From Remnant to Seed of Hope for Israel: Romans 9:27-29

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In what follows we aim to make a contribution to the significant theme of hope that pervades Paul's Letter to the Romans. More specifically, this article proposes a much more positive reading of Rom 9:27-29 than is usual. We wish to show the progression from the hope represented by a "remnant" of Israel in 9:27 to the hope represented by a "seed" in 9:29. This subtle progression of hope within 9:27-29 functions as a preliminary climax within Rom 9-11. It plays its role in the concerted thrust toward hope for unbelieving Israel that reaches its ultimate climax in the hope that "all Israel will be saved!" (11:26).

There are significant points of interpretation deserving a fresh look in each of the three verses that comprise Rom 9:27-29. First, with regard to 9:27, instead of the usual translation and understanding, we want to provide a new foundation for an alternative interpretation that accords better with the grammar, context, and OT background (Isa 10:22-23; Hos 2:1) of this verse. Second, we want to propose a new translation and interpretation of the perplexing participial pair, συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων, as a key to a better understanding of 9:28 as a confirmation of 9:27. Third, we want to investigate the neglected significance of the use of the first person plural to refer to the yet unbelieving, non-remnant part of the people of Israel in 9:29 as a key to unlocking the rhetorical function of this climactic verse. Finally and overall, we hope to demonstrate the significance of the subtle rhetorical progression from the "remnant" (ὑπόλειμμα) in 9:27 to the "seed" (σπέρμα) in 9:29 within Paul's expression of hope for unbelieving Israel.

Before examining each of these three verses in detail, it will be helpful briefly to locate their context within Romans. Most scholars rightly consider Rom 9:6-29 to be a distinct literary-rhetorical unit within Paul's intriguing scriptural argumentation in Rom 9-

11. In 9:6-29 Paul invites his audience to consider the serious problem of unbelieving Israel (9:1-5) primarily from the side of God and God's plan of salvation. Paul's opening thrust in 9:6a, "But it is not as if the word of God has failed!," serves as the thesis statement and superscription for the argumentation that follows. The verses in 9:27-29, therefore, function as a preliminary climactic confirmation that God's scriptural word of promise has not failed with regard to the unbelieving people of Israel.[1]

With regard to the more immediate context, the sub-unit of 9:27-29 follows upon Paul's combined quotation of Hos 2:25, 1 in 9:24-26 to argue provocatively that the people of God is now composed of both (Christ-believing) Jews and Gentiles: "We are those whom he thus called not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles, as indeed he says in Hosea, 'I will call what was not my people "my people" and her who was not beloved "beloved." And it will be in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," there they will be called sons of the living God.'"[2] But in 9:27-29 Paul turns his attention from believing Jews and Gentiles back to unbelieving Israel, his main concern (9:1-5), as he concludes the unit with two quotations primarily from Isaiah.[3] "But Isaiah cries out on behalf of Israel" introduces a quotation from Isa 10:22-23 (combined with Hos 2:1) in Rom 9:27-28, and "as Isaiah has foretold" introduces a quotation from Isa 1:9 in Rom 9:29.

I. Romans 9:27: God's Word of Promise That a Remnant Will Be Saved

The NRSV version of 9:27 is typical of the way that the majority of recent translators and commentators understand this verse: "And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, 'Though the number of the children of Israel were like the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved." Such translations not only mistranslate the preposition ὑπέρ in 9:27a as "concerning" or "about" Israel rather than the more contextually preferable "on behalf of" Israel, but they also misconstrue the protasis of the Isaian quote as a concessive clause and add an "only" (lacking in the Greek) to the apodosis.

They thus interpret 9:27 as an expression of judgment on Israel that limits the number of believers to "only" a remnant.[4]

The protasis of the Isaian quote in 9:27, however, should be construed as a conditional rather than concessive clause, so that if any word is to be added to the apodosis, it would be "surely" and/or "at least" rather than "only." Thus a more accurate translation of 9:27 would be: "But Isaiah cries out on behalf of Israel: 'If the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, (surely, at least) a remnant will be saved!'" Rather than a limiting judgment on Israel, then, 9:27 expresses the hope that, based on God's word of promise, a remnant of presently unbelieving Israel will come to believe and be saved.[5] Let us now substantiate this interpretation.

A. Romans 9:27a: But Isaiah Cries Out on Behalf of Israel

A consideration of each word in 9:27a is necessary to understand fully the meaning and function of this clause in Paul's argument. First, the word δέ should be given its full weight as an adversative particle expressing a contrast rather than a simple connective with what was stated in 9:24-26.[6] It indicates that in contrast to what Hosea says about the people of God being called from both Christ-believing Jews and Gentiles, Isaiah cries out on behalf of still unbelieving Israel. The contrastive sense of δέ thus accords with the shift in focus from Jewish and gentile believers in 9:24-26 on the one hand to yet unbelieving Israel in 9:27-29 on the other hand, Paul's main concern throughout Rom 9-11 (cf. 9:1-5).[7]

Second, that Paul quotes from "Isaiah," spokesman of the prophetic word of God, is intended to further his salvation-historical thesis that "it is not as if the word of God has failed!" (9:6a).[8] That the prophet Isaiah "cries out" (κράζει) expresses a particularly intense and urgent prophetic proclamation, inspired by God's Spirit.[9] The only other occurrence of this verb in Romans was in 8:15 (cf. Gal 4:6), where it expressed the prayerful crying out of Christians: "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery reverting you back into fear but you received a spirit of sonship by which we cry

out (κράζομεν), 'Abba! Father!'" Perhaps Paul's Roman audience is to carry over this prayerful connotation of κράζω from 8:15 to the "crying out" of Isaiah in 9:27a.[10] If so, it would contribute to our interpretation that Isaiah is crying out "on behalf of" rather than merely "concerning" or "about" Israel.[11]

Third, in contrast to most translations, which take the preposition ὑπέρ in 9:27a as the equivalent of περί and thus translate as "concerning" or "about" Israel, ὑπέρ here has its ordinary sense of "on behalf of" or "in favor of" or "for the sake of" when used in reference to persons in the genitive case.[12] In every other such occurrence of ὑπέρ used in reference to persons in Romans it has its normal meaning of "on behalf of" (see 5:6, 7, 8; 8:27, 31, 32, 34; 9:3; 10:1; 14:15; 15:30; 16:4).[13] The burden of proof lies heavily upon those who would see its occurrence in 9:27a as the only exception to this consistent usage. The reason most nevertheless translate ὑπέρ as if it were περί is undoubtedly to make it accord with their interpretation of the Isaian citation in 9:27b as a negative judgment "concerning" or "about" Israel rather than a positive, prophetic proclamation "on behalf of" Israel.[14]

Fourth, it is imperative to recognize that in 9:27a Isaiah is crying out not concerning the small number of Christ-believing "Jews" who are now part of God's new people along with Christ-believing Gentiles (9:24-26), but on behalf of presently unbelieving "Israel." Indeed, throughout all of Romans there is no instance where the term "Israelite" (9:4) or "Israel" (9:6, 27, 31; 10:19, 21; 11:2, 7, 25, 26) ever refers to a Christ-believing Jew. The burden of proof again lies heavily upon those who would see "Israel" in 9:27a as the only exception to this consistent usage. In Romans Paul always employs the term "Israel" in reference to those Jews who have not yet believed in Christ.

