

Reformation approach to some key elements of Christian theology, Kinzer said post-debate. Kinzer's life work has been to fight against the theologies that replace Israel and those that call an end to the covenants with Israel. Although Wright has challenged many of his Christian predecessors and colleagues, some still consider his conclusions essentially akin to one of the earliest Jewish-Christian dialogues of the second century: Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*. In this dialogue between a Christian and a Jew, the church becomes the true Israel. Wright starts with seeing Paul in his Jewish context but ends similarly to Justin Martyr, with no hope for the entire nation of Israel.

"It's paradoxical," said Kinzer, "I see a lot of my work as building upon a foundation that Wright's laid, but then I try to take it in a direction that he doesn't take it."

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"To the Jew First" Paul's Vision for the Priority of Israel in the Life of the Church

David Rudolph

One of the most promising developments in New Testament studies over the past thirty years has been the emergence of a new school of thought referred to as "Paul within Judaism (PwJ)." This view starts "with the assumption that the writing and community building of the apostle Paul took place within late Second Temple Judaism."¹ In other words, Paul did not burst the bounds of first-century Judaism but drew from its depths. Publications advocating for this post-supersessionist way of interpreting Paul's letters have largely focused on Paul's view of Jewish law and his mission to the gentiles. The issue of Paul's proselytizing of fellow Jews, however, has been something of a lacuna in PwJ scholarship.² The aim of this essay is to help fill in this gap by raising the query: What did Paul mean when he wrote that the gospel is "to the Jew first" (Rom 1:16)?³ In order to answer this question, I will consider the immediate context of this statement and then evaluate various approaches that exegetes have taken to the word *prōton* ("first") in this passage.⁴

Romans 1:13–15: Paul's Mission to the Gentiles

The Apostle Paul was a man with a vision. His vision, according to Romans 14–15, was to see the kingdom of God established on the earth in fulfillment of the words of the prophets, with Israel and the nations, in unity and diversity, worshipping the God of Israel and his divine Messiah, the son of David.⁵

Paul also had a mission from God. A mission is what you do to see the vision realized. In Romans 1:1, Paul articulates his mission:

¹ Mark D. Nanos, "Introduction," in *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 9; Cf. Magnus Zetterholm, "Paul within Judaism: The State of the Questions," in *Paul within Judaism*, 31–46; Magnus Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul: A Student's Guide to Recent Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 127–63. See www.paulwithinjudaism.com.

² A notable exception is PwJ scholarship on 1 Cor 9:19–23. See David J. Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews: Jewish Contours of Pauline Flexibility in 1 Corinthians 9:19–23* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2016); J. Brian Tucker, "Remain in Your Calling": Paul and the Continuation of Social Identities in 1 Corinthians (Eugene: Pickwick, 2011), 89–114; Mark D. Nanos, "Paul's Relationship to Torah in Light of his Strategy 'to Become Everything to Everyone' (1 Corinthians 9:19–23)," in *Paul and Judaism: Crosscurrents in Pauline Exegesis and the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. Reimund Bieringer and Didier Pollefeyt (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 106–40. Reprinted in Mark D. Nanos, *Reading Corinthians and Philippians within Judaism: Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos*, Vol. 4 (Eugene: Cascade, 2017), 52–92; Mark D. Nanos, "Was Paul a 'Liar' for the Gospel?: The Case for a New Interpretation of Paul's 'Becoming Everything to Everyone' in 1 Cor 9:19–23," *Review and Expositor* 110 (Fall 2013): 591–608. Reprinted in Nanos, *Reading Corinthians and Philippians within Judaism*, 93–108. See also J. Brian Tucker's chapter on "To the Jew First," in *Reading Romans after Supersessionism: The Continuation of Jewish Covenantal Identity* (Eugene: Cascade, 2018), 28–61.

³ All emphases in biblical quotations throughout the article are mine.

⁴ This essay is a revised and updated version of a paper presented at the Borough Park Symposium V, New York, 13 February 2020, and at HET-PRO University, Saint-Légier-La Chiesaz, Switzerland, 20 March 2019.

⁵ See esp. Rom 14:17; 15:8–13.

Paul, a servant of Messiah Yeshua, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God. (NIV [NCPE])⁶

In Romans 11:13–14, Paul explains to whom he is an apostle:

Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an *apostle to the Gentiles*, I glorify my ministry in order to make my own people jealous, and thus save some of them. (NRSV)

Paul was a man with a mission, a mission to the gentiles, a mission that he received directly from the resurrected Yeshua (Acts 9:15; 26:16–18). Paul writes in Galatians 2 about how he understood his primary mission as not being to his own people, the people of Israel, but to the gentiles:

[The Jerusalem apostles] saw that *I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles*, just as Peter had been to the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in *my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles*. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that *we should go to the Gentiles*, and they to the Jews. (Gal 2:7–9 NIV⁷)

To recap, Paul had a vision to see the kingdom of God realized on the earth in fulfillment of the words of Israel's prophets. Towards this end, Paul sought to carry out his mission to the gentiles. In Romans 1:13, he describes how his mission to the gentiles led him to Rome:

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. (NIV)

What does Paul mean here by “gentiles”? “Gentiles” translates the Hebrew word *goyim*, which means “nations.” It often refers in the Scriptures to all the nations except one, the nation of Israel. Paul's reference to “gentiles” reminds us that Paul identified as a Jew. From Paul's perspective, the world was divided into two groups: Jews and non-Jews (gentiles). Gentiles who became followers of Yeshua remained gentiles and did not become Jews (Rom 11:13). They did not become a “third entity” or “third race” that was neither Jew nor gentile, as some theologians suggest.⁸ Rather, in Paul's view, gentiles who became followers of the Messiah of Israel became gentile members of the people of God (Rom 11:17–24).

