THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

Volume 20 · Number 1 Spring 2016

Themes in Biblical Theology

THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

Vol. 20 • Num. 1
Spring 2016

Themes in Biblical Theology

Editorial: Reflections on the Significance of Biblical Theology

Stephen J. Wellum

Stephen J. Wellum is Professor of Christian Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and editor of *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*. He received his Ph.D. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and he is the author of numerous essays and articles and the co-author of *Kingdom through Covenant* (Crossway, 2012) and *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Crossway, 2015), and the co-editor of *Building on the Foundations of Evangelical Theology* (Crossway, 2015 with Gregg Allison), and *Progressive Covenantalism* (B&H, 2016 with Brent Parker).

In recent years, "biblical theology" as a discipline has grown in evangelical theology which has resulted in positive results. However, there are still differences in regard to its definition and why it is important. Since this issue of *SBJT* is devoted to the larger topic of biblical theology and various themes within it, it may be helpful first to explain what I think biblical theology is and its significance for our doing theology.

At the popular level, when most Christians think of "biblical theology" they understand it to be "true to the Bible" in our teaching and theology. To be "biblical" in this sense is certainly what all Christians desire, but this is *not* how I am using the term. To be more precise, let me contrast how "biblical theology" has been understood since the Reformation, especially contrasting a major non-evangelical use of the term from an evangelical, orthodox use.

In and after the Reformation, biblical theology was often identified more or less with systematic theology as the church sought to understand the entirety of Scripture and to grasp how the whole canon is put together in light of Christ. However, there was a tendency to read Scripture in more

logical and atemporal categories rather than to think carefully through the Bible's developing storyline. With the rise of the Enlightenment though, biblical theology began to emerge as a distinct discipline. But it is crucial to distinguish the emergence of biblical theology in the Enlightenment along two different paths: one, an illegitimate path tied to Enlightenment presuppositions, and the other, a legitimate path tied to the Bible's own self-attestation and presentation of itself.

In regard to the illegitimate Enlightenment path, there was a growing tendency to read Scripture *critically* and thus uncoupled from historic Christianity. This resulted in approaching the Bible "as any other book," rooted in history but unfortunately, also open to historical-critical methods which viewed the Bible within the confines of *methodological* naturalism. This meant that the Bible was not approached on its own terms, i.e., as God's Word written. Instead, the idea that Scripture is God-breathed through human authors—a text which authoritatively and accurately unfolds God's redemptive plan centered in Christ—was rejected. The end result of this approach was both a denial of a high view of Scripture and an increasingly fragmented reading of Scripture, given the fact that the practitioners of this view did not believe Scripture to be a unified, God-given revelation. Biblical theology as a discipline became merely "descriptive" and governed by *critical* methods and unbiblical worldview assumptions. "Diversity" was emphasized more than "unity" in Scripture, and ultimately, as a discipline which sought to grasp God's unified plan, it failed. In the twentieth century, there were some attempts to overcome the Enlightenment straightjacket on Scripture, but none of these attempts produced a "whole Bible theology" because, given their view of Scripture and theology, very few of them believed that Scripture taught a unified message.

Contrary to the Enlightenment approach, a legitimate and biblical approach to biblical theology emerged which was grounded in orthodox Christian theology, a high view of Scripture, and reading Scripture along its unfolding storyline. Probably the best-known twentieth century pioneer of this approach was Geerhardus Vos who developed biblical theology at Princeton Seminary in the early twentieth century. Vos sought to do biblical theology with a firm commitment to the authority of Scripture. In contrast to the Enlightenment view, Vos argued that biblical theology, as an exegetical discipline, must not only begin with the biblical text but must also view

Scripture as God's own self-attesting Word, fully authoritative, and reliable. Furthermore, as one exegetes Scripture, Vos argued, biblical theology seeks to trace out the Bible's unity and multiformity and find its consummation in the coming of Christ and the inauguration of the new covenant era. Biblical theology must follow a method that reads the Bible on its own terms, following the Bible's own internal contours and shape, in order to discover God's unified plan as it is disclosed to us over time. The path that Vos blazed was foundational for much of the resurgence of biblical theology within evangelicalism today.

Following this evangelical view, Brian Rosner offers a helpful definition of "biblical theology:" Biblical theology is "theological interpretation of Scripture in and for the church. It proceeds with historical and literary sensitivity and seeks to analyze and synthesize the Bible's teaching about God and his relations to the world on its own terms, maintaining sight of the Bible's overarching narrative and Christocentric focus" (*New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Intervarsity Press, 2000, 10). In this definition, Rosner emphasizes some important points crucial to the nature and task of biblical theology. Biblical theology is concerned with the overall message of the whole Bible. It seeks to understand the parts in relation to the whole. As an exegetical method, it is sensitive to literary, historical, and theological dimensions of Scripture, as well as to the interrelationships between earlier and later texts in Scripture. Furthermore, biblical theology is not merely interested in words and word studies but also in concepts and themes as it traces out the Bible's own storyline, on the Bible's own terms, as the plot line reaches its culmination in Christ.

With these points in mind, what, then, is biblical theology? It is best viewed as a *hermeneutical* discipline which seeks to do justice to what Scripture claims to be and what it actually is. In regard to its claim, Scripture is *God's* Word written, and as such, it is a unified revelation of his gracious plan of redemption. In terms of what it actually is, it is a *progressive* unfolding of God's plan, rooted in history, and unpacked along a specific redemptive-historical plot line primarily demarcated by biblical covenants. Biblical theology as a hermeneutical discipline attempts to exegete texts in their own context and then, in light of the entire canon, to examine the unfolding nature of God's plan and carefully think through the relationship between *before* and *after* in that plan which culminates in Christ. As such, biblical theology provides the

basis for understanding how texts in one part of the Bible relate to all other texts so that they will be read correctly, according to God's intention, which is discovered through human authors but ultimately at the canonical level. In the end, biblical theology is the attempt to unpack the "whole counsel of God" and "to think God's thoughts after him."

