

- b. Having drawn from the prophet Hosea to substantiate his claim concerning God's eternal purpose to call the Gentiles to Himself in Christ, Paul turned to Isaiah to substantiate the same claim with respect to Israel (9:27-29). Specifically, Paul cited from prophetic passages indicating that God's purpose to save Israel pertained to a *remnant* "from among the Jews" (9:24), and not the whole nation. This is consistent with his basic contention that "not all Israel is Israel." At the level of typological fulfillment the entire Israelite nation descended from Jacob had constituted the children of promise and covenant people of God. But in the context of the final fulfillment of His promise to Abraham, only an elect remnant of Israel would be regarded as true covenant children (ref. again 9:6-8).

As before, Paul conjoined two distinct citations from Isaiah. But, whereas the Hosea passages were taken from the same larger context, the present ones are drawn from separate literary contexts in Isaiah's prophecy. They likely refer in context to the same historical circumstances, but Paul conjoined them on the basis of contextual *emphasis*. That is to say, both passages emphasize the same principle, which is God's preservation of a remnant of the "seed" of Israel.

- 1) Paul's first citation is taken from Isaiah 10:22-23. This passage is part of an extended context that spans chapters 7-12. It opens with the historical setting of Ahaz' reign in Judah and the impending assault on Jerusalem by the king of Israel in alliance with Syria. This circumstance served as the historical platform for Isaiah's *Immanuel* ("God with us") prophecy (ref. 7:1-25), which prophecy overarches and informs the balance of the context as it moves through the twelfth chapter.

In context, the passage Paul drew from has reference to the future day when the Immanuel prophecy will find its ultimate fulfillment in the emergence of the *Davidic Branch*. This One is presented by Isaiah as both the root and branch (stem) of Jesse (11:1-10), and is shown to be the regal Seed promised to David (cf. 2 Samuel 7:1ff with Isaiah 9:1-7).

The Immanuel prophecy had been given to Ahaz as God's promise to the house of David that He would indeed preserve Judah as the seat of David's throne. He would do so by destroying the enemies that threatened Judah. The *immediate* referent of the prophecy was the Israelite-Syrian alliance, and God promised that very shortly these two kingdoms would be overcome and destroyed (7:1-16). God would do this work through the king of Assyria, with whom Ahaz had formed his own alliance. But lest Ahaz believe that this human power had been the source of Judah's deliverance, God would bring the Assyrians against Judah after they conquered the two kings Ahaz feared (7:17-8:8). In that way God would fulfill His promise to Ahaz that the house of David would be delivered from its enemies and preserved, not by human resource or strength, but by the Holy One of Israel who is Immanuel; the God who is with His own; the God who is faithful to keep His covenant promise to David (8:9-10).

God's promise to Ahaz would realize the second half of its near-term fulfillment during the reign of his son Hezekiah. At that time Sennacherib, king of Assyria, swept through Judah, making his way toward Jerusalem. Struck with fear, and yet confident of Yahweh's power and faithfulness, Hezekiah inquired of the Lord, and He declared through Isaiah that Sennacherib would not so much as shoot an arrow over the walls of Jerusalem (36:1-37:35). As promised, before his army could reach Jerusalem, the Lord turned Assyria away in defeat by sending His angel to slaughter 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (37:36-38, cf. also 10:1-19). Solely by His own power God delivered a remnant of Judah from their enemies and preserved them, just as He promised Ahaz years earlier. *Most importantly, God made known that this deliverance had come as evidence of His firm commitment to keep His word to David – the promise that David's house and kingdom would continue forever* (ref. 37:33-35; 2 Samuel 7:10-13).

The Immanuel prophecy was first fulfilled in Judah's deliverance from Israel-Syria and Assyria, but a greater, *ultimate* fulfillment was yet to come. In a future day, a greater deliverance would come by which David's house and throne would be secured *forever*; a final deliverance prefigured by the former one. As previously under Hezekiah, this deliverance would come in connection with the principle of *Immanuel*, but now God's presence would be realized *bodily* in the person of the Davidic Branch. He would come as the promised seed of David, appointed by Yahweh to build His house (the house of David), and establish David's throne and kingdom forever (ref. again 9:1-7). And just as with the deliverance under Hezekiah, this royal Branch would do so by vanquishing the enemies of God's people and delivering a remnant from destruction (11:1-5).

The two-fold significance of the prophecy is further highlighted by Isaiah's allusion to the Abrahamic promise. For God had pledged to Abraham that he would be the father of a *great nation*, with his descendents being as numerous as the "sand of the seashore" (Genesis 22:15-17; cf. 15:1-5 and 32:1-12). Under Solomon's rule in the fullness of David's kingdom, Israel had realized that promise (1 Kings 4:20-21). But though the seed of Abraham had become as numerous as the sand of the seashore, only a remnant would be saved – first, during the Assyrian assault on Judah, and later in the return from Babylonian exile.