B. Romans 9:27b: The Combined Citation of Isaiah 10:22a and Hosea 2:1a

The grammatical foundation for translating the protasis of the Isaian quote in 9:27b as a concessive clause referring to the past or present rather than a conditional

clause referring to the future is very questionable. When the conditional particle ἐάν is employed with a verb in the subjunctive mood, as we have here, it usually refers to a future eventuality "to designate what is expected to occur under certain circumstances from a given standpoint in the present: 'if, as is to be expected...'"[15] In our case what is assumed to occur in the future is expressed by the subjunctive of the Greek verb "to be" (ᾖ): "If (as is to be expected) the number of the sons of Israel <u>be</u> (in the future) as the sand of the sea..."[16]

When the conjunction ἐάν introduces a concessive clause ("even if," "but if," "although," "though"), it is usually followed by particles, such as καί or δὲ καί.[17] But that is not what we have in 9:27b. Furthermore, as already mentioned, there is no warrant for adding a limiting "only," which is lacking in the Greek text, to the apodosis ("<u>only</u> a remnant will be saved"). Grammatically, then, the Isaian quote in 9:27b is best translated and understood as an eventual conditional sentence expressing the hope that if, as is to be expected in accord with God's promise that the sons of Israel (who presently do not yet believe in Christ) will be as numerous as the sand of the sea, then surely, at least a remnant of this great number will be saved in the future by eventually coming to believe in Christ. To appreciate the rhetorical progression it is crucial to realize that in 9:24-26 Paul is referring to <u>present</u> believers "from the Jews," while in 9:27-29 he is referring to those among "Israel" who presently do not believe, a remnant of whom "will be saved" <u>in the future</u>.

<u>1. Isaiah 10:22a</u>

One of the reasons so many translate and understand Rom 9:27b in a concessive sense as expressing a judgment that limits the number to be saved among Israel to "only" a remnant is that the quote from Isa 10:22a in 9:27b is commonly translated and understood in this way. But a close consideration of the grammar and context of both the MT and the LXX of Isa 10:22a reveals that this verse expresses not a destructive judgment on Israel but a promising hope represented by a remnant.[18]

The NRSV renders the MT of Isa 10:22 as follows: "For though your people Israel were like the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness." This is typical of the way the first sentence of this verse is commonly misunderstood, namely, in a concessive sense as an expression of a threatening judgment that diminishes Israel to "only" a remnant.[19] But, as we will see, it should be understood rather as an assuring, if somewhat somber, promise of hope with regard to Israel.

The compound Hebrew conjunction כִּי אִם here introduces not a concessive clause ("For though...") but a proposition of affirmation ("For if...") expressing a strong sense of assurance.[20] There is no grammatical warrant for adding to the apodosis the limiting word "only," which is lacking in the MT.[21] Hence, the first sentence in the MT of Isa 10:22 should be translated more accurately: "For if your people Israel will be like the sand of the sea, a remnant of them will return."

The LXX of Isa 10:22a renders the Hebrew conjunction כִּי אִם as καὶ ἐάν, which can likewise be translated, "for if." As noted above, the καί usually follows rather than precedes ἐάν when it has the concessive meaning. But Paul in Rom 9:27b has eliminated the καί altogether and begins his quote simply with ἐάν, "if," to introduce an eventual conditional clause about what is expected to happen in the future.[22]

The strong statement of assurance about the future in Isa 10:22a, based on God's promise to Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous "as the sand on the seashore" (Gen 22:17), thus bolsters the expression of hope represented by a returning remnant in the immediately preceding verses in 10:20-21: "On that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on the one who struck them, but will lean on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God" (NRSV).

There are no grammatical connectives linking the second sentence in the MT of Isa 10:22, "Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness," with the first

sentence.[23] It is rather a new sentence with a new subject. It is directed, then, not, as it may appear on first glance, at Israel but rather at Assyria. This is confirmed by the verses that immediately follow in 10:23-27:

> 23 For the Lord God of hosts will make a full end, as decreed, in all the earth.
>
> 24 Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts: O my people, who live in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrians when they beat you with a rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did. 25 For in a very little while my indignation will come to an end, and my anger will be directed to their destruction. 26 The Lord of hosts will wield a whip against them, as when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb; his staff will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt. 27 On that day his burden will be removed from your shoulder, and his yoke will be destroyed from your neck" (NRSV).

The immediately following context makes it very clear that the "destruction" that is decreed in 10:22b refers to the destruction of the Assyrian oppressors of Israel: "<u>their</u> destruction" in v. 25; "<u>his</u> yoke will be destroyed" in v. 27.[24] In Rom 9:27b, then, Paul is quoting Isa 10:22a in accord with its original and true meaning in both the Greek and Hebrew versions, namely, as an expression not of a destruction diminishing Israel to "only" a remnant, but of hope for the future represented by a remnant that will surely issue from Israel, based on God's word of promise that the descendants of Israel will be as numerous as the sand on the shore of the sea.

