mark Forman, *The Politics of Inheritance in Romans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 80-81, 84.

¹⁹For a study of the international aspect of the Abrahamic promise in the Torah, see Paul R. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations: The Patriarchal Promise and Its Covenantal Development in Genesis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 151-70.

kings shall spring from you. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.” (Gen 35:11-12, emphasis added)

Note that the universal and particular are both present. All of this serves to underscore the point that Paul’s portrayal of Abraham in Romans 4:13 as “heir of the world” is unspectacular. Paul did not make a startling statement, as Wright suggests.²⁰ The image of Abraham as “heir of the world” is strongly implied in the Torah, and this is why it was a familiar concept in Paul’s day. In the Torah and in Second Temple Judaism, Abraham’s call to be “heir of the world” and the particularity of the land promise were not seen as either-or trajectories but *both/and*.²¹ If Paul had territory in view in Romans 4:13, he had one eye on the universal aspect of the promise and the other on the particular. Michael Vanlaningham concludes, “Rather than removing the privilege of the land from Israel, Paul appears to affirm it. . . . It is preferable, precisely because the OT and Early Judaism indicate that Israel will inherit the world, to place Paul in continuity with the OT teaching rather than in contrast to it.”²²

Jewish identity is a matter of indifference in Christ. Paul makes three statements that are often taken by transference theology proponents to be synopses of his view that Jewish identity is relativized to the point of indifference in Christ.²³ The similar language suggests to some scholars that they are variations of a slogan:²⁴

Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is *nothing* (οὐδέν); but obeying the commandments of God is everything. (1 Cor 7:19, emphasis added)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love. (Gal 5:6)

²⁰Wright, “Jerusalem in the New Testament,” 67.

²¹Burge, *Jesus and the Land*, 21-24, argues that Philo and Josephus redefined the land promise in such a way that its particularity was undermined. However, this is an oversimplification. See William Horbury, “Jerusalem in Pre-Pauline and Pauline Hope,” in *Messianism Among Jews and Christians: Twelve Biblical and Historical Studies* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 190; and George Wesley Buchanan, *The Covenant: Its Replacement and Renewal in Judaism and Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 100.

²²Michael G. Vanlaningham, “The Jewish People According to the Book of Romans,” in *The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 120-21.

²³See Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews*, 27-32.

²⁴James D. G. Dunn, “Neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision, but . . . (Gal 5.2-12; 6.12-16; cf. 1 Cor 7.17-20),” in *La Foi Agissant par l’Amour (Galates 4.12-6.16)* (Rome: Benedictina, 1996), 80-81.

For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! (Gal 6:15)

Did Paul consider Jewish identity to be a matter of indifference, as 1 Corinthians 7:19 and Galatians 5:6 and 6:15 seem to indicate? Horrell assumes that “nothing” or “not anything” points to unimportance.²⁵ But given the context, Paul is more likely saying that “neither circumcision nor the lack of circumcision has ultimate bearing on salvation.”²⁶ With respect to status before God and eschatological blessing, being Jewish or Gentile is irrelevant.

I contend that Paul uses hyperbole in these passages to stress that being “in Christ” is *more important than* being Jewish.²⁷ This means that being Jewish could still be very important to Paul. He is simply relativizing A to B. In support of this possibility, there are several occasions when Paul uses “nothing” (οὐδέν) or “not anything” (οὔτε . . . τι) language in a clearly hyperbolic way. First, with respect to the work of planting the Corinthian congregation, Paul describes himself as nothing compared to the Lord:

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything [οὔτε . . . ἔστιν τι οὔτε], but only God who gives the growth. (1 Cor 3:5-7)

Are Paul and Apollos truly nothing? Did they really do no work of any significance? On the contrary, their work was vital to the establishment of the Corinthian congregation. But *relative to* what God did, the miracle of changing lives, their work was nothing. Similarly, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 12:11, “I am not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing [οὐδέν εἶμι].”

²⁵David G. Horrell, “No Longer Jew or Greek: Paul’s Corporate Christology and the Construction of Christian Community,” in *Christology, Controversy and Community: New Testament Essays in Honour of David R. Catchpole*, ed. David G. Horrell and Christopher M. Tuckett (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 343; and David G. Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul’s Ethics* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 18, 260n50.

²⁶Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999), 284. Also Peter J. Tomson, “Paul’s Jewish Background in View of His Law Teaching in 1 Cor 7,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 266; and Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 550.

²⁷Cf. Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 131-34; and Christopher Zoccali, *Whom God Has Called: The Relationship of Church and Israel in Pauline Interpretation, 1920 to the Present* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 129.

Again, was Paul—the apostle to the Gentiles—truly “nothing”? Or is he saying that, *relative to* the Lord, he is nothing, even as *relative to* the super-apostles he is something?

Another example of Paul relativizing two important works of God is 2 Corinthians 3:6-11. Here Paul contrasts the glory of Moses’ ministry with the ministry of the Spirit. Though God performed miracles through Moses’ ministry that were unparalleled in history, Paul refers to Moses’ ministry as having no glory now, for “what once had splendor has come to have no splendor at all, because of the splendor that surpasses it” (RSV). It all pales in comparison. Moreover, three times Paul uses a *kal vachomer* (*a fortiori*) argument to compare old covenant and new covenant experiences of the presence and power of God (2 Cor 3:8, 9, 11). *Both* are truly glorious revelations of the God of Israel, but one is more glorious than the other. To emphasize the “splendor that surpasses,” Paul uses language that downplays the Sinai revelation. But it is wrong to mistake this as trivialization of the old covenant glory.²⁸ It is instead a rhetorical device intended to highlight the greater glory. He refers to something genuinely important to emphasize what is *even more important*. It is likely that Paul used the same rhetorical device when he referred to circumcision and uncircumcision as “nothing.”

