

RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

Paul's attitude toward his people [Israel](#) often seems quite contradictory. In one of his earliest letters, Paul comes down hard on "the Jews," affirming that "the [wrath](#) of God has come upon them *eis telos*" (in one translation, "finally"; [1 Thess 2:14–16](#)). In one of his latest letters, however, he expects that "all Israel will be saved" ([Rom 11:26](#)). Did Paul's view of Israel's future develop over the course of time or perhaps change periodically according to the [missionary](#) situation with which he was confronted? In order to understand Paul's perspective on the future of Israel it is essential to appreciate the OT and Jewish background, for Paul's appropriation of the OT and his understanding of it provide the framework of his [theology](#). Paul's Jewishness and immersion in biblical thought would have rendered him incapable of developing his [theology](#) apart from his traditional and biblical heritage. Against this background, furthermore, the apparent contradictions in Paul's perspective on Israel and her future tend to dissipate.

- [1.](#) The Restoration of Israel in OT and Jewish Tradition
- [2.](#) The Restoration of Israel in Paul

1. The Restoration of Israel in OT and Jewish Tradition.

For the purposes of this survey, the background of Paul's thinking can be traced to the two main streams of [tradition](#) which flowed out of the exilic and post-exilic situations.

1.1. The Exilic and Post-exilic Situations.

1.1.1. The Exile. The exile which came upon the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. and upon the southern kingdom in 587 B.C. represents a tragic phase in Israel's history and religious self-concept. A fundamental tenet of the ancient Israelite faith was that Yahweh had promised Israel land and statehood as signs of his special covenant relationship with her. These institutions included a capital city and a formal sanctuary where sacrificial worship was carried out. All these had been attained during the reigns of David and Solomon. Consequently the annexation of Israel to the Assyrian empire and of Judah to the Babylonian empire came as a direct challenge to the professed heritage of ancient Israel.

The prophets' response to this situation both before and after Israel's exile was basically to call their audience back to allegiance to [Yahweh](#). The people were challenged to fulfill their responsibilities as his [covenant](#) people. From the prophetic perspective the exile was an act of God that was both punitive and redemptive. For, on the one hand, the prophets preached that the Exile was a [judgment](#) of God for Israel's failure to live up to her obligations as [Yahweh](#)'s chosen people. The deportations of both Israel and Judah were understood to be [Yahweh](#)'s way of dealing with the sins of his people. On the other hand, however, the prophets preached that if the people repented, there was hope of restoration for Israel in the future.

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1.1.2. The Post-exilic Situation. When the Persians gained control of the Babylonian empire, they attempted to secure peace among a large and diverse mix of nationalities and cultures. This was done by allowing deported peoples to return to their homelands and to set up theocracies (i.e., political institutions that had priestly leadership). The edict of Cyrus allowed for the return of deported Jews to the homeland, as well as for the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. Many Jews, however, who had been exiled to Babylonia did not take the opportunity to return to Palestine, for life there had become quite comfortable. And none of the ten tribes of the northern kingdom ever returned. A Davidic prince, Sheshbazzar, led the first group of those who returned, but he was not successful in reestablishing a new Jewish community in the homeland. An ambitious nephew, Zerubbabel, followed and sought to reopen the temple at Jerusalem to be a national and religious focal point. He was eventually removed by the Persian governor, who took measures to discourage further displays of royal ambitions. It was at this stage that the high priest of Jerusalem (Joshua ben Jehozadak) was vested with whatever leadership powers were deemed appropriate by the Persian governor. In 515 B.C. a modest temple was completed, which did not compare with the splendor of the former Solomonic Temple.

1.2. Streams of Tradition: The “Already” and the “Not Yet.” From this point in Israel’s history, two major streams of tradition developed which differed radically in their interpretation of the postexilic situation (see Steck 1968; Hengel 1973, 321–22). According to one pervasive Jewish interpretation, the promised restoration had *already* occurred, as evidenced by such events as the return from Exile and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple. This perspective was based on the theocracy, centered on the Temple and the priesthood, and stressed the putative continuity with the preexilic cult. According to another influential interpretation, however, the restoration had *not yet* occurred and could still be expected in the eschatological future. For although the Israelites could return from exile, a restoration of all twelve tribes did not occur; although the Israelites could again live in the promised land, they did so under foreign rulers; and although the Temple was rebuilt, it was not the center of a unified people in its own land. Hence the theological ambiguity of the events at the turn of the post-exilic period allowed for both of these mainstream traditions to flourish, which they did throughout the Second Temple period and beyond.

1.2.1. The Theocratic Stream. The stream of tradition associated with Temple circles had as its theological agenda the establishment of the postexilic cult. According to [Ezra 1:1](#), the seventy years of exile with which 2 Chronicles ends ([36:16–21](#)) are now over, and Yahweh has raised up Cyrus. Thus Israel is separated from the dark period of Exile, in which Yahweh requited the guilt of the last preexilic generation; the land has in between received the Sabbath years which were denied it; Israel stands again in continuity with the salvific dealings of God before the Exile. If Israel falls into sin, the cult can provide forgiveness and atonement. It does not matter that the northern tribes never returned from exile, nor even that most Judeans remained in the Diaspora, nor that all Israel (even those in Judah and Jerusalem) remain under foreign rule. The restoration has already been realized. For according to this perspective, there is only one theologically relevant factor: whether they adhere to the Jerusalem cult.