<u>2. Hosea 2:1a</u>

In his primarily Isaian quotation in Rom 9:27b Paul replaces "the people of Israel" (ὁ λαὸς Ἰσραήλ) in Isa 10:22a with "the number of the sons of Israel" (ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ) from Hos 2:1a. This Hosean text lies close at hand for Paul, as he has just utilized Hos 2:1b in Rom 9:25-26 to refer to the believing Jews and Gentiles who now compose God's people (λαός μου, 9:26).[25] But what especially facilitates the connection between Isa 10:22a and Hos 2:1a is the Jewish exegetical procedure known

as gezera shava, by which texts are linked for mutual interpretation through words they have in common. Isa 10:22a and Hos 2:1a can be brought together for mutual interpretation especially via the simile "as the sand of the sea" (ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης) that they have in common.[26]

One of the reasons Paul replaces "the people of Israel" in Isa 10:22a with "the number of the sons of Israel" from Hos 2:1a is to avoid confusion in view of the expressions of "my people" in Rom 9:25-26 to refer to believing Jews and Gentiles rather than to unbelieving "Israel," his focus in 9:27-29.[27] But there is another, more positive reason for this Pauline substitution. Paul employs the term "number" (ἀριθμός) rather than "people" (λαός) here to reinforce the significance of the simile, "as the sand of the sea," as an expression of the vast, uncountable number of descendants God has promised for Israel. Through the gezera shava that links Isa 10:22a to Hos 2:1a for mutual interpretation, the whole of Hos 2:1a resonates in the ears of Paul's audience: "And the number of the sons of Israel were as the sand of the sea, which will be neither measured nor numbered." In other words, the term "number" intensifies the significance of the simile of the sand as an expression of God's word of promise about how numerous will be the descendants of Israel.

3. "As the sand of the sea": God's word of promise

The neglected significance of the simile of the sand as an expression of God's word of promise for an uncountable number of future descendants for Israel may be the main reason both Isa 10:22 and Rom 9:27 are so often misunderstood. This simile recalls the variously repeated expressions of God's promise to Abraham of innumerable descendants--as innumerable as the "sand" (ἄμμος) of the earth or of the sea(shore). In Gen 16:13 God promises Abraham, "I will make your seed as the sand of the earth," and in Gen 22:17, "I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand that is beside the shore of the sea." In Gen 28:14 God repeats this word of promise to Jacob, "your seed will be as the sand of the earth" ("sea" in the Alexandrian

codex), and in Gen 32:12 (32:13 in the LXX), “I will establish your seed as the sand of the sea.”[28]

The significance of the simile of the sand as an allusion to God’s word of promise for innumerable descendants for Israel in the future intensifies Paul’s combination of Isa 10:22a and Hos 2:1a in Rom 9:27b as a prophetic expression of God’s word of promise. This allusion to God’s word of promise to Abraham and Jacob reinforces the certainty of the hope that surely, at least a remnant of presently unbelieving Israel will be saved, if God has long ago and repeatedly promised that the descendants of Israel will be as the sand of the sea. Furthermore, the sand simile imparts a double dimension to Rom 9:27b as an expression of the word of God’s promise. Not only is Paul quoting the prophet Isaiah as a proclamation of God’s word of promise regarding unbelieving Israel, but the Isaian quote itself reverberates with God’s previous word of promise to Abraham and Jacob. The combination of Isa 10:22a with Hos 2:1a via the simile of the sand, then, greatly enhances the value of Rom 9:27 to demonstrate Paul’s main thesis throughout Rom 9-11--“But it is not as if the word of God has failed!” (9:6a).

II. Romans 9:28: A Word Definitively Decided the Lord Will Accomplish

The conjunction γάρ, “for,” indicates that the statement in 9:28 is to be understood as a further confirmation of the prophetic proclamation in 9:27 of God’s word of promise expressing the hope that surely, at least a remnant of presently unbelieving Israel will come to believe and be saved.[29] But the precise meaning of the continuation of the Isaian quote in 9:28 is quite difficult and greatly disputed. What must be determined is the meaning and reference of not only the initial term λόγον but also the perplexing participial pair, συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων.[30]

<u>A. Meaning and Reference of λόγον in Rom 9:28</u>

For Paul as for the LXX the Greek term λόγον, “word” (which replaces the Hebrew term כִּלָּיוֹן, “destruction” in the MT), from Isa 10:22b in Rom 9:28 refers to the

word of God's promise to which 9:27 has just alluded, namely, that the descendants of Israel will be as numerous as the sand of the sea. This corresponds to the first two uses of λόγος in Rom 9:6-29. In 9:6a it refers to the word of God: "For it is not as if the word of God (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ) has failed!" And in 9:9 it refers to the word of (God's) promise: "For this is the word (ὁ λόγος) of promise (ἐπαγγελίας): 'At this time I will return and Sarah will have a son' (Gen 18:10, 14)." Thus, just as λόγος in 9:9 refers to God's word of promise in Genesis regarding Abraham and Sarah's first descendant, so λόγον in 9:28 refers to God's word of promise in Genesis regarding Abraham's numerous future descendants (Gen 16:13; 22:17; 28:14; 32:12). The term λόγον in 9:28, then, means "word" and refers not, as it is understood by some, to a sentence of judgment, but to God's word of promise as quoted by the prophet Isaiah.[31]

B. Meaning and Reference of συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων in Rom 9:28

To decipher the precise meaning of the confounding couplet, συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων, in Rom 9:28 we begin by establishing the grammatical direct object to which this participial pair refers. Some take the object of these dual participles to be "Israel" or the "remnant" from Israel (9:27) or an unexpressed noun "time" as an implied object.[32] Since the preceding noun λόγον is in the accusative case, it seems rather clear and grammatically logical to take it as the object of this participial pair, as well as of the main verb ποιήσει, "will do" or "will accomplish."[33] But if these perplexing participles refer to the "word" of God's promise, what do they mean and how are they best translated?

To begin to answer that question we need to consider the sources of Paul's quotation from Isaiah in Rom 9:28. It is a conflated citation based on a gezera shava that brings together the LXX versions of Isa 10:22b-23 and 28:22b for mutual interpretation. We translate the LXX of Isa 10:22b-23 and 28:22b as follows: "For determining and deciding a word in righteousness, since a word that has been decided God will do in the whole world" (10:22b-23); and "since deeds that have been

determined and decided I have heard from the Lord Sabaoth, which he will do on all the earth" (28:22b). The key terms that these two Isaian texts have in common and that facilitate the gezera shava are the verbal forms--not only the main verb, "will do" (ποιήσει), but also various forms of our participles. In 10:22b-23 we have the pair of present active participles "determining and deciding" (συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων), as well as the single perfect passive participle "has been decided" (συντετμημένον). And in 28:22b we have the pair of perfect passive participles "have been determined and decided" (συντετελεσμένα καὶ συντετμημένα).[34]

This gezera shava has allowed Paul in Rom 9:28 to replace "God" (ὁ θεός) from Isa 10:23 with "Lord" (κύριος) from Isa 28:22b--"from the Lord Sabaoth" (παρὰ κυρίου σαβαωθ) and "in the whole world" (ἐν τῇ οἰκουμένῃ ὅλῃ) from Isa 10:23 with "upon the earth" (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) from Isa 28:22b--"on all the earth" (ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν).[35] In addition, Paul has eliminated from Isa 10:22b-23 the words, "in righteousness, since a word that has been decided," which he apparently considered superfluous, if they were in his source.[36] We propose, then, the following translation for Paul's conflated citation of Isa 10:22b-23 and 28:22b in Rom 9:28: "For definitively deciding a word, the Lord will accomplish (it) on the earth." Let us now justify and explain this translation.

