

'Callused,' Not 'Hardened':

Paul's Revelation of Temporary Protection Until All Israel Can Be Healed

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This paper is a revision of an essay to be published in a volume dedicated to William S. Campbell, who is always keen to confront readings of Romans that idealize Christian superiority at the expense of Jews and Judaism.¹ I hope this study can contribute to his lifetime effort to challenge the stubborn—perhaps one might even call it hardened—grip of that tradition. It builds on research presented in a previous paper, "'Broken Branches': A Pauline Metaphor Gone Awry?", which is soon to be published in a Mohr Siebeck conference volume,² a version of which is available on my web site. Both papers challenge the way that prevailing translations and interpretations of certain words and phrases in Romans 11 continue to undermine the force of Paul's otherwise benevolent argument for the temporary, protected state of his fellow Jews, even though some (indeed, most) of them did not share Paul's point of view about the meaning of Jesus Christ.

In spite of Paul's explicit effort to check prideful attitudes toward Jews among the non-Jews to whom he writes in Rome, a negative characterization of Jews naturally arises from Paul's use of *πώρωσις* in Romans 11:25, which is typically translated "hardening," and thus, "a

¹ "'Callused,' Not 'Hardened': Paul's Revelation of Temporary Protection Until All Israel Can Be Healed," in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation* (Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker, eds.; London and New York: T&T Clark, forthcoming 2010).

² "'Broken Branches': A Pauline Metaphor Gone Awry? (Romans 11:11-36)," in *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9--11* (Florian Wilk and J. Ross Wagner, eds.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), pp. 339-76.

hardening has come upon part of Israel" (NRSV), or "that a partial *hardening* has happened to Israel" (NASB). Whether translated to indicate that only some Israelites have been hardened, as in the NRSV, or that Israel itself has been hardened to some degree, as in the NASB, commentators also regularly conflate this reference to hardness with God's hardening of the heart of Pharaoh—although Paul does not refer to the heart of Israelites being hardened. A negative judgment of the condition of the Jewish other is thereby perpetuated, however unwittingly, within an interpretive discourse surrounded by language designed to argue against just such hostile assessments of their condition.

This exegetical tradition makes it hard to ignore that, in spite of the uniquely positive role Romans 11 has played in the crafting of *Nostra Aetate* (No. 4) and other similarly sensitive Christian re-evaluations of Jews and Judaism since the Shoah, the discourse by which this generosity of spirit is expressed continues to be constrained contextually by the need to account for Paul's attribution of hardness to his fellow Jews. It can hardly avoid communicating negative assessments of the other to some degree regardless of the best of intentions, at least at the exegetical level.

While I respectfully believe that Christians should hermeneutically distance themselves from such judgmental decisions about the motives of others or their standing before God if they arise in their sacred texts—which, after all, Paul instructs (2:1!)—in this case the challenge can be made at the exegetical level, for Paul's language in chapter 11 need not express such negative sentiments. By attending to this text's metaphorical attributes, including Paul's specific use here of *πώρωσις* rather than *σκληρός*, and its role in the larger context of his argument, the harsh visual representations that perpetuate this judgmental characterization, however unintentionally, can be revised—if not replaced.

Πώρωσις Versus Σκληρός

Sklerōs is regularly applied to the hardening of the heart in the sense of being strengthened to express firm, stubborn resistance to God's will, or being insensitive to it. Paul uses the verbal form, σκληρύνω, in 9:17-18, in keeping with the usage in Exodus 9:12, 16, where it metaphorically describes God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart (LXX usually for Hebrew *הָרַחֵם*, also). The σκληρός word group has to do with things hard or rough to the touch, harsh sounds, or harsh or bitter tastes and smells. When used metaphorically, it generally connotes harsh or hard in the sense of austere, stern, insensitive, or stubborn.³ Instead of eliminating Pharaoh, God is represented as making him stubbornly resistant to God's will so that the people of Israel would be freed. This hardening is undertaken in order to heighten the impact when Pharaoh is ultimately compelled to change his mind in the face of the inexorable suffering that his resistance provokes. In this way, God's power and thus name are made known among the nations.

But Paul does not use σκληρός or cognates to describe the state of Israelites; instead, he uses πώρωσις in 11:25 (and as a passive verb in v. 7: ἐπωρώθησαν) to describe the state of some (many) of his fellow Israelites.⁴ Πώρωσις (verb *πωρώω*) refers to a "callus" (verb: to callus) not to "hardness" per se.

³ LSJ, *Lexicon*, p. 1612; K. L. and M. A. Schmidt, *TDNT* 5.1028-31.

⁴ It is also useful to note that interpreters often refer to Isa 6:10 as a cross reference for Rom 11:7 and 25, but in Isaiah it is yet another different word, *παχύνω* (MT: *הָרַחֵם*), to swell or thicken or make firm or fat; figuratively, to make impervious (to water), insensitive (Schmidt and Schmidt, *TDNT* 5.1025). The point is that Isaiah is to speak the word so that it will not penetrate the hearts of the target audience.

Πώρωσις is not a word common to the Tanakh. It is used once in verbal form in the Septuagint, Job 17:7, to refer to eyes "growing dim" from anger or grief (MT: כהה). As will be discussed, the context indicates that it is not "hardness," or even "blindness" per se, but "impairment" of sight that is at issue, which is better expressed by the Greek variant *πεπήρωνται*. Πώρωσις is not used in the Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, or Philo. It is common in medical discussions in antiquity. According to Hippocrates, *De alimento* 53, it has to do with a process of healing following an injury: "Marrow nutriment of bone, and through this a *callus* forms [Μυελὸς τροφή ὀστέου, διὰ τοῦτο ἐπι πωροῦται]" (Loeb; trans. W. H. S. Jones).⁵ In other words, the formation of a callus—which involves a process of hardening, to be sure—is to offer *protection* so that the injured area can sustain life. It promotes *healing* of broken bones or wounds, not harm or destruction, or metaphorical resistance. It creates an area less sensitive to touch, but that too is a positive feature versus the continuation of the sensation of pain where the injury occurred. There are several options worth exploring to translate and interpret πώρωσις in terms of the process Paul has been communicating throughout: some

⁵ See also *De fractures* 23.10; *De articulis* 14.17, 24; 15.6; 49.18. Celsus, *De Medicina*. Aretaeus. W. G. Spencer (trans.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971 [1935 edn.]), p. 521, explains how to bind a broken bone tightly, "because in this position callus grows...."; see also pp. 527, 575. It is discussed several times in Galen, e.g., *Ars Medica* 1.387.18, and especially in his commentary (e.g., 18b.398-401, 412, 429, 505, 531, 541, 789) on Hippocrates' *De fractures*. Cf. LSJ, *Lexicon*, p. 1561; Schmidt and Schmidt, *TDNT* 5.1025-26; Joseph Henry Thayer (ed.), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novus Testamenti* (New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago: American Book Company, 1889), p. 559.

Israelites are temporarily stumbling or suffering an *injury* that can be and will be healed, witnessed in metaphorical terms by a *callus* on these broken branches.⁶

Given the negative valence of hardness in English combined with the derisive association to the disposition of Pharaoh's heart, hardening is not a helpful or an accurate translation choice for Paul's discussion of the condition of the Israelites he seeks to discuss. The difference implied can be profound; translating this as hardened in the sense of obdurate, stubborn, or insensitive hearts may obscure the very thrust of Paul's argument. This problem is evident in most discussions of this passage, for the prevailing approaches interpret hardness in a way that cannot avoid undermining the sympathetic force of Paul's argument, and thus the sympathetic interpreter, inadvertently but ineluctably, winds up expressing a negative judgment of intentions in the midst of seeking to communicate a message of good will.⁷ Yet Paul does not mention the heart, and there is no evidence that *πώρωσις* was used to refer to the heart during Paul's time. *Πώρωσις* is attested later in Mark 3:5, John 12:40, and in the Pauline tradition responsible for Eph 4:18, and it became more common in commentaries and elsewhere in theological discussions after the second century c.e., perhaps adumbrating the

⁶ I want to thank Daniel Stramara for encouraging me to investigate the positive aspects of the translation "callus" here, which I raised in passing in *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), pp. 261-62, but did not pursue. Following more recent detailed work on the allegory of the olive tree and its branches, and thus the relevance of this translation choice in v. 25, I am now prepared to see the positive elements of this metaphorical tree terminology in the forest of the Romans 11 argument, one might say; cf. Nanos, "Broken Branches."