Why is biblical theology important for the church? For this reason: biblical theology provides the basis and underpinning for all systematic theology and doctrinal formulation. At its heart, theology is seeking to understand and apply the entire Bible to our lives. It is seeking to think through all that Scripture teaches and then rightly drawing the correct conclusions for our thinking and lives. Given this fact, then one cannot do this properly without doing biblical theology first. Although theology also inevitably involves theological construction, for it to be *biblical*, it must be warranted by the entirety of Scripture. This is why systematic theology as the discipline which attempts "to bring our entire thought captive to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:1-5) must be rooted and grounded in biblical theology.

It is for this reason that we have devoted this issue to various topics and themes of biblical theology. Ultimately, we cannot draw proper conclusions from Scripture until we first see how the whole Bible understands the various issues discussed by each of our authors. It is my prayer that this issue of *SBJT* will help us better know Scripture, and rightly apply Scripture in our theological proposals so that we learn anew to live under the Lordship of Christ for the glory of God and the good of the church.

The Significance of Covenants in Biblical Theology

Peter J. Gentry

Peter J. Gentry is Donald L. Williams Professor of Old Testament Interpretation and Director of the Hexapla Institute at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served on the faculty of Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College and also taught at the University of Toronto, Heritage Theological Seminary, and Tyndale Seminary. Dr. Gentry is the author of many articles and book reviews, the co-author of *Kingdom through Covenant* (Crossway, 2012), and is currently preparing a critical text of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs for the Göttingen Septuagint.

Introduction

The goal of this article is to address the significance and role of covenants in the doing of biblical theology. This topic entails describing the approach or method to biblical theology taken in the book written by myself and my colleague, Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*,[1] and comparing different systems of theology and as such, calls for a gracious and humble spirit.

The term biblical theology, whether used in academia or in the church, has a bewildering number of meanings today. For starters, I am not using the term in the popular sense of theology that we may derive from the Bible or speaking simply of theology that is true to the Bible. Instead, I am using the term in the technical and disciplinary sense which will be defined shortly.

Even when we are using the term biblical theology as a technical term, a number of scholars, whether conservative-evangelical or liberal, honestly think that there are a wide variety of acceptable ways to do biblical theology. As we consider the role of covenant in biblical theology, we will do so in four steps.

First, we will address the issue of method or methodology in biblical theology. Should we accept the wide variety of biblical theologies, or can one argue for a methodology that is superior and leads to a biblical theology that better approximates truth so that other biblical theologies fall short, even if they have some value? We will broach this complicated subject by thinking through the different approaches to biblical theology as described by Edward Klink and Darian Lockett in their helpful overview of biblical theology, *Understanding Biblical Theology*.[2] This book is a helpful place to begin our reflections on method and to provide some initial critical reflections.

Second, we will outline some basic assumptions and presuppositions essential to the task of doing biblical theology from the standpoint of historic, evangelical theology. Third, we will describe some fundamentals of methodology central to the doing of biblical theology. Fourth, we will conclude with a comparison of the methodological approach of *Kingdom through Covenant* with other biblical theological proposals, and describe why covenant is crucial in the task of doing of biblical theology in a way which remains true to what Scripture is and how Scripture has come to us as God's inspired, infallible Word written. Let us now follow each of these steps in turn.

The Diversity of Biblical Theology: A Summary and Initial Evaluation

As noted, two evangelical scholars, Edward Klink and Darian Lockett have recently co-authored a book which describes different approaches to biblical theology and evaluates them. This book is a helpful place to begin and the five different approaches they describe can be briefly summarized.

1. Biblical Theology as Historical Description.

In this understanding of the discipline, the central task is to affirm the descriptive or exegetical nature of biblical theology and deny the normative or theological nature of biblical theology.[3] Exemplified by James Barr, biblical theology as historical description seeks a theology of the Bible in its own terms and based on its own context(s). Rather than being subject to contemporary commitments of faith that make normative judgments for the present day, this kind of biblical theology remains committed to an authority of the Bible that seeks first and foremost its own message. Note that this method is

committed to an approach to the bible based on historical criticism and is an approach arising from the exaltation of reason as king in the Enlightenment.

2. Biblical Theology as History of Redemption.
This view of biblical theology is an exegetically driven and historically sensitive reading of Scripture. On the continuum between history and theology, this type of biblical theology relies on redemptive history to discern the normative purposes of God as they unfold through the Scriptures. It views God's revelation as a fundamentally progressive disclosure deployed along a sequential and historical timeline. The central means to discern this redemptive history is through inductive analysis of key themes that develop through both discrete corpora and the whole of Scripture.[4] There are three or four different schools within this approach, but D. A. Carson and Graeme Goldsworthy are leading lights propounding this view.

3. Biblical Theology as Worldview-Story.
This view of biblical theology is exemplified notably by N. T. Wright. This approach attempts to balance historical and theological concerns via the category of narrative. Instead of progressing from the little portions of the narrative to the larger whole, the methodology begins with the larger narrative portions of text through which individual units are read. Wright considers metanarrative or story as an essential element of one's worldview. Historical criticism is criticized because in focusing on fragmentary and technical minutiae, it loses sight of the larger narrative connections running through and connecting the overarching plotline of the Bible as a whole. And since the larger story-line running throughout the text is the key to interpretation,[5] this approach relies on the plotline of the Bible's metanarrative to understand each individual passage. Wright is a NT scholar who uses the documents of the OT and of Second Temple Judaism to lay out the narrative framework fundamental to understanding the Gospels, Paul, and indeed the entire NT.

4. Biblical Theology as Canonical Approach.
This approach is exemplified by Brevard S. Childs as its chief originator and proponent. Although Childs accepts the historical-critical approach, he seeks a theology in canonical terms and based upon a canonical context. Rather than being confined to external criteria and hypothetical reconstructions,

this approach remains committed to an authority of the Bible that is located within the Bible by means of the exegetical form and function of the canon.[6] Proponents of the canonical approach claim that only a canonical biblical theology can hold together both the descriptive (historical) and prescriptive (theological) nature of Scripture intended for the confessing church.