The participial pair, συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων, from the LXX of Isa 10:22b in Rom 9:28 should be understood as a Greek hendiadys that is found also in Isa 28:22b and Dan 5:27, and that corresponds to a similar Hebrew hendiadys, כָּלָה וְנֶחֱרָצָה, found in the MT of Isa 10:23, 28:22 and Dan 9:27.[37] The first element of the Hebrew hendiadys is the qal stative verb כָּלָה, which means basically "be at an end" or "be finished."[38] But, when used in reference to speech, means "finish or fulfill a decision that has been spoken," "determine it," or "make it definitive."[39] The second element of the Hebrew hendiadys is the niphal participle נֶחֱרָצָה, which comes from the verb חָרַץ, meaning basically "to cut" or "sharpen."[40] But, when used in reference to speech, means "cut" in the sense of "decree" or "decide."[41] Literally, then, the Hebrew pair כָּלָה וְנֶחֱרָצָה means

"what has been determined and decided" or, as a hendiadys, "what has been definitively decided."

The Greek hendiadys, συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων, is more lexically even and alliterative than its Hebrew counterpart. Both elements of the Greek hendiadys are present active participles beginning with the same prefix, the preposition συν-, which intensifies the meaning of their verbal roots. So similar are they in sound and appearance that the only difference between them is that the first participle, συντελῶν, has the letter λ where the second, συντέμνων, has the letters μν.

The first Greek present active participle, συντελῶν, corresponds to the qal stative Hebrew verb כָּלָה and thus means, when applied to God's word (λόγον) as in Isa 10:22b and Rom 9:28, "determine" or "make definitive" the accomplishment of God's spoken word.[42] The second Greek present active participle, συντέμνων, corresponds to the Hebrew niphal participle נֶחֱרָצָה. The roots of both these participles (חָרַץ and τέμνω) mean "to cut" and when referring to speech, especially divine speech, "to decree" or "to decide."[43]

A comparison of the LXX and the MT of Isa 10:22b-23 indicates that the Greek participle συντέμνων, "deciding," is the main, dominant member of the hendiadys. In Isa 10:22b the LXX intensifies the single Hebrew qal passive verb חָרוּץ, "it has been decided," in the MT by rendering it with the Greek hendiadys, συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων, "definitively deciding." But in Isa 10:23 the LXX renders the Hebrew hendiadys, כָּלָה וְנֶחֱרָצָה, "it has been definitively decided," with the single Greek perfect passive participle, συντετμημένον, "decided." Similar to its Hebrew counterpart, then, the Greek pair συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων means "determining and deciding" or, as a hendiadys with συντέμνων as dominant, "definitively deciding."

Therefore, the Greek participial hendiadys, συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων, does not mean "finishing (definitively) and cutting short" (his decree). Nor does it refer to God's word of promise that will see fulfillment, but only to a limited degree. Nor does it

indicate that God's word of promise will be fulfilled only for a limited Israel--"only" a remnant. Nor does it indicate God's shortening the time of his long-suffering.[44]

As we have seen, the dominant participle of the hendiadys, συντέμνων, means "cut" not in the sense of "cutting short" either time or the word of God, but "cut" in the sense of "decide" or "make decisive" with reference to the word of God. Thus, Rom 9:28 should be understood to confirm 9:27 as follows: For definitively deciding a word (λόγον), namely God's word of promise that the descendants of Israel will be as numerous as the sand of the sea, which God has repeatedly stated and thus "definitively decided" (Gen 16:13; 17:22; 28:14; 32:12; Isa 10:22; Hos 2:1; Dan 3:35-36 [LXX]), God will accomplish this decided word of promise on the earth. That God will fully accomplish this definitively decided word of promise thus makes even more certain the further hopeful promise based on it, namely, that surely, at least a remnant of presently unbelieving Israel will be saved.

III. Romans 9:29: A Seed of Hope for the Non-Remnant of Israel

With a second quote from the prophet Isaiah Paul brings not only this sub-unit in 9:27-29 but also the broader rhetorical unit in 9:6-29 to its climactic conclusion. In Paul's introduction to the Isaian quote, "And as Isaiah has foretold" (9:29a), he employs a verb in the perfect tense, προείρηκεν, which thus means that Isaiah has foretold in the past and <u>still foretells in the present</u>. This is important, as it indicates that the following quotation from Isa 1:9, even though it seems to speak of the past, is to be understood as a presently valid prophetic promise that is foretelling something that will take place in the future. It points then to a future time, the same time when the previous prophetic promise from Isaiah that "a remnant will be saved" (Isa 10:22a in 9:27) is fulfilled.[45]

The quotation from Isa 1:9 in Rom 9:29 corresponds to the LXX and reads: "If the Lord Sabaoth had not left us a seed, we would have become as Sodom and we would have been made as Gomorrah." This Isaian text has been linked by Paul to the

previous Isaian text from Isa 10:22-23 in Rom 9:27-28 for their mutual interpretation not only by the word "Lord" (κύριος) that they have in common, but also by the thematic connection between the words "remnant" and "seed."[46]

This means that through their verbal and thematic connections both Isa 10:22-23 and 1:9 are referring to the same prophetic word of promise that God will accomplish in the future, namely, that at least a remnant of presently unbelieving Israel will be saved (Rom 9:27). It further confirms that the quote of Isa 1:9 in Rom 9:29 is about the future; it has not yet been fulfilled.[47] In other words, "if the Lord Sabaoth had not left us a seed" refers to the same future time when the Lord, definitively deciding his word that the descendants of Israel will be as numerous as the sand of the sea, will accomplish (ποιήσει) it on the earth, so that a remnant of Israel will be saved (σωθήσεται) (Rom 9:27-28). Both the "remnant" (ὑπόλειμμα) in 9:27 and the "seed" (σπέρμα) in 9:29, then, refer, not to those presently believing "from the Jews" (9:24), but to those in Israel who are presently unbelieving but will come to believe in the future. Their small number will then constitute both a "remnant" and a "seed" in relation to still unbelieving Israel.