⁷ Differently, but informatively, the opportunity to intentionally express criticism of Jews by way of this language is exemplified by Chrysostom: "That blindness in part hath happened unto Israel.' Here again he levels a blow at the Jew, while seeming to take down the Gentile" ("Homily 19," *Homilies on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, trans. J. B. Morris).

crossover that is common to English usage of hardness when translating πώρωσις as if synonymous with σκληρός.⁸ We will return to discuss the case of 2 Cor 3:14, which refers to impaired vision.

The Context for Paul's Use of πώρωσις in Romans 11:25

Paul moves away from formal allegorical development of the olive tree allegory of vv. 17-24 when he begins verse 25. This change is evident in several ways, not least by moving from

⁸ Cf. *Shep.* 30.1; 47.4; Pseudo-Clementine 158.8; Theophilus, *Ad Autolyicum* 2.35.32; Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus* 9.83.3.6; *Stromata* 1.18.88.3.2; Origen, *Comm. in Evangelium Matthaei* 11.14.68. *1 Clem.* 51:3 still uses σκληρῶν with καρδία; as does also *Barn.* 9:5. I do not find grounds for the Schmidts' claim that "in the NT" it "is always fig., usually of the heart. It refers to hardening of the Jews in ... R. 11:7...." (*TDNT* 5.1026), or commentaries that refer to hardening of the heart similarly in discussions of Romans 11. For discussion of why in each of these later NT cases the meaning "hardened" is unlikely as well, and of the variants for each, see J. Armitage Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: A Revised Text and Translation with Exposition and Notes* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1903), pp. 264-74. He concludes that in each case in the NT "obtuseness or intellectual blindness is the meaning indicated by the context" (p. 273), not hardness, a finding that this study will challenge for blindness too, and he also shows that ancient translators and commentators approached πώρωσις and πήρωσις as interchangeable. Robinson, *Ephesians*, 274, does not like the choice of or description of callus for πώρωσις in Thayer, ed., *Greek-English Lexicon*, or when callus is played off in the sense of "a covering has grown over the heart" by William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2nd ed., 1926 [Robinson is responding to the first edition]), p. 314. Their comment is about Rom 11:7 (note that they read 11:25: "that hardening of heart which has come upon Israel"), but Robinson seeks to challenge the translation "harden" in particular, and does not approach Rom 11:7, 25, as representing the metaphorical imagery I suggest. Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), pp. 694, 699-700, translates πώρωσις in v. 25 as "obtuseness," "as a failure to discern and to see that was simultaneously a willful act and divine punishment."

addressing a singular olive shoot in the allegory to "you Gentiles" in the plural, whom he does not want to be ignorant of a mysterious process he seeks to reveal: "For I do not want you to be unperceptive regarding this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you would not be mindful (only) for yourselves." It may be that, whereas the wild shoot stood implicitly for the non-Jews by way of a single cutting in the allegory in order to highlight the smallness and precariousness of their place among the people of God without suggesting that Paul has but one person in his sights, now Paul turns to addressing these non-Jews directly, and thus, in the plural.

In contrast to Isaiah's prophetic speech to his fellow Israelites in a way designed to prevent understanding,⁹ Paul declares that he seeks to make a mystery clear to his non-Israelite audience so that they will avoid the pitfalls of insensitive arrogance toward certain Israelites, and thus escape the disastrous consequences that follow from preoccupation with only their own wisdom and success. We might expect to find Paul thus employing simple, direct speech at this point to enhance clarity and avoid misunderstanding; but we do not. Instead, Paul continues to draw on metaphorical language in vv. 25-26a, and then on a conflation of the enigmatic texts of Isaiah 59:20-21 and 27:9 in the balance of vv. 26b-27. These ostensible proofs for his argument are also highly metaphorical, as is also their own context in Isaiah, which is itself full of inscrutable twists and turns; moreover, they do not easily align with what they are cited by Paul to prove.¹⁰ One wonders if the mystery has become clearer or

⁹ That Isaiah's prophetic language is itself that which causes misunderstanding is argued in Bradley R. Trick's 2009 Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting paper, "'Lest Their Hearts Understand': Hardening Hearts through Misunderstanding in Isa 6:1—9:6," a copy of which he was kind enough to make available to me.

¹⁰ A reading of Isaiah 27 and 59 and the chapters and themes around them, including many allegories and metaphors from trees and plant life—which perhaps triggered as well as informed Paul's developments of these

more confused, even if Paul's audience is now made keenly aware that there is something else going on that they should attend to seeing, something that should make them humble instead of filled with themselves.¹¹

I propose that the metaphorical word choices employed in 11:25-26a are neither random, nor chosen to introduce a new set of visual representations around the theme of hard heartedness, but continue to draw from the olive tree imagery that preceded them in vv. 17-24. Although Paul is not simply developing the allegory formally,¹² the theme stays the same: Paul sets out an argument in order to censure presumptuousness among the Christ-believing non-Israelites in Rome, lest they become "wise in themselves" (ἐαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι).¹³ Yet like

allegories and metaphors—cannot be taken up in detail here. Cf. Florian Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998); J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "In Concert" in the Letter to the Romans* (NovTSup 101; Leiden, Boston, and Köln: Brill, 2002); Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOTSupS 65. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989; Original Danish: G.E.C. Gads Forlag, Copenhagen, 1985); James Todd Hibbard, *Intertextuality in Isaiah 24-27: The Reuse and Evocation of Earlier Texts and Traditions* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2.16; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); Nanos, "Broken Branches."

¹¹ Cf. Daniel Patte, "A Post-Holocaust Biblical Critic Responds," in *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations* (Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte, eds.; Romans through History and Culture Series; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2000), pp. 225-45 (pp. 231-32).

¹² Drawing on Max Black, "Metaphor," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society for the Systematic Study of Philosophy* 55 (1954), pp. 273-94 (275), metaphor refers to a figure of speech (trope) that communicates a thing, idea, or action by substituting a word or expression that denotes a different thing, idea, or action, often a word from a visual image or sound, suggesting a shared quality between the two words or expressions that remains at an imaginary level. An allegory is the development of an extended metaphor.

¹³ In addition to repeating the accusation of presumption (ὕψηλὰ φρόνει) in v. 20, note also the idea that in v. 18 the wild branch did not support the root, but the root the branch.

the allegory itself, as well as its uneven fit with the previous allegories of the stumbling and of the dough, this metaphorical language can be as misleading as it can be enlightening.

Elsewhere I discussed why it is problematic to use such metaphorical language about grafting as if plain speech, and as if Paul had stated that it was Israel into which the graft was planted.¹⁴ The tree and root should logically be some entity other than Israel, which remains unnamed. Thus the wild olive shoot has been grafted into a tree and partaken of the root alongside of the branches that remained (that is, among the Israelites ["among them" in v. 17]), but not into Israel. The grafted branch joins alongside of Israelite branches, the tree is some entity large enough to encompass members of Israel and of the other nations simultaneously, such as "the people of God" or "the righteous ones," but the tree does not appear to be "Israel" per se.

I have also discussed why it is lexically and exegetically preferable to translate Paul's reference to the broken branches as "broken," but not "broken off."¹⁵ This allows the allegory of the olive tree in vv. 17-24 to correspond to the language on either side of it: beforehand, in vv. 11-15, with the allegory of stumbling but not fallen, through the portrayal of enhanced results for the non-Jews when these Israelites regain their step rather than confirming the zero-sum thinking that their absence increased the opportunities for the audience, and by the

¹⁴ Nanos, "Broken Branches."

