

## **Judaizers in the Catholic Church**

### **An Analysis of the Ministries of David Moss and Roy Schoeman**

**By Robert A. Sungenis, M.A., Ph.D. (cand)**

St. John Chrysostom once said: “The man who sets a Judaizing Christian straight, wins a victory over godlessness” (*Adversos Judaeos*). This statement, made over 1600 years ago, is just as relevant today as it was then. What is Judaizing? Simply put, it is the attempt to mix Judaism with Christianity to one degree or another. The Christian Churches of Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Colosse, Philippi were infested with Judaizers. It was the subject of the first Christian council, from which Acts 15:5 tells us: “But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up, and said, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.’” So bad was the problem that St. Paul had to treat the subject in most of his epistles, and he did so with some of the harshest condemnations found in the New Testament. We need not be puzzled as to the reason. St. Paul was warning the Church of a persistent problem she would be facing for millennia to come. The Fathers of the Church, with one voice, condemned it with passion; and the popes and councils throughout history did likewise. There is no need to document this condemnation, for it is common knowledge to those who know Catholic history.

Today the problem of Judaizing is just as prevalent as it was in the first century and it is growing worse. Prior to Vatican II, Jewish converts were assimilated into the Catholic Church with little concern that Judaism would be an ongoing concern in their new Christian lives. As in St. Paul’s conversion, they left it all behind for the glory of Christ. They considered whatever they had gained as “loss for Christ” (Phil 3:2-14). After Vatican II, however, someone, somewhere, got the strange idea that Judaism and Christianity could form some sort of hybrid religion. The term “Judeo-Christianity” was suddenly adopted in theological parlance. As the years went by, unofficial Catholic teaching began to treat Judaism as a viable religion in itself. Certain prelates went so far as to teach that the Old Covenant was never revoked, with the corollary that Jews could be saved in their own religion and need not be “targeted” with Christian evangelization.

These newfangled notions came to a head two years ago when William Cardinal Keeler and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops along with prominent Jewish leaders co-authored the 2003 document titled *Reflections on Covenant and Mission*. One of the more alarming assertions of the document was:

“...while the Catholic Church regards the saving act of Christ as central to the process of human salvation for all, it also acknowledges that Jews already dwell in a saving covenant with God.”

That a Cardinal of the Catholic Church, in full view of the rest of the world, could pen such a blatant contradiction against all previous Catholic teaching about Judaism shows the extent of the problem we are having today.

Interestingly enough, the notes issued in 1985 as one of the source documents for the *Reflections* drafters takes quite a different view. It states:

“Jesus affirms that ‘there shall be one flock and one shepherd.’ Church and Judaism cannot then be seen as two parallel ways of salvation, and the Church must witness to Christ as the Redeemer for all...”

Obviously, the *Reflections* committee disregarded its own notes and in turn produced a hybrid that has all the earmarks of heresy. To even suggest that unconverted Jews who refuse to accept Jesus Christ have, simply because they are Jews, some lingering covenant of salvation apart from the Church is perhaps one of the most horrific errors stated in the history of Christianity. There is simply no condemnation strong enough that could be made against it.

The problem of Judaizing today, however, presents a wholly different problem than that created by Cardinal Keeler and the USCCB, and it is prevalent among the current crop of Jewish converts. “Messianic Jews,” as they are called, have actually converted to the Catholic faith and have thereby rejected the error of the *Reflections* document. The problem, however, is that in most cases these Jewish converts have not let go of their Judaism, and worse, they are systematically trying to integrate it with Christianity and convince other Catholics they should do the same. The attempt at integration can range anywhere from advocating the celebration of Jewish holydays to anticipating the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem for the purpose of ritual sacrifices. Regardless of the form, the substance is the subject of this essay -- Judaizing the Catholic faith.

Four prime examples of Jewish converts who fall into this category are David Moss of the *Association of Hebrew Catholics*; Rosalind Moss, apologist for Catholic Answers; Roy Schoeman, author of the popular book *Salvation is from the Jews* and Marty Barrack author of the book *Second Exodus*. EWTN and *Catholic Answers* are directly involved as well, since they both feature these Jewish converts on a regular basis.

For example, David Moss, although he admits to the errors in the *Reflections* document, produces his own set of errors in a different vein. He writes:

Therefore, it follows that the Jewish people today remain “most dear” to God and retain their gifts and calling. They continue to live, not in their own saving covenant, but alongside Christians in that primary covenant established with Abraham and fulfilled in Jesus -- though they remain in an earlier stage of covenant development.

Post-biblical Rabbinic Judaism, an adaptation of the Judaism of the Sinai Covenant, can then be understood as the temporary provision allowed by God to preserve the Jewish people, their faith in God, and their calling. (website of AHC).

Moss demonstrates the same distortion of St. Paul's phrase "gifts and calling" (Romans 11:28-29) that has surfaced in much post-conciliar scholarship. Moss holds that "the gifts and calling" come in two stages; by two salvation programs that are diametrically opposed to one another. According to Moss, the first stage is "Post-biblical Rabbinic Judaism" (which would necessarily include the anti-Christian tenets in the Talmud, the Mishnah and perhaps the Kabbala). This fails to see Rabbinic Judaism for what it really is: an anti-Christian cult that developed precisely as an antagonist to the Catholic Church in the post-biblical era. The early Church Fathers, as well as numerous official magisterial declarations, regarded Rabbinic Judaism as an obsolete and false religion. The Fathers, to a man, condemned the rabbis for both their refusal to accept Christ as sent from God, and equally condemned their obstinate insistence on adherence to Mosaic rituals. At no time did the Church ever consider Rabbinic Judaism as some sort of weigh-station to determine the sincerity of Jews toward God or as a preliminary stage of enlightenment. Rabbinic Judaism was, pure and simple, a rejection of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant, not "an earlier stage of covenant development."

What Moss fails to see is that St. Paul's teaching in Rom 11:29, "for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable," is set in a context of individual salvation. In other words, "irrevocable gifts and calling" means God will still offer to save the Jew despite the Jew's past and constant rejection of God. God will do so because he promised Abraham (cf., Lk 1:73-74). The "gifts and calling" do not refer to the nation state of Israel, the Old Covenant, Rabbinic Judaism, or anything to do with Jewish ethnicity.

If Moss had merely advanced the idea that God has allowed the Jews to exist for the last two thousand years in hopes that they would come to Christ, there would be little problem, for Moss would not be promoting the false religion of Judaism. But now that he has crossed the line into asserting that God himself has, under the rubric of His "gifts and calling," ordained and perpetuated a false religion, it is little different than what the Judaizers of St. Paul's were promoting.

But not only does Moss promote Judaism as some sort of divine holding pattern, he is so enamored with his former religion that he is calling for nothing less than a Hebrew branch of Catholicism that would reintroduce the distinguishing marks of ancient Judaism (e.g., the ceremonial practices). As Christopher Ferrara writes:

*On The Journey Home*, Moss gave a good indication of AHC's plans in response to a question by email about why Catholics do not celebrate the Jewish holidays "like Jesus and Mary did." Ignoring the Church's teaching that the rituals and observances of the Mosaic law have been abolished with the New Covenant and that it is mortally sinful to observe them, Moss recommended that the Catholic inquirer "go to a local synagogue and watch what they do and listen to it. You can take part in a Seder," he added. Moss was even more explicit in answering another viewer question about the Protestant "Messianic Jews" who celebrate the Jewish feasts. Moss noted uncritically that the Messianic Jews "are Jews who have come to faith in Jesus under the Reformation umbrella" (as if a human version of Christianity were perfectly acceptable) and that "most of the Messianic

Jews do celebrate most of the Jewish feasts...” Moss then recommended that Catholics follow suit by celebrating Passover and Rosh Hashanah:

“Passover of course is fulfilled in the Mass and so it’s a recent set of events that Catholics are beginning to celebrate the Passover in one sense or another. I think that this exercise is helping many, many Catholics appreciate the Mass better because they’re getting a firsthand experience of the Passover. But there are people in the Church who are celebrating the [Jewish] feasts. In fact my pastor at my Catholic Church said “Why do we celebrate January 1st as New Year’s? We should be celebrating Rosh Hashanah.” There’s nothing in the Catholic faith that would work against that, and he [the pastor] wants to do a Hebrew Mass on Rosh Hashanah. And so the future holds a lot of potential...” (EWTN, March 7, 2005).

Notice the modernist double-talk in this quotation: The Passover was fulfilled in the Mass, but Catholics should celebrate the Passover. If the Passover was fulfilled in the Mass, then the way to appreciate the Mass better is to study the Mass, not return to the practice of a defunct Jewish supper ritual that merely prefigured the true worship God enjoins upon His Church. As for the “potential” Moss has in mind for “the future,” one can only shudder in anticipation. Meanwhile, Moss revealed, “we [AHC] hope to be able to provide published literature that would take what was prevalent at the time of Jesus and bring it up to today and into the Catholic faith.” In other words, Moss and AHC, with EWTN’s hearty endorsement, plan to introduce texts for the Judaization of Catholic worship throughout the Church by some sort of return to Jewish observances in effect before the New Covenant.