In the context of Romans 1:13, gentiles means “non-Jews”. And the fact that Paul can say that he hoped to come to Rome “in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had *among the other gentiles*,” suggests that he viewed the community he was writing to as having a gentile majority. This brings us to Romans 1:14 where Paul writes:

⁶ NIV *New Covenant Prophecy Edition* (Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, 1991).

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, “NIV” refers to The Holy Bible, New International Version, copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

⁸ For a discussion of Gal 3:28 and 1 Cor 10:32, see Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews*, 30–35.

I have an obligation to both Greeks and barbarians, to both the wise and the foolish. (TLV)

Paul viewed his mission among the gentiles as a divine obligation. He had an obligation to the gentiles because the Lord sent him to the gentiles. In Romans 1:14, Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, shows that he can see the world through gentile eyes. He highlights the diversity of the gentile world and describes it as divided into two groups: *Hellēsin* and *barbarois* (Greeks and barbarians). Notably, the New International Version translates *barbarois* as “non-Greeks” but it is more accurate to translate *barbarois* as barbarians.

What was the difference between Greeks and barbarians? For those of us who celebrate Chanukah each year, we can understand the extent to which the Greeks looked down on other people groups. The Greeks viewed their language and culture as the height of civilization and regarded anyone who was not Greek as a barbarian. In fact, *barbarois* is an onomatopoeia for the making of unintelligible sounds. From the Greco-Roman perspective, those who spoke languages other than Greek and Latin were making unintelligible sounds. The Greeks viewed themselves as wise and the barbarians as foolish. Barbarians were thought to be wild, uncultured, and uncouth. As Robert Jewett puts it in his *Hermeneia* commentary on Romans:

These character traits were seen as the polar opposites of Roman virtues. For the safety of the world and of civilization itself, barbarians had to be subjugated by Rome, which received this appointed task from the gods.⁹

In the context of Romans 1:13–14, Paul is talking about how, from the Greco-Roman perspective, the world was divided into these two groups—Greeks and barbarians. And Paul's mission, as the *shaliach la-goyim* (the apostle to the gentiles), was to serve both groups. To mention *Hellēsin* and *barbarois* (Greeks and barbarians) together was a standard first-century Greek way to refer to all ethnic groups and classes within the world. Thus, when Paul says, “I have an obligation to both Greeks and barbarians, to both the wise and the foolish,” he is saying that, as the apostle to the gentiles, he is called to bring the gospel to all gentiles, regardless of their ethnic origin or social status. It is a powerful statement about the inclusivity of the gospel. And this brings us to Romans 1:15 where Paul writes:

hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome. (NRSV)

Why does Paul say “to you also who are in Rome”? After all, the people he is writing to are already believers in Yeshua. Perhaps he says this because the gospel is not just about hearing the good news of Yeshua and believing it. It is also about walking it out. In Romans 1:5 and 16:26, Paul talks about how his mission is to call the gentiles to the “obedience of faith.”¹⁰ For Paul to say that he was eager to preach the gospel to “you also

⁹ Robert Jewett, *Romans* (*Hermeneia*; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 131.

¹⁰ Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 207–38.

who are in Rome” probably meant that he wanted to preach Messiah in Rome. He wanted to instruct them more deeply in what it meant to follow the Messiah of Israel, the son of David, who laid down his life for the world.¹¹

Having established this background concerning Paul’s mission to the gentiles, let us now turn to Romans 1:16, the focus of this essay, and Paul’s description of the gospel being “to the Jew first.”

Romans 1:16b: Six Approaches

In Romans 1:16, Paul puts forward his understanding of divine priorities in relation to the *besorah* (good news) of Yeshua. He writes in Romans 1:16a:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to *everyone* who believes. (ESV)

Leading up to this passage, Paul has already communicated three times that the gospel is for the gentiles and that he is called to serve the gentiles. We hear this loud and clear in verses 5, 13 and 14. And lest his readers have still not gotten the point, he says it a fourth time—now in verse 16a—that the good news of Yeshua is for the salvation of “*everyone* who believes,” and that “everyone” includes the gentiles. Paul has stressed this again and again because he wants the gentiles to be secure in the knowledge that God loves them, that Paul loves them, and that nothing will change that.

It is at this point, after establishing God’s commitment to care for the gentiles, that Paul introduces the subject of divine priorities. He shifts gears to focus on the Jewish people, his own people, when he says in Romans 1:16b that the gospel is:

to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (ESV)

Church leaders and scholars throughout the centuries have grappled with the words “to the Jew first” in various ways. The six most common approaches are:

1. Revise
2. Disregard
3. Enigmatize
4. Interpret as Chronological
5. Interpret as Strategic
6. Interpret as Covenantal

The *first* approach is to *revise* the saying by deleting the word *prōton* (“first”) in Romans 1:16. This is what Marcion, a second-century Christian leader, did.¹² Problem solved.

¹¹ See Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 62–63; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1988), 34.

¹² Tertullian, *Marc. 5.13.2*. See Jason D. BeDuhn, *The First New Testament: Marcion’s Scriptural Canon* (Salem: Polebridge, 2013), 246, 296; Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), 447; Antoine X. J. Fritz, *To the Jew First or to the Jew at Last? Romans 1:16c and Jewish Missional Priority in Dialogue with Jews for Jesus* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2013), 110–12.