Second, Paul’s manner of expression (οὐδέν . . . ἀλλά and οὔτε . . . τι . . . ἀλλά) in 1 Corinthians 7:19 and Galatians 5:6 and 6:15 is consistent with the Jewish idiom of dialectic negation in which the “not . . . but . . .” antithesis need not be understood as an ‘either . . . or,’ but rather with the force of ‘more important than.’²⁹ Consider, for example, how the prophet Hosea makes the same kind of hyperbolic comparison statement when he speaks in the name of the Lord,

For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. (Hos 6:6)

Sacrifices were important, for the Lord commanded them, but “steadfast love” was *even more important*. To emphasize this, the Lord states that he does *not*

²⁸Scott Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 321-27.

²⁹James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 51. Cf. E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 260-64; Roger P. Booth, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity: Tradition History and Legal History in Mark 7* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986), 69-70; and Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 147.

desire sacrifice. The negative statement should be taken as hyperbole; it is a Hebrew rhetorical device.³⁰

Third, Paul's anti-circumcision language (directed at Gentiles) in Galatians can be understood as upholding Jew-Gentile distinction rather than collapsing it: "Circumcising Gentiles would have made Jews and Gentiles all the same. Paul's vehement rejection of circumcision demonstrates his commitment to maintaining Jews and Gentiles as different and distinct, and militates strongly against seeing Paul's goal as creating human homogeneity."³¹

There is no longer Jew or Gentile in Christ. Transference theology tends to place a lot of weight on Galatians 3:28 ("There is no longer Jew or Greek . . . ; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus"), viewing it as evidence that Paul considered Jewish particularity to be universalized in Christ.³² But examined more closely, there are numerous holes in this argument.³³ First, the Galatians 3 context has more to do with the justification of Jesus-believing Jews and Gentiles in Christ and the community formed by these believers than the erasure of Jewish and Gentile identity in the present age.³⁴ Paul makes the same point in Romans 10:10-12, "For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. . . . For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek."³⁵

³⁰A variation of this is found in the *Letter of Aristeas* 234. Cf. Mark 2:17; 7:15.

³¹Paula Fredriksen, "Judaizing the Nations: The Ritual Demands of Paul's Gospel," *NTS* 56 (2010): 249-50. Also Pamela Eisenbaum, "Paul as the New Abraham," in *Paul and Politics: Ekklēsia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 518; and Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 116n84.

³²See Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 19-23; and J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 376-77.

³³See Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews*, 27-32; Justin K. Hardin, "Equality in the Church," in *Introduction to Messianic Judaism: Its Ecclesial Context and Biblical Foundations*, ed. David Rudolph and Joel Willits (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 224-29.

³⁴Judith M. Gundry-Volf, "Beyond Difference? Paul's Vision of a New Humanity in Galatians 3.28," in *Gospel and Gender: A Trinitarian Engagement with Being Male and Female in Christ*, ed. Douglas A. Campbell (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 18-19. Also Pamela Eisenbaum, "Is Paul the Father of Misogyny and Antisemitism?," *Cross Currents* 50, no. 4 (2000-2001): 515; and Troy W. Martin, "The Covenant of Circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14) and the Situational Antitheses in Galatians 3:28," *JBL* 122, no. 1 (2003): 121.

³⁵See Campbell, "No Distinction or No Discrimination?," 353-71. For a discussion of Ephesians 2:14-18, see Hardin, "Equality in the Church," 229-32; David B. Woods, "Jew-Gentile Distinction in the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15," *Conspectus* 18 (September 2014): 1-41; and William S. Campbell, "Unity and Diversity in the Church: Transformed Identities and the Peace of Christ in Ephesians," *IBS* 27 (2007): 4-19.

Second, Paul states in Galatians 3:28 that "there is no longer male and female." But is the male-female distinction erased in Christ? On the contrary, Paul distinguishes between men and women in his congregations (1 Cor 11:1-16; 14:34; Eph 5:22-24; Col 3:18; 1 Tim 2:12). The created order with respect to "male and female" (Gen 1:27-28) is not overturned in Christ. This raises an important question: if in Paul's thought the third pair (male and female) is not erased, why should it be concluded that the first pair (Jew and Greek) is erased?

Third, the NA28 text of Galatians 3:28 includes the word *év* ("one").³⁶ The NRSV translates Galatians 3:28 "for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." What is this oneness? Boyarin interprets it as a "universal human essence" where all distinction is eradicated.³⁷ But where is the direct evidence for this? If "male and female" in Galatians 3:28 alludes to Genesis 1:27-28, perhaps "one in Christ Jesus" is not unlike the *lābāsār 'ehād* ("one flesh") between male and female in Genesis 2:24.³⁸ Here *'ehād* describes a composite unity (two that are distinct but one). Might Paul have been thinking of a Genesis 2 *'ehād*-like unity in Galatians 3:28?³⁹ The argument adds to the case that the relationship between Jew and Gentile in Galatians 3:28 is one of unity with distinction, sameness.

Fourth, Paul refers to Jews and Gentiles (Greeks) in his letters.⁴⁰ To Peter, who withdrew from eating with Jesus-believing "Gentiles" (Gal 2:12), he says, "you are a Jew" (Gal 2:14 NIV). The writer of Colossians 4:10-11 refers to Aristarchus, Mark and Justus as "the only ones of the circumcision among my co-workers for the kingdom of God." By contrast, Titus is a "Greek" (Gal 2:3). In Romans 11:13, Paul writes, "Now I am speaking to you Gentiles" (cf. Rom 4:11-12). All of this suggests that, for Paul, the Jew-Gentile distinction is preserved, not erased in Christ.⁴¹ "He accepts, and even insists on retaining, the differences as ethnic-identity markers at the same time as he strips them of soteriological

³⁶P 46 omits *év*.

³⁷Boyarin, *Radical Jew* 7.

³⁸Gundry-Volf, "Beyond Difference?," 31-34. Cf. Richard W. Hove, *Equality in Christ? Galatians 3:28 and the Gender Dispute* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1999), 69-76, 107-9.

³⁹Eisenbaum, "Is Paul the Father of Misogyny and Antisemitism?," 520-21.

⁴⁰See Christopher D. Stanley, "Neither Jew Nor Greek: Ethnic Conflict in Graeco-Roman Society," *JSNT* 64 (1996): 101-24, for a discussion of the term *Greeks*.