This conclusion is supported by an item on AHC’s website entitled: “Through the Hebrew Catholic Year: A Collection of Traditions and Prayers for the Jewish Holidays for Catholics.” Here AHC advocates a “Catholic” celebration of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Succoth, Purim, Passover, Shavuoth, and Hanukkah, using prayers “adapted from traditional Jewish prayer book” While affirming that Catholics celebrate the Sabbath on Sunday, AHC – again, in typical modernist fashion – undermines what it affirms by commending the following Jewish Sabbath ceremony for Saturday night: “On Saturday evening, I light the Sabbath candles as I remember my [non-converted] mother doing. My head covered and my hands over my eyes, I recite the blessing, adding a prayer of thanksgiving for Yeshua (Jesus) the Light who has come into the world.” When using the special “Hebrew Catholic” prayers to celebrate the Jewish holidays, the text advises that “you may [may!] want to begin and end each service with the sign of the Cross in Hebrew.” Here is the English translation of the recommended “Hebrew Catholic” version of the Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father  
and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit  
one God, Amen

What sort of arrogance gives rise to the idea that “Hebrew Catholics” are free to add “one God” to a formula that goes back to the very beginning of the Church – as if the Church had, for twenty centuries, been insufficiently mindful that the Triune God is One? Or is this an attempt to deemphasize the Trinity? On *The Journey Home*, Moss intoned this “modified” version of the Sign of the Cross in Hebrew, adding: “the emphasis always being that the Trinity is still only one God.” *Still* “only” one God? When have Catholics ever believed otherwise? And by what right does the Association of Hebrew Catholics decide what the “emphasis” should be in the Church’s Trinitarian formula of apostolic origin? (Article pending publication in 2005)

Not only does Moss distort Romans 11:29’s “the gifts and calling,” he does the same with the rest of Romans 11. On the same March 7, 2005 appearance on EWTN’s *The Journey Home*, Moss stated: “Old Israel included the people of the flesh...the root of Israel...The people of the nations of the world are grafted onto the root, and the root is Israel.” In other words, Moss holds that Christianity, as represented by the nations, is grafted into Israel rather than grafted into Christ. This is certainly a novel interpretation. Unfortunately for Moss, it totally reverses the words of Romans 11:17-20. St. Paul writes:

17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the richness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. 19 You will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief..

We notice that Paul refers to Israel in verses 17 and 19 as “branches that were broken off,” and refers to the Gentiles as “a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place.” Israel is not the “root,” for a branch is not a root and roots are not “broken off.” The Greek for “branch” is “klados” but the word for “root” is “rhiza” – they are two different meanings. The “root” is Christ Himself, and thus He is elsewhere called “the root of Jesse” or “the root of David” (Romans 15:12; Apoc 5:5), and is the reason He insisted: “I am the vine you are the branches” (John 15:6). He further stated: “If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away as a branch.” Israel was that branch, according to St. Paul’s above words. Consequently, we are not grafted into Israel, we are grafted into Christ, the olive tree, and Moss is way off base. This truth is further stipulated in Romans 11:24:

For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.

Throughout Moss’s writings, there is hardly a mention of the blindness and obstinacy of the Jewish people to Christ. As such, it is no surprise to see Moss make the presumptuous claim that, because the Catholic Church hasn’t provided a special place for Jewish converts, this void is the very reason that Jews have refused to come to Christianity. As a result he adds that “...the mission to Jews...has to be seen as a total failure.” And later: “For the last 1700-1800 years, the

Church has become sociologically Gentile...This development has obscured the Israelite origins of the Church.” (AHC Manifesto). In other words, the last two millennia of Jewish unbelief is not due, as St. Paul says, to the obstinate heart of the Jew, but because the Church has insisted that Jewish ceremonies and identity markers are prohibited. It is the Catholic Church’s fault for being insensitive to “Post-biblical Rabbinic Judaism” that is the main cause for Jewish unbelief. This complaint, of course, was the same thing the Judaizers of St. Paul’s day were asserting. They complained that the Church was insensitive to the law of Moses (Acts 15:5), but the Church insisted that if they continued to practice Moses’ rituals they would be condemned (Acts 15:10-12; Gal 3:10-12; 5:1-4). The Council of Florence reiterated this very teaching, quite forcefully, fourteen hundred years later when Judaizers were again bothering the Christian community. It stated in no uncertain terms:

It firmly believes, professes, and teaches that the matter pertaining to the law of the Old Testament, of the Mosaic law, which are divided into ceremonies, sacred rites, sacrifices, and sacraments, because they were established to signify something in the future, although they were suited to the divine worship at that time, after our Lord's coming had been signified by them, ceased, and the sacraments of the New Testament began; and that whoever, even after the passion, placed hope in these matters of the law and submitted himself to them as necessary for salvation, as if faith in Christ could not save without them, sinned mortally. Yet it does not deny that after the passion of Christ up to the promulgation of the Gospel they could have been observed until they were believed to be in no way necessary for salvation; but after the promulgation of the Gospel it asserts that they cannot be observed without the loss of eternal salvation. All, therefore, who after that time observe circumcision and the Sabbath and the other requirements of the law, it declares alien to the Christian faith and not in the least fit to participate in eternal salvation, unless someday they recover from these errors. (Denzinger 712)

When St. Paul converted to Christianity he made a resolution to leave his Judaism behind. He certainly wasn’t calling for a Hebrew Association of Christians, for at every opportunity he sought to break down those artificial and prideful barriers. One means of doing so was to put his Judaism in proper perspective - as an obsolete religion that was now an obstacle to knowing Christ. In Philippians 3:2-8 he makes it quite clear:

2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evil-workers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. 3 For we are the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh. 4 Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, 6 as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ.

The Council of Florence was not the only Magisterial decree against Judiazing. Five hundred years later Pius XII reiterated the same truth:

“And first of all, by the death of our Redeemer, the New Testament took the place of the Old Law which had been abolished; then the Law of Christ together with its mysteries, enactments, institutions, and sacred rites was ratified for the whole world in the blood of Jesus Christ...but on the Gibbet of His death Jesus made void the Law with its decrees fastened the handwriting of the Old Testament to the Cross, establishing the New Testament in His blood shed for the whole human race. ‘To such an extent, then,’ says St. Leo the Great, speaking of the Cross of our Lord, ‘was there effected a transfer from the Law to the Gospel, from the Synagogue to the Church, from the many sacrifices to one Victim, that, as Our Lord expired, that mystical veil which shut off the innermost part of the temple and its sacred secret was rent violently from top to bottom.’”

“On the Cross then the Old Law died, soon to be buried and to be a bearer of death, in order to give way to the New Testament of which Christ had chosen the Apostles as qualified ministers; Trent, ch 1, 793: but not even the Jews by the very letter of the law of Moses were able to be liberated or to rise therefrom” (*Mystici Corporis*, 29-30).

Not only is Moss intent on creating a Jewish Catholicism, he is against bringing Jews into Catholicism by means of direct evangelism. This was brought out in Moss’s analysis of the *Reflections on Covenant and Mission* document. Although Moss rightly criticized the document’s assertion that Jews had their own saving covenant with God, he agreed with the subsequent assertion that “campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity are no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church.” As Moss puts it, Vatican II created a “breath of the Holy Spirit” wherein the Church “ceased from targeting peoples for conversion...we no longer have a program of direct evangelization.” Rosalind Moss, sister of David, holds the same view. She recently stated: “I could not agree more. Nor should attempts to ‘target’ any people be the mode of operation in our missionary endeavors.” Commenting on Moss’s desire to “dialogue” with Jewish people instead of convert them to the Christian faith, Christopher Ferrara explains what is really happening:

EWTN celebrities are now promoting still another error against the Faith: that the Church must not “target” specific peoples for conversion. Here, too, they argue, the Church was wrong for 2,000 years until she corrected her “mistake” at Vatican II. But, of course, “targeting peoples for conversion” is the very purpose of the Church’s existence. The words of Our Lord’s divine commission could not be clearer: “Go forth and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded thee.” Our Lord did not say: “Go forth and make disciples of one person at a time, but target no people for conversion.” Nor did He say: “Go forth and dialogue with all nations.” The word “dialogue” appears nowhere in Scripture or in the teaching of any Pope or

Council before 1962. "Dialogue" has no roots whatsoever in Tradition. "Dialogue" is a total novelty in the Church and thus cannot be part of her doctrine or dogma; for, as already noted, the Church has no power to invent new doctrines in the 1960s or at any other time.

In rejecting the "targeting" of peoples for conversion, the Moss siblings, and the ostensibly Catholic television network that promotes their opinions, reveal more about New Church theology than perhaps even they might realize. Why would any truly believing Catholic not want to see the Church "targeting" the Jews and every other people of the world for conversion? What greater service could the Church perform for all peoples than to make them disciples and save their souls, precisely as Our Lord commanded? Was it wrong for St. Paul to "target" the Gentiles of Cyprus, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Corinth, Ephesus and elsewhere on his three missionary voyages? Was it wrong for Saint Patrick to "target" the pagans of ancient Ireland? Was it wrong for Saint Boniface to "target" the barbarians of Germany? Was it wrong for the Jesuits to "target" the peoples of Brazil, China, India and Japan, or for Isaac Jogues to "target" the Sioux and the Iroquois in America? Has the Church been wrong, then, throughout the entire history of her missionary expeditions to the peoples of the world in keeping with the divine commission? Has New Church decided to repeal the divine commission (as if that were possible)?

Apparently, David and Rosalind Moss, EWTN and the rest of the New Church establishment regard the concerted evangelization of specific peoples as a form of racial discrimination rather than a work of mercy and salvation! Such is the condition of the "ecumenical" and "interreligious" mind. But what it tell us about the state of the Faith in New Church that its spokesmen regard attempts to convert entire peoples as an abuse. One wonders whether people who think this way have completely lost the Faith without realizing it. (And that would be a charitable assessment of such thinking.)...And how dare EWTN make itself a forum for this blasphemous disparagement of Holy Church? This, again, is the racial pride of the Pharisees, whether or not Moss recognizes it himself.

### **Analysis of Roy H. Schoeman:**

We see an even more aggressive approach to the Judaizing of Catholicism from Moss' colleague, Roy Schoeman, author of *Salvation is from the Jews: The Role of Judaism in Salvation History from Abraham to the Second Coming* (Ignatius Press, 2003). As with Moss, Schoeman is apparently sincere about his newfound faith, but the basis upon which he seems to have entered Catholicism raises grave concerns about where he and his followers are headed. For example, Schoeman regards supersessionism, i.e., the doctrine that the Old Covenant has been superseded, or made "null and void," by the New Covenant, as a blatant "error" (p. 352). He further asserts that this "error...dominated Christian theology for much of the past two thousand years." Although Schoeman tries to camouflage the object of his remonstrance by the use of the term "Christian theology," his time-marker, namely "two-thousand years," positions his critique



squarely against the Catholic Church, for Catholicism was the only Church existing for that long a time. Whatever dominant “theology” came from that period it came from the Catholic Church and it became part of the established tradition. As noted above, supersessionism was made into an infallible teaching at the Council of Florence and affirmed by Pius XII.