A *second* approach is to *disregard* the words “to the Jew first.” For example, in the IVP Tyndale New Testament Commentaries series, F. F. Bruce simply glosses over these words and addresses what comes before and after them.¹³

A *third* approach to Romans 1:16 is to *enigmatize* the words “to the Jew first,” to relegate them to mystery. This is what Luke Timothy Johnson does when he writes in his literary and theological commentary on Romans:

The tension between universality and particularity lies at the heart of the problem Romans addresses, or, better, at the heart of the mystery of God’s will that Romans seeks to discern.¹⁴

Full stop, no further discussion. Paul’s words are simply puzzling.

A *fourth* approach to Romans 1:16 is to interpret the words “to the Jew first” as *chronological*. The argument here is that, historically, the good news of Messiah was shared first with the Jewish people and then with the gentiles. The strength of this explanation is that the gospel indeed went first to Israel.

In Matthew 10:5–6, Yeshua tells his disciples to go only to fellow Jews and not to gentiles:

Yeshua sent out these twelve and ordered them, “Do not go to the Gentiles [literally: Do not go on the road of the Gentiles], and do not enter into any Samaritan town. But go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (TLV)

Five chapters later, in Matthew 15:21–28, Yeshua models this Israel-centric mission. He meets a gentile woman and only helps her after he explains to her that his mission (at least at this point in time) was to minister only to fellow Jews. Identifying himself as a shepherd of Israel, he says to the gentile woman in Matthew 15:24:

I was sent *only* to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (TLV)

We have to wait 13 more chapters, until after the Messiah’s death and resurrection, to hear Yeshua tell his disciples that the time has come to minister *also to gentiles*. Before ascending to heaven, he says to his Jewish disciples in Matthew 28:19:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. (TLV)¹⁵

Note that this is after more than three years of ministry focused solely on Israel.

Returning to Romans 1:16 where Paul says that the gospel is “to the Jew first and also to the Greek,” according to the *chronological* interpretation, Paul was simply communicating in verse 16 that, in the past, Jews heard the gospel before gentiles. There are two reasons why the *chronological* interpretation of Romans 1:16 is not fully

¹³ F. F. Bruce, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 84–85.

¹⁴ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon: Smyth and Helwys, 2001), 28.

¹⁵ Cf. Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:4, 8.

satisfying: (1) It does not explain God's purpose in prioritizing the Jewish people;¹⁶ and (2) Paul wrote Romans 1:16 with present tense verbs:

For *I am not ashamed* of the gospel, for *it is* the power of God for salvation to everyone *who believes*, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (ESV)

The apostle is saying something about the present reality.

This leads us to a *fifth* approach to Romans 1:16—that “to the Jew first” refers to Paul's missions *strategy*. The *strategic* interpretation argues that Paul adopted this *modus operandi*—to the Jew first and also to the Greek—because “The ‘People of the Book’ were most prepared to understand and receive the message.”¹⁷

This interpretation has much to commend it. The Gospels cannot be understood apart from Israel's Scriptures, and Israel's Scriptures were primarily read by Israel in the first century CE. One could even say that *the gospel is the story of Yeshua as it flows out of the story of Israel*. If this is correct, and Matthew 1:1 would seem to indicate that it is, then it makes sense that Yeshua went first to those who knew Israel's story and were awaiting the next chapter in this story—the coming of Israel's king—the ultimate son of David, the Mashiach.

The Gospels and Acts attest to a positive reception of the *besorah* of Yeshua by a sizeable minority of Jews in the land of Israel. This included the 12 apostles, the 72, the 120, the large crowds who followed Yeshua from town to town, the more than 500 Jewish people who witnessed his resurrection, the 3000 Jews in Jerusalem in Acts 2 who welcomed the good news that, through Yeshua's death and resurrection, God made available forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Spirit, the 5000 in Acts 4, and the countless thousands (*muriades*) of Torah-observant Messianic Jews in Jerusalem described in Acts 21.¹⁸ The initial positive response to Yeshua by at least ten thousand Jewish people would also explain why about twenty-five percent of those named in connection with Paul's ministry were Jews.¹⁹

The *strategic* explanation of Romans 1:16, however, has its shortcomings. By the time Paul wrote his letter to the Romans (c. 57 CE), his people were not responding as enthusiastically to the good news of Yeshua as they had prior. As Paul puts it in Romans 11:25–26:

I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. (ESV)

Paul acknowledges here that something has shifted in Jewish openness to the gospel, and that gentiles were now more responsive to the message than Jews. Moreover, Paul prophetically sees this as continuing until the eschaton when the fullness of the gentiles comes in (Rom 11:11–16, 23–26). The narrative of the book of Acts brings out this transition in positive response, from Jew to gentile, in dramatic detail.

My point in reminding us of this history is that the *strategic* explanation of Romans 1:16 leaves much to be desired if Paul, at the time when he wrote Romans, regarded gentiles as generally more open to the gospel than Jews. The *strategic* interpretation is not consistent with the “partial hardening” that Paul talks about in the mid-first century and that he expected would continue for some time to come. If Paul's use of *prōton* (“first”) in verse 16 was all about being strategic, it would make more sense for the church to go “to the gentile first” since the gentile world was where Paul was seeing the greater harvest.

What then was Paul's primary rationale for telling the gentile believers in Rome that the gospel was “to the Jew first”? This brings us to a *sixth* approach to Romans 1:16—that *prōton* (“first”) points to Israel's election and *covenant* relationship with God.