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The theocratic [tradition](#) displays the “pattern of religion” which E. P. Sanders has called “covenantal nomism,” identifying it as the common denominator of the various expressions of [Palestinian Judaism](#) from 200 B.C. to A.D. 200. “Briefly put,” writes Sanders, “covenantal nomism is the view that one’s place in God’s plan is established on the basis of the [covenant](#) and that the [covenant](#) requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of [atonement](#) for transgression” (Sanders 1977, 75). “All those who are maintained in the [covenant](#) by obedience, [atonement](#) and God’s mercy belong to the group which will be saved” (Sanders 1977, 422). Unfortunately, however, Sanders has so stressed continuity in the covenantal relationship between God and his people, and readily available [atonement](#) for sin by means of repentance, that another major stream of [tradition](#) in [Palestinian Judaism](#), which emphasizes prolonged *discontinuity* in the relationship as punishment for sin, has gone practically unnoticed. In no way can it be said that the “business-as-usual” approach of the theocratic stream prevailed in every quarter.

1.2.2. The Eschatological Stream. This stream of Jewish tradition takes the position that Israel has not yet been restored, but rather remains, until the eschatological restoration, under the wrath of God which came upon the people in 722 and 587 B.C. for their disobedience. From this perspective the Second Temple and its cult has no efficacy for atonement. In fact the Second Temple is often either considered polluted or deficient (cf. Dan 3:38 LXX; Sir 36:14; 1 *Enoch* 89:73; 90:28–33; [Tob 14:5](#); *T. Levi* 16:1–5; 17:10–11; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 68:5–7; *T. Moses* 4:8) or passed over altogether (cf. Yadin, 1:182–87). Many penitential prayers of the Second Temple period lament the present plight of Israel as a nation (e.g., [Dan 9:4–19](#); [Ezra 9:6–15](#); [Neh 9:5–37](#); [Bar 1:15–3:8](#); Pr Azar; [Sir 36:1–17](#); see further Scott “[Gal 3:10](#)”). The people are seen as continuing under the judgment and curse of God. Theologically speaking, “all Israel is still in Exile just as before, whether she now finds herself in the Land, which others rule, or in the Diaspora” (Steck 1968, 454). Furthermore, this condition of Exile would last until God intervenes in the eschatological future, which is now recognized as a time well beyond the seventy years which Jeremiah had envisioned (cf. [Dan 9:24](#): 70 x 7 years). Because God’s judgment and curse on Israel persists, the whole sinful history from the Exodus on, which led to this judgment, also continues on the people. Therefore, the penitential prayers repeatedly acknowledge Israel’s national guilt in order to declare the justice of God for the ongoing judgment (cf. von Rad). The earlier salvific deeds of God can now be only a pledge for the urgent plea that the expected restoration might come in order to bring an end to the present curse and remove the guilt of the people.

The eschatological stream is in no way limited to a few penitential prayers; it pervades Second Temple literature. Especially from the Seleucid period onward, this stream of [tradition](#) occupied an important place in postexilic theological history. It had become apparent from both the [apostasy](#) within Israel and the persecution of Antiochus from without that the idea of a realized restoration did not correspond to reality (cf. Neusner). As Nickelsburg comments:

The destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile meant the disruption of life and the breaking up of institutions whose original form was never fully restored. Much of post-biblical Jewish [theology](#) and literature was influenced and sometimes governed by a hope for such a restoration: a

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return of the dispersed; the appearance of a Davidic heir to throw off the shackles of foreign domination and restore Israel's [sovereignty](#); the gathering of one people around a new and glorified Temple. (Nickelsburg, 18)

Of particular importance to the eschatological stream is the Deuteronomic view of Israel's history, a pervasive OT/Jewish [tradition](#) which covered the whole history of Israel from its initial [election](#) to its ultimate [salvation](#) (cf. Steck 1967). By the final stage of its development (in the period from Antiochus IV to *2 Baruch*), the Deuteronomic view of Israel's history was still a living [tradition](#) capable of a certain fluidity of expression, but it had also become a relatively fixed conceptual framework containing the following six elements:

(1) The Deuteronomic view of Israel's history begins with the affirmation that Israel has been persistently "stiff-necked," rebellious and disobedient during its whole long history. For example, the second-century B.C. national [confession](#) of sin in [Baruch 1:15–3:8](#), which contains the Deuteronomic [tradition](#), commences with the words: "We have disobeyed him [the Lord], and have not heeded the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in the statutes of the Lord that he set before us. From the time when the Lord brought our ancestors out of the land of Egypt *to this day* (cf. [Deut 9:7; 29:3, 27; 2 Kings 17:23; 1 Esdr 8:73–74; 2 Esdr 9:7; Neh 9:32; Bar 1:13, 19; 2:6; Ezek 2:3; 20:31](#)), we have been disobedient to the Lord our God, and we have been negligent, in not heeding his voice" ([Bar 1:18–19](#)). As is characteristic of other national confessions of sin in this period which reflect the Deuteronomic perspective, the contemporary generation of Israelites identifies with the sins of the fathers by means of the first person plural (cf. Scharbert; Steck 1967, 114, 119, 120–21, 124–27), just as Moses includes the Israelite community before the conquest with the exile and restoration of future generations by means of the second person plural (cf. [Deut 4:25–31](#)). This is because Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic [tradition](#) view Israel as a unity in a historical continuum.

(2) After establishing the persistence of Israel's sin right up to the present, the Deuteronomic view of Israel's history goes on to affirm that God constantly sent his messengers, the prophets, to call his people to repentance and obedience.

(3) Nevertheless, Israel continued in its obduracy and rejected the message of the prophets. Again, the words of the national [confession](#) of sin in [Baruch 1:15–3:8](#): "We did not listen to the voice of the Lord our God in all the words of the prophets whom he sent to us, but all of us followed the intent of our own wicked hearts by serving other gods and doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord" ([Bar 1:21–22](#)). Some texts which are framed by the Deuteronomic [tradition](#) stress that Israel not only rejected the message of the prophets but actually persecuted and killed them (e.g., [Neh 9:26; Jub. 1:12; 1 Enoch 89:51](#)).