⁴¹Denise K. Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 76; Denise K. Buell and Caroline Johnson Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul," *JBL* 123, no. 2 (2004): 247-50; and Kathy Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power: Communication and Interaction in the Early Christ-Movement* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 192-93.

significance. . . . ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek’ is not about erasure of differences but revalorization of differences.”⁴²

ARGUMENTS FOR PARTICULARITY

Having discussed several Pauline passages that are often quoted by transference theology proponents to demonstrate that Paul opposed Jewish particularity, I will now present arguments in support of the view that Paul upheld the continued election, gifts and calling of the Jewish people. The combination of these arguments is mnemonically represented in the acronym GUCCI.

- | | |
|---|--|
| G | The Gifts of Israel |
| U | The Uniqueness of Israel |
| C | The Calling of Israel |
| C | The Confirmation of Israel’s promises |
| I | The Irrevocability of Israel’s election |

Figure 6.1 Arguments for particularity

The gifts of Israel. Paul writes in Romans 9:3-5:

For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah.

Here Paul states that the covenants, the promises and the Torah remain (in the present tense) possessions of the Jewish people. In his essay “The Priority of the Present Tense for Jewish-Christian Relations,” R. Kendall Soulen points up the significance of Paul’s use of the present tense in this passage:

The single most important element of Rom 9–11 for Jewish-Christian relations is its use of the *present tense* to characterize the Jewish people—Paul’s kinsmen “according to the flesh”—as the heirs of God’s covenant promises. We encounter this all-important present tense at two crucial points, near the very beginning: “They are Israelites . . . and to them belong . . . the covenants . . . the promises . . .” ([Rom] 9:4-5) and again near the very end (where the

⁴²Gundry-Volf, “Beyond Difference?” 21. Also Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 126–31.

present tense is, to be sure, implied): “. . . as regards election they are beloved . . . for the sake of their ancestors” ([Rom] 11:28). It is impossible to overstate the importance of these two present-tense passages for the structure of Paul’s argument. They are the iron brackets which surround Paul’s argument and ultimately contain its explosive force. . . .

When Christians do not attend in a serious way to “the shock of the present tense” in Rom 9–11, they are prone to read the Scriptures in ways that lead them to conclude that God’s election of the Jewish people was a phenomenon of the *ancient past*. Perhaps if they pay a little attention to Rom 11, they will also think of Israel’s election as a phenomenon of the *eschatological future*, when “all Israel will be saved” ([Rom] 11:26). This traditional Christian view of Israel’s election may remind us of the Queen’s attitude toward tea in *Alice in Wonderland*: “Tea yesterday, and tea tomorrow, but never tea today!” Precisely here, the “shock of the present tense” in Rom 9–11 exerts its enduring, foundational importance for Christian-Jewish relations. To the degree that Christians submit themselves to this shock, they will turn to their Jewish neighbor and see one who is God’s beloved—not *only* in the primordial past and eschatological future—but *also* and *above all* in the abiding now of covenant history.⁴³

When Paul refers to Israel’s “gifts” (χαρίσματα) in Romans 11:29 (“for the gifts and the calling of God [to Israel] are irrevocable”), he is likely pointing back to the list of national privileges of the Jewish people mentioned in Romans 9. Moreover, Paul’s use of the term χαρίσματα in Romans 11 is informed by Second Temple Jewish literature where Israel is described as having been given national “gifts” from God. This is attested in Philo, Josephus (who relates the term “gifts” to the land of Israel) and Ezekiel the Tragedian (a Jewish dramatist who wrote in Alexandria at the end of the second century BC).⁴⁴ After surveying this Second Temple background, William Horbury concludes in his study “The Gifts of God in Ezekiel the Tragedian”:

By “gifts” were meant, as in line 35 [in *Ezekiel Tragicus*], the national privileges given by God through the patriarchal covenants; and the promises of increase and of the land were probably especially in view (cf. Exod. 32:13). Ezekiel

⁴³R. Kendall Soulen, “The Priority of the Present Tense for Jewish-Christian Relations,” in *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9–11*, ed. Florian Wilk and J. Ross Wagner (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 498–99. Cf. Richard H. Bell, *The Irrevocable Call of God: An Inquiry into Paul’s Theology of Israel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 198–213, 280–81.

⁴⁴Philo, *On Rewards and Punishments* 79; Josephus, *On the Special Laws* 2.219 [cf. Deut 26:5–11]; *Ezekiel Tragicus* 35, 106.

Tragicus is an early witness to this application of words for “gift” to the covenantal privileges of Israel. The allusive character of his usage suggests that it was already traditional. This view of its age is consistent with its widespread attestation at the end of the Second Temple period, both among Greek-speaking Jews (see Philo and Josephus) and among those who used Hebrew or Aramaic (see the rabbinic texts). A wide currency is also suggested by its appearance, in Philo and Josephus, in summaries of prescribed prayers. This Jewish usage was reproduced by St. Paul (Rom. 11:29; cf. Rom. 9:4-5), and extended in 1 Clement.⁴⁵

What is the takeaway from Horbury’s findings? It is that the term “gifts” includes the land especially. Similarly, the terms “covenants” and “promises” in Romans 9:4 and 15:8 cannot be understood apart from their land aspect, because the origins of these covenants and promises are coterminous with the oath that God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob concerning the land (e.g., Ex 32:13).⁴⁶ This interconnection between covenant, promise and land is echoed hundreds of times in Israel’s Scriptures, something that would have been as clear to Paul as the stars in the sky.⁴⁷ Along these lines, Richard Bell concludes in his monograph *The Irrevocable Call of God: An Inquiry into Paul’s Theology of Israel*:

The term τὰ χαρίσματα [in Rom 11:29] refers most likely to the election of and promise to Abraham and his descendants κατὰ χάριν (Rom 4:4, 16). Although Paul’s argument is primarily concerned with salvation I wonder whether one can exclude the concrete promise of the land (and of “seed”). Further, one should add that the promise of the land is made more concrete through Jesus Christ. For by becoming a servant of the circumcision, he has confirmed the promises made to the patriarchs. Jesus Christ does not make the promises to

⁴⁵William Horbury, “The Gifts of God in Ezekiel the Tragedian,” in *Messianism Among Jews and Christians*, 79.