¹⁵ Nanos, "Broken Branches," discusses how Paul moves from describing the plight of some of the natural branches by changing the verb from ἐκκλάω (broken as in dislocated) in vv. 17-21, to ἐκκόπτω (broken off) in vv. 22-24, when he seeks to describe the state that will result for the wild olive. This logical conundrum develops when he turns by way of diatribe to attributing to the wild olive shoot the claim to have supplanted the broken branches and thus gained advantage over them in v. 19, to which Paul responds with an *a fortiori* argument describing the all the more severe state that the wild shoot should fear if it does not desist.

explanation that Paul's own ministry to the nations is for Israel's restoration rather than a testament to their failure or replacement, along with the theme of continuity expressed in the allegories of v. 16. This message of continuity rather than termination remains the theme after the olive tree allegory as well, with the assertion that "all Israel will be restored" (vv. 25-27), because these Israelites, while presently "alienated for your sake" are "beloved for the sake of the fathers," for "the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" (vv. 28-29).¹⁶ The proof text Paul weaves together in vv. 26-27 from Isaiah 59: 20-21 and 27:9, attests to a time when "the Deliverer. . . will remove ungodliness from Jacob," and because of the covenant relationship will "take away their sins." Note, not remove the ungodly, or take away the sinners, but cleanse and restore Israel after a time of discipline has accomplish God's design.¹⁷ And Paul

¹⁶ The NRSV translation "they are enemies of God" is most disconcerting, not least because "of God" is not attested in any manuscripts. The contrast is between two adjectives, "enemied [ἐχθροί]" (better: "alienated") and "beloved [ἀγαπητοί]," the first "for your sake," and the second "for the sake of the fathers." See Norman Beck, "Translations of the New Testament for Our Time," in *Seeing Judaism Anew: Christianity's Sacred Obligation* (Mary C. Boys, ed.; Lanham, et al: A Sheed and Ward Book: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), pp. 200-10 (pp. 204-6); Joseph Sievers, "'God's Gifts and Call Are Irrevocable': The Reception of Romans 11:29 through the Centuries and Christian-Jewish Relations," in *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations* (Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte, eds.; Romans through History and Culture Series; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2000), pp. 127-73.

¹⁷ It is possible that Paul is referring to the removal of sins from the nations with the citation of Isa 27:9, which uses a pronoun here ("their sins"), and is stitched into the place that continued citation of Isa 59:21 would be expected to appear. He thus weaves together a proof text that explains the intertwined positive destinies of Israel and the nations, with the removal of ungodliness from Jacob (Israel) covered by the citation of 59:20. The balance of 59:21, which Paul does not cite, describes the continued role of Israel, but perhaps Paul wants to turn to the effects of that role for the nations ("until when the fullness of the nations commences") through the introduction

wraps up his argument in vv. 30-32 by arguing that the present lack of "persuadedness" (to join Paul in declaring the gospel to the nations) by these Jews, and thus their need for mercy, follows after but is intimately linked to the former lack of "persuadedness" (of God alone versus idols) by these non-Jews, which led to their need for mercy. Thus now all are equally "joined together" in the need for God's mercy, in view of which Paul calls for mercy toward rather than judgment of each other.¹⁸

In each of these cases Paul seeks to connect inextricably the favor that these non-Jews have received through the good news message with the present suffering of disfavor, of discipline being experienced by Israel through the some (many) Israelites who are not (yet) declaring this message to the nations alongside of Paul. This stage, he argues just as forcefully,

of 27:9 instead. In this sense, Paul may see the forgiveness of the sins of the nations—for which he has argued throughout the letter and in v. 25 in particular—prefigured in the covenant made with Israel, yet unexpectedly not transpiring before the complete removal of the ungodliness from all Israel ("that a callus temporarily has formed for Israel... and thus all Israel will be restored"), these multiple aspects being simultaneously at work.

¹⁸ I see no reason to translate ἀπειθεία and cognates in these verses as "disobedience," when the idea of failure to be persuaded ("not-being-persuadedness") of that which Paul believes they should be persuaded makes sense of the context, even if English does not provide an exact equivalent. Not being persuaded of a propositional claim and disobeying what one knows to be a propositional truth are not the same thing. I also propose that God "(closely) joined together" (i.e., "drawn together," "integrated") everyone rather than that God "confined" or "imprisoned" everyone in this state in order to demonstrate the equal need of his mercy for everyone, Jew and non-Jew, makes more sense of his use of συγκλείω in v. 32 (cf. Euripides, *Bacch.* 1300; Plato, *Tim.* 76a; *Crat.* 117e; Isocrates, *Or.*, 12[*Panath.*].24; 15[*Amtid.*].68; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 7.1.33; Thucydides, 4.35.1; 5.72.1; see LSJ, *Lexicon*, p. 1665 [III-IV]).

is temporary, yet unquestionably to be followed by their rescue, not destruction.¹⁹ All of these developments are, according to Paul, bound up in a mysterious, interlocking scheme of God's design. Thus things are not as they might otherwise seem, for the present anomalous stage is required before the promised harmonious conclusion can materialize.

Many of the current translation choices undermine Paul's argument that Israel is presently suffering a *temporary* divided *stage* involving the remnant and the rest in a larger plan God has designed in order to begin the process of gathering members from the other nations into the people of God (alongside Israelites, but not as Israelites) through the gospel. Once this gathering from the nations begins, it will be followed by the restoration of the rest of these Israelites, and thus of all Israel—but these Israelites are by no means to be regarded as having *already lost their standing* within God's covenant with Israel.²⁰ The usual choices of

¹⁹ In some Jewish traditions, that Israel has a favored status is actually exemplified by God's discipline delivered quickly, even harshly, in order to bring it ultimately to faithfulness instead of destruction (2 Macc 6:12-17; cf. Ps 94:12; Prov 3:11-12; Jer 30:11; Lam 3:31-33; Jdt 8:27; Wis 12:1-2, 26; Pss. Sol. 10.1; 13.7; 16.1-5).

²⁰ In traditional approaches, the premise is that these Israelites have been removed from their covenant standing and thus, like non-Israelites, need to be "saved" in the sense of being outsiders brought back into the people of God. But Paul's argument assumes they are still the people of God, albeit in a state of discipline (variously named and described, including alternately as a result of God's initiative or in response to their unfaithfulness or unresponsiveness) that results in the need to be restored to good standing. The so-called two covenant approaches react to the traditional notion, yet also work from within its framework to the degree that they propose these Israelites are "saved" by Torah (thereby granting the need to find a way to describe an avenue for salvation); at the same time, this same framework remains in place in the arguments from which critics of the two-covenant approach work, however much I might agree with some of their criticisms of the two-covenant paradigm (e.g., Reidar Hvalvik, "A 'Sonderweg' for Israel: A Critical Examination of a Current Interpretation of Romans 11.25-27," *JSNT* 38 (1990), pp. 87-107; Terence L. Donaldson, "Jewish Christianity, Israel's Stumbling and

"broken off" (vv. 17-21), "hardened" (vv. 7, 25), "enemies [of God]" (v. 28), and "disobedient" (vv. 30-32), all work against Paul's generous thesis of vicarious and temporary suffering on the part of some Israelites and thereby Israel, and thus the present need for the Christ-following non-Israelites to regard them with respect and compassion. Moreover, beginning with the "therefore" of 12:1 through the end of the letter, Paul's audience is instructed to behave graciously toward these Israelites.

Translation alternatives exist in each case that perpetuate Paul's sympathetic (if patronizing) message, and the spirit of the metaphor of "stumbling" but "*not* fallen" (v. 11). These include "callused" in the sense of "protected" rather than "hardened," which this essay specifically addresses, but also "broken" rather than "broken off" in vv. 17-21, "alienated"

the Sonderweg Reading of Paul," *JSNT* 29.1 [2006], pp. 27-54; Christopher Zoccali, "'And so all Israel will be saved': Competing Interpretations of Romans 11.26 in Pauline Scholarship," *JSNT* 30.3 [2008], pp. 297-303 (pp. 289-318).