(4) Therefore, in view of Israel's intransigence, the [wrath of God](#) burned against Israel; [judgment](#) came upon them starting in (722 or) 587 B.C.; and the people were sent into Exile. According to the Deuteronomic view of Israel's history, the condition of Exile lasted all through the Second Temple period and even beyond, because the sin of the people and therefore their guilt did not abate (cf. Steck 1967, Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

122; idem 1968, 453–54). Thus, as the narrative introduction to Baruch shows ([1:1–14](#)), the [prayer in Baruch 1:15–3:8](#) was to be prayed on behalf of Jerusalem, because “to this day the anger of the Lord and his wrath have not turned away from us” ([Bar 1:13](#)). The [confession](#) itself goes on to state, in obvious allusion to [Deuteronomy 27–32](#): “So to this day there have clung to us the calamities and the curse which the Lord declared through his servant Moses ...” ([Bar 1:20](#)). And similarly, somewhat later in the same [confession](#): “See, we are today in our exile where you have scattered us, to be reproached and cursed and punished for all the iniquities of our ancestors, who forsook the Lord our God” ([Bar 3:8](#)).

(5) The Deuteronomic view of Israel’s history holds that during the protracted exile Israel still has the chance of repenting of sin. Thus the national [confession](#) of sin in [Baruch 1:15–3:8](#) affirms, again referring to the latter section of Deuteronomy,

Yet you have dealt with us, O Lord our God, in all your kindness and in all your great compassion, as you spoke by your servant Moses on the day when you commanded him to write your Law in the presence of the people of Israel, saying, “If you will not obey my voice, this very great multitude will surely turn into a small number among the nations where I will scatter them. For I know they are a stiff-necked people. But in the land of their exile they will come to themselves and know that I am the Lord their God. I will give them a heart that obeys and ears that hear; they will ... turn from their stubbornness and their wicked deeds.” ([Bar 2:27–33](#))

The [confession](#) goes on to implore the mercy of God, for although the petitioners are repentant, they are still in Exile ([Bar 3:1–8](#)). The point of much Second Temple literature is, however, that the obduracy of Israel persisted all during the protracted Exile (cf. Steck 1967, 187).

(6) If the people repent, then, according to the Deuteronomic view of Israel’s history, God will restore them to the land and to a covenantal relationship with himself. Thus the national [confession](#) of sin in Baruch continues with the divine promise:

I will bring them again into the land that I swore to their ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. ... I will make an everlasting [covenant](#) with them to be their God and they shall be my people; and I will never again remove my people from the land that I have given them. ([Bar 2:34–35](#))

The “everlasting [covenant](#)” and the [covenant](#) formula allude here to [Jeremiah 32:38, 40](#), which in turn recalls the “new [covenant](#)” and the [covenant](#) formula of [Jeremiah 31:31–34](#). In other texts with the Deuteronomic perspective, the sixth element includes the expectation of an eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles to Zion to share in the restoration of Israel (cf. *Pss. Sol.* 17:30–35; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 68:5; [Tob 13:11](#); [14:6–7](#); *1 Enoch* 90:30–36). Other texts emphasize that, along with the enemies of Israel, unrepentant Israel will fall under the final [judgment](#) of God.

2. The Restoration of Israel in Paul.

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Does Paul's concept of the restoration of Israel agree with either one of these two divergent mainstreams of Jewish [tradition](#)? To answer this question it will be necessary to consider Paul's Pharisaic background, his apostolic self-concept and his use of Scripture.

2.1. Paul's Pharisaic Background. When Paul the apostle sought to list the reasons he might have for putting confidence in the flesh, he mentioned his Pharisaic background ([Phil 3:5](#); cf. [Acts 22:3](#); [23:6](#); [26:5](#); see [Jew, Paul the](#)). Although it is extremely difficult to ascertain the content of Pharisaic teaching before A.D. 70, and Pharisaism developed over time, splintering into factions (cf. Hengel 1973), nevertheless Steck (1967, 210–11) suggests that the Pharisees were probably bearers of the Deuteronomic tradition. This would correlate in general with [Acts 23:6–10](#) (cf. [Acts 24:15–16](#); [26:6–7](#); [28:20](#)), where Paul is able to rally Pharisaic support for his cause in the Sanhedrin when he identifies himself as a Pharisee who is on trial for “the [hope](#)” of Israel and “the [resurrection](#) of the dead” ([Acts 23:6](#)), two closely related themes in OT/Jewish tradition on the restoration of Israel (cf. Haacker).

2.2. The Apostle to the Gentiles for the Sake of Israel. Even after he became a believer and was spurned by his compatriots, Paul affirmed his Jewish ancestry and heritage ([Phil 3:5](#); [2 Cor 11:22](#); [Rom 11:1](#)), and he called the Israelites his own people and kindred ([Rom 9:3](#)). Paul's starting point is that the Messiah of Israel ([Rom 9:5](#)) came to be the [hope](#) of both Jews and [Gentiles](#) alike ([Rom 15:8–13](#)). In true solidarity with his people, therefore, Paul mourned Jewish unbelief and hardening and wished that he himself could be cut off from [Christ](#) and accursed on their behalf ([Rom 9:2–3](#)). Paul's heart's desire and [prayer](#) to [God](#) for Israel was that they may be saved ([Rom 10:1](#)).