⁴⁶“The stress upon Abraham as the paradigm for faith warns us against deciding too quickly that the land motif is absent (see Romans 4; Galatians 3–4). While the Abraham image undoubtedly is transformed, it is inconceivable that it should have been emptied of its reference to land. No matter how spiritualized, transcendentized or existentialized, it has its primary focus undeniably on land. That is what is promised, not to the competent deserving or to the dutifully obedient, but freely given (as in the beginning) to one who had no claim.” Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 166. Cf. Richard C. Lux, “The Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisra’el*) in Jewish and Christian Understanding,” *SCJR* 3 (2008): 15; and James D. G. Dunn, “Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology? Reflections on Romans 9.4 and 11.2,” in *The Concept of Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 301–3.

⁴⁷Cf. C. F. D. Moule, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 164.

Israel less concrete; he makes them more concrete. . . . I therefore conclude that from a Pauline perspective God’s promise to Israel of the land still stands. It is the gift of the electing God to his elected people.⁴⁸

The uniqueness of Israel. The gifts of God to Israel made Israel unique. In his letters, Paul communicates this uniqueness (or “particularity”) in various ways. For example, he divides the world (including the church) into two groups: Jews and Gentiles.⁴⁹ Jews are “the circumcised” as distinct from “the uncircumcised” (Rom 3:30; 4:9, 12). Jews are “natural branches” in contrast to “wild olive shoot[s]” (Rom 11:17, 21, 24).⁵⁰ Jews are “Israelites” in contrast to “the nations” (Rom 9:4; cf. Rom 10:1; 11:11, 25–26):

Paul is convinced that the election and calling of Israel are irrevocable (Rom 11:28–29) and, by implication, that the distinctiveness and uniqueness of Israel among the nations persist. In other words, there can be no ironing out of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. . . . The Christ event, instead of bringing about a binary opposition between old and new Israel, reveals and renews a nondivisive difference between Israel and the nations, Jews and Gentiles. This is the nondivisive difference of election, in which Israel is distinguished from the Gentiles in a way that includes them, and the Gentiles are united with Israel in a way that undergirds Israel’s irreducible difference. Israel and the Gentiles share in the same God, but differently.⁵¹

⁴⁸Bell, *Irrevocable Call of God*, 379–80.

⁴⁹See Romans 11:13 and Galatians 2:15. When Paul refers to Jews and Gentiles as a pair, he typically lists Jews first, the exception being Colossians 3:11.

⁵⁰“Although the NRSV [Rom 11:17] reflects traditional replacement theology, ‘and you . . . were grafted in their place,’ the NASB and the KJV are closer to the Greek: ‘you . . . were grafted in among them [ὁ δὲ . . . ἐν αὐτοῖς].’ . . . In other words, the wild shoot is placed among the remaining branches as well as among the broken ones, which remain on the tree in an impaired state.” Mark D. Nanos, “Broken Branches: A Pauline Metaphor Gone Awry? (Romans 11:11–24),” in Wilk and Wagner, *Between Gospel and Election*, 342–43. Cf. Terence L. Donaldson, “Riches for the Gentiles’ (Rom 11:2): Israel’s Rejection and Paul’s Gentile Mission,” *JBL* 112, no. 1 (1993): 84–85. For a discussion of other translations of Romans 11 that reflect transference theology, see Mark D. Nanos, “Romans 11 and Christian-Jewish Relations: Exegetical Options for Revisiting the Translation and Interpretation of This Central Text,” *CTR* 9, no. 2 (2012): 3–21.

⁵¹Susannah Ticciati, “The Nondivisive Difference of Election: A Reading of Romans 9–11,” *JTI* 6, no. 2 (2012): 271, 276. Cf. William S. Campbell, *Unity & Diversity in Christ: Interpreting Paul in Context* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013), 91–145; and idem, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 86–158.

The relationship between Jews and Gentiles is one of interdependence and mutual blessing.⁵² The salvation of Israel cannot happen without the faithful witness of Jesus-believing Gentiles to the Jewish people (Rom 11:11-14, 25-26, 30-31),⁵³ and world revival cannot take place until Israel becomes a messianic Jewish nation (Rom 11:12, 15).⁵⁴ Because Gentiles “share” in the nourishing sap of the Jewish olive tree (Rom 11:17), they are indebted to the Jewish people, “For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings” (Rom 15:27 NIV).⁵⁵

The apostle writes that there is much “advantage” in being a Jew, and that there is significant “value” in circumcision if one keeps the Torah (Rom 2:25; 3:1-2). Paul even goes further and maintains that Jews (unlike Gentiles) are supposed to keep the whole Torah. He writes in Galatians 5:3 (NIV), “Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.”⁵⁶

⁵²See R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 114-77.

⁵³An apt analogy likens Judaism to a ladder, with the sophistication of one’s commitment a function of how high a rung one has attained. Most Jews are positioned on a rung high enough to discern Mount Sinai and the Law Moses received thereon. Yet Paul feels that he has achieved a still higher rung and vantage point enabling him to discern, *beyond* the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, the benefits of the far more marvelous revelation of Jesus as the Christ—i.e., as the Messiah. . . . Unbelieving Jews will not be in a position to share Paul’s realization until they themselves venture higher on the self-same ladder that Paul *still* occupies. Since Paul anticipates their ultimately doing so, he now broadly lays out how he expects this development will unfold: the proliferation of Gentiles within the church, newly enjoying the fruits of God’s promises tendered originally to Israel’s own Patriarchs, will arouse within Jews a craving for the blessings they believe are properly *theirs*, mobilizing them, finally, to accept Christ Jesus after all!” Michael J. Cook, “Paul’s Argument in Romans 9–11,” *RevExp* 103 (Winter 2006): 101-2. Cf. Samuel Sandmel, *The Genius of Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 36.