For the record, David Moss makes the same error as Schoeman. On the EWTN program for March 7, 2005, *The Journey Home*, Moss condemned the view that “the Church replaced the people of Israel.” According to Moss, “it was an erroneous theology that was taught for many, many centuries...The Church no longer teaches...that the people of Israel, the Jewish people, are superseded...they are an eternal people...that have an irrevocable calling.”

Unfortunately, one won't find any references to the Council of Florence or Pius XII's *Mystici Corporis* on Moss's website or in Schoeman's book. Schoeman tries to defend his view by positing that supersessionism “has...recently been definitively rejected by the Church.” Strong words, indeed. In canonical circles, “definitively” usually carries the connotation of defined dogma. Seemingly unbothered by the inherent contradiction he has created in Church protocol by pitting “two-thousand years” of Church teaching as something that is now “recently...rejected,” Schoeman proceeds to give us his proof texts in a tersely worded footnote. One would think that, for such a “definitive” rejection of two-millennia of Church teaching Schoeman would have an arsenal of dogmatic statements to prove his case. In fact he has none, and the few non-dogmatic sources he cites do not say what Schoeman wishes they would say. He cites “Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate*” as his first source for the “definitive rejection” of supersessionism, but fails to cite any statements from the document supporting his contention. For those who know *Nostra Aetate*, the reason becomes readily apparent: *Nostra Aetate* does not contain any statements that deny the two-thousand year old teaching of supersessionism, much less do so “definitively.”

In fact, the only time *Nostra Aetate* even mentions the word “covenant” is in section 4, but with words that have nothing to do with Mr. Schoeman's assertion. It states: “The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant.” If anything, this speaks of the Old Covenant as an entity of the past. So it remains to be seen what “definitive...rejection” Schoeman sees in *Nostra Aetate*. Unfortunately for Schoeman, this miscue will now make us very cautious in reading the rest of his material.

In his supporting footnote Schoeman also cites three speeches of John Paul II as support for his contention that supersessionism “has...recently been definitively rejected by the Church.” The speeches are: “remarks to Angelicum Colloquium on *Nostra Aetate* on April 19, 1985; at the Synagogue of Rome on April 13, 1986; and to the Jewish community in Mainz, Germany, on November 17, 1980.”

Since the latter two are in German and Italian, respectively, we will address the remarks in the April 19, 1985 Colloquium. This is a very brief speech of only 15 short paragraphs. One can read it on-line at the Vatican archives. In it, one will find nothing about supersessionism, let alone an attempt by the pope to “definitively reject” the traditional teaching. The speech merely expresses pastoral concerns for the Jewish people with the hope that Christians and Jews, in the spirit of Vatican II, can relate to one another on a friendly, not antagonistic, manner. The only reference

to the Old Covenant is John Paul II's quoting from the same sentence noted above containing the clause "His inexpressible mercy conclude the Ancient covenant." There is absolutely nothing saying that supersessionism has been rejected by the Church, and nor would we expect to see any, for it is a dogma of the Church.

Schoeman, apparently feeling the need to fill the void in the wake of the "definitive rejection" of supersessionism and the over-reaction of the *Reflections* document that sought to make the Old Covenant a means of salvation, offers what he calls a "third alternative." This "alternative" is very important to Schoeman, since it forms the backbone of his 392 page book. He writes:

"...as the Old Covenant was brought to fruition by the New at the first coming, so will the New Covenant be brought to fruition by the Old, by the return of the Jews at the Second Coming. Thus, the current wave of Jewish entry into the Church may be among the most important things going on today, or indeed, in the history of the world." (page 353).

Thus, Schoeman's "alternative" relationship between the Old and New Covenants seems to be a kind of theological 'reverse osmosis.' Whereas the Church has always held that the New Covenant fulfills the Old, Schoeman's alternative is that the Old Covenant will fulfill the New. According to Schoeman, the New Covenant will be fulfilled by the Old when Jews of the Old Covenant (which covenant, in his view, still survives because it hasn't been superseded) return to Christ. Schoeman's view is unprecedented. I know of no one in Christian history who has advanced such an idea, much less seen it as Catholic teaching. The conversion of Jews to the Christian faith is not something that has been put off to the future, nor are such conversions ever understood as based on the continuance of the Old Covenant. Luke 1:67-79; Hebrews 8:7-13; 10:16-18, for example, are clear that Christ came at his first coming and established the New Covenant precisely to save the Jews, and for the express purpose of fulfilling the promises to Abraham and David. Not surprisingly, the first Christians were Jews. Almost ten thousand of them, along with some Gentiles, were saved within a few weeks time (Acts 2:41; 4:4). For those Jews who have accepted His invitation, He has thus saved in the same way for the last two thousand years.

St. Paul reminds us, however, that even in the Jews' glory days, only a remnant under the Old Covenant followed God and did not bow the knee to the false god Baal (Rom 11:2-4). Consequently he says, "at this time ALSO there is a remnant chosen according to grace" (Rom 11:5), and thus we understand that a similar same small portion of Jews have been and are now being saved. Schoeman, implying that he has some inside track on the divine plan, anticipates massive conversions of Jews at Christ's return, outshining both what occurred for 2,000 years in the Old Covenant (e.g., Abraham to Christ) and the 2,000 years so far in the New Covenant (Christ to the present). As we will see later, this whole eschatological schema is based on Schoeman's personal interpretation of Old Testament prophecies, interpretations that are without precedent in the Catholic Church. It is an exegesis that is just as erroneous as the one he offered on *Nostra Aetate* and the speeches of John Paul II.

To recap, Schoeman sincerely believes his is the ultimate answer to the fulfillment of Christianity. The way Schoeman expresses himself it is almost as if God has purposely withheld

this enlightening “alternative” from the Church for the last two millennia until we have been privileged to receive it from a Jewish convert who is the sign and substance of its great insight. This is precisely why Schoeman chose “Salvation is from the Jews” as the title for his book, since it implies that Christianity is somehow dependent on the fortunes of the Jewish people; that somehow the very essence of Christianity is in doubt unless substantial numbers of Jews convert and provide it the needed divine approval and fulfillment of its own covenant. Similar to Schoeman’s previous attempts at interpretation, his commandeering of John 4:22’s “Salvation is from the Jews” is simply a case of distorting the text.

In John 4 Jesus is speaking with a Samaritan woman who is arguing that worship of God can be performed on her mountain, and not, as the Jews demand, in Jerusalem. Jesus retorts that the woman does not even know what she is worshiping, but the Jews do know who to worship. It is this distinction between the Samaritans and the Jews that causes Jesus to add: “for salvation is from the Jews,” which obviously means that the woman and her people do not have the means of salvation. If she wants to worship God the way God presently demands she will have to come to Jerusalem, for that was the requirement of the Old Covenant. Jesus’ answer, of course, is the appropriate response on the Old Covenant side of the cross. With rare exceptions, those who wanted a formal and salvific relationship with God were required to obtain it through the Jews who were in possession of the divine oracles (Rom 3:1-2). But that would not be the case once Jesus died on the cross. It is the Church that provides salvation after the cross, not the Jews (cf., Mt 16:18-19; Rm 6:1-4). After the cross, the Jews become a part of the Church, not vice-versa (1Co 12:13). Jesus explains how this change will occur as He tells the woman: “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth.” According to St. Paul, worship by the Spirit is precisely what the New Testament Church brought to mankind in full flower (cf., Rom 7:6; 8:1-4).

These truths, of course, make the title of Schoeman’s book at best a misappropriated anachronism. In fact, if we really wanted to get technical, we could make the claim that “Salvation is from the Gentiles,” since St. Paul’s whole argument against the Judaizers was that Abraham received his justification and the divine promises while he was an *uncircumcised Gentile!* (cf., Roman 4:10; Gal 3:6-8). But we know that advancing Gentile or Jewish causes is not what Christianity is all about, and there is no reason why Schoeman should be seeking for some kind of spirito-ethnic distinctions in regards to salvation in light of the fact that the New Covenant teaches that “there is no longer Jew nor Greek...for we are all one in Christ Jesus.”

There is much more to discuss. The crux of Schoeman’s book begins at chapter eight, titled: “The Jews and the Second Coming.” Almost identical to what is contained in the Protestant *Scofield Reference Bible*, Schoeman slants passages that have been traditionally interpreted as referring either to historic Israel or the Church as now in the exclusive category of prophecies concerning the present political state of modern-day Israel just prior to the Second Coming of Christ. In essence, Schoeman’s exegesis of Scripture is one gigantic paradigm shift. For example, Schoeman writes:

“Jerusalem will return again to Jewish hands shortly before the Second Coming (Luke 21:24): ‘Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.’ (A description of the Second Coming then follows in

verses 25-28). Jerusalem was in the hands of the Gentiles continuously from the fall of the Jewish nation in A.D. 70 until it was recaptured by the modern State of Israel in the 1967 war.” (p. 306).

Here Schoeman shows himself to be a true Zionist. Making no distinction between biblical prophecy and the political/military victories of modern-day agnostic Israeli leaders, Schoeman advances the argument that the Jewish occupation of Israel is guaranteed by divine right. We know this is his intent since on the next page he uses Isaiah 66:5-8 as the singular divine prophecy predicting a meteoric rise of modern Israel: “The Jewish nation will be reborn in a single day.” He adds the following commentary:

“This [Is 66:5-8] was quite literally fulfilled when on May 14, 1948, the modern State of Israel was born in a single day following the passage of UN Resolution 181 partitioning “Palestine” into the Arab State of Jordan and the Jewish State of Israel.” (p. 307).

In reality, this is little more than a special pleading of Scripture. Isaiah gives not the slightest indication he had in mind a single day in the distant future in which godless political forces (i.e., the United Nations) bring about a geographical restoration to an anti-Christian people (the Jews) which, as the historical records show, was led by the brutal incursions under David Ben Gurion and Menachem Begin by bloody campaigns of human slaughter against native Palestinians. Schoeman’s political imposition on Scripture shows that his Catholicism is defined by Zionism and its successes, not by traditional Catholic teaching and sound exegesis of Scripture. Nowhere has the Church taught this type of newspaper/political exegesis of the Old Testament. In fact, the Church has traditionally understood the whole of Isaiah 66 as being a prophecy of the first coming of Christ.