But Israelites do not need to be "saved" in a way that parallels the needs of non-Israelites; some need to be saved from their errors (i.e., in the sense of having sinful acts forgiven, or periods of discipline lifted), but not in the sense of having become non-members of the people of God. Paul appears to be working from the notion that Israel is in a covenant based on promises to the fathers, into which Torah was introduced later for Israel in order that Israelites might live right and declare God's words to the nations, so that they too could enter into the covenant with the fathers for the blessing of the nations. But the nations do not enter into the covenant with Israel as if becoming Israelites, and thus not into a relationship with Torah on the same terms as Israelites. It is thus one covenant with different aspects for Israelites and for those from the other nations who turn to Israel's God as the one God of all humankind (both/and, rather than either/or). See William S. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (Library of New Testament Studies 322; London and New York: T & T Clark, 2006), pp. 33-53, *passim*; Mark D. Nanos, "Paul and the Jewish Tradition: The Ideology of the Shema," in *Celebrating Paul. Festschrift in Honor of J. A. Fitzmyer and J. Murphy-O'Connor* (ed. Peter Spitaler; CBQMS; Washington D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, forthcoming 2010).

rather than "enemies"—especially the unwarranted "enemies of God"—in v. 28, and "not-persuadedness" rather than "disobedience" in vv. 30-32.²¹ In addition, as will be discussed, the preliminary and temporary nature of the present state of some Israelites and thus Israel in Paul's argument can be highlighted by translating the prepositional phrase ἀπὸ μέρους in v. 25 as "temporarily," rather than as if referring to "part" of Israel, or the whole of Israel "partially," even though each of these aspects remain relevant.

The Metaphors and Messages of 11:25-27

In vv. 25-26, at least three of the key terms, and the context of their usage, can be understood to draw on tree metaphors: πώρωσις (callus), πλήρωμα (fullness),²² and σωθήσεται

²¹ To name but two other translation choices that perpetuate this disconnect, in vv. 11-12, wherein Paul denies these Israelites have fallen but asserts that they have merely stumbled or tripped, παραπτώματι is often translated "transgression" ("by their transgression"; NASB), although this obscures the metaphorical language at play here, and the idea the word carries in general of "misstep" (NRSV: "through their stumbling"), and the translation "fall" in the KJV and ASV reverses the denial that they have fallen. In v. 17, the NRSV expresses replacement theology with "and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted *in their place*," when the Greek expresses co-participation: "but you, a wild olive [shoot], were being grafted *among them* [σὺ δὲ ἀγριέλαιος ὦν ἐνεκεντρίσθης ἐν αὐτοῖς]" (as in NASB, KJV).

²² In the case of πλήρωμα, this is common plant terminology. Theophrastus used this language regularly, e.g., in *Caus. plant.* 3.15.3 (line 10) he writes πληροῖ for how the fluid in vines "fills" them when dressed. In *Caus. plant.* 1.13.9 (line 6), he describes how a tree harvested early can "fill up" (ἀναπληροῦνται) again and become pregnant. In *Caus. plant.* 1.2.5 (line 10), συμπληροῦν refers to "fill out" as in the space around the tree. 1.13.3 (line 3), describes how trees after sprouting and fruit production in spring are "replenished" (ἀντιπληροῦσθαι) with food again (παλιν). *Hist. plant.* 3.17.1 (line 11), describes a tree coming back from deterioration as "renewed" (ἐξαναπληροῦται); in 5.6.7, a root will "fill out" (ἐκπληρώω) the whole space.

(salvation/restoration/rescue/return to health).²³ The texts from Isaiah that Paul cites are not only set in metaphorical and allegorical contexts, but largely turn around images of plants and trees.²⁴ Just before Isa 27:9, which Paul cites in 11:27, stands Isaiah 27:6 (LXX): "they that are coming are the children of Jacob. Israel shall bud and blossom, and the world shall be filled with his fruit."²⁵

We must be careful not to expect that Paul's use of metaphor around a tree or plant theme functions as another fully developed allegory, or require it to comport too closely with what he has developed in the previous allegory; even the allegory of the broken branches did not correspond well to the allegory of the stumbling but not fallen Israelites that preceded it.²⁶ The limitations of metaphor, and of Paul's employment thereof, are evident to the degree that

Besides the general sense of a plant or any part of a plant "coming in" or "beginning" to grow or bud or blossom fully at some point, in terms of grafting, fullness is envisaged to come in/commence (εἰσέλθῃ) when a grafted branch begins to draw life from the root of the tree. Theoph., *Caus. plant.* 1.6.3, discusses how a graft "takes root" (ρίζουται) and "seals over" (ἐπισημαίνει), after also discussing how bark grows over the graft and encloses it. See also *Hist. plant.* 5.2.

²³ Theophrastus uses σῶζω to signify the "preserving" or "saving" or "restoring" of a plant or tree, or the various parts of them, like the roots, stem, or branches; see *Caus. plant.* 1.4.5 (line 8); 1.7.2 (line 7); 1.19.5 (line 7); 1.22.2 (line 8); 2.16.5 (line 1); 2.17.5 (line 12); 5.16.2; 5.18.4 (line 3).

²⁴ Isa 59-61 are full of plant metaphors, as are Isa 27-28. The context of Isa 59 is God coming to the rescue of Israel when no one else does. The context of Isa 27 is the gathering of Israelites from the dispersion (vv. 12-13 announce the regathering).

²⁵ Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton (trans.), *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, with an English Translation; and with Various Readings and Critical Notes* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972); NRSV, based on the MT: "in days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, and fill the whole world with fruit."

²⁶ A central topic of discussion in Nanos, "Broken Branches."

the branches are ultimately presented to be in need of (the miracle of) re-grafting. Paul got tangled up in the web of his own rhetorical weaving while seeking to communicate the *a fortiori* severity that awaited the wild olive if it would presumptuously suppose that it had replaced these Israelites in God's favor. In this same vein, Isaiah's use of and mixing of allegories in the context of the language Paul cites in vv. 26-27 should not be expected to work seamlessly or comprehensively in Paul's argument, although we should try to make sense of the message they are enlisted to support.

It is unclear here if Paul envisages "all Israel" to be all of the branches that are Israelites, or the whole tree. The latter view informs the conflation of "the Church is Israel" positions. That he does not name the tree or trunk or boughs but only branches may itself be instructive: creating a comprehensive picture of Israel or the church is not the point of the allegory. Rather, his goal is to explain the unusual and precarious place of the Christ-following non-Jew among the Israelites, so that they will humbly understand their own role is by God's design to live on behalf of all Israel's restoration, not to (mis)judge those Israelites in a temporary state of suffering. In vv. 25-26a, the Israelites are still identifiable, just as are the Gentiles, so that the "all Israel" remains distinguishable from the implied "all the members of the nations,"²⁷ who are somehow an indication of the timing of this process. They are beneficiaries of the vicarious suffering of these Israelites, however difficult that may be to comprehend.

In other words, these groups, Israel and the nations, represent entities distinguishable from each other, different branches, while the implied tree is a broader category into which

²⁷ That this distinction remains important to Paul is a central thesis of all of Bill Campbell's work, as well as the work of Kathy Ehrensperger, a point with which I heartily agree.

they can both be incorporated, become one, such as the people of God, or the church, which will consist of "all Israel" and "all the other nations" too. In vv. 25-26, Paul discloses specifically the unexpected way that the "restoration" of "all Israel" is taking place ("and in this way"), which includes a temporary injury to but also protection of some Israelites and thus Israel ("a callus has formed temporarily for Israel"), a rescue involving discipline and forgiveness foretold in Isaiah, which Paul cites as proof, as well as the dawning of the "fullness" of the nations ("until when the fullness of the nations begins").