A. From Remnant to Seed of Hope

Although both "remnant" and "seed" refer to those presently unbelieving Israelites who will believe in the future, there is a notable difference and progression from "remnant" in 9:27-28 to "seed" in 9:29.[48] Whereas "remnant" (υπόλειμμα)--although it occurs within a broader expression of hope in 9:27-28--in itself carries a negative connotation in terms of a limiting reduction of the great number expressed by the sand simile, "seed" (σπέρμα) is much more positive, promising, and hopeful.[49]

Indeed, the audience of Romans will recall that Paul used the term "seed" previously to refer to the great number of descendants Abraham will have in accord with God's word of promise in 4:18: "Against hope in hope he (Abraham) believed that he would become the father of many nations as it was said to him, 'Thus will your seed (σπέρμα) be' (Gen 15:5b)."

But the audience will especially recall the previous uses of the term "seed" with a connotation of promise and hope in the more immediate context of 9:6-29, the unit for which 9:29 serves as the climactic conclusion. In 9:7-9 Paul states: "Nor are all the children (of Abraham) the seed (σπέρμα) of Abraham, but, 'through Isaac there will be called a seed (σπέρμα) for you' (Gen 21:12). This means that it is not the children of the flesh that are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as seed (σπέρμα). For this is the word of promise: 'At this time I will return and Sarah will have a son' (Gen 18:10, 14)."[50]

That the Lord Sabaoth will leave for "us," that is, the non-remnant, non-seed, still unbelieving majority of Israel, a "seed" (σπέρμα) means that they will not be utterly destroyed and wiped off the face of the earth without any descendants, like the proverbially notorious cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24-29).[51] The "seed," that "remnant" that will believe and be saved, will serve not only as the future descendants of the unbelieving majority of Israel, but as their "children of the promise," since it is "the children of the promise" who are reckoned as "seed" (9:8). As "children of the promise" (9:8), that is, of God's "word of promise" (9:9) that has not failed (9:6a), the "seed" is a seed of promise and hope. It gives the majority of unbelieving Israel (as well as the audience) at least a glimmer of hope that they themselves (not just their descendants) will not be utterly lost like Sodom and Gomorrah, but that, somehow, some way, some day, through the believing "seed" of promise that God has left "for us" (9:29), they too will come to believe, will be saved (9:27), and will be called sons of the living God (9:26).

B. Seed of Hope for the Still Unbelieving Non-Remnant of Israel

It remains to determine the identity and rhetorical function of the first person plural speaker of the quote from Isa 1:9 in Rom 9:29. With its triple occurrence there is an emphasis upon the first person plural that dominates the Isaian prophetic proclamation: "If the Lord Sabaoth had not left us (ἡμῖν) a seed, we would have

become (ἐγενήθημεν) as Sodom and we would have been made (ὡμοιώθημεν) as Gomorrah." But what is the identity of these first person plurals? The "we" in 9:29 is clearly distinct from the "seed."[52] The "seed," the same as the "remnant" (9:27), refers to the small number of presently unbelieving Israelites who will believe and be saved in the future. Thus, the "we" can only refer to the non-seed, non-remnant, vast majority of still unbelieving Israelites.

That Paul uses a quotation from scripture with a first person plural speaker is rather unusual and worthy of note. The only other time it occurs in Romans is in the climactic conclusion of chaps. 5-8 where it refers to the believing Christian community: "For your sake we are being put to death all the day long; we are regarded as sheep for the slaughter" (Ps 44:22 in Rom 8:36). In 9:29 the first person plural quotation serves as the climactic conclusion to the previous scriptural quotes in 9:6-28, in which God himself (9:7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17, 25-26) or the prophet (9:27-28) is the speaker. But in the climax of this section (9:6-29) concerned with the serious problem of unbelieving Israel (9:1-5), Paul, through a presently valid prophetic quotation from Isaiah, has the vast majority of unbelieving Israel speak for themselves the promising hope that the "seed," the small number who will believe, represents for them: That God will leave "for us" a seed means that "we" will not become utterly destroyed as Sodom and "we" will not be made ultimately desolate as Gomorrah. There is still hope, then, even for the vast majority of unbelieving Israel.

The use of Isa 1:9 in Rom 9:29 with its communal, first person plural speaker plays a significant role in Paul's masterful rhetorical strategy to persuade his Roman audience not only to share his great concern (9:1-5) but also his hope for unbelieving Israel. Since they are a community of believers, a "we," Paul's Roman audience can all the more easily identify with the "we" in the Isaian quote. In other words, the hope expressed by the "we" for themselves in 9:29 is also a hope to be shared by Paul's audience, whom he is trying to convince that with regard to unbelieving Israel, the word

of God's promise has not and will not fail (9:6a). Thus, the subtle but climactic progression of hope for unbelieving Israel from the "remnant" to the "seed" in 9:27-29 plays a prominent part in the overall progression of hope in Rom 9-11 that culminates in the hope that "all Israel will be saved!" (11:26).

IV. Conclusion and Summary

In conclusion, we propose that Rom 9:27-29 should be translated and understood as follows: "But Isaiah cries out on behalf of (not 'concerning') Israel (still unbelieving Israel, not those from the Jews [9:24] who believe in Christ), 'If the number of the sons of Israel be (not 'were') as the sand of the sea (which they will be in accord with God's word of promise in Gen 16:13; 22:17; 28:14; 32:12), surely, at least (not 'only') a remnant will be saved! For definitively deciding a word (that Israel will be as numerous as the sand of the sea), the Lord will accomplish (it) on the earth' (Isa 10:22-23; 28:22b; Hos 2:1a). And as Isaiah has foretold (and still foretells), 'If the Lord Sabaoth had not left for us (the unbelieving majority of Israel) a seed (the remnant who will believe and be saved), we would have become as Sodom and we would have been made as Gomorrah' (Isa 1:9)."

Keys to this new translation and interpretation are (1) the recognition that "as the sand of the sea" in 9:27 expresses the word of God's previous promise about how numerous Israel will be, issuing in the hope that surely, at least, a remnant will come to believe and be saved; (2) a new understanding of the perplexing participial pair, συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων, as a hendiadys meaning "definitively deciding" and referring to God's word in 9:28; (3) the identification and rhetorical significance of the "seed" as the remnant who will believe and of the "we" as the majority of unbelieving Israel in the Isaian quote in 9:29; and (4) the progression from the hope expressed by the "remnant" in 9:27-28 to the hope expressed by the "seed" in 9:29 for still unbelieving Israel and for Paul's Roman audience.