For example, Isaiah 66:7 (“Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she was delivered of a son”) is understood as an allusion to Christ’s birth and the establishment of the New Testament Church, and it is very similar to the language of Apocalypse 12:2,5 (“...she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery...she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron”). Isaiah 66:8 (“Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her sons”), using the same imagery of the travailing woman in labor, refers to the Apostles and the early Christians coming from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria to preach the Christian Gospel (Acts 1:8). In one day, 3,000 souls were baptized and saved at Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2:37-42). Appropriately, Isaiah 66:10-13 says:

“Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her; 11 that you may suck and be satisfied with her consoling breasts; that you may drink deeply with delight from the abundance of her glory.” 12 For thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will extend prosperity to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall suck, you shall be carried upon her hip, and dandled upon her knees. 13 As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall

be comforted in Jerusalem. 14 You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your bones shall flourish like the grass; and it shall be known that the hand of the LORD is with his servants, and his indignation is against his enemies.

The above description was precisely what happened at Pentecost, as Jews and Gentiles from 15 different nations gathered in Jerusalem to hear the Christian Gospel (Acts 2:1-15). Collaboration from other Old Testament prophecies are noted as Peter quotes from the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16-21). The enemies of the Gospel were set aside, even as Zechariah prophesied of Christ's birth in Luke 1:71: "Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us." The same is prophesied in Isaiah 66:20-21:

20 And they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their cereal offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD.  
21 And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.

Again, it was in Jerusalem that the Christian Church had its beginning, and nations from all around gathered to her, and from them God chose a new priesthood, ordained under the sacrament of Holy Orders.

But what does Schoeman do with Isaiah 66:9-14? He sees only a Zionist political movement, stating: "The new Jewish state shall be extremely prosperous (Isaiah 66:9-14)." Essentially, Schoeman is confiscating passages of Scripture that have heretofore been applied to the Church and is now applying them to Zionist Jews, and all without the slightest concern that he is trespassing on ground that even angels would fear to tread.

Another special pleading in Schoeman's interpretation of Scripture is noted in his commentary on Zechariah 13:8-9, in which the prophet states...

"...two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive. And I will put this third into the fire and refine them...They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

Schoeman interprets this as follows: "In fact, during the Holocaust almost exactly two-thirds of Europe's Jews perished (estimates vary between 60% and 72%)" (p. 307). Not only does Schoeman miss the contextual and historical meaning of the passage, he doesn't even satisfy the desires of modern day Jews. If one examines the context, Zechariah is speaking of God's judgment against the false prophets of Israel. Hence, if "two thirds" of Jews are cut off and perish, it means that God has judged them as sinners who will perish under His wrath. Is this the picture Schoeman wishes to create – a Holocaust planned by God Himself? If so, then Schoeman is required to follow it to its logical conclusion and say that the Holocaust was a righteous judgment from God upon the Jews for their sins, for the context of Zechariah's passage would demand such a consequence. Schoeman's idiosyncratic exegesis inadvertently makes Hitler to be an instrument doing God's bidding against the Jewish people. For his own sake, Schoeman

should take another look at this passage, otherwise Jews of today should be casting their aspersions on him.

Of course, Schoeman can save himself by simply recognizing that Zechariah is not talking about the Jewish Holocaust of World War II. Zechariah 13, like Isaiah 66, is speaking about the first coming of Christ. In fact, the verse immediately prior to the passage that Schoeman quoted (Zechariah 13:7) prophecies the capture of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, and is quoted by both Matthew (26:31) and Mark (14:27) – (“for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered’”). Schoeman skipped right over these references since he was so intent on making the passage a prophecy of Zionism. It is only Christians who will answer: “The Lord is my God,” something the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust haven’t done for the last 60 years, and show no signs of rectifying. Instead, as the evidence plainly shows, they have designs on restoring Judaism through Temple worship in Jerusalem, as we will see later.

We can say the same for Schoeman’s interpretation of Ezekiel 36:22-28; Jeremiah 16:14-15; Zechariah 12:1-3; Joel 3:2 and Apocalypse 16:16 cited on pages 307-309 of his book. His commentaries contain the same erroneous exegesis and special pleadings for the modern state of Israel, but they are simply a self-aggrandizing attempt to proof-text his way through Scripture, all the while oblivious to the context, the New Testament quotations of Old Testament prophecies, and the traditional interpretation given by the Catholic Church’s historical exegetes. It is the Church who is the “new Israel,” not modern day Jews. As Vatican II states:

Israel according to the flesh, which wandered as an exile in the desert, was already called the Church of God. So likewise the New Israel which while living in this present age goes in search of a future and abiding city is called the Church of Christ. (*Lumen Gentium*: On the People of God, II, 9).

Or as *Ad Gentes* puts it: “Thus the Apostles were the seeds of the New Israel and the beginning of the sacred hierarchy” (1, 5). As Isaiah 66:20-21 indicates, the new Israel has its own priests chosen by God for His service, and John Paul II reiterated this truth:

...an unceasing echo of the words concerning Israel, whom the Lord "has chosen as his own possession." For in every consecrated person the Israel of the new and eternal covenant is chosen. The whole messianic people, the entire Church, is chosen in every person whom the Lord selects from the midst of this people. (*Redemptionis Donum*, III, 8).

Or as St. Athanasius put it:

“So the Jews are trifling, and the time in question, which they refer to the future, is actually come. For when did prophet and vision cease from Israel, save when Christ came, the Holy of Holies? For it is a sign, and an important proof, of the coming of the Word of God, that Jerusalem no longer stands, nor is any prophet raised up nor vision revealed to them, and that very naturally. For when He that was signified was come, what need was there any longer of any to signify Him? When the truth was there, what need any more of the shadow? For this was the

reason of their prophesying at all, namely, till the true Righteousness should come, and He that was to ransom the sins of all. And this was why Jerusalem stood till then, namely, that there they might be exercised in the types as a preparation for the reality” (*Treatise on the Incarnation*, 40).

Schoeman is so entrenched in his Zionist interpretations of Scripture that he feels compelled to issue the same kind of ‘anti-semitic’ warning against those who don’t adopt his view as the *New Scofield Reference Bible* added to its 1967 edition. Schoeman, in reference to Zechariah 12:3, writes:

“Most would agree that Jerusalem, as the focal point of tensions in the Middle East, has become a ‘heavy stone for all the peoples,’ and certainly all who have ‘come together against it’ since 1948 have ‘grievously hurt themselves.’”(p. 311).

With these kinds of interpretations, Schoeman will certainly find a home in the Neo-con/Evangelical/Zionist alliance, for they are all preaching the same fare. Although there is virtually no sign that the Israeli people are coming to their spiritual senses even long enough to stop the incursions into occupied territory, still, the drumbeat that this is all by divine prophecy continues.

Schoeman then adds: “But Israel will be miraculously militarily strong and able to successfully defend itself (Zechariah 12:6-9)” (p. 310). Unfortunately for Schoeman, he is caught, once again, ignoring the time-clues embedded into the text. While he is singing the praises of the Israeli military, Zechariah is pleading the case for the first coming of Christ, for in the very next verse, Zech 12:10, he speaks about those who “will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him.” This passage is quoted verbatim in John 19:37 for the express purpose of fulfilling Zechariah’s prophecy of Jesus hanging upon the cross. How could Schoeman miss this? Perhaps it is easy when one is blinded by a Zionist agenda, for Scripture then becomes the wax nose to be molded to one’s political designs. Even the passage from Augustine that Schoeman later attempts to bring to his defense on another topic, says: “‘They shall look upon me whom they pierced.’ And by this word the crucifixion of Christ is certainly more plainly indicated” (*City of God*, Bk 20, Ch 30). Incredulously, on the very next page (p. 311) Schoeman quotes from Zechariah 12:10 apparently oblivious to the fact that the Gospel of John applies it to the first coming of Christ (Jn 19:37). Schoeman applies it instead to Jews during the “Second Coming” as he states: “Zechariah, too, foretold the conversion of the Jews when he said that they would weep bitterly over one ‘they have pierced’ (Zechariah 12:10).”

Schoeman then tries to support his major thesis (i.e., that the New Covenant is fulfilled by the Old Covenant Jews at the Second Coming of Christ) by quoting from the Catholic Catechism, paragraph 674. This paragraph is often used for Zionist causes, but in reality, the Catechism merely ties together a string of quotes from Romans 11, but it doesn’t offer any specific exegesis or commentary as to how these quotes will be fulfilled. Schoeman just assumes they apply to some mass of Jews in the future. Yet he assures us that

“This has been the understanding ever since the Church Fathers, for instance, St. Augustine: ‘In connection with the last judgment, therefore, we who believe can

be sure of the following truths...the Jews will believe' (City of God, Bk 20, ch 30).

It is rather interesting to see Schoeman appeal to "the Church Fathers" when he sees that it might be to his advantage. Previous to this, Schoeman had shunned the "two thousand years" of Church teaching on supersessionism, the very doctrine taught by the Fathers of the Church. Moreover, the Church Fathers, especially Augustine, followed closely with St. Paul's harsh words to the unbelieving Jews of his day. So strong were the words of the Fathers many of today's modernists don't hesitate to categorize the whole patristic and medieval eras as "anti-semitic."