That a callus... has developed for Israel (ὅτι πώρωσις... τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν)

Paul represents the current state of Israel or of some Israelites (some natural branches) as that of having become πώρωσις (for the sake of simplicity, we will postpone translating ἀπὸ μέρους, which can mean, for example, "in part," "part of," "partially," "sort of," "somewhat," "to a degree," "for a while," or "temporarily," until after the other elements have been discussed). The problem with translating this state in terms of "hardened" has been discussed, and to this can be added the problem that the negative value judgment in the language of hardening in English would not contribute to communicating a mystery calculated to confront conceit toward these Jews from the non-Jews Paul addresses—which is the point of this disclosure.

Although Theophrastus (ca. 370-285bce), who wrote two extensive treatments of plants, does not appear to use πωρόω, he discusses developments in plants in similar terms when writing of a growth or callus or knot (ὄζος, knot corresponding to the eye of a vine, scion/offshoot from which a branch or leaf springs, but also used for unproductive knots), and he also refers to a "joint" [γόνυ] in olive trees that forms where a cut or injury has occurred

(*Caus. plant.* 1.6.3; *Hist. plant.* 1.8.1-4;²⁸ 3.7.1; 5.2; see also Columella, *Rust.* 4.24.4-6). In trees and plants, it is derived from the sap (Theoph., *Caus. plant.* 5.16.4). This process closes the wound to protect the tree (*Caus. plant.* 3.7.5-12).²⁹ With fresh growth over the callused area, the callus becomes a knot within the trunk or branches. In modern plant terminology, that process is referred to explicitly as the forming of a callus.

If Paul meant "callus," that need not carry the negative valence that "harden" does.³⁰ Instead, it would offer a more positive and arguably more salient choice that has to do with the healing and protecting process that takes place after an injury has occurred, such as after a branch has been broken or broken off.³¹ The translation "that a callus *has happened* to Israel" expresses the perfect active verb γέγονεν ("has become") here. It allows the dative "to" or "for Israel" to be expressed. If discussing a callus in English, we would express this as "has developed" or "has formed": "that a callus has developed/formed for Israel."³² Either way, this

²⁸ Knotting: "as though one thing were made thereby into two and a fresh growing point produced, the cause being mutilation [πήρωσιν] or some other such reason..." (1.8.4).

²⁹ Theoph., *Caus. plant.* 5.16.4, observes that olive trees endure splitting because they quickly close their wounds with sap (which makes them hard to split). He says the olive tree is protected by a coating/bark (φλοιός) that seals up/protects (ἀποστέγω) the piece cut from it to preserve/guard (τηρέω) its life (1.4.5). And for vines, he writes of a sap/juice (ὀπός)-like "tear of gum" or "exudation" (δάκρυον) that collects at the cut, which must run off so the scion can be dry when the graft is made (1.6.8; 6.11.16).

³⁰ Theophrastus uses σκληρός and cognates to describe the hard state of plants and trees and their various components, or parts derived from them, like wood (*Hist. plant.* 5.3.1).

³¹ Although interpreters do not develop this language in metaphorical terms here, or translate πώρωσις as callus, when the translation callus is discussed the negative aspects have generally been emphasized, e.g., that they are hardened and insensitive areas; cf. Robinson, *Ephesians*, p. 264.

³² Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, 13.80; 13.107.

also communicates the idea that the callus "has happened" for the benefit of some Israelites or Israel. (Of course, even the translation "callus" contains a value judgment that is at the very least patronizing, for Paul believes that his fellow Jews not joining him in declaring Christ to the nations have suffered a wound that elicits the need for this protective measure; but at the same time his point is that this is a part of the way God is working, using them, so that these Israelites are still a part of the way God is announcing the message to the nations.)

That Paul was describing a protective and healing callus rather than the idea of hardness as in stubborn, insensitive, or obdurate, is enhanced by attending to the manuscript variants for πώρωσις. Πηρώω and πήρωσις are regular variants for πωρώω and πώρωσις in the NT and other manuscripts. In their *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* essay on the topic, the Schmidts conclude that switching between these terms was so common that it is not possible to determine the original: "the most one may deduce from it is that there was no longer any awareness of the difference in meaning between the two stems πωρ- and πηρ-."³³

Although πήρωσις is not listed as a variant among Greek manuscripts for Romans 11:25,³⁴ Nestle-Aland²⁵ does list the Latin variant *caecitus* (blindness/dullness) in latt,³⁵ and syP

³³ Schmidt and Schmidt, *TDNT* 5.1027-28; cf. Robinson, *Ephesians*, pp. 264-74. Theophrastus used πηρώω and πήρωσις, and cognates, to refer to the process of maiming or injuring trees or parts of trees, to their being thereafter maimed, wounded, harmed, injured, mutilated, disabled, or incapacitated (*Hist. plant.* 1.8.4; 2.4.3; 4.14.8; *Caus. plant.* 1.5.5). The variant πυρ- is attested for *Hist. plant.* 1.8.4 in U M Mon. ^{yp}; Suzanne Amigues, (ed., trans.), *Théophraste. Recherches sur les Plantes. Tome I. Livres I-II* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1988), p. 24.

³⁴ Cf. Reuben Swanson (ed.), *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines Against Codex Vaticanus: Romans* (Wheaton and Pasadena: Tyndale House Publishers and William Carey International University Press, 2001), p. 181.

also uses "blindness/dullness" (עוֹרְרוּת),³⁶ which may indicate that these scribes worked from a Greek manuscript with πῆρωσις, or that the two were used interchangeably. J. A. Robinson lists the translation choices in Latin as *obtusio* (dull/blunt/obtuse/blind) for Ambrosiaster and Hilary, and *caecitas* (obscure/blind) for clar, vg, Ambrosiaster, and Augustine.³⁷ This variant tradition apparently accounts for Luther's German translation choice of "blindness" (Blindheit).³⁸ Also, for the earlier use of the verb ἐπωρώθησαν in v. 7, Swanson lists the variant ἐπερώθησαν in the fifth century Uncial C.³⁹ Swanson also provides many Greek variants with an omicron rather than omega for the second letter, and a double ρρ in some cases, that is, with πόρωσις (including the case of P⁴⁶) and πόρρωσις in v. 25, and ἐπορώθησαν, ἐπορρώθησαν, and ἐπορρόθησαν in v. 7.⁴⁰ These anomalies raise an interesting question when combined with

³⁵ *Caecitās* and cognates not only refer to dullness/dimness of judgment, or making/being obscure, but also, interestingly, are used to refer to the removal of the eyes or buds from plants (P. G. W. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 1996).

³⁶ Schmidt and Schmidt, *TDNT* 5.1027. I am grateful to Daniel Stramara for help with the Syriac variant for 11:25, which uses a verb, and also introduces the heart (also added to v. 7). Lamsa's translation of the clause in v. 25 does not reflect the verbal change; it reads: "for blindness of heart has to some degree befallen Israel" (George M. Lamsa, *Holy Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text: George M. Lamsa's Translations From the Aramaic of the Peshitta* (San Francisco, et al.: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 1132. Lamsa translates the verbal usage in v. 7 in a way that brings out the alternative aspect of dullness or darkness: "were dulled in their minds" (p. 1131; see also J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, p. 407).

³⁷ Robinson, *Ephesians*, pp. 267-69.

³⁸ Schmidt and Schmidt, *TDNT* 5.1023, 1027.

³⁹ Swanson, *New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, p. 170.

⁴⁰ Swanson, *New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, pp. 170, 181.

the many cases of manuscript variation discussed in other NT texts by the Schmidts: Why the consistent inconsistency in these vowels?