Notes

[1] For a fuller discussion of how the hope expressed for a remnant and seed develops into the hope that all Israel will eventually be saved, see J. P. Heil, Romans--Paul's Letter of Hope (AnBib 112; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1987) 64-70; idem, Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Reader-Response Commentary (New York: Paulist, 1987) 102-10. For a discussion of the concentric outline of 9:6-29, according to which vv. 27-29 parallel vv. 6-9, see J.-N. Aletti, "L'argumentation paulinienne en Rm 9," Bib 68 (1987) 41-56; idem, Comment Dieu est-il juste? Clefs pour interpréter l'épitre aux Romains (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1991) 171-73. For a recent rhetorical analysis, see J. D. Kim, God, Israel, and the Gentiles: Rhetoric and Situation in Romans 9-11 (SBLDS 176; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000) 115-28.

[2] On Paul's combination and reworking of Hos 2:1 and 2:25 in Rom 9:25-26, see D.-A. Koch, Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus (BHT 69; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986) 166-67; C. D. Stanley, Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature (SNTSMS 69; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 109-13.

[3] The recognition of this shift of focus is crucial for a proper understanding not only of the rhetorical progression from 9:24-26 to 9:27-29 but from 9:27-28 to 9:29. Whereas in 9:24 Paul employs a prepositional phrase, "from the Jews," to refer to those Israelites who have already come to believe in Christ, in 9:27 "Israel" refers to those Israelites who have not yet believed. That "in the present time" (ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ) believing "Jews" are part of a "remnant" (λεῖμμα) of Israel will be alluded to later in 11:5, but in 9:27-29 Paul is concerned with a "remnant" (ὑπόλειμμα, v. 27) and "seed" (σπέρμα, v. 29) from those Israelites who presently do not yet believe in Christ. The "remnant" in 9:27 thus plays its role in the progression of hope for salvation from a "remnant" to a "seed" (9:29) to "branches" (individual Israelites) (11:24) to "all" Israel as a whole (11:26). See Heil, Paul's Letter of Hope, 68 n. 13; idem, Paul's Letter to the Romans, 134 n. 6.

[4] See also RSV, NAB, CEV, JB, NJB, NEB, REB, NIV, TEV. For recent commentaries, see J. D. G. Dunn, Romans 9-16 (WBC 38b; Dallas: Word Books, 1988) 569; J. A. Fitzmyer, Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 572; B. Byrne, Romans (SP 6; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996) 300; D. J. Moo, The Epistle to the Romans (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 609; L. T. Johnson, Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary (New York: Crossroad, 1997) 154; T. R. Schreiner, Romans (BECNT 6; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) 526. Fitzmyer comes close to the interpretation we are advocating (pp. 572-74), though he translates ὑπέρ in 9:27a as "about" rather than "on behalf of" Israel. Although Moo translates the Isaian quote correctly, as a conditional rather than concessive sentence and without "only" in the apodosis, in his commentary he nevertheless understands it as expressing a judgment on Israel: "The judgment consists in the fact that, though 'the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea' only 'a remnant will be saved'" (p. 615; Moo's emphasis).

[5] On this interpretation see M. Zerwick, "Drama Populi Israel Secundum Rom 9-11," VD 46 (1968) 330; S. Lyonnet, Quaestiones in Epistulam Ad Romanos. Series Altera. Rom 9-11 (3d ed.; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1975) 74-80; L. Gaston, Paul and the Torah (Vancouver: University of British Comlumbia Press, 1987) 140; R. B. Hays, Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) 68; Aletti, Comment Dieu, 172; S. K. Stowers, A Rereading of Romans (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) 301-2. We intend to provide a new foundation to bolster the interpretive observations of these scholars.

[6] On the particle δέ BDAG states that it is "used to connect one clause to another, either to express contrast or simple continuation. When it is felt that there is some contrast betw. clauses--though the contrast is oft. scarcely discernible--the most common translation is 'but'" (p. 213). K.-H. Pridik, "δέ," EDNT 1.278: "As an adversative particle δέ, but (originally adverbial: on the other hand), designates a contrast--sometimes strong, sometimes weak--to a preceding statement or term."

[7] Most translate δέ in 9:27 as a simple connective, "and," which obscures the contrast and

leads to the misunderstanding that Paul is still referring to Christ-believing Jews when he employs the term "Israel." Both Moo (Romans, 609) and Schreiner (Romans, 526) do translate δέ as "but" in 9:27. Moo, however, fails to draw out its significance, while Schreiner states that "the δέ (de, but) should be construed as adversative so that the fate of Israel is contrasted with that of the Gentiles" (p. 528). But it needs to be noted that still unbelieving "Israel" in 9:27 is being contrasted not only with the Gentiles but with the Christ-believers "from the Jews" (ἐξ Ἰουδαίων, 9:24) who now comprise God's people.

[8] O. Michel, Der Brief an die Römer (KEK 4; 14th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978) 318 n. 31: "Paulus will die Heilsgeschichte in der Aufzählung der Zitate fortführen, wenn er die Propheten namentlich nennt."

[9] H. Schlier, Der Römerbrief (HTKNT 6; Freiburg: Herder, 1977) 304: "Κράζειν ist das inspiriert Rufen des Geistes." On the figurative use of κράζω, as here, BDAG indicates that it expresses "the urgent speech of the prophet or what his book says" (p. 564). See also H. Fendrich, "κράζω," EDNT 2.313-14; D. J. Williams, Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999) 85 n. 147.

[10] See Fitzmyer, Romans, 501.

[11] On 9:27a Dunn (Romans 9-16, 572) notes that "κράζει is not merely stylistic, but probably indicates a degree of intensity or urgency." See also Moo, Romans, 614 n. 17. But Dunn goes on to interpret this intensity and urgency in a negative way, namely, that it "gives the following citation a more threatening color." But the possibility of a prayerful connotation and the more appropriate understanding of ὑπέρ in 9:27a as meaning "on behalf of" indicates that the prophetic "crying out" of Isaiah in the quote that follows is to be understood as purely positive, expressing a public plea on behalf of still unbelieving Israel.