5. Biblical Theology as Theological Construction.

This last approach to biblical theology is more of a theological construction that seeks a theology of the Bible in which theological terms are overriding and based on a theological hermeneutic. This approach, exemplified by Francis Watson entails only a modest critique of historical criticism and seeks to incorporate all such criticisms beneath a theological criticism characterized by a governing interest in God and the church.[7] They claim that only an explicitly *theological* biblical theology can make God the primary subject matter and address the issues innate to the church. Too long has the academy usurped the categories of the Bible and its theology, leaving the leftovers to the church.

An Initial Evaluation

A serious shortcoming of Klink and Lockett's introduction to biblical theology is that although the authors are evangelicals, they place together on the table, as approaches to be evaluated equally, biblical theologies that differ vastly in their assumptions, presuppositions, and epistemological foundations. And nowhere in the book do they assess or critique the epistemological foundations of the different views. They simply record the advantages and disadvantages of the approaches presented without making the basic assumptions explicit, but in so doing, they never get to the heart of the differences between the five approaches.

Briefly, then, let us make clear some of the assumptions, axioms, and epistemological foundations of each of these five approaches to biblical theology so that we can briefly evaluate them.

The approach of biblical theology as historical description (#1) is completely committed to historical criticism. Although the biblical theology approaches of canon (#4) and theological construction (#5) are more post-liberal in their method, they are also committed to historical criticism, with the caveat that the canon or the church's theology can trump it. So in

three out of the five methods described and evaluated, there is already a faulty view of Scripture which does not match the Bible's own proclaimed view of itself, which is a major problem indeed. It is hard to conceive of how these three approaches are biblical theologies in any orthodox, evangelical sense of the word. In other words, we have people putting the Bible together in a way that is completely contrary to the Bible's own categories and self-delineated structures. These are approaches in which human reason is set above the authority of Scripture itself and, as a result, must ultimately be rejected as unacceptable.

In truth, it is only the approaches of #2 and #3 which resemble an evangelical approach to biblical theology. With that said, what minimal assumptions and presuppositions ought to govern our doing of biblical theology? It is to this subject we now turn.

Some Basic Assumptions and Presuppositions Central to Biblical Theology

One of the most prolific scholars in biblical theology, whose approach is not only evangelical, but also committed to covenant theology in the Reformed tradition, is Graeme Goldsworthy. After producing a number of works which "do" biblical theology, his most recent work, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, is focused on describing and determining the best method in biblical theology.[8] Goldsworthy's work, then, offers a good interlocutor with which we can dialogue as we seek to articulate and develop the best methodology in biblical theology. In fact, unlike the book by Edward Klink and Darian Lockett, Goldsworthy is clear and forthright about his assumptions and presuppositions. Since Stephen Wellum and I share all these and more, it is appropriate to describe them briefly in order to be clear exactly what is undergirding our approach to biblical theology and how we differ from other approaches. What, then, are some of the epistemological foundations behind *Kingdom through Covenant*?

1. The Doctrine of God.

Graeme Goldsworthy states, "We would not be interested in the theology of the Bible if we did not have some previously formed notion that the Bible can deliver a theology."[9] Those who are Christians, i.e., followers of Jesus as the

Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed King, have come to certain conclusions. We believe in one creator God who made the entire universe simply by speaking, by his Word. We believe that humanity is created or made as the image of this God. And above all, we believe that this God is triune: that is, within the one and only being that is supreme in and above the universe we can distinguish three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The comment of Goldsworthy is helpful here:

> A trinitarian dogmatic will inform the way we do our theology and the way we formulate principles of interpretation. The doctrine of the Trinity and its related doctrine, the incarnation of Jesus, form the basis for understanding all relationships in terms of both their unity and their distinctions. This is vital for the proper handling of a progressive dynamic in revelation and for the avoidance of a view of Scripture as a flat and static body of timeless propositions. Different parts of Scripture bear different relationships to Christ and the Christian.[10]

2. The Doctrine of the Word of God.

We are also assuming in our approach to biblical theology a classic, evangelical, orthodox view of Scripture as God's Word written. We accept fully the claims of Scripture as divine revelation, guaranteed via divinely inspired spokesmen, the prophets of the OT and the apostles of the New. We would speak of Holy Scripture as our foundation, as first order truth, having first order authority, and that all of our interpretations, creeds, and confessions are second order as they seek to rightly interpret and understand God's objective, authoritative, infallible Word-revelation of himself.

In addition, the Bible is a Word-Act revelation. It is not merely a record of the acts of God in history. The authors of the Bible also provide us with the authoritative and correct interpretation of those events in a first order way.

As noted, what this entails is that we would relegate our own interpretation of the Bible to second order. We come to Scripture biased. No one is completely objective. We bring to the Bible a life-philosophy, a theology, a world-view, a *Weltanschauung* that does not necessarily match that of Scripture. So we constantly strive to bring our interpretation to match and correspond to the first order data of Scripture. Since the Bible is objective and first order truth, it can constantly correct our interpretation of it.

We reject the method of historical criticism because those who adopt this approach have already adopted a view of the Bible that does not equate with God's own view of the Bible as evidenced by its own claims and statements. We consider that the biblical authors are accurate and trustworthy in what they affirm, what they tell us, and what they teach. So we pursue and strive to see the unity of the Bible according to God's own way of putting the Bible together, to grasp and understand what categories and structures are provided by the Bible itself and how, in fact, they are put together by Scripture itself.

What is heartwarming here is to see the agreement here between ourselves and Goldsworthy. He says, "In the wider sense biblical theology is concerned with the structures of revelation and with the ways in which the unity of the biblical canon can be described."[11] Indeed, in more than one place in his work he expresses in similar words the need to discover and build a biblical theology based upon the Bible's own categories and structures.

As we distinguish between the Bible as first order truth and acknowledge our own interpretation as second order and confess our lack of objectivity, it is important to note that raw data and events are never self-interpreting. This can be illustrated by the different interpretations of the crucifixion of Jesus offered by those who were in fact eyewitnesses to the event. Let us consider those who were bystanders and who witnessed this event.

