

of the missionary task which was Paul's special calling. Even enthusiastic premillenarians have not always emphasized the reality of salvation in the millennium and thus have obscured one of the principal reasons for its place in an adequate end-historical scheme.

The literary feature of beginning and ending a poem or work with matching motifs can be observed in many places in the Old Testament, as in Ps 103: "Bless the Lord, O my soul. . ." is heard at the beginning and conclusion. The possibilities for chiasmic structure are especially beautiful. Paul's adherence to this scheme is especially obvious in Romans. Isaiah seems to have suggested the model for Romans. As we have seen, Habakkuk is the companion piece to Isa 11 which concludes the core of the hook. The Book of Isaiah itself is a remarkable example of opening and closing with companion motifs.

Isaiah begins his book with an unsparing description of the sin of his people, but immediately counters the darkness with the sublime millennial picture of 2:2-5. The conclusion of the vision of the son of Amoz is a climactic parallel to the beginning. After the apocalyptic destruction of enemies (66:6) and the conversion of the nation (66:7-11), there comes the millennial word of comfort (66:12-24) when God's glory is known among the nations and all mankind comes and bows before the Lord. Paul has employed the Isaianic pattern with magnificent effect and has found in it the framework for his superb mission epistle.

Two of the eschatological foci of Romans have just been pointed out, one in the salutation of the letter, with its complement in the doxology at the conclusion: and a second in the parallel citations from Habakkuk and Isaiah.

Another eschatological context in Romans is found in Paul's analysis of the divine promises to Abraham. This analysis is of strategic importance in understanding the eschatological outline of Romans. Romans 4: 11-13 contain in essence the whole redemptive plan. Paul makes the breathtaking assumption that the ancient promises meant that Abraham will inherit the cosmos. Paul is clearly here speaking of Abraham in a representative as well as personal status. He is a "father" or representative of all who believe, Jew or Gentile. More particularly to the understanding of Romans, Paul makes a distinction not only between the natural descendants of Abraham and the uncircumcised believers, but most significantly, Paul makes a dichotomy within the natural descendants of Abraham (v12). This is the key to the understanding of Rom 9-11, especially chap. 11. What vast misunderstanding could have been avoided if the church had perceived Paul's division, within Israel, of belief and unbelief, and had not assumed that Israel, as a people, was rejected, when only some branches were broken off! Paul in Rom 4 establishes the doctrine of a believing remnant in Israel. The history of the remnant must be seen to have its full implications in the unfolding of the Abrahamic Covenant. The remnant, according to the election of grace, carries Israel unbrokenly through the trauma of her rejection of the Messiah and, because God purposes to have mercy on all, guarantees the ultimate salvation of the whole people. Small wonder that Paul could exclaim. "O the depth of the wisdom and power of God."