[12] See BDAG, 1030. This is recognized by Hays, Echoes, 68; Stowers, Rereading of Romans, 302: "The fact that hyper can on very rare occasions be used in a way that seems to approximate peri should not rule against the larger context of 9:27, which makes natural the normal use of hyper."

[13] See also Lyonnet, Quaestiones, 73-74; T. Zahn, Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer (Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament 6; 2d ed.; Leipzig: Deichert, 1910) 466 n. 42.

[14] Stowers, Rereading of Romans, 365 n. 31.

[15] H. Balz, "ἐάν," EDNT 1.367; see also BDF §§371.4; 373.1; BDAG, 267; M. Zerwick, Biblical Greek (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1963) §320: "A future eventuality...is expressed by ἐάν with the subjunctive in the protasis, the apodosis being free to use any form permitted by the circumstances of the expression."

[16] Translating as a concessive clause has led some to misconstrue the subjunctive verb with future reference into an indicative verb with either past or present reference: "Though the number of the sons of Israel were like the sand of the sea" (see NRSV; NAB); "even if the number of the sons of Israel are as the sand of the sea" (see Dunn, Romans 9-16, 569; Schreiner, Romans, 526).

[17] Balz, "ἐάν," 367; BDF §374; BDAG, 267-68. There are some instances, however, when ἐάν with the subjunctive can be translated concessively; cf. Mark 14:31; Luke 17:4; John 8:16; 1 Cor 13:1-3. Nevertheless, we maintain that Rom 9:27 is not one of these instances.

[18] This is recognized by Fitzmyer, Romans, 574: "Through all of Israel's history a ray of hope has always gleamed; God's mercy has always been manifested to some and will continue to be. The words about the remnant were used originally by Isaiah about those preserved from the Assyrian captivity; as Israel survived that captivity in the days of Isaiah, so too now."

[19] J. Vermeylen, Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique: Isaïe, I-XXXV, miroir d'un demi-millénaire d'expérience religieuse en Israël: Tome I (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1977) 263: "Le texte même d'Is., X,22a n'exprime pas cette nuance; par ailleurs, on peut s'étonner du brusque changement de ton: on passe de la pure promesse à une perspective assez sombre, qui reprend cependant la formulation même de la promesse."

[20] P. Joüon, Grammaire du l'Hébreu Biblique (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1923) §164c: "כִּי־אִם aboutit au sens de indispensablement, assurément surtout dans un jurement."

[21] J. A. Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers

Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1993) 117: "The promise to Abraham stands and 'your people, O Israel, will be' like the sand of the sea (Gen 22:17). It is in this sense that (lit.) 'a remnant among them will return'. Only is an interpretative addition assuming that remnant is used here in a threatening sense but this does not suit the reference to the Abrahamic promise" (Motyer's emphases).

[22] For this and other differences between the LXX of Isa 10:22-23 and Rom 9:27-28, see Stanley, Paul and the Language of Scripture, 114-19. We will examine some of these differences in our treatment of Rom 9:28.

[23] The MT of Isa 10:22 is quite different from the LXX, in which the second sentence is linked to the first by the conjunction γάρ; see below on Rom 9:28.

[24] Y. Gitay, Isaiah and His Audience: The Structure and Meaning of Isaiah 1-12 (SSN 30; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1991) 206-7: "The remainder, 'destruction is decreed" (v. 22) is usually understood as the total destruction (cf. 28:22) of Israel. However, such harsh absolute language is too extreme for the present context...A broader look at the text reveals, however, that the subsequent verses are not disconnected from their surroundings. Verses 24 ff. inform us that the emphasis on destruction relates not to Israel but to Assyria."

[25] On the conflated citation of Isa 10:22a and Hos 2:1a in Rom 9:27b, see Stanley, Paul and the Language of Scripture, 114-15.

[26] C. K. Stockhausen, "2 Corinthians 3 and the Principles of Pauline Exegesis," Paul and the Scriptures of Israel (JSNTSup 83; eds. C. A. Evans and J. A. Sanders; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 156: "In Jewish exegetical texts the verbal linkage between two or more texts is often performed for the sake of interpretation. What one text lacks in detail, or in clarity, is supplied from the other, or others, with which it shares specific verbal affinity...The texts, now related through specific verbal links, may be further related through any of their themes. They become mutually explanatory as a whole." For more on Paul's use of gezera shava, see C. K. Stockhausen, Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant: The Exegetical Substructure of II Cor. 3,1-4,6 (AnBib 116; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1989) 26-27. See also T. W. Berkley, From a

Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Romans 2:17-29 (SBLDS 175; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000) 39-40, 60-66.

[27] Koch (Schrift, 168) recognizes this when he writes, "Durch die Verwendung von ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ vermeidet es Paulus, Israel als Ganzes als λαός zu bezeichnen," and rightly concludes, "Daher ist der Austausch von ὁ λαὸς Ἰσραήλ durch die rein beschreibende Wendung ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ nicht als rein äußerliche Variation in der Ausdrucksweise, sondern als bewußte, aus inhaltlichen Gründen erfolgte Zitatveränderung durch Paulus zu beurteilen." But Koch misses our proposed second, more positive reason Paul employs the word "number" in his quote.

[28] J. W. Wevers, Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis (SBLSCS 35; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993) 326: "The point of the comparison is in all cases the same; the offspring will be so numerous that they can not be numbered." In addition to Isa 10:22 and Hos 2:1, see Dan 3:35-36 (LXX) for another expression of the divine promise of a seed as numerous as the sand on the seashore. For other uses of the simile of the sand to express innumerability, but without a direct reference to God's word of promise, see Josh 11:4; Judg 7:12; 1 Kgdms 3:5; 2 Kgdms 17:11; 3 Kgdms 4:29; Jdt 2:20; Pss 78:27; 139:18 (LXX); Sir 1:2; Hab 1:9; Isa 48:19; Jer 15:8; 1 Macc 11:1.

[29] Schreiner, Romans, 529: "The γάρ (gar, for) introducing verse 28 demonstrates that this verse functions as a ground for the preceding."

[30] Dunn, Romans 9-16, 573: "The most difficult issue is to catch the precise sense of the συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων phrase."

[31] Michel, Römerbrief, 318: "Es handelt sich um ein beschlossenes Strafgericht, das Gott hier auf Erden vollziehen wird." Moo, Romans, 615: "But the idea of judgment, plain in the Hebrew text, is probably intended by Paul also: God will carry out his word [of judgment]." E. Käsemann, Commentary on Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 275: "The unarticulated λόγον does not, then, refer to God's word." He translates λόγον rather as "reckoning" ("Abrechnung" in German) in 9:28 (p. 272). Fitzmyer (Romans, 574), as well as the NRSV and

NAB, translates λόγον in 9:28 as "sentence," but seems to interpret this as referring to God's promise.