Paul's concern for the [salvation](#) of his people stems not merely from patriotism, but more particularly from the call of God upon his life. Most scholars assume (cf. Sandnes, 61–65) that Paul's description of his apostolic call (see [Conversion and Call](#)) in [Galatians 1:15](#) (“But when he who has set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace ...”) alludes to the calling of the [Servant](#) in [Isaiah 49:1](#) (“From my mother's womb he has called my name”) and [49:5](#) (“the Lord, who formed me from the womb to be his own servant, to gather Jacob and Israel to him”; see [Prophet, Paul as](#)). If this is so, then Paul's apostolic commission must have included from the start a vision for the restoration of Israel (cf. Kim, 97), even though the universalistic purpose of his call is stressed in [Galatians 1:16](#) (cf. [Is 49:6](#), which ties together both aspects of the Servant's call—as an agent of Israel's restoration and as a light to the nations; see [Universalism](#)).

Paul might have been primarily the [apostle](#) to the Gentiles ([Rom 1:5](#); [11:13](#); cf. [Gal 1:15–17](#); [2:7–8](#)), but he was the [apostle](#) to the Gentiles for the sake of Israel. Even the [gospel](#)—the good news of Israel's restoration (cf. [Is 52:7](#), cited in [Rom 10:15](#))—which Paul was commissioned to preach was to the Jew first and also to the Greek ([Rom 1:16](#)). As a result, Paul would sometimes try to win Jews directly ([1 Cor 9:20](#)). More often, however, he would try to win them indirectly through his Gentile mission: “Inasmuch then as I am an [apostle](#) to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, in order to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them” ([Rom 11:13–14](#); cf. [10:19](#) [citing [Deut 32:21](#)]; [11:11](#)). Not only does Paul view his Gentile mission as a catalyst to the present [salvation](#) of a [remnant](#) from Israel, he also views it as an essential precursor to the eventual [salvation](#) of all Israel; for it is not until the full number of the

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Gentiles comes in that all Israel will be saved ([Rom 11:25–26](#)). Hence Paul’s driving passion is to bring the [gospel](#) to the Gentiles as quickly as possible, even as far as Spain ([Rom 15:18–29](#)), and to raise the collection for the [saints](#) (see [Collection](#)).

If Paul casts his Gentile mission as an effort to provoke Israel to [jealousy](#), it is not just a desperate attempt to demonstrate to [Jewish Christians](#) in Rome that he really is concerned for Israel after all (contra Räisänen, 187–88). For Paul bases this understanding of the role of Gentiles in the restoration of Israel on the [eschatological](#) hope of [Deuteronomy 32:21](#). In other words, Paul conceives his ministry as fitting within the framework of the aforementioned eschatological stream of Jewish [tradition](#), particularly the Deuteronomic view of Israel’s history.

2.3. The Deuteronomic Framework of Paul’s Restoration Theology.

2.3.1. Deuteronomy and Paul’s Use of Scripture. It has often been observed that Paul confines his citations of the OT to certain letters, and that he tends to gravitate toward certain OT books more than others (see [Old Testament in Paul](#)). Of the approximately one hundred explicit citations of the OT in the Pauline corpus, almost all appear in the *Hauptbriefe* (“chief letters,” cf. D. M. Smith). In fact, among the uncontested letters of Paul, not only are the explicit citations confined to the *Hauptbriefe*, but fully half are found in [Romans](#) alone. And fully half of the OT quotations in Romans are found in chapters [9–11](#). To match this uneven distribution of OT citations in Paul is an uneven selection of OT books cited. Paul obviously has a preference for citations of Isaiah, Psalms, Genesis and Deuteronomy. According to Dietrich-Alex Koch (33), Paul cites Isaiah twenty-eight times, Psalms twenty times and Genesis and Deuteronomy fifteen times each. No other book is quoted more than five times.

What attracts Paul to these specific OT books? On the one hand, the [reason](#) behind Paul’s attraction to Isaiah is relatively clear. In the words of R. Hays,

Isaiah offers the clearest expression in the Old Testament of a universalistic, eschatological vision in which the restoration of Israel in Zion is accompanied by an ingathering of Gentiles to [worship](#) the Lord; that is why the book is both statistically and substantively the most important scriptural source for Paul. (Hays, 162)

This is true, according to Hays (46), even when Paul cites [Isaiah 52:5](#) in [Romans 2:24](#) (“For, as it is written, ‘The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you’”) and imaginatively assumes thereby that the present-day Israel that he is castigating is in exile, for the quotation of [Isaiah 59:20](#) and [27:9](#) in [Romans 11:26–27](#) shows that the [apostle](#) sees beyond the exile to Isaiah’s words of hope and restoration.

On the other hand, what attracts Paul to Deuteronomy is perhaps less clear. Hays calls Deuteronomy “the most surprising member of Paul’s functional [canon](#) within the [canon](#)” (Hays, 163). For, as he goes on to argue,

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One might expect this book of conditional blessings and curses to bear witness—as it apparently does in [Gal 3:10, 13](#)—to precisely the sort of performance-based religion that Paul wants to reject. In fact, however, none of Paul’s other references to the book is pejorative in character; nowhere else is Deuteronomy disparaged as a retrograde voice of legalism. Instead, ... the words of Deuteronomy become [in Romans] the voice of the [righteousness](#) from [faith](#) ... [and] a prefiguration of Paul’s [gospel](#). (Hays, 163)

Hays never resolves the tension between Paul’s uses of Deuteronomy in Galatians and Romans. He does, however, emphasize the key importance of the Song of Moses in [Deuteronomy 32](#). In fact, Hays goes so far as to say that “[Deuteronomy 32](#) contains Romans *in nuce*” (Hays, 164), a statement which he substantiates by two considerations:

(1) [Deuteronomy 32](#) contains the [salvation](#)-historical scheme appropriated in Romans: God’s [election](#) and care for Israel ([Deut 32:6–14](#)), Israel’s rebellion ([Deut 32:15–18](#); cf. [32:5](#)), God’s [judgment](#) upon them ([Deut 32:19–35](#)) and ultimately God’s final deliverance and vindication of his own people ([Deut 32:36–43](#)).