First there were the Jewish leaders, who stated that Jesus was a blasphemer and was receiving the just penalty due him for claiming to be God. Second we see the disciples. Judas was utterly disappointed to have followed a failed Messiah, one who in no way brought down the might of Rome and put Israel in first position of political power. Some of the other followers of Jesus were also very confused and some were fleeing as fast as possible. The women who had consistently followed Jesus in order to meet his needs would have thought, "Well, now, here is a gentle, meek person who always brought good and never harmed anyone. And now he has been done in by the system." Two bandits were crucified with Jesus. One considered Jesus just another bandit like himself. The other saw Jesus as a real king who ruled a real kingdom and who could rescue him and so cast his vote for Jesus' kingdom as opposed to that of Rome. The Roman soldiers had witnessed scenes like this hundreds of times in the first century and Jesus was not the only person in the first century who claimed to be the Messiah. The centurion in charge, however, concluded from the events, "Truly this man was the son of God" (Mark 15:39).

We see then, how many and varied were the interpretations of the eyewitnesses. In Romans, however, Paul gives us the *true* interpretation: "He was handed over because of our offenses, and he was raised because of our justification" (4:25). Scripture provides first order truth in both the description of events *and* the interpretation that goes with them.

3. The Canon as the Limit of Inspired Scripture.

Canon is a corollary of inspiration and revelation. If we believe that God has spoken and his words have been written down, then the Word of God must be located in some texts, while other texts must be distinguished as not containing or constituting the Word of God.

Here the evangelical and Protestant view stands in opposition to the claims of the Roman Catholic Church that the church gave us the Bible and has the authority to determine its limits and interpret it according to its teachings. The Protestant view holds that God gave us his Word and the church recognizes its claims. In 1 Corinthians 14:37 we read: "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord" (ESV).

Two principles are laid out by Paul in this verse: (1) The Bible attests to and makes claims for itself, and (2) God's people acknowledge its claims. Both parts of the principle are clearly seen in 1 Corinthians 14:37. The first part is clearly primary. For the OT, the Protestant view is based upon the fact that Jesus accepted the Jewish Tradition of only twenty-four books which we number as thirty-nine in our tradition. As followers of Jesus Christ, this is also normative for us.

In this way the Protestant view avoids the ambiguities of the grey areas of the Roman Catholic basis of authority in canonical scripture: deutero-canonical texts and church tradition. It is interesting that 1 Maccabees, one of the Apocrypha or deutero-canonical texts, not only does not claim anywhere to be Scripture or authoritative, but actually expressly states at least three times that no one at that time was speaking for God as a prophet or as an inspired spokesman (4:46, 9:27, 9:54, 14:41).

4. The Arrangement of the Canon.

We also argue in *Kingdom through Covenant* that the arrangement of the books in the Jewish canon of the OT is significant for the way we read the text. In the Jewish tradition, which is spelled out by Jesus in Luke 24:44,

there are three divisions: the Law or Torah, the Prophets (which contain the historical books called the Former Prophets and the prophetic works known as the Latter Prophets) and the Writings, headed by the book of Psalms. The different arrangement in our English Bibles is derived from the Septuagint, where the original order in Jewish tradition was rearranged according to chronology and to four genres: Law, History, Prophets, and Poetry.

An example of how the arrangement affects our interpretation can be seen by considering the books of Kings and Chronicles. In our English Bibles, Chronicles follows Kings and is considered by many Christians to be a redundant rehash of Kings. Yet the historical moment in which each was written and the motive for writing each book differs greatly between Kings and Chronicles. Kings was written during the exile to answer the question: Has God failed in his promises? Chronicles was written after the exile to deal with the question: Do We as Returned Exiles Have any Future Hope? Placed at the end of the canon in the Hebrew Tradition, Chronicles provides a bird's eye view of the entire Old Testament and ends by pointing to the promise of the Messiah. Thus the exegesis and interpretation of individual books is sometimes dependent on the arrangement in the canon. Goldsworthy does not adopt a position on the arrangement in the canon.

5. The Unity of the Canon of Scripture.

Also crucial for our approach in biblical theology is the unity of the canon of Scripture. Although the books reckoned as Holy Scripture were written by many human authors over a 1,500 year period, there is a single divine author and we must view the book as a single text, not as an anthology of stories or texts. As a single text or literary work, we can treat it the way we do other unified literary works and ask about the themes or specific topics it treats as well as the narrative plot structure that unifies the whole. This has huge implications for how we do biblical theology which will be unfolded in a moment.

6. The Human Problem and God's Response.

Theologians in the Reformed tradition speak of total depravity. This is not to say that all humans are completely evil, but that all humans are guilty of moral rebellion against the creator God and that this affects every area of our humanity, including our mind. Systematic theologians speak of the noetic effects of sin. Not only our desires and will, but even our reason and thinking

are corrupted and we cannot rely on logic or reason, pure and simple, to attain to a knowledge of God. According to 1 Corinthians 2, in our natural state we do not accept or receive revealed truth. We must possess the Spirit of God to investigate and understand properly divine revelation.

7. The Role of Story in Worldview.

Here we combine a central element in the method of N. T. Wright with those who approach biblical theology as redemptive history.

Every person who has ever lived, from untutored to intellect of great sophistication, has an approach to life, a worldview. Now a metanarrative or overarching story is a basic element of every worldview. This metanarrative or overarching story deals with basic questions like "Who am I?", "Where did I come from?", "Where am I going?", "What am I doing here?", "What is my purpose in day to day life?" Answers to questions provide us with guides for daily praxis in life and symbols that hold things together in our minds. This is discussed by N. T. Wright in the first part of his foundational work, *The New Testament and the People of God*.[12] In the modern period in which I was born, there was a rule that we should reduce all truth to propositions. While I am not denying the importance of propositional truth, N. T. Wright has argued that a proposition, in fact, is an abbreviation of an overarching story and that story is not always reducible to propositions.