The Covenantal Interpretation of Romans 1:16b

Paul uses the expression “the Jew first and also the Greek” three times in his letter to the Romans. The first is in Romans 1:16 and the other two are in Romans 2:9–10, just a chapter later:

There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, *the Jew first and also the Greek*, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. (ESV)

In Romans 2, “the Jew first” is not about mission chronology or strategy. Rather, “the Jew first” is another way of referring to Israel's election.²⁰ God's standard of judging the world will be: to whom much is given, much is expected. And because Israel has been given much in the way of prerogative due to her election and covenant relationship with God, the Jewish people will be judged by a different standard than the gentile world.²¹ In light of Romans 2–3,²² and Paul's identity as a Second Temple Jew,²³ even a Pharisee,²⁴ it would seem that, in Paul's thought, the gospel goes first to the Jewish people because there is a covenantal priority.

16 “That the gospel first was preached to Jews, is, of course, an indisputable historical fact. But this historical priority was more than coincidence. It seems clear that both Jesus and the early church believed that the Jewish people had a priority due to its election” (Reidar Hvalvik, “To the Jew First and also to the Greek: The Meaning of Romans 1:16b,” *Mishkan* 10:1 [1989]: 3); “We conclude that ‘to the Jew first’ signifies both a historical priority, and a positional priority, based on God's covenantal history with Israel. The former is based on the latter” (Bill Bjoraker, “To the Jew First...: The Meaning of Jewish Priority in World Evangelism,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21:3 [Fall 2004]: 111).

17 Bjoraker, “To the Jew First...,” 111.

18 See Matt 4:25; 8:1; 10:2; 13:2; 14:13, 21; 15:30, 38; 16:9–10; 19:2; 21:9, 11; 22:33; 23:1; Luke 10:1; Acts 1:15; 2:41; 4:4; 21:20; 1 Cor 15:6.

19 Reidar Hvalvik, “Named Jewish Believers Connected with the Pauline Mission,” in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, ed. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 154–78.

20 See Tucker, *Reading Romans after Supersessionism*, 34; Wayne A. Brindle, “To the Jew First: Rhetoric, Strategy, History, or Theology?” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159 (2002): 227–29; Hvalvik, “To the Jew First and also to the Greek,” 4–5; Bjoraker, “To the Jew First...,” 111.

21 While it is an honor for our people to be “first” (*prōton*) when it comes to these prerogatives, we have often wished that we were not a covenant people because of the responsibilities and challenges entailed. It is for this reason that Solomon Rabinovich (under the pen name Sholem Aleichem), who wrote the stories that *Fiddler on the Roof* are based on, has Tevye say to the God of Israel, “God, I know we are your chosen people, but couldn't you choose somebody else for a change?”

22 Cf. esp. Rom 2:9–10; 3:1–2.

23 “I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin” (Rom 11:1 NRSV). Cf. Phil 3:5; Acts 21:39; 22:3.

24 “Brothers, I am [present tense] a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees” (Acts 23:6 NRSV).

But is this a continuing priority? The normative Christian view over the past two millennia has been that the election of the Jewish people expired sometime in the first century CE and that the church replaced the Jewish people as the people of God.²⁵ Consequently, “to the Jew first” is not a priority in most churches today. That said, some Christian leaders are charting a new course. For example, Robert Morris, the founding lead senior pastor of Gateway Church, one of the largest churches in the United States, has publicly renounced replacement theology and made “To the Jew First” a foundational principle that guides Gateway’s ecclesial vision. In an interview about the Gateway Center for Israel, Pastor Robert shared:

Be open-minded to the Scripture. I was taught replacement theology in Bible college and I didn’t know any different. It wasn’t until Wayne Wilks at Shady Grove Church, in an elders meeting, began to take us scripture by scripture to show us that God still had a place in his heart, and a plan, for the nation of Israel. Once you see it in Scripture, it changes everything. Just a while back I was with one of the largest churches in the world and the senior pastor said to me, “What’s the most important thing you can share with us?” I just immediately said, “Take the gospel to the Jew first: Romans 1:16.”²⁶

What did Paul say about the continuing priority of Israel in the life of the church? In Romans 11 the apostle calls for a reassessment of replacement theology. He flatly says to the gentile believers in Rome, “I ask, then, has God rejected his people? May it never be! (Rom 11:1).” Paul underscores the God-given prerogatives that Israel continues to experience in the New Covenant era:

What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness? Not at all! (Rom 3:1–4 NIV)²⁷

25 R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 1–106; Michael J. Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 17–81; Matthew A. Tapie, *Aquinas on Israel and the Church: The Question of Supersessionism in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2014), 1–47. See www.post-supersessionism.com.

26 GOD TV interview with Pastor Robert Morris, Dallas, 5 February 2020. Gateway Church’s statement “What We Believe About Israel” includes the commitment, “We at Gateway Church uphold a vision for healing the schism between the Church and the Jewish people. We acknowledge the painful and tragic history between Christians and Jews, wherein the Church for nearly two millennia became complicit in verbal hostility and in continuing violence, discrimination, and harassment directed against God’s chosen people. Moreover, this persecution of the Jewish people was frequently church-sponsored and fueled by supersessionism—the view that the Church is the new Israel and replaces the Jewish people as the people of God. We renounce such attitudes, actions, and theologies, and resolve not to repeat or to condone them or to remain silent in the face of them now or in the future. We also grieve the many historical examples of persecution and death of faithful Jews who were victims of violence in the name of Jesus. We recognize that the Jewish people remain in relationship with God through the eternal covenant that he made with Abraham and his descendants (Rom 9:4–5). We understand that God’s gifts and calling to Israel are irrevocable because of God’s faithfulness (Rom 3:1–4; 11:1, 28–29). . . . We wholeheartedly affirm that Yeshua is and will forever be the son of David, the King of Israel, and the Savior of the world (Rev 22:16; John 4:42). As the Jewish Messiah, he came ‘first’ to his own people and thousands of first-century Jews followed him (Mark 7:27; Acts 3:25–26; 21:20). Because of the enduring covenant relationship between God and Israel, we agree with the Apostle Paul that the gospel—the message of God’s powerful plan to rescue everyone who trusts in him—should be presented ‘to the Jew first’ (Rom 1:16; 2:9–10; Acts 13:44–46; 14:1; 17:1–4, 10; 18:4–6; 19:8). Moreover, we at Gateway Church unashamedly share this life-giving story of Israel’s Messiah with Jewish people in love, respect and honor, and without compulsion” (www.centerforisrael.com).