⁵⁴For a survey of views on Romans 11:26 (“all Israel will be saved”), see Christopher Zoccali, “And So All Israel Will Be Saved”: Competing Interpretations of Romans 11.26 in Pauline Scholarship,” *JSNT* 30, no. 3 (2008): 289-318; J. R. Daniel Kirk, “Why Does the Deliverer Come ἐκ Σιών (Romans 11.26)?,” *JSNT* 33, no. 1 (2010): 91, 96-97; Reidar Hvalvik, “A ‘Sonderveg’ for Israel: A Critical Examination of a Current Interpretation,” *JSNT* 38 (1990): 87-107; and Vanlaningham, “Jewish People According to the Book of Romans,” 122-28.

⁵⁵See Gerald Peterman, “Social Reciprocity and Gentile Debt to Jews in Romans 15:26-27,” *JETS* 50, no. 4 (2007): 735-46.

⁵⁶Paul’s words appear to imply that he was living the circumcised life: “If the Galatians did not know Paul as a Torah-observant Jew, then the rhetoric of [Gal] 5:3 would have no bite: ‘I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is bound to keep the whole law.’ Otherwise, they might simply respond, ‘but we want only what you have: Jewish identity, without obligation to observe ‘the whole law.’” Mark D. Nanos, “The Inter- and Intra-Jewish Political Context of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians” in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 405. See also Mark D. Nanos, “Paul and Judaism: Why Not Paul’s Judaism?,” in *Paul Unbound: Other Perspectives on*

Paul writes in Romans 11:28 (NIV) that “as far as election is concerned, they [the Jewish people] are loved [by God] on account of the patriarchs.” This is why Paul refers to fellow members of the tribe as “his [God’s] people” (Rom 11:1) or “his inheritance [τὴν κληρονομίαν]” as the marginalized reading of Romans 11:1 puts it,⁵⁷ thus emphasizing the land and seed promises:

In [Rom] 11:1-2 the word λαόν has a semantic range which includes not only the people of God but also, in line with its OT usage, the people who inhabit *a particular land*. There is thus no weakening of the geographical dimension of the inheritance concept when it is used in tandem with λαόν in [Rom] 11:1-2. The two words κληρονομία and λαόν are here used in parallel because together they convey (and this is what is distinct about the Romans 11 text) the *permanent nature* of God’s relationship to Israel. Here the word explicitly expresses the concept of God’s enduring faithfulness. It is a reminder that the original promise to Abraham and his descendants is one which God, at least ultimately, intends to keep.⁵⁸

Because of Israel’s election, Paul can say in Romans 1:16 (NIV) that the gospel is “first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”⁵⁹ Going first to the Jewish people was not mainly a matter of chronological order, ethnic loyalty or wise outreach strategy; it was primarily because the Jewish people remain elect,⁶⁰ and therefore

the Apostle, ed. Mark D. Given (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 151-52; Dieter Mitternacht, “Foolish Galatians?—A Recipient-Oriented Assessment of Paul’s Letter,” in *The Galatians Debate*, 409; and Markus Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 171.

⁵⁷Most notably P⁴⁶.

⁵⁸Forman, *Politics of Inheritance in Romans*, 152. See Mark D. Given, “Restoring the Inheritance in Romans 11:1,” *JBL* 118, no. 1 (1999): 89-96.

⁵⁹Marcion removed the word πρῶτον from Romans 1:16 because it affirms Jewish particularity in Paul’s thought. See A. G. Padgett, “Marcion,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 706-8.

⁶⁰In saying that the gospel is “first (πρῶτον) for the Jew,” Paul may be following the example of the Messiah who said, “First (πρῶτον) let the children eat all they want” (Mk 7:27, [emphasis added]); cf. Mt 10:5-6; 15:24; Acts 3:25-26; 13:46). “Paul’s phrase ‘to the Jew first’ is not simply a rhetorical device. It was designed not to deceive readers about his view of Israel, but to emphasize it. Paul’s attitude toward Israel, though cautious because of their hardness of heart and constant rejection of the gospel, is based on a thoroughgoing conviction that Israel’s election by God is permanent and determinate for salvation history. Nor does the phrase merely depict Paul’s missionary pattern or the chronological precedence of Israel as the object of gospel preaching, since the context of Romans 1:16 is primarily theological and is designed to set the stage for Paul’s consideration of the relevance of God’s promises to both Jews and Gentiles throughout the epistle. Paul’s emphasis on the justification of Gentiles by faith never overshadows his confidence that God’s plan for Israel is still unfinished and that God’s fulfillment of His

God's children in a unique sense, "adoption" through covenant being one of the national privileges of the Jewish people that Paul lists in the present tense in Romans 9:4.⁶¹ That is why Paul can write in Romans 2:9-10 (NIV, emphases added): "There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: *first* for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: *first* for the Jew, then for the Gentile." The Pauline principle here is theological and ethical: To whom much is given, much is expected. Because the Jewish people are in a unique filial relationship with God and have national privileges (including covenants, promises and the Torah), they will be judged by a different standard than the Gentile world.

The calling of Israel. In Romans 11:29 (emphasis added), Paul writes, "for the gifts and the *calling* of God [to Israel] are irrevocable." What does Paul mean by the "calling" of God to Israel? Notably, Paul uses the same term for "calling"—κλήσις—in 1 Corinthians 7:17-20, where he refers to the "calling" of being circumcised. Paul writes, "This is my rule in all the congregations. Was anyone at the time of his call [to salvation] already circumcised? . . . In the calling in which he was called, in this let him remain" (1 Cor 7:17-18, 20, author's translation).⁶²

The notion of a "Jewish calling," and the responsibility of Jews to remain in their particular calling, finds support in Paul's command to Jewish people in 1 Corinthians 7:18, where he says μη ἐπισπάσθω (literally: "do not put on foreskin" / metonymically: "do not assimilate or Gentilize yourself").⁶³ The language is a

covenant promises to Israel is just as significant in this age as His focus on worldwide Gentile salvation. For Paul, Christ's mission to fulfill God's covenants with Israel has theological priority and provides a paradigm for dealing with Jewish-Gentiles issues in the church." Wayne A. Brindle, "'To the Jew First': Rhetoric, Strategy, History, or Theology?," *BSac* 159 (April-June 2002): 221-33. See Reidar Hvalvik, "'To the Jew First and Also to the Greek': The Meaning of Romans 1:16b," *Mishkan* 10, no. 1 (1989): 1-8.