(2) [Deuteronomy 32](#) contains both the prophecy that God would stir Israel to jealousy through the Gentiles, cited in [Romans 10:19](#) (cf. [Deut 32:21](#)), and the invitation to the Gentiles to join with God’s people in praise, cited in [Romans 15:10](#) (cf. [Deut 32:43](#)).

For Hays, therefore, Deuteronomy is used by Paul in much the same way as Isaiah, that is, as a part of “his typological reading strategy” to find a scriptural basis for a universalistic, eschatological vision in which the restoration of Israel is accompanied by the inclusion of Gentiles to [worship](#) the [Lord](#).

There can be no question that Hays is fundamentally correct: Deuteronomy is crucial to Paul’s thinking. As was discussed above, however, much of Second Temple literature is heavily influenced by Deuteronomic [tradition](#). How does Paul square with this [tradition](#)? Although Hays recognizes that Paul’s “typological reading strategy extends a typological trajectory begun already in the texts themselves” (Hays, 164), he does not follow through with this idea by showing how Paul’s use of Deuteronomy is mediated by OT/Jewish [tradition](#). In the following, it will be shown how Deuteronomic [tradition](#) is taken up by Paul in letters as early as [1 Thessalonians](#) and as late as Romans.

2.3.2. *Paul’s Use of Deuteronomic Tradition in [1 Thessalonians 2:15–16](#)*. In the polemic against the Jews in [1 Thessalonians 2:15–16](#) (which many have dismissed as a later, post-Pauline addition despite the fact that [Rom 9:22](#) repeats the same idea), Paul appropriates a Hellenistic Jewish-Christian tradition which adapts the Deuteronomic view of Israel’s history to include the death of Jesus (see [Death of Christ](#)) as the culmination of Israel’s rejection of the prophets (cf. Steck 1967, 274–78). Beginning in [1 Thessalonians 2:14](#), Paul compares the persecution which the Thessalonians experienced from their fellow citizens to that which the churches in Judea [suffered](#) at the hands of “the Jews.” Then in [1 Thessalonians 2:15–16](#) he goes on to describe the Jews in more general terms as those

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who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out; they displease God and oppose all people, by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they might be saved. Thus they have constantly been filling up the measure of their sins; but God's wrath has come upon them *eis telos* (lit. "finally" or "completely").

Here, as in the first element of the Deuteronomic perspective (see [1.2.2](#) above), the historic sin of the people is seen as ongoing even to the present. In fact the sin is steadily filling up to its full measure (cf. [Mt 23:32](#)). Here, as in the third element of the Deuteronomic perspective, the violent rejection of the prophets is seen as symptomatic of the continuing guilt and obduracy of the Jews. For Paul the Jewish people have been as unrepentant and recalcitrant in the face of his message (cf. [2 Cor 11:24–25](#)) as they have always been toward the prophets during the long history of Israel. Hence, as in the fourth element of the Deuteronomic perspective, the [wrath](#) of God came upon the people at a historical point in the past, most likely at the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and the Babylonian Exile, and they still displease God. The ongoing "wrath" of God on Israel in Exile is a constant theme of the Deuteronomic perspective in OT/Jewish [tradition](#) (cf. Steck 1967, 364; McCarthy 1974).

If [1 Thessalonians 2:16](#) stresses the [wrath of God](#) which has come on Israel, that does not necessarily mean that the [apostle](#) views his people as doomed forever. While this may depend to a certain degree on whether *eis telos* ([1 Thess 2:16](#)) is translated "at last," "forever," "completely" or "to the end," Paul could have a positive outlook on Israel's future even if the [phrase](#) should be translated "forever." For even in the ultimately positive perspective in [Romans 9–11](#), Paul cites [Psalms 68:24](#) in [Romans 11:10](#), which apparently pronounces eternal [judgment](#) on the Jews (*dia pantos*). Furthermore, if Paul sees himself in [1 Thessalonians 2:15](#) (as elsewhere, cf. Sandnes) in the line of the OT prophets, and that particularly within the Deuteronomic [tradition](#) of the violent rejection of the prophets, then Luke's portrayal of Paul as a Deuteronomic-style preacher of repentance to Israel (cf. Moessner) gains credibility. Although Paul's verdict on the Jews in [1 Thessalonians 2:16](#) fails to express elements 5 and 6 of the Deuteronomic view of Israel's history (the traditional hope of repentance and restoration for Israel), this could reflect the [apostle's](#) contingent situation (cf. [Acts 17:1–15](#); [2 Cor 11:24–25](#); [Gal 5:11](#)) rather than the coherence of his theological beliefs. The very fact that Paul appropriates the Deuteronomic [tradition](#), which looks inexorably beyond present [judgment](#) to future hope, may indicate his basically positive conviction about Israel's future. In that case, there would be no fundamental contradiction or development between this passage and [Romans 11:25–32](#), especially in light of the fact, as will be shown below, that [Romans 9–11](#) is also framed by the same Deuteronomic [tradition](#). Moreover, it is possible that Paul realized already in [1 Thessalonians 2:16](#)—and not first in [Romans 11:25–26](#)—that Israel's complete and final [salvation](#) depends on the prior inclusion of the full number of the Gentiles, for his negative remarks about Israel's present standing with God follow directly upon his statement that the Jews are hindering him from preaching to the Gentiles that they might be saved.

2.3.3. *Paul's Use of Deuteronomic Tradition in [Galatians 3:10](#)*. Scholars have long been baffled about what kind of assumption lies behind Paul's citation of [Deuteronomy 27:26](#) (+ [29:19](#)) in [Galatians 3:10](#): "For as many as are of works of the Law are under a [curse](#); for it is written, 'Cursed is every one who

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does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to do them.’ ” How can Paul cite Deuteronomy in support of his point? Was [Deuteronomy 27:26](#) not merely a warning of what would happen if Israel violated the covenant stipulations? How could Paul assume that the curse of Deuteronomy had indeed come upon Israel?