27 “Specifically here in Rom 3:1–2, Paul uses circumcision as a pars pro toto for all Jewish privileges. He balances circumcision with being a Jew (to perisson tou Ioudaïou) and begins a list of benefits (prōton men), albeit without completing it (see Rom 9:1–5)” (Gregory Tatum, “‘To the Jew First’ [Romans 1:16]: Paul’s Defense of Jewish Privilege in Romans,” in *Celebrating Paul: Festschrift in Honor of Jerome Murphy-O’Connor and Joseph A. Fitzmyer*, ed. Peter Spitaler [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2011], 278). Cf. John C. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 111.

To them belong the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Torah and the Temple service and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs—and from them, according to the flesh, the Messiah, who is over all, God, blessed forever. Amen. (Rom 9:4–5 TLV)

Note that the Greek of this last text—“To them belong the adoption . . . the covenants and the giving of the Torah”—is in the present tense.²⁸ There is no sense in Paul’s thought that the Jewish people have lost their calling as a covenant people or that their election has an expiration date. Paul confirms this in Romans 11:28–29:

as far as election is concerned, they [the Jewish people] are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable (*ametamēleta*). (NIV)

While the word “irrevocable” in English translations usually appears at the end of the sentence, in the Greek, *ametamēleta* appears at the beginning of verse 29, thus placing emphasis on this word as though it were highlighted or had an exclamation mark attached to it. Paul’s point is that Israel’s general state of unbelief does not compromise its election, gifts or calling.²⁹ In other words, returning to Romans 1:16, “to the Jew first” needs to be understood in the wider context of Paul’s defense of Israel’s covenantal prerogatives,³⁰ a defense that begins in 1:16, continues in chapters 2–3, climaxes in chapters 9–11, and concludes in chapter 15 with the words:

For I declare that Messiah has become a servant to the circumcised for the sake of God’s truth, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs. (Rom 15:8 TLV)

Paul then quotes from the Torah, Prophets, and Writings to demonstrate that the priority of Israel in the plan of God leads to blessing for the nations.³¹

The covenantal meaning behind Paul’s catchphrase “to the Jew first” (Rom 1:16) is confirmed by the examples of Yeshua and Peter. The Gospels tell us that Yeshua went to his own people *first* because Israel had a covenant relationship with God. Consider

28 See R. Kendall Soulen, “‘They are Israelites’: The Priority of the Present Tense for Jewish-Christian Relations,” in *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9–11*, ed. Florian Wilk, J. Ross Wagner, with Frank Schieritt (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 497–504. Cf. Richard H. Bell, *The Irrevocable Call of God: An Inquiry into Paul’s Theology of Israel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 198–213, 280–81; William Horbury, “The Gifts of God in Ezekiel the Tragedian,” in *Messianism among Jews and Christians: Twelve Biblical and Historical Studies* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 79.

29 For a discussion of Rom 9:6, see Mark D. Nanos, “‘The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable’ (Romans 11:29): If So, How Can Paul Declare that ‘Not All Israelites Truly Belong to Israel’ (9:6)?” in *Reading Romans within Judaism: Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos, Vol. 2* (Eugene: Cascade, 2018), 214–34. Cf. Mark D. Nanos, “Romans 11 and Christian-Jewish Relations: Exegetical Options for Revisiting the Translation and Interpretation of This Central Text,” in *Reading Romans within Judaism*, 179–99.

30 Simon Buttica, “‘Has God Rejected His People?’ (Romans 11.1). The Salvation of Israel in Acts: Narrative Claim of a Pauline Legacy,” in Paul and the Heritage of Israel: Paul’s Claim upon Israel’s Legacy in *Luke and Acts in the Light of the Pauline Letters*, ed. David P. Moessner, et al. (London: T & T Clark International, 2012), 159; Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 238–39.

31 “‘Promises made to the patriarchs’ reprises the theme of the gracious election of Israel (9:4) and, in particular, the story of Abraham (4:13, 14, 16, 20, 21; 9:8–9). ‘Confirm’ here has the sense not only of ‘reaffirming’ but also of ‘realizing’ the promises. . . the primary issue Paul addresses in Romans in regard to God’s truthfulness is God’s faithfulness to his promises to Israel (e.g., 3:4; 9:4, 6; 11:1, 11)” (J. Ross Wagner, “The Christ, Servant of Jew and Gentile: A Fresh Approach to Romans 15:8–9,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116:3 [1997]: 477–78). Cf. J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul “in Concert” in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 317–29; Scott H. Hafemann, “The Redemption of Israel for the Sake of the Gentiles,” in *Introduction to Messianic Judaism: Its Ecclesial Context and Biblical Foundations*, ed. David Rudolph and Joel Willits (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 206–13; Scott Hafemann, “Eschatology and Ethics: The Future of Israel and the Nations in *Romans 15:1–13*,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 51:2 (2000): 161–92.