⁶¹Cf. Exodus 4:22-23, Jeremiah 31:9 and Hosea 11:1. "In the Bible, it is not Abraham who moves toward God but God who turns to Abraham with an election that is not explained because it is an act of love that requires no explanation. If God continues to love the people of Israel—and it is the faith of Israel that he does—it is because he sees the face of his beloved Abraham in each and every one of his children as a man sees the face of his beloved in the children of his union with his beloved." Michael Wyschogrod, *The Body of Faith: God in the People Israel* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 2000), 64.

⁶²For a fuller discussion of 1 Corinthians 7:17-24, see David J. Rudolph, "Paul's 'Rule in All the Churches' (1 Cor 7:17-24) and Torah-Defined Ecclesiological Variegation," *SCJR* 5 (2010): 1-23; idem, *A Jew to the Jews*, 75-88; J. Brian Tucker, "Particularistic Approach to 'in Christ' Social Identities," in *Remain in Your Calling: Paul and the Continuation of Social Identities in 1 Corinthians* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 62-88; and Anders Runesson, "Paul's Rule in All the *Ekklesiāi*," in Rudolph and Willitts, *Introduction to Messianic Judaism*, 214-23.

⁶³"Let him not undo his circumcision. . . . Paul is thinking of more than surgical operation, of one kind or another. The converted Jew continues to be a Jew, with his own appointed way of obedience."

likely allusion to 1 Maccabees 1:11-15, where the expression "removed the marks of circumcision" is linked to deJudaization and the adoption of Gentile customs that collapse Jew-Gentile distinction.

Why was Jewish assimilation so problematic for Paul? It is probably because Jewish particularity reflects Israel's divine calling. According to Exodus 19, the Lord elected Israel to be his "treasured possession [*səgūllā*] out of all the peoples." The text goes on to say that Israel was called to be a "priestly kingdom and a holy nation" [*mamleket cōhānīm wəgōy qādōs*] (Ex 19:5-6; cf. Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18). Philo, a Jewish contemporary of Paul, considered Israel's Exodus 19 calling to be fundamental to the nation's identity.⁶⁴ He compared Israel to a king's royal estate and to a priest who ministered on behalf of a city.⁶⁵ In other words, Philo viewed Israel as having a priestly calling to be different, and through that difference to minister to the nations.

Against this Second Temple Jewish backdrop, we can understand Paul's command in 1 Corinthians 7:18—μη ἐπισπάσθω (do not assimilate)—as an imperatival instruction to Jewish people, including Jesus-believing Jews, to remain faithful to their Jewish identity. This was ultimately so that, through their particularity, they might live out Israel's priestly calling to the nations, even as Paul was living out this "priestly service" (as he puts it in Rom 15:16) by being the "apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom 11:13).

The confirmation of Israel's promises. In Romans 15:8, Paul writes: "For I tell you that Christ has become a *servant of the circumcised* on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might *confirm the promises given to the patriarchs*."⁶⁶ Here

C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (London: A&C Black, 1971), 168. Contra Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 146-64, who argues that 1 Corinthians 7:20 refers to epispasm operations. Winter, however, offers no direct evidence that epispasm was common enough in the first century to warrant Paul making a "rule in all the churches" (1 Cor 7:17) banning the operation. It should be noted that the metonymic and nonmetonymic positions are not mutually exclusive. A metonymic interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:20 would include epispasm among the diverse ways that Jews could assimilate into Gentile identity and lifestyle.

⁶⁴Philo, *On the Life of Abraham* 56, 98. Cf. *On the Embassy to Gaius* 3; *On the Life of Moses* 1.149; *On Rewards and Punishments* 114; *On the Special Laws* 1.97, 168; *Questions and Answers on Exodus* 2.42.

⁶⁵Philo, *On Planting* 54-60; *On the Special Laws* 2.163-67. See Martha Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests: Ancestry and Merit in Ancient Judaism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 158-59.

⁶⁶"Promises made to the patriarchs" reprises the theme of the gracious election of Israel ([Rom] 9:4) and, in particular, the story of Abraham ([Rom] 4:13, 14, 16, 20, 21; 9:8-9). 'Confirm' here has the sense not only of 'reaffirming' but also of 'realizing' the promises. . . . The primary issue Paul addresses in Romans in regard to God's truthfulness is God's faithfulness to his promises to Israel (e.g. [Rom] 3:4; 9:4, 6; 11:1, 11)." J. Ross Wagner, "The Christ, Servant of Jew and Gentile: A Fresh Approach to Romans 15:8-9," *JBL* 116, no. 3 (1997): 477-78.

“Paul’s use of the perfect tense γενενησθαι in [Rom 15:]8, over against the simple aorist γενεσθαι, indicates Christ’s *continuing* to be a servant to the circumcision.”⁶⁷ Paul goes on to quote the Septuagint version of Isaiah 11:10 to show how these promises to the patriarchs will come to ultimate fulfillment in the messianic kingdom.⁶⁸ Romans 15:12 states:

and again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse shall come,
the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;
in him the Gentiles shall hope.”

Notably, the context of this Isaiah passage includes fulfillment of the land promise. After the words “in him the Gentiles shall hope,” Isaiah declares:

And it shall be in that day, *that* the Lord shall again show his hand, to be zealous for the remnant that is left of the people. . . .

And he shall lift up a standard for the nations,
and he shall gather the lost ones of Israel,
and he shall gather the dispersed of Judah
from the four corners of the earth. (Is 11:11-12 LXX)

In Isaiah 11 the universal dimension of the messianic kingdom is balanced by the particularity of Israel’s king (“the root of Jesse,” that is, the son of David) and the return of his people to their land. Though Paul does not quote Isaiah 11:11-12, we can reasonably assume that he was aware of the territorial context and that in keeping with contemporary Jewish practice his quotation served as more of a bookmark than a stand-alone comment.