Regarding the Fathers and the conversion of the Jews, the following points about their beliefs need to be made:

- (a) while there is evidence that a few Fathers anticipated a significant conversion of Jews, none of these Fathers foresaw a physical restoration of the nation state of Israel;
- (b) none of the Fathers specify that the future spiritual conversion of Jews is *en masse*;
- (c) all of the Fathers interpreted the Old Testament prophecies about Israel as applicable exclusively to the Church, the new Israel; while those who anticipated a future conversion of Jews base it on one passage, Romans 11:25-26, although there never has been an official Catholic interpretation of that passage, and certainly no consensus in patristic or medieval thought;
- (d) of the over one hundred Fathers of note in the patristic era, only a little over half a dozen speak about an anticipated conversion of Jews, and half of them apply it exclusively to the salvation of a remnant during the Church age; another portion see both a remnant saved in the Church age and a more significant portion in the distant future;
- (e) all of the Fathers emphasized the obstinate disbelief of the Jews and a hardness put upon them by God;
- (f) all of the Fathers held to the fact that the Old Covenant is formally and legally null and void and that the New Covenant has totally superseded the Old, except that the New often appeals for precedent to the moral, civil and religious principles of the Old.

Consequently, it would be quite presumptuous to claim, as Schoeman does, that the Church Fathers held a consensus on the future conversion of the Jews. Even the view Schoeman cites from Augustine in *The City of God* is modified in other places. In Augustine's commentary on Romans 11:26-27, for example, he detracts from the idea that the passage speaks only of Jewish believers, opting for the concept that "all Israel" refers to both Jews and Gentiles saved throughout the New Testament period and thus creating a "truer Israel" (Letters 149: FC 20:253). Theodoret takes the same view: "All Israel means all those who believe, whether they are Jews, who have a natural relationship to Israel, or Gentiles, who are related to Israel by faith" (Comm. on Romans, Migne 82, col. 180). Pelagius says Romans 11:26-27 does not apply to the future, since it would leave Jews prior as a damned people: "Some interpreters regard all these events as future. To them one must reply...what will become of those who are now perishing as unbelievers" (Comm. on Romans, PCR 12930). Origin indicates that he does not know what "all Israel" means: "What all Israel means or what the fullness of the Gentiles will be only God knows..." (Commentary on Romans, 4:304). Only three Fathers hold out for a future and distinct conversion of Jews: Jerome: "...because when the Jews receive the faith at the end of the world,



they will find themselves in dazzling light, as if Our Lord were returning to them from Egypt” (Comm. on Matthew, Ch 2) and Cyril of Alexandria: “Yes, one day, after the conversion of the Gentiles, Israel will be converted, and the Jews will be astonished at the treasure they will find in Christ” (Comm. on Genesis, Bk 5); Chrysostom: “‘When the fulness of the Gentiles,’ he says, ‘shall have come in, then shall all Israel be saved,’ at the time of his second coming, and the end of the world” (Homily on Romans, xix, 7, 11). As opposed to Schoeman’s view, none of the Fathers specify or imply that a spiritual movement among the Jews includes a national and physical restoration of Israel in the land of Palestine, nor was it taught by any medieval theologian, pope or saint. Moreover, neither Jerome, Cyril or Chrysostom give a thorough exegesis of the passages in question (Romans 11:25-26). In fact, Chrysostom incorrectly turns the Greek “houtos” in Romans 11:26 from its function as an adverb modifying *how* Israel will be saved into a future time element for the salvation (e.g., “then shall all Israel be saved,” when the Greek actually reads “in this way all Israel shall be saved”).

As for the popes, the only one of mention that anticipates a future conversion of the Jews is Gregory the Great (*Moralia in Job*, X, 20), but in contrast to Gregory, Pope Innocent III (d. 1216) speaks of “...the remnants of which then will finally be saved (Romans 9:3-24), since in those days Judah will be saved (Jeremiah 33:6-26) and Israel will dwell in mutual trust...” (Letter to the Kings of France and Germany); and in a similar vein Martin V (d. 1431) says: “...and a remnant of them will one day be saved” (Declaration on the Protection of the Jews, A.D. 1419). At best, then, the evidence from tradition is divided and uncertain. The reason for this is that the only passage that speaks to this question is the somewhat cryptic Romans 11:25-26.

Not only were the Fathers divided on the prospects for Jewish conversions, even the popular idea that Elijah was to come back in the future to lead the Jews to the faith was neither in consensus nor had a reliable exegetical pedigree. This issue is important, since if Romans 11:25-26 is the only passage teaching a future conversion of Jews, then the “Deliverer” specified in Romans 11:26 should be someone other than Christ, since at Christ’s Second Coming it will be at the end of the world and the offer of salvation will no longer be available. Hence, prior to the return of Christ, some of the Fathers anticipated the return of Elijah to preach to the Jews, although there was much disagreement among them. The positing of Elijah as the “Deliverer” is suggested in the writings of Chrysostom, Augustine and Theodoret, through John Damascene and Venerable Bede, but these Fathers arrived at their view by Augustine’s questionable interpretation of Malachi 4:5 based on the Greek Septuagint which indicated a return of “Elijah the Tishbite.” The appearance of the specific locale “Tishbite” compelled Augustine to conclude that the *real* Elijah would return in the distant future. The problem here is that the Hebrew of Malachi 4:5, which was the inspired language of the Old Testament, not Greek, contains only “Elijah the prophet,” a prophecy Jesus said was already fulfilled figuratively by John the Baptist (cf., Mt 17:11-12). Consequently, Augustine could easily have been misled. Thus, without a proper identity to the “Deliverer” of Romans 11:26, interpretations that apply it to the future are at best questionable. Accordingly, Ludwig Ott says that a return of the real Elijah in the future is a concept “without sufficient foundation” and that neither Malachi nor Jesus made such a claim. Ott also gives no affirmation to a universal conversion of Jews as being a Church teaching (*Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 486).

Schoeman's next claim is that Hosea 3:5 is a prophecy concerning a distinctive conversion of Jews near the Second Coming of Christ. The passage reads:

Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

The obvious question is: what in the passage compels Schoeman to view this as applicable only to the Second Coming of Christ? If it is the phrase "latter days," this is nothing but the common Hebrew words 'acharith yom' that generically refers to the end of a period of days (e.g., "last days"), but it is not a specific reference to the end of time or the Second Coming. In fact, Hosea 3:5 is one of the passages Church tradition has understood as fulfilled in the first coming of Christ, but Schoeman is trying to confiscate it for Zionism. The Church had every reason to see it as applying to Christ's first coming, since the salient sign of its fulfillment is recorded almost verbatim in Acts 2:17 at Pentecost ("And in the *last days* it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh") with the operative words being "last days." Likewise, Acts 15:17-18 says that the New Covenant Church is to be understood as the "rebuilding of the tabernacle of David" (see also Ezekiel 34:23-24). In addition, Hosea 1:10 and 2:23 are quoted in Romans 9:25-26 as a fulfillment in the Church age of the restoration of Israel, only now it is an Israel with Gentiles as well as Jews. Suffice it to say, there is nothing in the context of Hosea 3:5 which even remotely points to the Second Coming of Christ and an exclusive conversion of Jews.

Schoeman then cites Mt 23:37-39 as more proof of "the conversion of the Jews prior to the Second Coming":

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Schoeman comments as follows: "Here Jesus is saying that he will not be seen again (i.e., the Second Coming will not occur) until 'you' (the Jews) say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord' (i.e., acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah)."

Here Schoeman has placed the cart before the horse. The verse is not saying that Jesus cannot return until the Jews acknowledge him. The phrase "until you say" is a Greek aorist subjunctive, which is merely putting a condition on whether the "forsaken and desolate" state of Jerusalem can be stopped. The singular event that can cease the desolation is when Jerusalem says the required words ("blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"), but because the grammar is constructed as a conditional sentence, there is no guarantee that Jerusalem will, indeed, respond with the appropriate words. In other words, by using the subjunctive mood, the verse is not saying that the Jews *will*, without doubt, say the required words but only that they won't see Christ unless they do so. This is the same kind of conditional sentence St. Paul utilized in Romans 11:23 when speaking of potential Jewish conversions: "And they also, *if they do not persist in their unbelief*, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again." Belief

is never guaranteed. It is an act of the free will of man, and according to St. Paul, no one can promise that the Jews will make the right decision.

Schoeman then enters into a most crucial phase of his Zionistic interpretations – those dealing with the actual events leading up to the Second Coming. He writes:

“Related to the prophecies about the Antichrist and the final war is the belief that prior to the Second Coming, the Temple in Jerusalem will be built. This is based on an interpretation of Daniel 9-12, in which Daniel 9 refers to the Second Coming of Christ.”

He then begins his application:

“Although the prophecies of Daniel are at times associated with other events, too, since Jesus explicitly applies them to the Second Coming, that must be at least one of their intended fulfillments. The prophecies mention the sacrifice ceasing and the temple being profaned; the Church Fathers [interpret] this in a spiritual sense, to refer to a cessation of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. But, it is conceivable that it might also have a literal fulfillment, if the Temple in Jerusalem should be rebuilt. And this is now within the realm of possibility. In 1967, for the first time in almost two thousand years, Jews regained possession of the Temple Mount, and there are now organizations in Israel attempting to rebuild the Temple. Should it be rebuilt on the Temple Mount, also claimed by Islam as a holy site, it is not hard to envision how that in itself could precipitate the global war known as ‘Armageddon.’”

“As stated earlier, the purpose of this discussion is not to ‘prove’ that the Second Coming is near. Many of the proposed interpretations of the prophecies are speculative. Yet cumulatively they suggest that the Second Coming takes place at a time when the Jewish people have returned to Israel and formed a Jewish nation. If this is, in fact, a precondition for the return of Christ, the concerted efforts of the past century to eliminate the Jews and, failing that, to destroy the nascent State of Israel, well might be part of a diabolical attempt to prevent the Second Coming.”