Yeshua's conversation with a gentile woman who fell at his feet in the region of Tyre. She asked Yeshua to expel the demon out of her daughter, to which Yeshua replied in Mark 7:27:

First (prōton) let the children eat all they want. (NIV)

The "children" Yeshua speaks of here are the children of the covenant, the Jewish people. Similarly, Peter declares to his fellow Jews in Acts 3:25–26:

And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, "Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed." When God raised up his servant [Yeshua], he sent him first (*prōton*) to you. (NIV)

Here Peter suggests that it is because of the covenant relationship between God and the Jewish people that Yeshua shared the gospel with Israel first (Luke 9:6; 20:1).³² Luke's use of *prōton* in Acts 3 prepares the reader for his use of *prōton* again in Acts 13, where Paul is described as bringing the gospel to the Jew first:³³

The following *Shabbat*, almost the entire city came together to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jewish leaders saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and tried to contradict what Paul was saying by reviling him. Both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary for the word of God to be spoken to you first (*prōton*). Since you reject it and judge yourselves unfit for eternal life—behold, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:44–46 TLV)

When Paul says "we turn to the Gentiles," he means only in Pisidian Antioch, and not that he has abandoned his principle of going to the Jew first. We know this because Luke portrays Paul as going first to the Jew in the chapters that follow.³⁴ Luke's point seems to be that the gospel goes first to the Jew and then to the gentile because of Israel's covenant relationship with God.³⁵

Given Yeshua's use of *prōton* ("first") to describe his "to the Jew first" ministry,³⁶ a

compelling case can be made that what we are seeing in Acts 3 and 13 is Peter and Paul *imitating* Yeshua's practice of ministering to Israel first (see esp. Acts 3:26). Paul appears to confirm in 1 Corinthians 9–11 that this is precisely what he has been doing. After describing his active ministry to *Jews and gentiles* (in that order in 1 Cor 9:20–21 and 10:32–33), Paul concludes in 1 Corinthians 11:1 with the appeal, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Messiah" (NIV [NCPE]).³⁷

This raises the larger question of whether Yeshua and Paul were also influenced by the "to the Jew first" vision of Israel's prophets. Stuart Dauermann describes this prophetic tradition in relation to Romans 1:16:

Paul introduces himself as "an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures [Rom 1:1–2]." His good news is not new news, but was long ago planned and foretold. . . . We must not miss how one of Paul's reasons why the gospel is good news is that it fulfils prophetic expectations. . . . It is good news first for those to whom it was first promised: to the Jew first. We need go no further in the prophetic Word than Genesis 12:2–3 to find the beginning of this invariable biblical rhythm "To the Jew first and also to the Gentile:"—"And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

The fifty-second chapter of Isaiah is another passage in the Tanach that more explicitly demonstrates it is not a new idea that the gospel is good news to the Jew first. Five times the chapter proclaims that this gospel of the coming Redeemer is good news for Jerusalem, and five more times, that it is good news for Zion. Verse seven summarizes this thrust: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'" This is the gospel: the good news of the reign of Zion's God, of whom the Psalmist writes, "'I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.' I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you.'"³⁸ Paul references this very text in setting up what he will say in Romans 1:16. It is only because it is good news for the Jew first that the gospel can by extension be good news for the Gentiles. . . .

Certainly many, if not most (all?) first century religious Jews knew that salvation begins with the household of Israel before going out to the nations. Of course it is to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. How could it be otherwise? Isaiah is not alone in this conviction. That is why we read in Acts 15 of James finding in the words of Amos a justification of Paul's mission to the pagan world.

Paul reinforces the prophetic component of his argument by reminding us all that this is the gospel "concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom 1:3, ASV). This is the good news of the Son of David, that king of Zion! This is a gospel of prophetic fulfillment, the power of God foundationally operating first of all as good news for the Jews and only then for the Gentiles!

The entire thrust of the Older Testament was the foundation of Paul's "to the Jew first and

32 "Of all the New Testament writers, it is Luke who offers the closest parallels to the Pauline formula 'the Jew first, then the Greek.' Whether in Acts 3:26 or in Acts 13:46, the *prōton* placed in the mouth of Peter and Paul is undeniably consonant with the Pauline agenda of salvation history. . . . Thus Luke offers from this *prōton* a narrative translation in the recurring scenario of the Pauline mission: invariably, after arriving in a new city, the apostle to the gentiles begins his missionary activity with the Jewish synagogue. This scenario, established at the beginning of Paul's kerygmatic activity (Acts 13), prevails all the way to its close, at his arrival in Rome (Acts 28)" (Butticia, "'Has God Rejected His People?'" 160). Cf. Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation II* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 56, 174

33 "If God sent the risen Messiah and his blessings to the Jews first, in fulfillment of promises to their ancestors [Acts 3:25–26], Paul must speak to the Jews first, as he indicates in 13:46" (Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:174).

34 See Acts 14:1; 16:13; 17:1–2, 10; 18:4–6; 19:8; 28:30 (Western text). Also Wenxi Zhang, *Paul Among Jews: A Study of the Meaning and Significance of Paul's Inaugural Sermon in the Synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia* (Acts 13:16–41) for His Missionary Work Among the Jews (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 162; Robert C. Tannehill, "Rejection by Jews and Turning to Gentiles: The Pattern of Paul's Mission in Acts," in *The Shape of Luke's Story: Essays on Luke-Acts* (Eugene: Cascade, 2005), 145–65; Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, "To the Jew First in the New Millennium," in *To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 209–16. It is notable that Paul's "to the Jew first" pattern began in Jerusalem (Rom 15:19), "There is one further indication that Paul tried to carry on his mission in Jerusalem. . . in Rom. 15:19 we find a remark to which too little attention has been paid, namely that he has preached the gospel of Christ 'from Jerusalem and the surrounding area' (or less probably: 'and in a wide circle') to Illyricum" (Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 87. Cf. Henry Chadwick, *The Circle and the Ellipse: Rival Concepts of Authority in the Early Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959), 1–18. Reprinted in *Jerusalem and Rome: The Problem of Authority in the Early Church*, ed. Clarence L. Lee (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 23–36.