8. Can the Overarching Story Scripture Function as Worldview?

Since a storyline is at the heart of every worldview and everyone has a worldview, we may ask the question: how can we construct a Christian worldview? Another way to pose the same question is this: can the overarching storyline of Scripture function as a worldview? The answer is yes and every Christian attempts in some way to build a worldview in which something of the story-line of Scripture forms a part of the story of their worldview. The main problem we all face is that we all are children of our times. We all inherit a worldview from the culture and society and time in which we live. Our worldview is very much like a window through which we view the world. When parents teach their children, they do not spend time talking about the window; they simply view the world through it. What happens in education is that the children adopt the window and look at the world the same way without the parents necessarily describing the window.

Similarly, all systematic theologies in some way marry the truth of Scripture with the worldview of their own times. We would argue that the closer the overarching story of our worldview is to the overarching story of Scripture, the more biblical or Christian our worldview will be. In the lives of many people who claim to follow Jesus Christ, there are only some elements of biblical truth married to the metanarrative common in the culture at the time that forms the basis of their worldview. We want the basic story-line or metanarrative of our worldview to match that of Scripture as closely as possible.

Basic Fundamentals of our Methodological Approach to Biblical Theology

With our assumptions and presuppositions laid out we can now discuss our actual exegetical and hermeneutical task. In the book, *Kingdom through Covenant*, both authors address this topic.

The design for *Kingdom through Covenant* is based on the conviction that biblical theology and systematic theology go hand in hand. To be specific, systematic theology must be based upon biblical theology, and biblical theology in turn must be founded upon exegesis that attends meticulously to the cultural/historical setting, linguistic data, literary devices/ techniques, and especially to the narrative plot structure, i.e., the larger story which the text as a unitary whole entails and by which it is informed.

First we must interpret the text according to the cultural and historical horizons in which it was written. This means, for example, that when we analyse the term "image of God" in Genesis 1:26-28, we must ask the question: what background from culture and history would the first hearers or readers bring to this text? Communication always begins with "where the hearer or reader is at" in order to bring them to the place of understanding the communicator wishes them to reach.

Second, the meaning of the words must be determined according to the languages in which they were originally written. It is the grammar and lexicon of the fourteenth century BC which is the fundamental place to start in interpretation of Genesis 1. What did "image of God" mean in Hebrew in its ancient Near Eastern setting? Here we must exclude the baggage we might bring to the text from Aristotelian or Platonic philosophy as it informs the Graeco-Roman heritage of our western civilization.

Third, we must allow the author to communicate not only by clauses and sentences, but by the literary devices and literary shape and structure he gives to the text in its parts and in the whole. Just as music combines lyrics with melody and rhythm, which shape the meaning of the words, just so the literary structures shape the meaning of the individual clauses and words. In fact, the literary structures as a whole frequently communicate big ideas not particularly specified or stated in any one particular clause. We have demonstrated this over and over throughout the exegesis in Part 2 of *Kingdom through Covenant*.

Fourth, the details in the text must be construed according to the narrative plot structure, i.e., the larger story which the text as a unitary whole entails and by which it is informed. Here I wish to affirm how our minds operate in attempting to grasp and understand things. When we investigate an object, we move back and forth from a view of the whole to an analysis of the parts. Let me illustrate. Suppose we look out a window and I ask you what you see. You look out and you respond: "I see a tree." You have just observed an object and you quickly form a judgement about the whole. This in turn may lead to a detailed study of the parts. You could dig in the ground to see whether there is a single root going straight down deep or a multitude of little roots which are shallow and extend immediately outward. You could examine the size and shape of the trunk. Does it branch right away or does it grow tall before branching? You could look at the colour and texture of the bark. You could consider the pattern of the branches and the overall shape of the tree. You could look at the shape of the leaves and the patterns of the vein structures on the underside. Indeed, if you observed long enough throughout the seasons, you might observe flowers or fruit/nuts and describe them. After all this further analysis of the parts you might refine your initial judgement of the whole by deciding that it is, in fact, a beech tree. As humans we continue to develop understanding by interpreting the parts in the light of the whole and using our understanding of the parts to refine our grasp of the whole. We move back and forth from deduction to induction and vice versa. This is not a vicious circle, but rather a hermeneutical spiral, as we continue to refine our understanding.

This must be part of our exegesis of Scripture. We must use our view of the whole, i.e., the plot-structure or storyline of the literary work to understand the parts and we must use our knowledge of individual details to refine and reshape our grasp of the whole.

An illustration of the interrelation of the plot-structure of the whole and the details of the parts comes from the Exodus.

The event of the Exodus must be interpreted the way Scripture interprets it, not only in the textual horizon, but also in how it is worked out inter-textually across the covenants in the narrative plot-structure, and reaches its fulfilment in Christ.

When we do this, we discover that the Exodus becomes a typological pattern that ultimately points forward to God's greater act of deliverance in Christ and his cross. How do we know this? In its immediate context the Exodus as an event is also presented as a model of future salvation. In light of the prophetic anticipation, the Exodus is spoken of in terms of a new exodus, and that new exodus post-Davidic covenant is anticipated in the dawning of the new covenant age, along with the coming of the Messiah, as seen specifically in the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. Note how Isaiah speaks of the new exodus in many places, (e.g., Isa 4, 11, passim) and especially in the servant passages, it is contrasted with the return from exile under Cyrus.

Liberation theology does not think about how the Exodus is worked out across the canon and how as a type it points forward to the greater need of redemption from sin. Instead, they view it merely as the liberation of a poor and oppressed people which now applies to God being on the side of the poor and that revolutions can take place similar to Marxist ideology. The problem with this view, is that it is possible to read the Exodus this way only if you limit it to its textual horizon, but even when you do that, it does not do justice to the Exodus in the covenants, and it certainly does not do justice to how the Exodus is picked up inter-textually and then canonically in Christ.

This illustration also clarifies the way Stephen Wellum addresses the method of interpreting the text of Scripture in *Kingdom through Covenant*. He argues that we must consider not only the *textual* horizon, but also the *epochal* horizon and finally the *canonical* horizon. The first horizon, the textual horizon, is the immediate context of a passage.[13]

The *epochal horizon* is the second context by which we interpret texts. Here we seek to read texts in light of where they are in the history of the progress of redemption, or where they are in terms of the unfolding plan of God. Since Scripture is a progressive revelation, the texts do not come to us in a vacuum; rather they are embedded in a larger context of what has come *before* them. As God communicates through biblical authors, these same authors write in light of what has preceded them.