Suffice it to say, these are some of the most troubling paragraphs in Schoeman’s book. It is certainly true that Jesus speaks about the abomination of desolation, and it is certainly within the realm of prophetic fulfillment that the abomination telescopes into the events near the end of time. What is not in the realm of possibility, however, is that a future Temple built in Jerusalem by modern day Jews would be a fulfillment that comes about due to a divine blessing on the Jews. Conversely, Schoeman believes that this new Temple will not only be a fulfillment of divine favor, but his recalling that Daniel’s “prophecies mention the sacrifice ceasing and the temple being profaned,” coupled with Schoeman’s rejection of the interpretation of the Church Fathers that the sacrifice which ceases refers to a termination of the Catholic Mass, shows that Schoeman fully anticipates a return of Old Covenant cultic sacrifices as a primary sign of divine blessing upon the Jews. Then, by a strange twist on predictive prophecy never before seen,

Schoeman posits that the “abomination” spoken of by Daniel occurs when these cultic sacrifices are interrupted by the Antichrist. In other words, because the re-institution of Temple worship, as it was practiced in the Old Testament, is, according to Schoeman, from divine favor upon the Jews, anyone who would attempt to stop it is of the Antichrist! Suffice it to say, this is the ultimate Judaizing of the Catholic Church – Temple worship under the auspices of Catholicism.

In the process, Schoeman, by his own admission, has eliminated the Church as the fulcrum of prophetic prophecy, for it is Israel and its Temple worship that are now the principle focus of the divine plan. That these Temple sacrifices necessitate the formal return of Judaism (or perhaps some type of Judaistic-Catholic hybrid) as the pinnacle of divine favor doesn’t seem to bother Schoeman in the least. In reality, Schoeman’s attempt to resurrect Old Covenant sacrifices and theocratic worship is one of the most audacious pieces of private interpretation ever seen in the history of Christianity. It is in direct contradiction to Scripture (Hebrews 7:18; 8:7, 13; 10:9; 2 Cor 3:6-14; Gal 3:1-12; 5:1-4), Tradition (Fathers and Medievals teaching on supersessionism) and the Magisterium (Council of Florence, Pius XII’s *Mystici Corporis*, 29-30).

The error started, of course, when Schoeman decided to reject the Church’s teaching on supersessionism and replace it with his “third alternative,” which, if the reader recalls, was the assertion that the New Covenant will be fulfilled by a reintroduction of the Old Covenant and a mass conversion of Jews. We now know what Schoeman envisions as the drawing card for the reintroduction of the Old Covenant – the return of Judaistic cultic sacrifices in a newly built Temple in Jerusalem. So enamored is Schoeman with his new interpretation he suggests that any attempt to thwart the existence of the “nascent State of Israel” is nothing less than a “diabolical attempt to prevent the Second Coming.” This, of course, is the logical conclusion of an interpretation of Scripture that is based on pure Zionism from start to finish.

Unfortunately for Schoeman, the reality is quite different. It can safely be said that, based on the teachings of Catholic dogma cited above, any attempt of the Jews to rebuild the Temple and return the Judaistic religion and its cadre of Old Covenant sacrifices to Jerusalem as a divinely favored fulfillment of predictive prophecy, can be understood, in itself, as an “abomination of desolation.” Yes, it will certainly be a fulfillment of prophecy, yet not one of divine favor but one of divine judgment; a fulfillment predicted by St. Paul in which demonic forces create an abode for “the man of sin...who takes his seat in the Temple of God, showing himself to be God...the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan...” (2 Thess 2:3,4,9). Ironically, as per Schoeman, the rebuilding of the Temple will certainly usher in the return of Christ, but a return in absolute judgment upon those who built it, for, ever since God tore the Temple curtain (Mt 27:51), the Temple is nothing more than a symbol of the Jews’ perennial rejection of Christ and Christianity.

These things are no surprise to Catholics who know their Scripture and Tradition. As the 1911 Catholic Encyclopedia spoke of the Antichrist coming from the Jews, so the 1936 Catholic Encyclopedia spoke of a Temple being built for him:

“Many of the Fathers believe that Antichrist will be of Jewish extraction, of the tribe of Dan, will be circumcised, will rebuild Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple, in which he will set himself up as God. Likewise, he is to begin his work of

seduction among the Jews who will accept him as the Messiah. Thus St. Irenaeus (*Adversus Haereses*, v. 30, PG VII, 1206) says of Antichrist: ‘Jeremias does not merely point out his sudden coming, but he even indicates the tribe from which he shall come, where he says: We shall hear the voice of his swift horses from Dan; he shall come and devour the earth’ [Jr 8:16].

Not only do the Fathers have much to say on these eventualities, the medievals were just as informed. Just two examples will suffice. St. Anselm in his *Details Concerning the Antichrist*, writes:

“Towards the end of the world Antichrist will draw the hearts of the Jews to him by his great generosity and sympathetic attitude so much so that they will praise him as a demi-god;”....“For, the Temple which Solomon built having been destroyed, in its place he [Antichrist] shall restore it, he shall circumcise himself, and he shall give forth the lie that he is the son of the omnipotent God.”

St. Bridget of Sweden writes in her *Life and Revelations*:

“Before Antichrist come, the portals of the Faith will be opened to great numbers of pagans....Just as children of God are born of a spiritual marriage, so will Antichrist spring from an accursed woman who will pretend to lead a spiritual life, and from an accursed man, through whose agency, and with God’s permission, the devil will accomplish his ends.”

Interestingly enough, there was another time in history when the Jews attempted to rebuild the Temple, but it met with total disaster, apparently directed by God Himself. In the fourth century, the man now known as Julian the Apostate conspired with various Jews to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The whole plot is recorded in the writings of the Fathers, namely, John Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzus and Cyril of Jerusalem, with additional material from the historians Eusebius, Socrates Scholasticus and Ammianus Marcellus (Julian’s biographer). Julian’s argument to Chrysostom was simple: if he and the Jews should succeed in building the Temple, then the Jews would be vindicated and Christianity would be proven false. Julian and the Jews proceeded, first by removing the centuries old refuse covering the foundation. As soon as this was completed, cataclysmic events began to occur. Eusebius writes:

“...there arose a huge storm, the earth shook, and huge balls of fire burst forth from the ground and continued to do so through the next day. Instruments melted, workers were burnt to death, strange crosses appeared on clothes and bodies, a luminous cross shone in the sky, and the enterprise had to be abandoned.”  
(*Demonstratio evangelica*)

St. John Chrysostom writes a similar account: “...suddenly fire leaped forth from the foundations and completely consumed not only a great number of the workmen but even the stones piled up there to support the structure” (*Adversus Judaeos*). Gregory adds: “...a sudden whirlwind and the convulsion of the earth...as if by an invisible hand...flames that burst forth...burnt some of them

and destroyed others.” Socrates adds that all the accounts are accurate and credible. Suffice it to say, the Temple was never built. Christianity was vindicated and Judaism was vitiated.

### **Salvation is from the Jews, Chapter 9**

Schoeman then enters into chapter nine of his book titled “The Return of the Jews.” Here Schoeman gives us his treatment of Romans 11. He begins his analysis with a puzzling comparison. He writes:

“It might seem odd to refer to the entry of Jews into the Catholic Church as ‘the return of the Jews.’ It is, however, the natural image for one who see the Catholic Church as simply the continuation (and fulfillment) of Judaism after the first coming of Jesus, the Jewish Messiah. In such a case, it is the Jews who accepted Him and became the first Christians who stayed within the core of Judaism, while those who rejected Him left the mainstream, the fullness of the truth of the religion.” (p. 317).

Schoeman’s reference to “the Catholic Church as simply the continuation...of Judaism” and the assertion that “the first Christians...stayed within the core of Judaism” is an attempt to create a symbiotic relationship between Christianity and Judaism that is sanctioned neither by Scripture nor Tradition. Scripture mentions “Judaism” (Greek: “Ioudaism”) in several places, but none of them are supportive or flattering (e.g., Gal 1:13-14; 2:14; Acts 13:43). In no instance does the New Testament speak of Judaism as something that Jewish converts were to consider as the “core” of their newfound Christian faith and certainly nothing concerning the Church being the “continuation of Judaism.” If anything, the New Testament is consistently promoting a formidable break with Judaism. As we noted earlier, it was the “Judaizers” (i.e., those Jews who insisted on mixing Christianity with the cultic observances of Judaism) who were St. Paul’s most exasperating opponents. The whole book of Galatians speaks to the problem, and it spills over into St. Paul’s other epistles as well (e.g., Philippians, Colossians, Titus, Timothy, Hebrews, et al).

On the other hand, if Schoeman were to say that the Old Covenant was *fulfilled* in the New Covenant, there would be no conflict with Scripture or Tradition. The New Covenant both fulfills the prophecies in the Old Covenant and continually extracts the moral, civil and religious principles embedded in the Old Covenant. It was the Church who decided what, if any, principles of the Old were to be incorporated into the New (cf., Romans 13:8-13; 1Cor 9:9-11; NB: the conspicuous absence of the seventh-day Sabbath from the Ten Commandments). But this is not “Judaism,” per se. Judaism is the term we normally assign to Jews who still do not see the Old Covenant as being fulfilled by the New, and who insist that the Old Covenant still has an independent viability, which is precisely why Scripture refers to Judaism in a negative light. Schoeman’s resurrection of the term “Judaism” is thus misplaced. Moreover, considering Schoeman’s desire to see Temple worship re-instituted in the “nascent State of Israel,” my suspicion is that his utilizing of the word “Judaism” is an attempt to legitimize the modern practice of the ancient religion as something permissible within the bounds of Christianity.

After quoting Romans 11:2-9, Schoeman then implies that the present blindness of the Jewish people is caused exclusively by God. He writes:

“Here St. Paul states that God Himself ‘darkened’ the eyes of the Jews, that they might not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, even down to the present time...It was God who ‘hardened’ them, ‘darkened’ their eyes. There is a mystery here, part of the ‘mystery of iniquity,’ just as there is a mystery to God ‘hardening’ Pharaoh’s heart during the Exodus (Exodus 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:8), yet Paul clearly states that in some mysterious way, it was part of God’s Providence that some Jews should remain unable to recognize Jesus as the Messiah.”

Schoeman’s attempt here, I believe, is to put the onus on God for the present disbelief of the Jews, for he makes no mention concerning the part the Jews themselves have contributed to their own state of unbelief. In fact, throughout this section Schoeman levies no blame against the Jews for their present condition. It almost seems as if Schoeman is trying to make the Jews victims of a grand divine plot bent on using them as spiritual pawns. Perhaps uncomfortable with this conclusion, Schoeman then resorts to an alternate theodicy, one that deflects from putting the blame directly on God and instead attributes the cause of Jewish blindness to the “mysteries” about God we will never understand. The dependence on “mystery” will later work well with Schoeman’s desire to see a conversion of Jews, since what God arbitrarily or “mysteriously” casts upon them can just as well be removed on the same basis.