35 Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:173–74; Bjoraker, "To the Jew First. . ." 112.

36 Mark 7:27.

37 See Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews*, 173–76, 194–208.

38 Ps 2:6–7 (ESV).

also to the Gentile.” . . . The gospel is the fulfillment of prophetic expectation, the means of eschatological blessing for the Jew first and also for the Gentile in vindication of God’s promises to each, in accord with the patterns, precedents, and covenants of Scripture.³⁹

Finally, it is important to raise the question of whether Paul’s Pharisaic background informed his “to the Jew first” outreach vision.⁴⁰ Paul’s focus on proselytizing Jewish people may not have been a radical break from Judaism as much as a reflection of how Second Temple Jewish missionary-apologists attempted to win fellow Jews to their own Jewish sect, even as today Chabad Hasidim send out shlichim (emissaries) to proselytize fellow Jews to their brand of Judaism.

Since Paul lived as a Pharisee and came from a family of Pharisees (Phil 3:5; Gal 1:14; Acts 23:6; 26:5), it is possible that his approach to mission was in some way influenced by Pharisaism. In order to determine the plausibility of this, two questions need to be asked: (1) Did the Pharisees proselytize? And (2) if they did, whom did they proselytize?

Is there any direct evidence that the Pharisees engaged in active proselytizing activity? It would seem that explicit evidence is provided in Matthew 23:15 where Yeshua says:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert (*prosēlutos*). (NRSV)

Here Matthew depicts the Pharisees as a group that engaged in *proselytizing* activities. Shaye Cohen concedes that Matthew 23:15 is an “ancient source that explicitly ascribes a missionary policy to a Jewish group.”⁴¹ Matthew 23:15 does not indicate the extent of their proselytizing efforts. The text, however, implies that Pharisaic outreach was widespread enough that it caught Yeshua’s attention and he considered it worthy of comment. If proselytizing had been an insignificant aspect of the group’s activities, there would have been no force to Yeshua’s words. As for geographic extent, while no locations are given, the text seems to hint that the Pharisees were involved in proselytizing work outside of the land of Israel (“you cross sea and land”).

Whom did the Pharisees proselytize? The response to this question in contemporary scholarship often depends on whether the interpreter is a minimalist or maximalist on the issue of Jewish proselytizing activity in the Second Temple period.⁴² Maximalists typically interpret the passage as a reference to Pharisaic proselytism of gentiles. By contrast, Martin Goodman, a minimalist, maintains that Matthew 23:15 refers to Pharisaic proselytism of ordinary Jews. Goodman writes:

Is the conversion of Jews to Pharisaism something that Pharisees would have found desirable in the first century? . . . Pharisees believed that they alone could interpret the

39 Stuart Dauermann, “To the Jew, of Course!” (paper presented at the LCJE International Consultation Meeting, High Leigh, U.K., August 2011), 10–12, 16. Cf. Stuart Dauermann, *Converging Destinies: Jews, Christians, and the Mission of God* (Eugene: Cascade, 2017), 148–86; Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans*, 227–28.

40 This section on Pharisaic proselytizing is adapted from Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews*, 135–42.

41 Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Was Judaism in Antiquity a Missionary Religion?” in *Jewish Assimilation, Acculturation and Accommodation: Past Traditions, Current Issues and Future Prospects*, ed. Menachem Mor (New York: University Press of America, 1992), 18.

42 Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*, ed. Bruce W. Winter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 36.

Torah correctly and it would seem obvious that, like the prophets of old calling the people to repent, they should feel a duty to teach the rest of the Jews how to live righteously and bring divine blessings on the community. . . . It is reasonable to suppose that they might wish as many Jews as possible to “become Pharisees.”⁴³

Irina Levinskaya adds to the cogency of Goodman’s argument by pointing out that Yeshua’s woe in Matthew 23:15 is linked to the woe before it which concerns Jews, not gentiles. As Levinskaya puts it, “Both woes are connected and develop the same idea with rhetorical intensification.”⁴⁴

The combined data corroborates Goodman’s position in my view. It is unlikely that the Pharisees were critical of Yeshua eating with Jewish sinners when they were at the same time planning missions to gentile sinners. The concern for one but not the other strikes me as unrealistic. More true to life and consistent with what is known of Pharisaic Judaism is Goodman’s explanation that the Pharisees sought to win “converts” from among the masses of ordinary Jews.⁴⁵

Why would Pharisees proselytize Jews and not gentiles? Like Chabad Hasidim today, they were probably motivated by the election of the Jewish people and a prophetic burden to call fellow Jews to embrace God’s plans and purposes for Israel, which would lead to world redemption (*geula*). It is not difficult to imagine how Paul, a Pharisee of Pharisees, continued to carry this prophetic burden for his own people after becoming a follower of the Messiah of Israel, in the full realization that Israel’s national salvation would lead to *techiyat ha-metim* (“life from the dead”) (Rom 11:15).⁴⁶

Conclusion

Paul’s “to the Jew first” vision was an expression of Paul *within* Judaism. In Romans 1:16, the Jewish apostle writes:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, *to the Jew first* and also to the Greek. (ESV)

“To the Jew first” is Paul’s shorthand for God’s continued prioritization of Israel in his plans and purposes, leading to the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth with the son of David on the throne (Rom 1:3). As a first-century Jew, and Pharisee, who followed the example of Yeshua the Messiah, Paul carried a prophetic burden for his people Israel and he wanted his gentile brothers and sisters to carry it as well.