Paul’s Isaiah references (especially Isaiah 59 and 27) in the discourse leading up to Romans 15 and following also shore up the view that Paul understood the *ekklēsia* as a prolepsis of Israel and the nations in the eschaton. Contrary to Wright’s transference view that Paul “subverts the Jewish story from within,”⁶⁹

⁶⁷Scott Hafemann, “Eschatology and Ethics: The Future of Israel and the Nations in Romans 15:1-13,” *TynBul* 51, no. 2 (2000): 170.

⁶⁸Cf. J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul “in Concert” in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 317-29.

⁶⁹N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 235. Cf. idem, *The New Testament and the People of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 403-9.

Hafemann maintains that the real climax of the covenant envisioned in Romans 15 is Israel’s future restoration for the sake of the nations:

Our passage thus gives no ground for seeing Israel’s identity and eschatological hopes reconfigured into Christ and/or the present Church, having been transformed by Paul into exclusively present realities. Redemptive history does not become abstracted into the “Christ-event” or personalized into an eschatological “community,” but continues on after Christ’s coming and establishment of the Church just as concretely and historically as it did before. The “climax of the covenant” remains Israel’s future restoration for the sake of the nations. Moreover, it is precisely this climax to the covenant that secures the believer’s salvific hope in the return of Christ. In light of God’s promises to the patriarchs ([Rom] 15:8), the Messiah, as the servant to the circumcision, *must* come again to judge the nations in order to restore Israel and save the Gentiles ([Rom] 15:12; cf. 11:29).⁷⁰

Significantly, Paul describes the future kingdom in Zionist terms in Romans 11:26, where he proclaims,

And so all Israel will be saved; as it is written,
“Out of Zion will come the Deliverer;
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob.”

Based on this passage and Galatians 4:26-30 (“Be glad, barren woman” [NIV]), Horbury concludes in his seminal study “Jerusalem in Pre-Pauline and Pauline Hope,” that

Paul envisaged a coming messianic reign in the divinely prepared Jerusalem, bringing together the king with the city and the sanctuary on the Old Testament pattern. . . . Hints at a Jerusalem-centred messianic reign in both passages would be consonant with the eschatological importance of Zion or the land in Rom. 9.25-6.⁷¹

⁷⁰Scott Hafemann, “The Redemption of Israel for the Sake of the Gentiles,” in Rudolph and Willitts, *Introduction to Messianic Judaism*, 212-13. See Hafemann, “Eschatology and Ethics,” 190-91; and Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 329-40.

⁷¹Horbury, “Jerusalem in Pre-Pauline and Pauline Hope,” 218. See James M. Scott, “And Then All Israel Will Be Saved? (Rom 11:26),” in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 495-96, 524-25; and Kirk, “Why Does the Deliverer Come ἐκ Σιών (Romans 11.26)?,” 91, 96-97. In Romans 15, Paul appears to view Jerusalem as the geographic center of the kingdom of God in an already-but-not-yet sense. This would explain why he describes his apostolic ministry as coming

Why does Horbury highlight this passage in Romans 9:25-26? It is because Paul quotes Hosea as saying,

And *in the very place* where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' *there* they shall be called children of the living God.' (Hos 1:10, NRSV, emphases added)

Since the Greek word ἐκεῖ (translated "there" in Rom 9:26) does not appear in any known Septuagint version of Hosea, it would seem to suggest that Paul is placing an emphasis on this geographic location. What do the words "in the very place" and "there" point to? In the context of Hosea 1, these terms refer to the land of Israel. Moreover, the Hosea 1:10 text that Paul quotes is in the middle of the prophet's description of how the land and seed promises to the patriarchs are fulfilled in the eschaton. In Hosea, a messianic king is appointed and then possession of the land is restored. The context states:

[Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered]; and *in the [very] place* where it was said to them, "You are not my people," [*there*] they shall be called children of the living God. [The people of Judah and the people of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head; and they shall take possession of the land.] (Hos 1:10-11, NRSV)

W. D. Davies discusses this text in his monograph *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine*. Though Davies is known for his view that Paul regarded the land promise as "christified,"⁷² when it comes to Hosea 1:10 (quoted by Paul in Romans 9:26), Davies concedes that Paul presents in this Romans passage a normative territorial view of Zion. He writes:

What is illegitimate is to ignore the plain geographic emphasis of the text at Rom. 9:25-26 in favour of a generalized reference to the call of the Gentiles or

out of Jerusalem. He writes in Romans 15:19 that "from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ" (cf. Rom 15:25-26, 31; 1 Cor 16:3; Gal 1:18; 2:1).

⁷² "In Christ' Paul was free from the Law and, therefore, from the land." W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 220. For a recent reassessment of Davies's conclusions, see Forman: "This study of inheritance above has demonstrated that Davies is wrong to suggest that the concept of 'land' in Paul's writings is entirely spiritualized. . . . Against Davies, therefore, the present study has argued that Paul's language of inheritance continues in a geographical, physical direction *and that* using this kind of language in the first-century context was undeniably subversive of the message perpetuated by the powers of the day" (*Politics of Inheritance in Romans*, 234).

of lapsed Jews. The full weight of the doctrines which we dealt with in Part I are in favour of giving to Zion a geographic connotation. Zion or Jerusalem was for the Jew, Paul, the centre of the world, the symbol of the land itself and the focal point for the Messianic Age. The likelihood is that, at first at least, it occupied the same place in his life as a Christian. 2 Thess. 2, and possibly Rom. 11:26, and, probably Rom. 9:26 confirm this.⁷³

In addition to these Pauline texts that uphold a territorial confirmation of Israel's promises, I would add 1 Corinthians 15 to the mix.⁷⁴ Horbury notes that:

In the larger Pauline context the most important passage for the question is 1 Cor. 15:20-8. The present writer follows those who hold that in 1 Cor. 15 Paul envisages a Zion-centered Messianic reign, beginning with a second coming of Christ. As is shown in [1 Cor 15:]25-8 by the exposition of Pss. 110.1, 8.6 on the subjection of enemies, this reign involves the crushing victory over hostile forces granted to the king, God's son, in Zion, on the lines sketched in Pss. 2.6-9, 110.1-6. . . . In Christian sources this execution of foes in the messianic victory is pictured at 2 Thess. 2:8.⁷⁵

All of this eschatological drama described in 1 Corinthians 15, centering on the death, resurrection *and bodily return of the Messiah*, takes place in the land of Israel.