Finally there is the *canonical horizon*. Given the fact that Scripture is *God's* Word and thus a *unified* revelation, in the final analysis texts must be understood in relation to the entire canon. We cannot adequately interpret and apply Scripture if we ignore the canonical level.

These three horizons bring us back to the notion of the plot-structure or storyline of the text as a whole. We will see how crucial this is as we evaluate the method of others and seek to demonstrate the centrality of the covenants in the narrative storyline of Scripture.

A Comparison of Our Methodological Approach to Others in Biblical Theology

In *Kingdom through Covenant* we have argued that the covenants (plural) form the backbone of the narrative plot-structure of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments. To describe the main storyline we do two things: (1) first we exegete the central passages or texts that detail the major covenants initiated by God between himself and various human partners. As already indicated, we attempt to do exegesis that attends meticulously to the cultural/historical setting, linguistic data, literary devices/techniques, and especially the narrative plot structure, i.e., the larger story which the text as a unitary whole entails and by which it is informed. (2) Second, we exegete the many passages in the OT which discuss and describe the relationships of each covenant to the other covenants. This second step has been neglected by other scholars. It is not sufficient to accurately understand the different covenants. We must put them together into an overall structure or storyline that is derived from Scripture itself and not from our imagination. We want the overarching story to be as close to Scripture itself so that as much as possible, we eliminate from our minds the bias and pagan worldview we bring to the text. The problem in so many biblical and systematic theologies is that the data and different parts of Scripture are put together in a way which is contrary to the way that they are put together by Scripture itself.

Biblical Theology which Emphasizes Themes over the Bible's Plot-Structure

Our colleague James M. Hamilton has written an excellent and helpful biblical theology entitled *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology*.[14] Hamilton correctly emphasizes the unity of the biblical texts and

claims a center for biblical theology, i.e., that the idea or theme of "the glory of God displayed in salvation through judgment" is *the* theme which unites the entirety of Scripture and that the parts or individual texts of Scripture cannot be understood without reference to it. We agree with the former, but we do not argue for the latter. We do not deny that "salvation through judgment" is *a* theme of Scripture, even a major one, but we will not defend the assertion that it is *the* theme to the neglect of other themes. In addition, Hamilton does not give much attention to the biblical covenants, their unfolding, progressive nature, and how the biblical covenants provide the entire substructure to the plot-line of Scripture. Yet it is our contention that apart from thinking through the relationships between the biblical covenants, one does not fully grasp the Bible's own intra-systematic categories and thus how the parts are related to the whole in the overall plan of God.[15] Before one argues for *the* overarching *theme* of Scripture, one must first wrestle with the unfolding nature of the biblical covenants and their fulfilment and consummation in Christ.

A similar evaluation could be given of the biblical theology of our colleague entitled *The King in His Beauty* by Tom Schreiner.[16] He proceeds book by book through the canon of Scripture, discussing the central themes in each book and in the canon as a whole. Again, the important question, is, "How can we be sure his presentation is accurate apart from our relying on the skill of Prof. Schreiner to describe and discuss the themes? In other words, how we put the themes of Scripture together and also how we emphasize some themes and de-emphasize others depends on the biblical theologian's own skill. There is no independent way to adjudicate whether the result is, in fact, the storyline of Scripture or an appropriate approximation to the biblical metanarrative.

A third example is the work of T. Desmond Alexander. His approach is to deal with biblical theology in terms of themes. In a recent book *From Eden to the New Jerusalem* he treats the following as central themes: the presence of God traced through the Sanctuary of Eden, the Tabernacle, and the Temple and the sovereign rule of Yahweh as King, the removal of evil, the slaughter of the Lamb to redeem creation and the new Jerusalem.[17] We would agree that these are important themes. Much of his discussion is helpful, insightful, and stimulating. Nonetheless, how are these themes related? If, however, we follow the covenants as the key to the plot structure, the problem is easily

solved: God is establishing his rule and bringing salvation in the world through a progression and sequence of covenant relationships. Thus the themes he presents of divine presence, divine rule, and divine salvation are properly correlated. The sequence of covenants puts the different themes together into the proper story-line.

It is interesting to note that G. K. Beale is in complete agreement with our assessment of biblical theologies based on either centers or thematic approaches. Beale insightfully writes: "The challenge for these thematic approaches is validating the probability of whether the major themes chosen are in fact the major themes of the NT."[18] Later Beale also notes: "A focus on a single theme can lead to overlooking other important notions, which sometimes can happen when systematic theological categories are appealed to."[19] In our view, Beale correctly understands that themes can be distilled from the metanarrative and that a correct grasp of the metanarrative is superior to identifying a center.[20] Beale's own proposal concerning the metanarrative of scripture will be critiqued momentarily.

What, then, is the main problem with biblical theologies that seek to treat the themes of the Bible alone? It is simply this: there is no way to arbitrate satisfactorily which themes should be considered more prominent or how they should be put together into a framework or larger story—something that will happen in any person's particular worldview whether consciously thought out or not. Such a biblical theology, then, owes too much to sanctified imagination and does not permit Scripture itself to determine and inform the way the pieces of the metanarrative are put together into a larger whole.

Biblical Theology which Emphasizes Historical Epochs over the Bible's Plot-Structure

Our claim in *Kingdom through Covenant* is that the progression of the biblical covenants is the key to the plot-structure of Scripture. In one sense, this is not new at all. The covenants (plural) or covenant (singular) are considered as the key to the main storyline by covenant theologians and dispensationalists. After all, the name of one major biblical-theological view is *Covenant* theology. On the other hand, dispensationalists have normally used the covenants as a way of dividing history into the various dispensations. The covenant or covenants are important to both positions. So we must assess how our work differs from other approaches.