In the case of the switching between the omicron and omega in the second letter position, the specialists surmise that this is due to the similar "o" sound of these vowels in *πώρωσις* and *πόρωσις*. But it may be that this anomaly bears witness to the earlier usage of *πήρωσις* in manuscripts no longer available to us. There is some reason to suppose that Paul may have been using cognates of *πηρώω* and *πήρωσις*, especially in 11:7, based on the kinds of disabilities that are described in the passages he cites from Isaiah 29:10 combined with some turns of phrase from Deut. 29:3 in v. 8, and Psalm 69:22-23 (LXX 68:22-23) in vv. 9-10, although neither *πώρωσις* nor *πήρωσις* are used in these texts.⁴¹

Πήρωσις and *πηρώω* can denote being "wounded," "maimed," or "impaired" in some way, or being "blinded" (although cognates of *τυφλός* are used specifically for blindness, rather than merely obscured vision or generally damaged organs, including eyes). The only place where *πωρώω* is found in the Septuagint, Job 17:7 (*πεπώρωνται γὰρ ἀπὸ ὀργῆς οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου*), bears witness to a similar manuscript variation between *πωρώω* and *πηρώω*. This case refers to the eyes being disabled, but the eyes are not being callused; rather, vision is being impaired, as the manuscript variants from Codex Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, among others, indicate by using *πεπήρωνται*, and in other manuscripts by the use of *ἡμαυρωθησαν* (*μαυρώω*: to darken, dim, make obscure).⁴² The *Test. Levi* 13.7 uses *πήρωσις* in combination with

⁴¹ Paul did not include the first part of Deut 29:3, which refers to the heart, in his citation.

⁴² Alfred Rahlfs (ed.), *Septuaginta; id est, Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX interpretes* (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 5th ed., 1952), p. 299, lists AS^{S+}; Robinson, *Ephesians*, p. 265, lists \aleph^c A, and refers to the cases of *ἡμαυρωθησαν*.

τύφλωσις: εἰ μὴ τύφλωσις ἀσεβείας καὶ πήρωσις ἀμαρτίας; "except the *blindness* of impiety and the *impairment* of sin."⁴³ This may well be a play on the synonymous usage of πήρωσις for effect, that is, it is a disability, an injury that inhibits proper function similar to what blindness (or better, "nearsightedness," since applied to impiety here) represents in terms of vision. The meaning "*blindness* of sin" misses the move between these two descriptive choices; the distinction as well as overlap between being impaired in the eyes and being similarly incapacitated elsewhere is at play.

Cognates of πήρωσις are found regularly in Philo (50+ times), but πώρωσις does not appear to be used at all.⁴⁴ Πήρωσις and cognates are translated throughout as impaired, disabled, or deprived, and refer to many different parts of the body (*Spec. Laws* 1.341). When πήρωσις is used with reference to the eyes or vision it describes a more general disability that can include the specific case of τυφλός (e.g., *Heir* 76; *Moses* 1.124; *Virtues* 7). In *Alleg. Interp.* 3.91, impaired is combined with blinded to describe the inferiority of recollection to memory (πηρὸν καὶ τυφλὸν πρᾶγμα); they are similar in valence here, but different qualities (cf. 3.231).⁴⁵ In *Flight* 121, Lot's wife's looking back is described as ἐπηρώθησαν, which would not refer to being blind exactly, but to being near-sighted. *Good Person* 55, refers to the failure to perceive the depths of the soul's suffering due to impaired reason (λογισμοῦ πήρωσιν; cf.

⁴³ Note that the context is the gaining of wisdom in the fear of God by the wise, which can protect them against all manner of loss, and cannot be taken away from them except when wisdom is coupled with impiety or sin.

⁴⁴ No entries for πώρωσις as a variant are listed in Peder Borgen, Kåre Fuglseth and Roald Skarsten (eds.), *The Philo Index: A Complete Greek Word Index to the Writings of Philo of Alexandria* (Grand Rapids, Mich. and Leiden: Brill, 2000).

⁴⁵ In *Cherubim* 58, a mind that is blind (τυφλός) is compared and contrasted to being deprived (πηρωθέντα) of the external sight by the eyes. *Sacr.* 69, does refer to "the eyes/vision of the soul being maimed [τὰ ψυχῆς ὄμματα πεπηρωμένος]" (cf. *Worse* 22; *Posterity* 8; *Unchangeable* 93; *Spec. Laws* 3.6; *Contempl. Life* 10).

Providence 2.20 [διάνοιαν]). This brings up the case of 2 Cor 3.14, where Paul states that "their thoughts (in the sense of what they perceived) [τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν] were callused [ἐπωρώθη]," which seems to indicate that they were "obstructed." This is said to correspond to a "veil [κάλυμμα] laid over their hearts" in v. 15. The dynamic turns around perception or seeing, and this would suggest πήρωσις rather than πώρωσις, or that πώρωσις can have a sense not so much of hardening, which does not describe sight or perception, but of covering up or obstructing the view of sight, understanding, perception, or thoughts; hence, covered by a callus. Moreover, Robinson shows that the early translators and commentators understood this in the sense of obstructed or blinded, and he concludes that this application of πώρωσις for the faculty of understanding is unparalleled if translated hardened.⁴⁶

Likewise, πώρωσις is not used by Josephus, but he does use cognates of πήρωσις several times.⁴⁷ *Ant.* 1.267, πήρωσις refers to Isaac's deficient eyesight when addressing Esau; in Gen 27:1, his eyes are described as "dim" or "dull" (ἀμβλύνω), but Isaac is not exactly blind. The general sense of maiming of any part of a person is evident in *Ant.* 4.280, when discussing the *Lex talionis* (Ex 21.24; Lev 24.19), and *War* 5.228, where it refers to any bodily defect on a priest, while in *Ag. Ap.* 2.15, πεπηρωμένους is used for those who have been maimed in contrast to the blind (τυφλοὺς) and leprous who came out of Egypt.

⁴⁶ Robinson, *Ephesians*, pp. 265, 267; cf. Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich. and Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. and Paternoster Press, 2005), p. 301: "the Israelites of Moses' day had calloused hearts that were insensitive to spiritual stimuli."

⁴⁷ No variants or cases of πώρωσις are listed in Karl Heinrich Rengstorf (ed.), *A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus* (Study ed.; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002).

These cases suggest that interpreters unnecessarily refer to *blindness* rather than to *impairment* in a more general sense, for *dim* sight bespeaks impaired vision, lack of clarity, sometimes lack of far-sightedness as in myopic, but not exactly blindness.⁴⁸

The passages Paul cites in Romans 11:8-10 do not refer simply to the eyes—although "eyes" provides the *gezerah shawah* linking his proof texts—but also to sluggish spirits, ears that do not hear, and backs that are bent, in addition to describing a temporary state of obscured vision rather than a permanent state indicated by blindness. Since *πηρόω* would make sense of this state if translated "injured" or "wounded" or "disabled," it may be suggested that Paul probably meant if not used *πηρόω* rather than *πωρόω* in v. 7 (cf. Philo, *Flight* 123; *Spec. Laws* 1.117). Since this cannot be proven, it can at least be suggested that the better translation of *πωρόω* here is in the sense of a temporary state likened to a protective callus that forms after an injury, rather than to a hardening in the sense of insensitivity, or stubbornness, or related to the heart, or alternatively, to blindness or obtuseness.

In the case of 11:25, the likelihood of *πήρωσις* originally written or intended rather than *πώρωσις* is neither as easy to infer, nor is it preferable. The proof texts from Isa 59:20-21 and 27:9 do not suggest impairment any more than they suggest hardening; however, their metaphorical use of plant language throughout supports the notion of callusing. Assuming that Paul was using this language metaphorically, it does follow that if there is a callus, there was an injury in need of such protection at the point of the wound until healed, i.e., saved, rescued, or restored. If Paul meant "that an injury (or: a wound) has happened to/for Israel," the focus would be on the process of divine discipline, of the sustaining of an injury that is

⁴⁸ Jerome's translation of Job 17:7 is "*obscurati*" (obscured, darkened) from the Hexaplar, and "*caliguit*" (misty, darkened) from the Hebrew (Robinson, *Ephesians*, p. 265 n. 1), so also not "blinded" per se, but obscured.

evident presently; it is not an indication of destruction, but of a temporary stage that makes necessary the future rescuing of the plant. If he meant "that a callus has developed for Israel," the focus would be on the process of being divinely protected after an injury has occurred, but all the more emphasizing that this development highlights a temporary stage in order to facilitate a healthy outcome; indeed, full recuperation according to God's design. That is consistent with the language of the texts from Isaiah in their contexts.