The irrevocability of Israel's election. Paul writes in Romans 11:29 that "the gifts and the calling of God [to Israel] are *irrevocable* (ἀμεταμέλητα). While in English translations the word "irrevocable" usually appears at the end of the sentence, in the Greek text, ἀμεταμέλητα appears at the beginning, thus placing emphasis on this word, as though it were highlighted or had an exclamation mark attached to it. Paul's point is that Israel's general state of unbelief does not compromise its election, gifts or calling (cf. Rom 3:3-4 ["What if some were unfaithful? Will their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means!"] and the present-tense list of Israel's covenant privileges in Rom 9:1-6). God remains faithful to Israel despite Israel's unfaithfulness.

Paul makes the same point at the beginning of Romans 11 when he raises the rhetorical question, "I ask, then, has God rejected his people [or, in the marginalized

⁷³ Davies, *Gospel and the Land*, 196.

⁷⁴ See Seth Turner, "The Interim, Earthly Messianic Kingdom in Paul," *JSNT* 25, no. 3 (2003): 323-42; and L. Joseph Kreitzer, *Jesus and God in Paul's Eschatology* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 131-64.

⁷⁵ William Horbury, "Land, Sanctuary and Worship," in *Early Christian Thought in Its Jewish Context*, ed. John Barclay and John Sweet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 220.

reading, “his inheritance”]?” (Rom 11:1).⁷⁶ Here Paul does not go on to say: “Yes, God has rejected his people and transferred all of Israel’s blessings to the church.” On the contrary, he exclaims, “μὴ γένοιτο,”⁷⁷ which means, “Of course not!” (REB), “Absolutely not!” (NET), “Out of the question” (NJB), “By no means!” (NRSV), “Heaven forbid!” (CJB). The fact of the matter is that “if it can be concluded that God is unfaithful in his relationship to Israel, there is little reason to think that he should be otherwise in his relationship with the Christian Community.”⁷⁸ Paul could not have been more loud and clear in affirming the irrevocability of Israel’s election.

CONCLUSION

In this essay I have argued that Paul does *not* eliminate particularity for Israel and the land in his portrayal of salvation available for all the world, and that a compelling case can be made for particularity when we consider what Paul has to say about:

- G The **Gifts** of Israel
- U The **Uniqueness** of Israel
- C The **Calling** of Israel
- C The **Confirmation** of Israel’s promises
- I The **Irrevocability** of Israel’s election

Paul does not undermine the particularity of the people or land of Israel in his teachings. Rather, he affirms the continuing election, gifts and calling of the Jewish people and spends considerable time in his letter to the Romans (at least five chapters!) to get this point across.

In Paul’s view, particularity is part of the warp and woof of the kingdom of God, a kingdom that is manifest in a table fellowship of Jews and Gentiles who remain faithful to their calling as Jews and Gentiles in the Messiah. Paul’s Isaianic vision of the world to come is best expressed in Romans 11 and 15, where Israel and the nations are described as worshipping God together in unity and diversity, in interdependence and mutual blessing. Paul sums it all up beautifully in Romans 15:10 when he says, quoting the Song of Moses, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”

⁷⁶Forman, *Politics of Inheritance in Romans*, 136-71; Given, “Restoring the Inheritance in Romans 11:1,” 89-96.

⁷⁷Cf. Paul’s use of μὴ γένοιτο in Romans 3:3-4. “The section [Romans] 2.25-3:4 therefore suggests that the Jew’s election has not been annulled. There is value in being a Jew, and God has remained faithful even though Israel has not believed. Paul therefore does not hold to a substitution model here. God’s election of Israel is unshakable.” Bell, *Irrevocable Call of God*, 198.

⁷⁸Bruce W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1-11* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 251. Cf. Markus Barth, *The People of God* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 30. See Romans 11:20-22.

- PART THREE -

THEOLOGY

AND ITS

IMPLICATIONS

THE NEW

CHRISTIAN

ZIONISM

**FRESH PERSPECTIVES
ON ISRAEL & THE LAND**

**EDITED BY
GERALD R. McDERMOTT**

 **IVP Academic**
An imprint of InterVarsity Press
Downers Grove, Illinois

InterVarsity Press
P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515-1426
ivpress.com
email@ivpress.com

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Cover design: Cindy Kiple
Interior design: Beth McGill
Images: Landscape: [suprunvitaly/iStockphoto](https://www.istockphoto.com/author/suprunvitaly)
Necklace: [Lisalson/iStockphoto](https://www.istockphoto.com/author/lisalson)

ISBN 978-0-8308-5138-6 (print)
ISBN 978-0-8308-9438-3 (digital)

Printed in the United States of America ☺



As a member of the Green Press Initiative, InterVarsity Press is committed to protecting the environment and to the responsible use of natural resources. To learn more, visit greenpressinitiative.org.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: McDermott, Gerald R. (Gerald Robert), editor.

Title: *The new Christian Zionism : fresh perspectives on Israel and the land* / edited by Gerald R. McDermott.

Description: Downers Grove : InterVarsity Press, 2016. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016011844 (print) | LCCN 2016019816 (ebook) | ISBN 9780830851386 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780830894383 (eBook)

Subjects: LCSH: Christian Zionism.

Classification: LCC DS150.5 .N48 2016 (print) | LCC DS150.5 (ebook) | DDC 261.2/6--dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2016011844>

P 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Y 34 33 32 31 30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16

To Baruch Kvasnica,

who first planted the seed that eventually became
this book and whose teaching and correspondence

have taught me much ever since