In his recent work, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, we find helpful the critique and evaluation of evangelical biblical theologies by Goldsworthy.[21] Goldsworthy rightly contends that biblical theology consists in more than simply narrating the events of the biblical story in order. Instead, biblical theology must first grasp the Bible's own internal structure and then draw conclusions based on how the Bible unfolds *on its own terms*. Given the lack of consensus among evangelicals on how the Bible is "put together," Goldsworthy proposes that the "Robinson-Hebert" scheme best reflects the Bible's structure and it is the defense of this scheme that the rest of the book discusses. (Donald Robinson and Gabriel Hebert were both influential mentors in the formation of his thinking.) In setting the context to his discussion, in chapters 4-5, Goldsworthy summarizes the various methodological proposals of leading evangelical biblical theologians (e.g., Geerhardus Vos, Edmund Clowney, Dennis Johnson, Willem VanGemeren, William Dumbrell, Sidney Greidanus, Charles Scobie, Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen, as well as proponents of a multiplex approach, Gerhard Hasel and Elmer Martens). He devotes most of his effort to evaluating the influential and dominant Vos-Clowney approach which divides redemptive history into various epochs. Goldsworthy's main critique is that their epochal divisions are not consistent to the way the Bible structures itself (111-132). Thus, for example, the last great epoch of the OT in addition to creation, the fall, the flood, the call of Abraham, is the period from Moses to the coming of Christ. But Goldsworthy rightly questions whether this is how the OT divides redemptive history and whether this does justice to the watershed revelation associated with David and Solomon, let alone the later prophetic eschatology which focuses on the return from exile, the restoration of the people, and the anticipation of the renewal of all things.

We are excited about the emphasis in Goldsworthy's work: he is concerned to build a biblical theology that follows the categories and internal structure established and provided by Scripture itself. We could not agree more about the agenda. I note two central issues as Goldsworthy seeks to derive and implement this method.

First, as he attempts to discover the unity of the canon of Scripture, he lists three possible avenues of approach:

> The Bible, as a book, can exhibit unity in different ways. The three major dimensions of the Bible are literary, historical and theological. The literary unity cannot

> be usefully reduced to the fact that all sixty-six books have come to be collected under one cover. In fact there is very little by way of unity at the level of the literary genres. A collection of documents written over more than a thousand years in three different languages and containing a long list of different genres and forms does not make for much that we can call unity. There are many extra-biblical texts that closely resemble the biblical texts in terms of language and genre, and even of subject matter, but that have not been recognised as Scripture. Beyond the narrative continuity, literary unity is clearly not very meaningful. The diversity of the canon is found principally in its literary dimension.[22]

Since Goldsworthy does not find the literary dimension useful for biblical theology, he turns to the historical dimension for his method. In our view, this is not enough. Goldsworthy comes within a hair of finding a better method than the one he chooses. For it is in the narrative plot-structure, which runs across all books and all genres, that there is a unity—and the covenants are the key to this unity.

Second, Goldsworthy spends four chapters, literally one-third of the entire work, evaluating evangelical scholars who have divided the narrative into historical epochs as a basis for biblical theology on the one hand, and on the other hand, sifting through the evidence of the OT afresh as he seeks a better way to divide the narrative into epochs:

> What, then, can be said to constitute the significant events that characterize the epochs or stages of revelation, and what criteria are applicable to discern them? The object of our enquiry is to discover what, if any, matrix of revelation exists in the Old Testament. Are there inherent structures or epochs that can be discerned from some overarching emphasis in the various texts.[23]

Later on as he works with the divisions established by other scholars and the evidence of the text itself he acknowledges the difficulty of this approach: "These disagreements serve only to show that establishing epochs, whether theological or narrative-historical, is difficult."[24]

We would agree and note that the different divisions into historical eras or epochs show the approach to be flawed in its method. In chapters 6-8, he argues for the threefold structure of Robinson-Hebert as reflecting best how the Bible itself moves from creation to new creation. He proposes that

God's plan unfolds in three main stages: (1) the basic biblical history from creation to Abraham, and then to David and Solomon; (2) the eschatology of the later writing prophets; and (3) the fulfillment of all things in Christ.

Here we come to the heart of my second point: as Goldsworthy assesses the evidence of the Old Testament afresh, looking for some way to divide it into epochs or historical periods, the key to doing this seems for him to be the covenants. He discusses the covenant with Noah, with Abraham, with Moses, and with David. Like most traditional covenant theologians, the covenant with Noah does not play a large part in his thinking. (He argues—mistakenly I believe—that it is given little attention in the OT). Next he subsumes the Mosaic Covenant under the Abrahamic Covenant which he calls the Covenant of Grace. Nonetheless, he re-arranges the epochs in the Clowney-Vos system because he demonstrates, successfully we believe, that earlier theologians have not paid sufficient attention to the Covenant with David.

The upshot of all this is that even though Goldsworthy belongs to the camp of biblical theology as redemptive history, as he considers the evidence of the OT in a fresh manner, the covenants play the key role in his discussion in determining the different epochs in biblical history. Thus, in the end, he is arguing for what is the main thesis of our work: the covenants are the key to the biblical metanarrative.

The problem with Goldsworthy's proposal is twofold: (1) First, he does not really understand Genesis 1:26-28 as we do, which we have argued describes and proclaims a covenant at creation between God and humanity and between humanity and all creation. Thus, his biblical metanarrative or story-line is too short. No wonder the covenant with Noah plays so little significance in his thinking because there God is renewing his covenant with creation. This is damaging when we come to the NT, where Paul draws parallels between Adam as the head of creation and Christ as the head of the new creation. Note that this headship is covenantal.

(2) Second, although he argues for the importance of the Davidic Covenant, in reality, he follows traditional covenant theology in which the Abrahamic Covenant flattens out and overshadows the entire narrative plot-structure. He sees the New Covenant as fulfilling the Mosaic Covenant but not really surpassing and superseding the Abrahamic Covenant.