The Deuteronomic view of Israel’s history provides the most plausible solution to this question (see Scott “[Gal 3:10](#)”). Paul’s use of Deuteronomy in [Galatians 3:10](#) assumes the same perspective that lies behind [1 Thessalonians 2:15–16](#), and behind the national [confession](#) of sin in [Baruch 1:15–3:8](#), and especially behind the closely related [prayer](#) of [Daniel 9:1–18](#). Just as [Daniel 9:11](#) acknowledges that “the curse (*katara*) has come upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned,” so also Paul assumes in [Galatians 3:10](#) that the “curse” (*katara*) “written” in Deuteronomy has come upon Israel because of the nation’s sin. In fact the likeliest explanation as to why Paul considers Israel to be “under” a curse is that the Deuteronomic “curse” to which [Daniel 9:11](#) refers came “upon” the people. For Paul [Deuteronomy 27:26](#) is not a “retrograde voice of legalism.” Paul evidently assumes the Deuteronomic perspective which was prevalent in Second Temple literature and reflected in [Daniel 9](#), that the divine [judgment](#) begun in 587 B.C. continues on Israel, that the Jewish people remain in exile until the time of the restoration (cf. also N. T. Wright 1992, 140–41, 146). In other words, the use of [Deuteronomy 27:26](#) (+[29:19](#)) in [Galatians 3:10](#) is another example of the *exilic* perspective which Hays has already noticed in the [citation](#) of [Isaiah 52:5](#) in [Romans 2:24](#).

As in Paul’s [citation](#) of [Isaiah 52:5](#) in [Romans 2:24](#), however, his quotation of [Deuteronomy 27:26](#) (+[29:19](#)) in [Galatians 3:10](#) sees beyond Israel’s exilic situation. For the subsequent context of [Galatians 3–4](#) goes on to make clear that Christ reverses the effects of the curses of Deuteronomy (cf. [Dan 9:24–27](#)) and thereby brings the [redemption](#) and restoration expected in Isaiah. According to [Galatians 3:13](#), “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us; for it is written: ‘Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree.’ ” Here Paul cites [Deuteronomy 21:23](#) in combination with [Deuteronomy 27:26](#), in order to adapt it to the previous [citation](#) of [Deuteronomy 27:26](#) both lexically and materially. Paul’s use of Deuteronomy in [Galatians](#) is totally subordinated to the Deuteronomic [tradition](#) which reflects the situation of Israel since 587 B.C. From Paul’s point of view, however, “the fullness of time has come” and the messianic Son of God has redeemed those who were under the curse of the Law ([Gal 4:4–5](#)). The fact that [Galatians 3–4](#) moves from “curse” to “redemption” from the curse through Christ, and from there to the integrally related reception of the “[Spirit](#)” and divine adoptive sonship (see [Adoption and Sonship](#)), shows unequivocally that Paul partakes here of restoration [tradition](#). Thus [Galatians 3:10](#) should be seen together with [Galatians 3:13–14](#) as the negative side of the traditional hope—already articulated in [Deuteronomy 27–32](#)—which looks forward to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the restoration of Israel (cf. [Deut 32:43](#), cited in [Rom 15:10](#)). Seen in this light, Paul’s exilic understanding of the Deuteronomic curse in [Galatians 3:10](#) parallels that found in Jewish inscriptions of Asia Minor (cf. Trebilco, 60–69), which may help to explain why the Galatian addressees could be expected to follow the rather enthymatic argument here.

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2.3.4. *Paul's Use of Deuteronomic Tradition in [Romans 9–11](#)*. Here, again, the Deuteronomic view of Israel's history provides the framework for Paul's thinking. In [Romans 9–11](#) Paul presents a sustained theological argument to solve the problem of Israel which was raised in the first eight chapters of the letter. That problem is as follows: although the [gospel](#) is to the Jew first ([Rom 1:16](#)), most of Israel is closed to the gospel ([Rom 10:16](#)) and therefore has not received salvation (cf. Hofius, 175–78). Has God's promise to [Abraham](#) and his seed been annulled ([Rom 9:6](#))? Has God rejected his people ([Rom 11:1–2](#))? These are the questions which, as an Israelite motivated by supreme love for his people (cf. [Rom 9:2–3](#)), Paul seeks to answer in this section, showing that "the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" ([Rom 11:29](#)). Paul's salvation-historical argument in [Romans 9–11](#) is framed by the six traditional elements of the Deuteronomic perspective (see [1.2.2](#) above).

(1) As in the first element of the Deuteronomic view of Israel's history, Paul affirms in *Romans* the recalcitrance and guilt of the Jewish people. He makes this point already in [Romans 2:1–29](#), often alluding to Deuteronomy, and carries this thought forward in [Romans 9–11](#). In [Romans 9:31](#), for example, Paul states: "Israel who was pursuing the law of [righteousness](#) has not attained to that Law." In [Romans 10:21](#), furthermore, Paul brings out the historical dimension of Israel's guilt by the [citation](#) of [Isaiah 65:2](#): "But of Israel he [Isaiah] says, 'All day long I [God] have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.'" In this [citation](#), Paul thrusts forward the [phrase](#) "all day long" in order to stress the constancy with which God has graciously appealed to his people, most recently in announcing to them the [gospel](#) message. As [Bultmann](#) correctly observes,

When Paul characterizes Israel according to [Isaiah 65:2](#) as "a disobedient and contrary people" ([Rom 10:21](#)), he understands the history of Israel as a whole, that is, as a unified history of sin. And this sin is, so to speak, concentrated—and thereby in its [essence](#) manifested—in the Jews' lack of [faith](#) in Christ and the Christian message. All the accusations of the Jews and threats of the prophets are applied to the present time ([Rom 9:25–11:10](#)). ([Bultmann](#), 100)

Thus [Bultmann](#), who immediately before this comment denies that a Deuteronomic view of Israel's history is found in Paul, unwittingly makes a strong argument for its existence in [Romans 9–11](#)! For, as Steck (1967, 193) has shown, the Deuteronomic view brings the whole sinful history of Israel to bear on the present. As in [1 Thessalonians 2:15–16](#), Paul is saying here that Israel has been continually disobedient and obstinate.