[32] Fitzmyer (Romans, 574) takes the participles as referring to the remnant. Regarding the object of the more difficult συντέμνων, Moo (Romans, 615 n. 25) states: "Some interpreters think that its implied object here is 'time,' so that the point is the speedy execution of God's decree. Others suggest that Israel is the implied object: God will execute his word by 'cutting off' Israel (e.g., reducing her to a remnant). But it seems better to take as the object of both participles the word λόγον."

[33] U. Wilckens, Der Brief an die Römer (EKKNT 6; 3 vols.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978, 1980, 1982) 2.207: "Die beiden participia coniuncta können schwerlich λόγον zum Objekt haben..." But Koch (Schrift, 149) counters: "Künstlich ist auch der Versuch, λόγον lediglich als Objekt von ποιήσει zu verstehen und von συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων völlig abzutrennen. Dies hat zur Folge, daβ man συντελεῖν positiv als 'vollenden', συντέμνειν dagegen negativ als 'verkürzen, einschränken' fassen, also die Synonymität beider Ausdrücke aufheben muβ."

[34] We will substantiate and explain these translations for the participles below.

[35] Koch (Schrift, 149 n. 46) denies the influence of Isa 28:22b on Paul's alteration of Isa 10:22b-23 in Rom 9:28. But in support of it, see Stanley, Paul and the Language of Scripture, 118-19.

[36] For possible explanations of this Pauline omission, see Koch, Schrift, 83; Stanley, Paul and the Language of Scripture, 116-18.

[37] For the suggestion that this Hebrew pair constitutes a hendiadys, see G. F. Hasel, The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah (Andrews University Monographs 5; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1972) 319 n. 389; H. Wildberger, Jesaja 1-12 (BK 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972) 412.

[38] BDB, 477; HALOT 2.476-77.

[39] F. J. Helfmeyer, "כָּלָה," TDOT 7.159: "It is not so much that a person 'finishes' speaking

as that he brings his words to their conclusion, i.e., their goal. Something that is firmly decided also represents the conclusion of a process of decision."

[40] BDB, 358; HALOT 1.356.

[41] D. N. Freedman and J. R. Lundbom, "חָרַץ," TDOT 5.219-20: "In Hebrew psychology, the act of speaking can be compared to a cutting operation. Not only can the tongue be sharp, but words uttered by the tongue are also likened to fragments, which, once cut, have a kind of finality. They cannot be recalled....Certain things are 'pre-cut' by Yahweh, i.e., they are determined well in advance of the time when they are to take place....The number of a nation's days is likewise decreed by Yahweh. Isaiah tells the people that Jerusalem's destruction has been determined beforehand (Isa. 28:22), as has the destruction of Assyria (10:22f.)."

[42] BDAG, 975; LSJ, 1726.

[43] On the meaning of τέμνω, the root of συντέμνων, see LSJ, 1174-75.

[44] For these interpretations and those who hold them, see BDAG, 975; Fitzmyer, Romans, 574.

[45] Koch (Schrift, 318) refers to the quote from Isa 1:9 as a "Vergangenheitsaussage" and explains: "Paulus verwendet es jedoch als Beschreibung des gleichen, heute sich vollziehenden Vorgangs und führt es sogar ausdrücklich als Vorausankündigung Jesajas (καθὼς προείρηκεν Ἠσαΐας) ein. Während also im Falle von Jes 52,15 (Röm 15,21) und 10,22f (Röm 9,27f) der futurische Charakter der prophetischen Ankündigung voll gewahrt bleibt, werden die vergangenheitsbezogenen Aussagen von Jes 65,1 und 1,9 völlig aus ihrem vorgegebenen Zeitbezug herausgelöst und sind ebenfalls--ohne Umgestaltung des Wortlauts--als unmittelbar die Gegenwart betreffend verstanden."

[46] As we observed above, in Rom 9:28 Paul replaced "God" (ὁ θεός) from Isa 10:23 with "Lord" (κύριος) alone from the phrase, "from the Lord Sabaoth" (παρὰ κυρίου σαβαωθ), in Isa 28:22b. He has thus reserved the fuller, more majestic expression, "Lord Sabaoth (κύριος Σαβαώθ)," from Isa 1:9 for his climactic conclusion in Rom 9:29.

[47] This is commonly misunderstood. Michel (Römerbrief, 319), for example, in reference

to Isa 1:9 in Rom 9:29 states: "auch dies Schriftwort hat sich in der Gegenwart erfüllt."

[48] Commenting on the quote of Isa 1:9 in Rom 9:29, Fitzmyer (Romans, 575) notes the progression: "The preservation of even a remnant is a manifestation of God's grace; in this way Paul, by quoting the Isaian verse, goes beyond the affirmation of the quotation in v. 28."

[49] Michel, Römerbrief, 319: "Das Motiv des 'Restes' wird hier zu dem des 'Sames', und damit tritt sein Verheiβungscharakter stärker heraus." D. Zeller, Der Brief an die Römer (RNT; Regensburg: Pustet, 1985) 180: "Wenn wir das V. 29 aus Jes 1,9 [LXX] angefügte Wort über den belassenen Samen hinzunehmen, glimmt auch bei Paulus noch ein Fünkchen Hoffnung." U. Kellermann ("σπέρμα," EDNT 3.264) refers to the "seed" in Rom 9:29 as "descendants that make life possible."

[50] Schreiner, Romans, 529: "As we saw in the exposition of 9:6-9, the term σπέρμα refers to Israelites who are truly the children of Abraham, the genuine children of God. It is merely another way of describing the remnant of verse 27."

[51] For other uses of "Sodom and Gomorrah" as types of eschatological judgment, see Dunn, Romans 9-16, 574.

[52] This is misunderstood by Wilckens, Brief an die Römer, 2.207: "In dem 'wir' dürfte Paulus die Judenchristen als die wahren Repräsentanten Israels reden hören: Hätte Gott nicht sie als den Rest aus dem Israel κατὰ σάρκα übriggelassen, so wäre ganz Israel Sodom und Gomorra gleichgeworden." Wilckens thus ignores the distinction between the "we" as the speakers and the "seed" about whom they are speaking.