This association between the variant "injury/wound/impairment" and the translation suggestion "callus" work together; both keep the metaphorical quality of the language in view in a way that the usual translations "hard," "stubborn," "obdurate," "insensitive," "obtuse," and "blind" do not communicate, even ironically, "obstruct."⁴⁹ Indeed, the suggested translations provide a positive and sympathetic instead of a judgmental—dare I suggest "insensitive"—valence to the images evoked.

The Issue of Translating ἀπὸ μέρους

Another translation and interpretation issue arises with Paul's usage of ἀπὸ μέρους in v. 25. As already discussed, this is usually translated either to refer to "part" of Israel, or Israel "partially." The latter can imply that it refers to all Israelites, but it need not, for it can refer to Israel in general because of the state of some Israelites, and thus in effect visualize the same idea as "part of Israel" translations (if "part" of the branches in a tree are callused or injured, "part" of the tree can also be described as callused or injured, or the tree "in part," or

⁴⁹ I am thus in agreement with Robinson's conclusion that πῶρωςις is not best translated "hardened," but in disagreement that it should be rendered "blinded," for it is not indicating that kind of permanent and completely damaged state, but an injury if pertaining to the eyes would better be translated in terms of obstructed vision, unable to see clearly, "partially blinded," "obstructed," "obscured," "blocked," "clouded," "darkened," "dimmed."

"partially," although this would still not indicate that all the branches are callused or hardened).⁵⁰ While the placement of the prepositional phrase after "callus" could indicate a partial callus, that Paul seeks to describe a partial callus rather than a full callus seems unlikely: a callus forms, or does not.⁵¹ There are several other alternatives to explore.

Although rarely observed, this prepositional phrase can be translated "sort of,"⁵² thereby signaling the metaphorical limitations of the image invoked: "that a callus, sort of, has happened to Israel...."

The translation, "..., in part," can be maintained, and refer to a process which "in part" consists of what is happening *preliminarily* in the service of a larger purpose or later goal; hence, *part of the reason* that a callus has formed for Israel is *because of the function it serves* until the fullness of the nations commences: "that a callus, *in part* (for a particular purpose), has formed for Israel, until..." In addition to "in part," this sense can be communicated if translated "somewhat" or "to some degree,"⁵³ that is, this has happened specifically in the service of the next development, or particularly until the next stage of the process has been

⁵⁰ Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 699-700, argues against taking this to apply to Israel as a whole, which was the position I maintained in *Mystery of Romans*, pp. 263-64; Idem, "'Broken Branches,'" but I now recognize how it could apply to Israel without meaning it applies to all Israelites, a distinction that keeping the tree metaphor in view in vv. 25-27 helps to visualize.

⁵¹ One could discuss specific stages in the process of callus development, but this does not appear to be the topic.

⁵² Krister Stendahl, *Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), p. 38.

⁵³ Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 401. Chrysostom translated this as "in part," and the grammatical example he provides from 2 Cor 2:5 indicates a development partially applied to a group, but he never the less interprets it to indicate part of Israel: "But his meaning is nearly this, and he had said it before, that the unbelief is not universal, but only 'in part'... it is not the whole people..." ("Homily 19," *Romans*, trans. J. B. Morris).

reached. The translation could read, "that a callus, *to some degree*, has formed for Israel, until...."

Another option arises from the fact that Paul seeks to describe a *temporary* state in the next clause, which is framed in time-sequential terms as "until... begins."⁵⁴ A translation capturing the partial time element would be true to the adverbial aspect normally indicated when this phrase is used, which some have argued is the grammatically proper way to read ἀπὸ μέρους here, so that this "has happened partially" to Israel.⁵⁵ As already noted, when it is

⁵⁴ Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 335, note that the point is to indicate "that it is only temporary and that the limitation in time is 'until....'"

⁵⁵ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 2.575, insists that it is adverbial, yet he concludes that it is "not all Jews" who are thereby indicated, which is however the same conclusion one would reach from taking this to be adjectival; moreover, an adverbial usage can indicate that it has happened partially to Israel, i.e., to all Jews, which Cranfield argues against. Although C. K. Barrett recognizes the phrase could be adverbial, he decides that it is used adjectivally here, and concludes, like Cranfield, ironically, that it is "*partial* in the sense that it was only a part (though the larger part) of Israel that was hardened" (*The Epistle to the Romans* [Black's New Testament Commentary; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, Revised edn., 1991], p. 206). James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38b; Dallas: Word Books, 1988), p. 691, includes time, purpose, and people: "The blindness is partial as both temporary and as afflicting what Paul hopes will in the end be a relatively small proportion of his people.... The harshness... against Israel is ameliorated by the setting of a time limit... is limited to a specific purpose and period." Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York, et al.: Doubleday, 1993), p. 621, observes that it is only part of Israel that is hardened, but includes that this hardening is "also temporary." Although Jewett argues against adverbial application to indicate hardening has happened partially to Israel as a whole, and against it meaning that the hardening itself is partial, but rather that it signifies that only part of Israel is experiencing this, he also implicitly recognizes the temporariness of this stage when he discusses the

recognized that Paul is dealing in plant metaphors, and something that happens to part of the tree also affects the whole tree partially as well, there is no reason to object to this translation on the basis that it is only some Israelites whom Paul appears to be describing as callused; however, there is another way to construe the message of this prepositional phrase that I have not seen explored.

One can translate ἀπὸ μέρους to highlight the time element of what is happening: it "has happened *for a while*." Louw and Nida discuss how ἀπὸ μέρους can refer "to a relatively short period of time, with emphasis upon the temporary nature of the event or state – 'not long, temporary, for a little while, for a while.'⁵⁶ In Rom 15:24, Paul writes of the fact that he will stay in Rome "for a while [ἀπὸ μέρους]" before he heads off to Spain. Thus, the phrase can be translated, "that a callus has formed for Israel *for a while*, until... begins," or, "that a *temporary* callus has formed for Israel, until... begins," or, "that a callus has formed for Israel *temporarily*, until... begins," or, in keeping with Paul's word order: "that a callus *temporarily* has formed for Israel."⁵⁷ These choices are fully compatible with the focus on a part of a process discussed immediately above: "for a while" emphasizes the time element over the developmental aspect. Both aspects are expressed by the adjective "temporary," or the adverb, "temporarily."

One of the strengths of developing the temporary time element in the translation is that it keeps the focus on Paul communicating a stage in a development that will come to a conclusion that may not be apparent to his audience at the time, which is the thrust of his next phrase, for he understands "Israel's obtuseness lasting until the fulfillment of the predestined plan for Gentile conversion" (*Romans*, p. 700).

⁵⁶ *Lexicon*, 67.109.

⁵⁷ This time element oriented alternative works just as well if "injury" was indicated instead of "callus."

argument throughout the larger sentence as well as the chapter overall. Another benefit is that it parallels the message of the proof text Paul creates in vv. 26-27 to substantiate the mystery he seeks to disclose, which does not refer to part of Israel or Israel partially, but to a temporary stage in Israel's history, according to God's promise, when it will be delivered from ungodliness and sins. In the argument following these citations from Isaiah, Paul explains that while some Israelites are presently alienated, they are nevertheless beloved, and that at the end of this period they will be persuaded of Paul's message and join together with those from the rest of the nations similarly persuaded, Israel and the other nations together glorifying God for the receipt of mercy. I thus propose that Paul's effort to disclose this mystery as the present state of things *for a while*, as a *partial* and *preliminary* stage in a larger process that includes several stages leading to a previously unforeseen outcome, is visualized most usefully by the translation "temporarily."