The context leading up to Romans 1:16 reiterates over and over that Paul is the apostle to the gentiles and that his mission is to see a harvest among them. Paul maintains that the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone. In balance with this

43 Martin Goodman, “Jewish Proselytizing in the First Century,” in *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, ed. Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 1994), 61–62.

44 Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*, 39. The Goodman-Levinskaya case is strengthened by the fact that there is arguably (though controversially) no explicit interest in a gentile mission in the bulk of Matthew until ch. 28.

45 Cf. Albert I. Baumgarten, “The ‘Outreach’ Campaign of the Ancient Pharisees: There is no such thing as a Free Lunch,” in *Judaea-Palaestina, Babylon and Rome: Jews in Antiquity*, ed. Benjamin Isaac and Yuval Shahar (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 11–28.

46 Paul’s Pharisaic eschatology comes through in Rom 11:15. Cf. Acts 23:6–8.

universal mission, he reminds his gentile readers that the gospel is to the Jew first.

We have examined six ways that church leaders and scholars over the centuries have approached Paul's words "to the Jew first." Some deleted the *prōton* ("first"). Others have ignored it or relegated it to mystery. Still others have tried to see it in strategic terms that left a chronological footprint. While this last approach is probably the most common way that commentators have interpreted Romans 1:16, I would argue that it is too low a view of God's strategic plan—it overlooks God's prophetic purposes for Israel portrayed in the metanarrative of Scripture and thus it does not get to the heart and depth of what Paul seems to be saying, especially given the two other occasions in Romans where Paul uses the expression "the Jew first" (Rom 2:9–10).

It appears that the primary reason Paul included the catchphrase "to the Jew first" in Romans 1:16—even at the risk of alienating some of his non-Jewish readers—is that the gentile believers in Rome needed to hear that God's covenant relationship with Israel was "irrevocable" (Rom 11:29). Some of the gentiles were saying that God had given up on the Jewish people and that Israel's election had expired (Rom 11:1). In Romans 1:16, Paul fires the first shot in his attempt to push back against this wrong teaching, a teaching that continues to circulate in the church today.⁴⁷ "To the Jew first" should be understood in the wider context of Paul's defense of Israel's covenantal prerogatives—a defense that begins in Romans 1:16, continues in chapters 2–3, climaxes in chapters 9–11, and concludes in chapter 15.

Paul viewed the church as a table fellowship of Jews and gentiles in Messiah who were called to relate to each other in a spirit of interdependence and mutual blessing, a prolepsis of the world to come when Israel and the nations, in unity and diversity, would worship Adonai alone. Paul sums it all up beautifully in Romans 15:10 when he says, quoting the Song of Moses, "Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people."⁴⁸

Interdependence and mutual blessing, however, could not take place without mutual humbling.⁴⁹ Paul recognized that Messianic Jews needed to have a vision for gentile inclusion in the people of God, as gentiles, and that his fellow Jewish believers would have to accommodate the seismic demographic and cultural shift prompted by the addition of "grafted in" members of the family (Gal 1–2, 5; Acts 15).⁵⁰ Similarly, gentile believers needed to have a vision for the continued prioritization of Israel in God's plans

and purposes as described in the prophetic writings.⁵¹ Paul drives home this last point with the perennial words "to the Jew first."⁵²

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47 "To the Jew first" for Paul means a recognition of the abiding election of Israel" (William S. Campbell, "The Freedom and Faithfulness of God in Relation to Israel," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 13 [1981]: 36; Hvalvik, "To the Jew First and also to the Greek," 6.

48 See Mark D. Nanos, "Reading Paul in a Jewish Way: 'Oh be joyful all you peoples, with God's People' (Rom 15:10): Who Are the People?" in *Reading Paul within Judaism: Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos, Vol. 1* (Eugene: Cascade, 2017), 155–70; Zakali Shobe, "Acceptance Motif in Paul: Revisiting Romans 15:7–13" (New York: Peter Lang, 2017), 176–82.

49 Cf. Rom 11:30–36.

50 See David J. Rudolph, "Paul and the Food Laws: A Reassessment of Romans 14:14, 20," in *Paul the Jew: A Conversation between Pauline and Second Temple Scholars*, ed. Carlos A. Segovia and Gabriele Boccaccini (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 151–81; Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews*, 90–109, 173–212; David J. Rudolph, "Paul's 'Rule in All the Churches' (1 Cor 7:17–24) and Torah-Defined Ecclesiological Variegation," in *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 5 (2010): 1–23; David J. Rudolph, "Bilateral (Jew-Gentile) Ecclesiology and Ethics," *Verge* 1:2 (2009): 4; David J. Rudolph, "Messianic Jews and Christian Theology: Restoring an Historical Voice to the Contemporary Discussion," *Pro Ecclesia* 14:1 (2005): 58–84. Also www.messianicstudies.com.

51 David J. Rudolph, "Zionism in Pauline Literature: Does Paul eliminate particularity for Israel and the land in his portrayal of salvation available for all the world?" in *The New Christian Zionism: Fresh Perspectives on Israel and the Land*, ed. Gerald McDermott (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2016), 167–94.

52 "To sum up: Israel has a prerogative which is based on God's gracious election, an election which holds good because 'the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable' (11:29). . . . It is in this connection that Paul uses the expression 'to the Jew first.' Consequently, the prerogative of Israel implies a priority as to the gospel" (Hvalvik, "To the Jew First and also to the Greek," 6).

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