Suffice it to say, Schoeman’s theodicy is quite off the mark. If one reads Scripture honestly, it is no “mystery” why the Jews were consistently in almost total unbelief. It is quite clear that the Jews chose their state of unbelief because, as St. Stephen testified in Acts 7:51: “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.” Stephen, of course, is merely echoing page after page of Jewish unbelief recorded in the Old Testament that even the patience of God could not withstand, which is the reason why He finally cut them off and sent the Romans to destroy Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Moreover, if Schoeman had looked a little more closely at the very passages he cited to support his theodicy of “mystery” he would have seen that God’s hardening of man only comes after man has already hardened his own heart. God merely enforces the hardening as a punishment for man’s decision to harden his own heart. This is noted in the verses just prior to the one Schoeman mentioned. Exodus 9:34 states: “But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.” This tells us that Pharaoh initiated the hardening of his own heart, and the text calls his decision a “sin.” God, of course, cannot sin, and therefore He cannot be implicated in causing Pharaoh’s initial hardening. God can only act upon the sin that Pharaoh commits.

Schoeman keeps on the same track a few pages later. He writes:

“But since the original branches ‘were broken off so that [the Gentiles] might be grafted in,’ the implication is that they were intentionally broken off by God. These branches are of course the Jews who reject Jesus, and who are now outside

the Church. So again in this verse Paul suggests that the failure of some, or most, of the Jews to accept Jesus was part of God's plan."

Here again, with no indication he is thinking otherwise, Schoeman implies that Jewish unbelief was not due to the obstinacy of the Jews, but that it was somehow "God's plan" that they remain in unbelief because God needed to save the Gentiles. We can, of course, grant anyone the prerogative to say that "all that transpires is 'God's plan,'" since nothing escapes His divine purview before it actually happens. But Schoeman appears to be using the phrase "God's plan" only in the *a-priori* sense, not the *a-posteriori* sense. That is, Schoeman intimates that God "mysteriously" put the Jews in unbelief by His own accord, not because He was reacting to the unbelief the Jews demonstrated to Him initially. Acts 13:46 says quite the opposite: "And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, 'It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.'" If Schoeman is not thinking thus, he certainly hasn't made it clear in his book.

Continuing his thesis that the New Covenant finds its fulfillment in the a revival of Old Covenant Jews near the end of time, Schoeman writes:

"Again, the statement that the unbelief of the Jews was an integral part of God's plan to enable the Gentiles to be saved, but that when the 'full number' of the Gentiles has come in – presumably at the end of this age of salvation history, at the 'end of time' – the 'hardening' resulting in the Jews' unbelief will be removed and 'all Israel will be saved.'" (p. 322).

Here again we see Schoeman's dependence on a kind of 'push-button' salvation – God alone caused the hardness and, when the time is right in His "plan," God will turn the lever and the hardness will automatically be removed, with no mention of the responsibility of the Jews themselves to come to a personal belief in God by their own free will. Not only is this theology erroneous, it attempts to by-pass the clear conditional language of Romans 11:23: "the others, *if they do not persist in their unbelief*, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again." In other words, Paul's teaching is: (a) God will graft them back in IF the Jews turn from their unbelief; not (b) God will inevitably remove the hardness from the Jews and they will believe and be grafted back in. There is nothing inevitable or automatic about Jews coming to Christ, otherwise, St. Paul is contradicting what he said in Romans 11:23 and every other statement he makes about salvation in the New Testament.

### **Interpreting Romans 11:25-27:**

In Romans 11:26-27, St. Paul quotes from Isaiah 59:20. Since the prophecy was made in the past, then its fulfillment can come at any time after the prophecy was declared. Examining the context of Isaiah 59, there is nothing said concerning a future glory for national Israel or a future repossession of Palestine. The whole context, beginning at 59:1 and up to 59:19 contains God's complaint against Israel for her many and continual sins; and a stipulation that her present punishment is due to those very sins. It is because of those sins that God promises to send "The Deliverer" (Hebrew: gadol) in hopes that Israel will repent.



When did God send the Deliverer to offer forgiveness for sins? According to the New Testament, the Deliverer came 2,000 years ago; and specifically to save Israel from their sins. This is no more clearly presented to us than in Luke 1:67-79, a speech by one of the leading Jews of the day, Zachariah. There he stated that in Christ's coming as a babe in Bethlehem "the Lord God of Israel has visited and redeemed his people" (Lk 1:67), so that "we should be saved from our enemies" (1:71), as a fulfillment "to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father, Abraham" (1:72-73) and "to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins" (1:77).

This requires us to understand that Romans 11:26-27 is referring to the first coming of Christ, not the second. Consequently, it means that Romans 11:25 must be connected to the first coming, not the second. If one were to attempt to disprove this, one must show how Isaiah 59, or any other Scripture, specifies that the coming of the "Deliverer" to establish a "covenant" so that he can "take away their sins" refers to the second coming of Christ. This, of course, will be an impossible task, since the second coming and the events just prior to it are not concerned with making "covenants" and "forgiving sins" but about judgment upon sins (2 Thess 2:1-11; Apoc 20:7-15). Covenants concerning the forgiveness of sins are the exclusive domain of Christ's first coming, as Hebrews and other passages make very clear (Hebrews 8:1-13; 10:16-18; 12:24; 1Cor 11:25; 2Cor 3:14).

Consequently, Romans 11:25 must be interpreted within those parameters, but this is an easy task once one understands the context St. Paul sets up in Romans 11:1-4. As we noted earlier, the logical question one would ask after the Temple curtain was miraculously torn in two at the death of Christ (Mt 27:51) and the destruction of the Jews and Jerusalem in 70 A.D. is: Do the Jews have any future with God at all? Has He judged them so severely that none of them can be saved any longer? Or as St. Paul says: "I say then, has God rejected his people?" The answer to the question is:

"By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 'Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have demolished thy altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.' 4 But what is God's reply to him? 'I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' 5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.

Notice that the answer about whether the Jews are rejected concerns their individual salvation, not a corporate or national revival either then or sometime in the future. Moreover, the answer shows that the salvation of Israel will be just as it was in the Old Testament. Out of a nation of millions of people, God tells Elijah there were only 7,000 who had remained faithful. Thus, it is no surprise that "even at this present time" there is the same "remnant" of Jewish believers.

Hence, when St. Paul then says in Romans 11:25: "Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel..." this is said in direct connection to the opening dialogue in Romans 11:1-5. In other words, any Gentiles who

think the Jews have been entirely cut off from God with no hope of salvation are quite wrong. They are unaware of the “mystery” that, even though the majority of Israel has been cut off, God is still saving a remnant, just as He did in the Old Testament when, in like fashion, a majority of the Jews were faithless. It is a “mystery” because it is God who secretly selects his chosen out of the mass of unbelievers (cf., Jer. 3:14; Isaiah 17:6; 2Tim 2:19; Acts 2:47). Therefore, the Gentiles cannot “boast” (Rom 11:22) or “be wise in their own conceits” against the Jews, for God is still saving the Jews.

Another crucial phrase is “the fullness of the Gentiles,” for this is the terminus of the word “until” (Greek: *achri hou*) in Romans 11:25: “...a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in...” It is tempting to interpret “fullness of the Gentiles” as referring to the completed salvation of the Gentiles. Although possible, we can surmise, however, that if St. Paul had in view merely the salvation of the Gentiles, he would have most likely said “salvation of the Gentiles.” We can be rather confident of this analysis because when St. Paul speaks of the salvation of Israel he says, specifically, “thus all Israel will be *saved*.”

Furthermore, the phrase “fullness of the Gentiles” (Greek: *pleroma ton ethnon*) does not appear again in the New Testament except in a similar phrase in Luke 21:24 using the same Greek verb: “the fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles”(Greek: *plerothosin kairoi ethnon*). No other New Testament verse uses “full” and “Gentiles” in the same sentence. That being the case, we are left with Luke 21:24 to help determine the meaning. Luke 21:24-27 states:

...they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. 25 And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

In this passage, since the Gentiles are “treading down Jerusalem,” the “fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles” is a general reference to the political/militaristic activity of the nations, not necessarily their salvation. Moreover, when the times of the “treading down” reaches its fulfillment, Jesus speaks in the next verses of the immediate end of the world and His second coming. There is neither an interlude when Jerusalem is not trodden down nor a special time before the return of Christ in which the Jews convert to Christianity in any distinctive proportion.

Hence, the term “fulness of the Gentiles” in Romans 11:25 must refer to the same time period as Luke 21:24, that is, the period of time from the treading down of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) until the end of time and the return of Christ.

Applying this truth to the context of Romans 11, despite what one might expect to be a total and justified rejection of Israel, the “mystery” is God’s unfathomable mercy to save any Jew who still wants salvation, which will be a blessing for them that, in accordance with the promise to their forefathers that is “irrevocable,” will continue right up until the end of time! This was all set

in place by the “Deliverer” who came out of Zion to “take away their sins,” even as Zechariah said regarding the first coming of Christ:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant...the oath which he swore to Abraham our father...to give His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God.” (Luke 1:68-77).

That this is the proper interpretation of Romans 11:25 is noted in how St. Paul begins Romans 11:26: “and *thus* all Israel will be saved, just as it is written...” The word “thus” is the Greek adverb “houtos,” which literally means “in this way” or “in this manner.” It does not mean “then” as we find in various biblical commentaries with a Zionist slant. That is, by the continual saving of the Jews, both in the Old Testament (such as in the time of Elijah 7,000 Jews remained faithful), and in the New Testament (such as Paul, Peter, James, the 3,000 at Pentecost, et al), it is “in this way” that “all Israel” will be saved. In other words, the unique phrase “all Israel” refers to all the remnant of Jews in the Old Testament and all the remnant of Jews in the New Testament who will become saved by the Gospel of the “Deliverer,” Jesus Christ who died to forgive their sins.