But God had further promised Abraham that he would be the father of a *multitude of nations*. This extended fatherhood was tied to his being the source of God's blessing for all the earth's families. In the day when the Abrahamic promise would find its ultimate fulfillment in the kingdom of David's Son, the sons of the kingdom (the sons of Abraham) would come from all the nations. At the same time, though the sons of Israel would be as numerous as the sand of the seashore, only a remnant would be saved. For not all Israel is Israel; the children of promise are the children of God.

*It is this ultimate judgment and deliverance that serve as the prophetic context for Paul's first citation.* In the day of Branch's coming, the preserved remnant of Israel would never again rely on human allies as had Israel of old. Rather, they would *"truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel"* (10:20). Yahweh would bring about His decreed destruction; a comprehensive destruction, and one *"overflowing with righteousness."* In the Davidic Branch, God would exercise a thorough judgment by which righteousness would be exalted and established. And as a result, a remnant of Jacob would return to the mighty God (10:21-23).

This was God's promise to Israel through Isaiah, and His word had been fulfilled with the coming of the Son of David: God had poured out His wrath at Calvary in a comprehensive, righteous judgment; He had destroyed the enemies of His people and delivered them from the forces that threatened to overcome them; He had kept His promise to David to establish his house and kingdom forever. And now He was gathering to Himself an elect remnant of Jacob (11:11-16).

- 2) Paul's final citation is taken from the first chapter of Isaiah (1:9), and elaborates on the theme of God's deliverance of a remnant of Israel. In context, this passage probably alludes to the destruction of the cities of Judah resulting from the Israelite-Syrian and Assyrian military incursions (1:5-9; 36:1; also 2 Chronicles 28:1-8). If this conclusion is correct, this citation shares with the preceding one the same general historical context.

It is the *remnant* concept that Paul wished to emphasize, but the *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* ideas also make a vital contribution. In the Scripture, these two cities symbolize the height of human sin as expressed in fierce personal autonomy and high-handed rebellion against God. It was on that basis that God poured out His fury upon them, eradicating them from the face of the earth. But woven into that act of divine judgment was God's intimate interaction with Abraham. *Even as God was covenanting with Abraham to take his seed as His own beloved people, Abraham watched as God destroyed the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.* By juxtaposing these two sharply contrasting realities, the Scripture highlights the distinction between God's own and those who stand opposed to Him and whom He opposes. Israel was antithetical to Sodom and Gomorrah.

And yet, before Israel had even fully settled into the land of promise, the beloved seed of Abraham had itself been transformed into the likeness of Sodom (cf. Genesis 19:1-9 and Judges 19:1-24). Later, this indirect indictment would be made explicit as God directly addressed His covenant nation under the titles of *"rulers of Sodom"* and *"people of Gomorrah"* (1:10ff). God had appointed Abraham to be the point of the mediation of His mercy to the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3), and yet his intercession could not save Sodom and Gomorrah. So also Judah would not be delivered by virtue of her connection with Abraham; as Sodom before her, Judah would endure God's condemnation and destroying hand.

But unlike her two namesakes, Judah had not (and would not) suffer a complete destruction at God's hand. The beloved covenant nation that had effectively become indistinguishable from Sodom and Gomorrah would yet see the preservation of a remnant. God had extended His mercy to a chosen few in the time of His indignation when he punished Judah through the Israelite-Syrian alliance and then the army of Assyria. So also, in the not-too-distant future He would preserve from destruction and captivity a poor and powerless remnant among the sons of Judah when He brought upon them the king of Babylon (2 Kings 24:10-25:12; Jeremiah 39:1-10). Later still, God would deliver another remnant from their exile in Babylon and resettle them in the land of Judah. But God's promise looked beyond even the momentous event of the Babylonian captivity; it was to find its definitive fulfillment in another great day of judgment, preservation, and restoration – the same day implicated in Isaiah 7-12.

As He had done repeatedly throughout Israel's history, Yahweh would once more sovereignly preserve among the sons of Israel a remnant for restoration in the day of His great indignation. Through the cataclysm of that "complete destruction" there would be the vindication and establishment of righteousness. In that day He would pour out His wrath on His enemies, and, in turn, deliver a remnant of Israel from their spiritual captivity, establish them in righteousness, and restore them to perfect, delightful communion with Himself in His everlasting kingdom. Much more, under the triumphal reign of the Son of David, the earth would be "full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas." In the fulfilled kingdom, the restoration of a remnant from among the Jews would be accompanied by the ingathering of all the nations (ref. again Isaiah 11:1-12:6; Romans 9:23-24).

*"Therefore the Lord God of hosts, The Mighty One of Israel declares, 'Ah, I will be relieved of My adversaries, and avenge Myself on My foes. I will also turn My hand against you, and will smelt away your dross as with lye, and will remove all your alloy. Then I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning; after that you will be called the city of righteousness, a faithful city.' Zion will be redeemed with justice, and her repentant ones with righteousness. But transgressors and sinners will be crushed together, and those who forsake the Lord shall come to an end."*

*"Now it will come about that in the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.' For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war." (ref. Isaiah 1:24-2:4)*