(2–3) As in the second and third elements of the Deuteronomic view of Israel's history, [Romans 9–11](#) features Israel's violent rejection of the prophets, at least tangentially. For in showing that God has not rejected his people totally and finally (cf. [Rom 11:1–2a](#)), [Romans 11:2b–5](#) adduces [1 Kings 19:10](#), [14](#):

Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So too at the present time, there is a [remnant](#), chosen by grace.

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Although Paul's main point in citing this text is that now as always God has preserved a [remnant](#) in Israel (cf. [Rom 9:27–29](#)), the fact that the [apostle](#) thrusts forward the statement about the killing of the prophets suggests that he also wants to stress, as in [1 Thessalonians 2:15](#), the continual obduracy of Israel to the prophetic message, including his own [gospel](#) message (cf. [Rom 10:16](#); [15:31](#)). The Deuteronomic view of Israel's history traditionally uses Israel's violent rejection of the prophets as an indication of Israel's continual obduracy. In fact, *1 Enoch* 89:51 alludes to [1 Kings 19:10](#), [14](#) in the context of the Deuteronomic framework (cf. Steck 1967, 155 n. 5). Therefore, the reference to Israel's killing of the prophets in [Romans 11:3](#) should be seen, along with that in [1 Thessalonians 2:15](#), as an element of the Deuteronomic perspective (pace Steck 1967, 278 n. 2).

(4) As in the fourth element of the Deuteronomic view of Israel's history and [1 Thessalonians 2:16](#) which appropriates this perspective, Romans affirms the [wrath of God](#) on the Jewish people ([Rom 2:6–8](#); [3:5](#), "on us"). Furthermore, as Hays has observed, the quotation of [Isaiah 52:5](#) in [Romans 2:24](#)—"The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you"—works in Paul's argument only if the Jewish readers castigated by the text take on the role of Israel in Exile. This does not require Jewish readers to strain their own imaginations, for the Deuteronomic [tradition](#) which Paul appropriates assumes that the Jewish people remain under [judgment](#) in Exile long after the sixth century B.C. and indeed until the time of the restoration.

The concept of the [judgment](#) on Israel is developed in more detail in [Romans 9–11](#). Already in [Romans 9:1–3](#) Paul implies that divine [judgment](#) rests on Israel, for, with great sorrow and anguish for his people, the [apostle](#) expresses the wish that he were "accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred by race." Paul's anguish for his people stems from the realization, which he articulates in the subsequent context, that the majority of Israel remains under the condemnation of God, at least for the time being. The presence of a "remnant" may show that God has not abandoned his people ([Rom 11:1–6](#)), but the fact remains that the "rest" of Israel who are not included in the [remnant](#) stand under condemnation. For according to [Romans 11:10](#), David's curse applies to "Israel" which "failed to obtain what it sought" ([Rom 11:7](#); cf. [10:3](#)): "let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and keep their back forever bent" in servitude. Moreover, [Romans 11:15](#) presupposes that God has rejected the majority of Israel. [Romans 11:17–24](#) pictures Israel as an olive tree (see [Olive Tree](#)) whose branches are cut off because of their "unfaithfulness" ([Rom 11:17](#), [19–22](#); cf. [3:3](#)). The image stems from [Jeremiah 11:16–17](#) (cf. [Hos 14:6](#)), which prophesies that as an olive tree Israel's branches would be broken for violating the [covenant](#)—a possible reference to the [judgment](#) in 587 B.C.

In view of this evidence, there is much to commend Wright's observation (1980, 218) that in [Romans 9–11](#) Paul is "working out the exile-[theology](#) of Moses' closing speech in Deuteronomy, applying it to his new situation as others had applied it to the exile itself (Jeremiah) or the Maccabean crisis ([Qumran](#), the apocalyptists), and would apply it to the events of A.D. 70 (4 Ezra, the Rabbis)."

(5) As in the fifth element of the Deuteronomic view of Israel's history, [Romans 2:4–5](#) makes it clear that God wants to lead Israel to repentance before the final [judgment](#), but that Israel has had a hard and impenitent heart (cf. [Deut 31:27](#)). [Romans 9–11](#) elaborates on this point by arguing that Israel's present

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rejection of the [gospel](#) reflects their continual obduracy to the message of the prophets. During the period that God has been showing his wrath, he “has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction ...” ([Rom 9:22](#); cf. [1 Thess 2:16](#)). Paul writes in [Romans 10:16](#), citing [Isaiah 53:1](#): “But they have not all obeyed the [gospel](#); for Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ ” In other words, what Isaiah could say in his day applies equally in Paul’s day because of the continual obduracy of the people. Likewise in [Romans 11:7b–8](#) Paul states, citing [Deuteronomy 29:3](#) (+ [Is 29:10](#)): “The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, as it is written, ‘God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that should not see and ears that should not hear, down to this very day.’ ” Thus Paul affirms, in accordance with the Deuteronomic perspective, that Israel has always been recalcitrant and continues to be so. Moreover, as Paul goes on to say in [Romans 11:25](#): “a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.” Yet Paul also argues on the basis of [Deuteronomy 32:21](#), a text about Israel’s experience in exile, that God seeks to make Israel jealous by means of the Gentiles in order to provoke Israel to repentance and emulation (cf. [Rom 10:19](#); [11:11](#), [14](#)).