Despite Schoeman’s anticipation for a conversion of Jews *en masse* just prior to the return of Christ, later he seems to relax his exuberance when he examines the present numbers with which he has to work. First, rather than a firm conviction that St. Paul teaches a mass conversion of Jews, Schoeman says “St Paul *suggested* in his Letter to the Romans that the last days will see the widespread conversion of the Jews” (p. 350). If Schoeman is not having second thoughts, then at the least he is now admitting that he is basing his whole “third alternative” on a mere “suggestion” that he sees in one verse of one chapter in St. Paul’s writings.

Further doubt about his own position is admitted as he says:

“It is probably impossible to determine whether the current wave of Jewish conversion is numerically greater than any previous one...But whether or not the largest in history, the current wave of conversions does have some distinctive characteristics that are suggestive.”

Again, Schoeman’s opinion is reserved, since he again uses the word “suggestive,” as opposed to “definitive.” Although he seems to be an eternal optimist, we can see why Schoeman resigns himself to seeing the statistics as merely “suggestive,” for on the next page he provides some revealing figures:

“By the mid 1970s, *Time* magazine placed the number of Messianic Jews in the U.S. at over 50,000; by 1993 this number had grown to 160,000 in the U.S....this compares to a total of 5.3 million Jews in the U.S. in 2001...” (p. 351).

These statistics are important to Schoeman because he is trying to use them as evidence that we are near the second coming of Christ, which, according to his view, should produce a mass

conversion of Jews all over the world, and we should be seeing increasing signs of it today. He writes: "Many, perhaps most, in the Messianic Jewish community, both in Israel and around the world, see themselves as living within biblical prophecies about the Second Coming" (p. 352). Taking Schoeman at his word, then, the anticipated conversion of Jews would have to be extraordinarily distinctive at the present time, otherwise Schoeman can make no claims to a prophetic fulfillment. But if we examine closely the statistics Schoeman provides, not only is there no evidence of numbers leading to a mass conversion, the statistics are almost identical to the number of Jewish believers in Elijah's time, the very remnant St. Paul specified in his opening remarks in Romans 11:1-8.

In Elijah's day (circa 870 B.C.) we can estimate that there were about 5 million people living in Israel. We know this because about 600 years earlier, after the Israelites made their exodus from Egypt, there were 603,550 men (Numbers 1:46). Before that, there were 70 people who settled in Egypt 430 years prior (Genesis 46:27). Thus, if the Israelites could grow from 70 to a half million in 430 years, they could easily grow to 5 million in the next 600 years.

If we then take a round figure of 5 million Jewish men existing in Israel during the time of Elijah, and yet out of that number only 7,000 remained faithful to God (Romans 11:3-4), this means that only 0.14% of the Jews were saved at that time. Accordingly, St. Paul says in Romans 11:5: "So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace." We would assume, then, that the ratio of saved to unsaved will be approximately the same among Elijah's day, Paul's day and our day. This is precisely the case. If we take Schoeman's figures of U.S. conversions, there were 160,000 converts in 1993 out of a total Jewish population of about 5 million. This means that only 3.2% of Jews were saved in 1993. Obviously, there is not a huge difference between 0.14% and 3.2% in the context of Schoeman's expectation of seeing massive conversions of Jews to Christianity. In fact, the range between 0.14% and 3.2% is not any more or less than what we have seen of Jewish conversions in the last 2000 years.

If we take Schoeman's second statistic, things are even worse. Schoeman writes:

"Of particular interest is the spread of Messianic Judaism in Israel itself. Despite opposition by the Israel government, there is now practically no town or city in Israel without a 'Messianic Jewish' congregation, and the total number of Jewish converts to Christianity in Israel is over 5,000" (pp. 351-352).

Considering that recent statistics show the Israeli population hovering at about 6 million people, if we compare that number to the 5,000 converts living in Israel, this means that only 0.08% of the Israeli people have received the grace of God and converted. This is even lower than what we calculated in the time of Elijah (0.14%). Thus, far from supporting Schoeman's prediction of a tremendous surge in Jewish conversions to Christianity, the statistics show precisely the opposite. They agree to the letter with what St. Paul said in Romans 11, that is, there is a *remnant* of Jews being saved at the present time just as a remnant was saved in the Old Testament, and this situation will continue right up until the return of Christ, and "in this way all Israel will be saved."

**How to Understand the Covenants:**

Much of the problem in the Judaistic-Catholicism advocated by Moss and Schoeman can be traced back to their view of the Old Covenant. For example, Moss writes:

We can consider the Abrahamic covenant to be the primary and eternal covenant established by God. All the subsequent covenants God made with Israel can then be understood as developments of that primary covenant, culminating with the final covenant in Jesus Christ. And it is through this new and final covenant that the nations, with Israel, find salvation.

The New Covenant in Jesus, therefore, does not revoke the prior covenants but, rather, fulfills and transforms them.

Analogously, the various stages in a caterpillar's life eventually give way to its transformation into a butterfly. The caterpillar is not revoked - it is the same creature as the butterfly but in a different stage of its development.

The problem here is that Moss does not make the proper distinctions. It is wrong to say: "The New Covenant in Jesus, therefore, does not revoke the prior covenants..." In regards to "revoking," a distinction must be made between the Abrahamic covenant and the Mosaic covenant. Scripture and Tradition are clear that the Mosaic covenant, which is also called the Old Covenant (2 Cor 3:14), was, indeed, revoked. In fact, the book of Hebrews uses some very technical Greek terminology to get the point across. Hebrews 7:18 says: "On the one hand, a former commandment is *set aside* because of its weakness and uselessness, for the law made nothing perfect." The phrase "set aside" is from the Greek "aphetesis," which also means "to annul" or "to remove." When something is annulled it means it does not exist as a legal and binding entity any longer. Similarly, Hebrew 8:13 says: "In speaking of a new covenant he treats the first as obsolete." Hebrews 10:8-9 says: "...these are offered according to the law, then he added, 'Lo, I have come to do thy will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second." The word "abolish" is from the Greek "anaireo," which also means "to abrogate," or even "to kill." The contexts of these passages are referring exclusively to the Mosaic law, and thus it was *that* covenant which was abrogated, abolished, annulled. As we noted earlier, the Council of Florence made it crystal clear that the Mosaic covenant was taken away and replaced by the New Covenant. Pius XII reiterated this principle in *Mystici Corporis* 29-30. The Fathers also, in unanimous consent, teach that the Mosaic covenant was abolished.

The Abrahamic covenant, however, is treated differently. It transitions into and becomes the New Covenant. But, as we noted earlier, one of the reasons it can do so is that the Abrahamic covenant was not initiated when Abraham was a Jew, but a Gentile. This is St. Paul's main argument against the Jews who claim Abraham as their sole and exclusive father. Paul writes in Romans 4:10-11:

10 How then was it reckoned to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. 11 He received circumcision as a sign or seal of the righteousness which he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who

believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them...”

The above event is recorded for us in Genesis 15:6 in the famous words: “And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.” In other words, Abraham was credited with righteousness when he was a Gentile, for only when circumcision was instituted did the Jewish nation begin to exist, and that did not occur until Genesis 17. St. Paul reiterates this same truth in Galatians 3:6-8:

6 Thus Abraham ‘believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’ 7 So you see that it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations [Gentiles] be blessed.’

Although the Gentile component of the Abraham covenant continues into the salvation of the New Covenant, the Jewish element of the Abrahamic covenant (e.g., circumcision) was abolished, forever. It’s annulment began when the curtain of the Temple was torn in two by God Himself (Mt 27:51), which annulment was ratified at the first Christian council when St. Peter declared that circumcision would no longer be regarded as a requirement for God’s favor (Acts 15:1-12). All that remains now is the spiritual element of the Abrahamic covenant, and the difference between the spiritual promises and the physical promises introduces another crucial distinction.

God gave two kinds of promises to Abraham. For lack of better terminology, we will call them: (a) physical promises made to the circumcised (the Jews); and (b) spiritual promises made to all of mankind. As we noted earlier, the first physical promises concerned the acquisition of earthly borders for Abraham’s Jewish descendants, as we note, for example, in Genesis 15:18-21:

On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.’

But Abraham himself never received any of these physical promises. Hebrews 11:39 says: “And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised.” This is the same reason that Genesis 15:18 does not say “to you and your descendants,” but “to your descendants,” a very crucial distinction. Abraham’s descendants were given their divine promises, for this is recorded quite definitively over one thousand years of Israel’s history. Joshua 21:43-45 says:

Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land which he swore to give to their fathers; and having taken possession of it, they settled there. And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers; not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands.

Not one of all the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

1 Kings 8:56 says: “Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised; not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he uttered by Moses his servant.”

Nehemiah 9:7-8 says:

Thou art the LORD, the God who didst choose Abram and bring him forth out of Ur of the Chaldeans and give him the name Abraham; and thou didst find his heart faithful before thee, and didst make with him the covenant to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite; and thou hast fulfilled thy promise, for thou art righteous.

As we can see, God fulfilled all the physical promises concerning the giving of land to the Jews, and He owes them nothing more. Thus, any claims that Jewish people of today are still entitled to the land of Palestine by divine right are totally erroneous. Those who do so are making God a liar, for God has clearly stated that He already fulfilled those promises by a divine oath.

The spiritual promises to Abraham regarding salvation, however, have not been completely fulfilled, and thus they are prefaced by the clause: “to you and your descendants.” Among these are the promises in Genesis 13:15; 17:7-8; 22:17-18. These passages indicate Abraham and his descendants will eventually receive the promise of dwelling place, but it is not a piece of land on this sin-cursed earth. Rather, as St. Paul tells us in various places, Abraham’s inheritance will be a heavenly city that he will receive after he is raised from the dead:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go... For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:8,10)

If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. (Hebrews 11:15-16)

And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. (Hebrew 11:39-40)

The promise to Abraham and his descendants, that they should inherit the world, did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. (Romans 4:13)

End