Paul's Message

Paul metaphorically describes an anomalous development in Rome that he does not want to be misunderstood. In Paul's view, his audience is witnessing a time when Israelites are divided in their response to the gospel message and thus some—a select few, such as Paul sees himself—are taking up the responsibility to proclaim this news to the nations, while others—indeed, the majority—are not.⁵⁸ This development is temporary, and Israel will be preserved throughout it. In due time, when the messengers such as Paul have turned fully to bringing this message to the nations; "in this way" or "then," those of his fellow Israelites who have not recognized *yet* that the age to come time has arrived—that it was thus time for bringing the

⁵⁸ I have described this interpretation of Paul's message and ministry in detail in *Mystery of Romans*, pp. 239-88.

message of good to those of the nations who will turn to the worship of the One God of Israel as the only God of all humankind (when "the fullness of the nations should commence")—will join him in this task. It has always been Israel's special privilege to bring the "words of God" to the nations (cf. 3:2); from Paul's vantage point, that time has arrived.

The purpose of describing this stage is to communicate a mystery to his non-Israelite audience about which they lack a proper understanding, for the Roman communities addressed have not experienced the way that Paul's ministry to the nations unfolds specifically in the context of his ministry to his fellow Israelites, and thus they fail to perceive how their destinies are inextricably combined. He cannot get to Rome yet, so he must write to explain that things are not as they may myopically appear to them to be: these members of Israel are not God's enemies, or theirs, but rather are suffering vicariously on their behalf, however counterintuitive that may seem. "Therefore," in the chapters that follow (12–16), Paul instructs these non-Jews to regard these fellow members of Abraham's family with compassion instead of judgmentalism, and to seek to support them through this vulnerable time instead of insensitively dismissing them and their opinions, even though they do not share affiliation in Christ-faithfulness. They are to live righteously, which includes the demonstration of respect for Israelite covenant norms, for thereby they will avoid giving that push that might cause those stumbling to completely fall. In due time, upon Paul's arrival in Rome, and thus after the Jews there have the opportunity to witness Paul's success in bringing these members of the nations from idolatry and sin to the One God and righteousness through faithfulness to God in

Christ, Paul predicts that his fellow Israelites will join him in turning fully to proclaim to the nations this message of the dawning of the long awaited age of shalom.⁵⁹

Concluding Translation of vv. 7, 25-26

The translation and interpretation of the aorist passive verb *πωρόω* in 11:7 as "the rest *were callused*," is not as well suited to the context as would be "the rest *were wounded/disabled*," which implies that if *πωρόω* is original, it could already be used in the direction of *πηρόω*. The allegory with broken branches and thus the protective need for a callus has not been introduced by v. 7; therefore, the reader is not prepared to infer the metaphorical quality of forming a protective callus, at least on the first reading. The message communicated in the proof texts from Isaiah and the Psalms that Paul provides in vv. 8-10, speak of a *temporary* period of time when God inflicts on some people spirits that are not alert (i.e., that slumber), eyes that do not see, ears that do not hear, and backs that are bent, in other words, a time of disability (not unlike the disabling he wants his audience to avoid allowing to develop among themselves through arrogant indifference to the plight of these Israelites!). In English, "the rest *were hardened*" does not successfully communicate temporariness; likewise, neither does

⁵⁹ I discuss the implications of this interpretation, and thus that history did not unfold as I understand Paul to have imagined that it would, as well as the hermeneutical opportunities that nevertheless arise from Paul's argument and doxology in vv. 33-36, in Mark D. Nanos, "Challenging the Limits That Continue to Define Paul's Perspective on Jews and Judaism," in *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations* (Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte, eds.; Romans through History and Culture Series; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2000), pp. 217-29. Notably, this essay was developed in dialogue with the views Bill Campbell expressed in "Divergent Images of Paul and His Mission," *Reading Israel in Romans*, Grenholm and Patte (eds.), pp. 187-211.

"blinded." The negative valence of these choices does not signal that Paul is driving toward a favorable conclusion highlighting the eventual restoration of these Israelites. Furthermore, it fails to convey the generous spirit that one might expect to accompany Paul's earnest plea for his audience to live graciously toward these Israelites during this stage in God's design, just as these members from the other nations stand only because of the grace they have received and embraced.

The choice of the noun πώρωσις in 11:25, however, is warranted contextually, and can carry a positive meaning when translated metaphorically as "callus." Its potential for communicating in generous terms is enhanced when this language is understood to allude to the olive tree allegory it follows, combined with the metaphorical turns of phrase throughout vv. 25-27, which employ tree metaphors of "fullness" and "restoration," and reflect the metaphorical context of the passages in Isaiah from which Paul quotes.

When approached in metaphorical plant terms, the translation "callus" need not be understood in the sense of hardness or blindness, or be interpreted to signify insensitivity, or obduracy, or stubbornness toward God. Rather, the development of a callus envisages a protected state after the sustaining of an injury, and is thus intimately related to πήρωσις, the disability itself. The forming of a callus is a positive development undertaken by the tree to sustain the health of the injured part as well as the health of the overall plant, which is naturally affected by an injury to any part of it. Thus, Paul may well be reaching back to the language introduced in vv. 7-10, but now to the next stage in the process, that of the *protected state* of the wounded part of Israel-- until the final healing can be completed. The larger clause as well as the suggested translation of ἀπὸ μέρους as "temporarily" can emphasize the preliminary stage of protecting the injured area "until" the beginning of the next phase, when

the grafted wild branch representing the nations is introduced, which must take hold to succeed, i.e., "come in" or "commence." That requires a healthy tree able to provide nourishment in a time of stress, if not yet a tree in which all of the natural branches have been restored to full health.

I therefore propose a translation that retains the character of metaphor drawing on an image of a tree following damage, such as would be the case for some broken branches in the allegory it follows: *that a callus temporarily has formed for (to protect) Israel*. This allegory also included the introduction of a wild shoot in need of recognizing its need "to take proper root" after being grafted among these branches, which includes its place among both the healthy ones as well as the ones presently undergoing the process of becoming callused to sustain life in their damaged condition. The tree Paul envisions includes not only all Israel, but also members from all of the nations alongside of the children of Jacob, all of God's created order coming into harmony, however different, as one people of God (cf. 15:5-13).

Hence, I suggest a translation of vv. 25-26 (with expanded explanations) in this direction:

⁽²⁵⁾**For I do not want you to be unperceptive regarding this mystery** (of the unexpected interdependence of the promised future for all Israelites with the beginning of the successful inclusion of those from the other nations among the people of God), **brothers and sisters, so that you would not be mindful (only) for yourselves** (as members from the other nations experiencing grace, and not graciously concerned about the welfare of those Israelites who do not share your convictions about the gospel), *that a callus temporarily has formed for Israel*, (to protect Israel) **until (the time) when the fullness of the nations should**

commence (the successful introduction of a grafted shoot representing the nations, or the blossoming of that grafted shoot, representing when Paul turns fully to declaring the gospel to the nations following the divided response it receives when first proclaimed to his fellow Israelites), ⁽²⁶⁾**and in this way (or: and then)**⁶⁰ **all Israel will be restored** (that is, following the beginning of the positive response by some from the nations, witnessed by their turning from idolatry and sin to the One God and righteousness, Israel will be restored to full health instead of its divided state, for the production of abundant fruit from among the nations in response to Paul's declaration of the message to them triggers a process by which those Israelites not yet persuaded of the gospel will recognize what time it is, the awaited time to join Paul in proclaiming the good news to the rest of the nations), **just as it was written** (i.e., promised)....

The suggested literal translation is:

⁽²⁵⁾For I do not want you to be unperceptive regarding this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you would not be mindful (only) for yourselves, *that a callus temporarily has formed for Israel*, until (the time) when the fullness of the nations should commence, ⁽²⁶⁾and in this way (or: and then) all Israel will be restored, just as it was written....

⁶⁰ The issue of whether Paul's usage is modal ("in this way") or temporal ("then") cannot be resolved lexically. The interpreter must choose based on other contextual elements, the interpretation of which are of course also a matter of dispute. Pieter W. van der Horst, "'Only Then Will All Israel Be Saved': A Short Note on the Meaning of καὶ οὕτως in Romans 11:26," *JBL* 119 (2000), pp. 521-25, has made the case for the temporal, noting that the two options are not mutually exclusive (p. 524), although the prevailing opinion is toward the modal, from which I argued in *Mystery of Romans* (cf. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 701); either one can express the interpretation proposed herein.