Hence the [apostle](#) to the Gentiles has a twofold purpose in evangelizing the Gentiles as quickly as possible: First, he hopes thereby to provoke his fellow Jews to jealousy and thus bring some of them to [salvation](#) ([Rom 11:13–14](#)). If they do not persist in unbelief, the Jews will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again ([Rom 11:23](#)). But, second, he also hopes to bring in the full number of the Gentiles and so bring about the [parousia](#), when all Israel will be saved ([Rom 11:25–26](#)).

(6) As in the sixth element of the Deuteronomic view of Israel’s history, [Romans 9–11](#) expects the national restoration of Israel in conjunction with the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles. In [Romans 11:25–32](#) Paul reiterates that the [salvation](#) of Israel follows the [salvation](#) of the Gentiles (cf. [Rom 11:11–15](#)), and that the Gentile Christians are not to be conceited (cf. [Rom 11:17–24](#)). Paul is confident that the natural branches will be grafted back into their own olive tree ([Rom 11:24](#)). He then takes this a step further by describing how Israel will eventually be saved.

First, the hardening of Israel will continue “until the [fullness](#) of the Gentiles comes in” ([Rom 11:25](#)), which implies an ongoing historical process which will be completed in the future. In accordance with the OT/Jewish concept of the “eschatological measure,” the fullness of the Gentiles (cf. [Rom 11:12](#)) refers to a particular number of Gentiles who are predestined to be saved. In other words, as long as Israel remains hardened and thus fills up the measure of their [sin](#) (cf. [1 Thess 2:16](#)), the Gentiles would fill up another measure, according to the sovereign plan of God. Paul probably thought that once the Spanish mission was completed the full number of the Gentiles would be reached (cf. Riesner).

The idea of the Gentiles’ “coming in” implies the OT/Jewish expectation of the pilgrimage of the Gentiles to Zion in the messianic time. If the image of the pilgrimage of the Gentiles in [Isaiah 2:2–5](#) has been used here, the order has been reversed: The nations do not come to Israel because they see Israel’s [glory](#); rather, Israel comes to the nations because she sees the [salvation](#) and [glory](#) which they have in Christ. As Hofius (324) suggests, however, Paul may have in mind certain OT texts which put the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles before the restoration of Israel. When the full number of the Gentiles comes in, then, second, all Israel, including the previously impenitent and hardened majority, Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

will be saved at the [parousia](#) (cf. Hofius, 319–20). Thus [Romans 11:26–27](#) states, citing [Isaiah 59:20](#) and [27:9](#): “And so all Israel will be saved, just as it is written: The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will remove ungodliness from Jacob”; “and this will be my [covenant](#) with them when I take away their sins.”

Interpreters often wonder whether “all Israel will be saved” means every single Israelite or only a full and proper representation of Israel. The answer may be neither, for according to the Deuteronomic [tradition](#) which frames [Romans 9–11](#), Israel is a unity in a historical continuum (cf. [1.2.2.](#) above). Therefore, [Romans 11:26](#) probably has in view the people of Israel taken as a whole from their initial [election](#) to their ultimate [salvation](#). This will be the time of the [resurrection](#) of the dead (cf. [Rom 11:15](#)), which is closely associated with the restoration of Israel (cf. Haacker). This will also be the time of the [new covenant](#), when God will restore the covenantal relationship with his people and forgive Israel’s sins ([Jer 31:31–34](#); cf. [1 Cor 11:25–26](#); [2 Cor 3:1–18](#); [6:14–7:1](#)). Finally, this will be the time of the deliverance and vindication of Israel expected in [Deuteronomy 32:36–43](#), when the Gentiles will rejoice with Israel ([Deut 32:43](#)). Interestingly enough, Paul cites [Deuteronomy 32:43](#) LXX in [Romans 15:10](#) for the benefit of Gentile believers. The fact that the Gentiles participate in the restoration of Israel was signaled already by the quotations of [Hosea 2:25](#); [2:1](#) (LXX) in [Romans 9:25–26](#).

E. P. Sanders (1985, 91–119) finds in [Romans 9–11](#) such compelling evidence of traditional restoration [eschatology](#) that he suggests Paul can be adduced, together with John the Baptist, to show that the expectation of the restoration stands at the conclusion as well as at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. For Sanders, however, Paul’s concept of restoration is a somewhat desperate expedient to solve what he calls Paul’s “fundamental theological problem,” that is, how to hold together and/or reconcile the two dispensations of [election](#)/Law and [faith](#), and thus to save God’s reputation from the charge of arbitrariness (Sanders 1991, 117–28; cf. also Räisänen, 196). Sanders thinks that Paul is caught in a dilemma—how to reconcile God’s promises to Israel with the promise of [salvation](#) to those who have [faith](#) in Christ—which cannot be solved as long as the [apostle](#) is considering the present age. Hence Paul changes categories by “lateral thinking,” relegating the solution to the future, when God will save everyone and everything.

The problem with assuming such a dilemma, however, is that it ignores the fundamental question: Why did Israel need a restoration in the first place? Sanders fails to see that, according to the Deuteronomic view of Israel’s history which Paul appropriates in [Romans 9–11](#), there was a plight: Israel had apostatized from the [covenant](#) and this led to their [judgment](#) in exile; covenantal nomism had ceased to be a viable option after 587 B.C.

See also [APOCALYPTICISM](#); [COVENANT AND NEW COVENANT](#); [CURSE, ACCURSED, ANATHEMA](#); [ESCHATOLOGY](#); [ISRAEL](#); [JUDGMENT](#); [LAW](#); [WRATH, DESTRUCTION](#).

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