As Goldsworthy develops these three stages, he argues that the first stage of biblical history not only provides the rationale and backdrop to the calling

of Abraham and the covenant with Israel, it also establishes the typological patterns which are later developed in the prophets and fulfilled in Christ. In addition, he argues that the high point of the first stage is found in David and Solomon and in the building of the temple which represents God's presence among his people, an echo back to Eden of old. The second stage begins with Solomon's apostasy. Biblical history from this time on is primarily one of judgement that is overlaid with the prophetic promises that the Day of the Lord will come and bring ultimate blessing and judgement. In this stage of revelation, the typological patterns laid down in the earlier history are now recapitulated as they project a greater future fulfillment. In the last and final stage, the fulfillment of the previous stages now takes place in Christ who fulfills all the previous patterns in himself in an "already-not yet" fashion (170-174).

Viewing the structure of the Bible this way not only leads us to read the entire Bible Christologically, it also allows for what Goldsworthy labels "macro-typology." Instead of restricting typology to certain persons, events, and institutions, Goldsworthy proposes that whole stages of revelation are typological and as such, "there is no limit to types in Scripture other than Scripture itself, which embraces the whole of reality" (185). Yet, Goldsworthy in making such a sweeping statement does not want to open the door to allegory. He writes: the "removal of limits to typology does not mean that anything goes, or that we take a cavalier attitude to finding types of Christ in every little detail on the basis of some association of ideas" (186). For example, he rejects the redness of Rahab's cord as a type of Jesus' blood since this represents a "fanciful, non-contextual associations that avoid the real theology behind these things" (187). Rather the entire stage of revelation is the context of typology and the "typological value of a person, event or institution is governed by the role that each plays in the theology of the redemptive revelation within the stage of revelation in which it occurs" (187).

Stephen Wellum devotes Chapter 3 of *Kingdom through Covenant* to a discussion of typology. In brief, we both believe that typology is governed by four factors.

(1) Correspondence between events, people, places, etc. of one time and events, people, places, etc. of a later time. This correspondence is due to the fact that God in his providence sovereignly controls history and is consistent in his character so that there are repetitive patterns to his works in history.

(2) Escalation from type to antitype so that the later event, person, or thing which can be said to be the fulfillment of the type is much better and greater than that which foreshadows it.

(3) Biblical warrant. Here we claim that for something to be considered a type, there must be exegetical evidence in the original text that indicates that what the text is dealing with is intended to be a model or pattern for something to follow in history. An excellent example is the exposition of Exodus 15, the Song of the Sea, by Norbert Lohfink in an essay published in his book, *The Christian Meaning of the Old Testament*.[25] He shows exegetically from Exodus 15 that the deliverance through the Red Sea was intended from the start to be a model for future salvation. Thus, when the major prophets predict a future salvation through the work of a coming king, they are right to speak of it as a New Exodus and describe the future salvation in the language of God's great deliverance in the past.

(4) The progression of the covenants throughout the narrative plot-structure of the Bible both creates, controls and develops the typological structures across the canon of Scripture. For example, in the covenant with Creation, Adam is portrayed as a king-priest who must be an obedient son in relation to God and a servant king in relation to creation. This role is taken up by Noah in the covenant with God which reaffirms the covenant with creation. Next, in the covenant with Abraham I demonstrate how the king-priest role devolves upon him. In my exposition of Exodus 19, I show, next, how Israel as a nation is called to be an obedient son and servant king, functioning in a priestly role vis à vis the nations of the world. In the Davidic covenant, this role is narrowed from the nation as a whole to the king in particular. Finally, in the New Covenant, Jesus the Messiah finally fulfills these roles adequately and fully.

The problem with Goldsworthy's exposition is that while he sees the importance of typology, he has no criteria to adequately distinguish what is typological from what is not. We are essentially back to the allegories of the church fathers who had no controls over typology.

Overall this is a helpful work on biblical theology and a careful study of its content will pay rich dividends. Goldsworthy is on target in seeking to argue for the Bible's own internal structure and thus how the Bible fits together *on its own terms*. In this regard his discussion of the three stages of revelation is helpful in thinking through how redemptive history is structured. Unfortunately this discussion is often neglected in biblical theology and too often the practice of biblical theology leads people merely to work out

broad themes across the canon without ever asking whether those themes are structured the way Scripture structures them.

However, even though we are sympathetic with Goldsworthy's proposal, we think a better case can be made for thinking that the *progression of the biblical covenants* is the backbone to the biblical storyline and that a proper unpacking of the covenants will make better sense of his three stages of revelation that Goldsworthy rightly notes. So, beginning in Genesis 1-11, what frames these chapters is God's covenant with creation first made in Adam and then in Noah. As God's promise of redemption from Genesis 3:15 is given greater clarity and definition through the respective covenants tied to Abraham, Israel, and David, we can make better sense of how God's grand plan of redemption progressively unfolds in promise, prophecy, and type. As the covenants develop and unpack the various typological structures, and especially as the prophets recapitulate and project forward the typological patterns developed in those covenants and look forward to the arrival of a new and better covenant, what Goldsworthy rightly notes is better structured along the plotline of Scripture in terms of the *progression of the covenants*. In this light, we do not find persuasive his discussion of macro-typology and the unlimited number of types despite the restraint he places upon this discussion. If types are unlimited in number then it seems difficult to argue that something is or is not a type. A better way to proceed is to argue that typology is indeed limited and that it is through the biblical covenants that the typological structures are developed, clarified, and projected towards their eschatological fulfillment in Christ.

The Biblical Theology of G. K. Beale

Finally, in November of 2011 a magisterial volume entitled *A New Testament Biblical Theology* by G. K. Beale appeared.[26] Comparison of Beale's work and ours would require more than I can do in this article, but one difference between his approach and ours centers on how he unpacks the storyline of Scripture. Beale argues that the "thought" and "themes" of Genesis 1–3 and the later patterns based on it form the storyline of Scripture. His metanarrative turns out to be essentially creation, judgment, and new creation. He summarizes as follows:

> The Old Testament is the story of God, who progressively re-establishes his new-creational kingdom out of chaos over a sinful people by his word and Spirit

> through promise, covenant, and redemption, resulting in worldwide commission to the faithful to advance this kingdom and judgment (defeat or exile) for the unfaithful, unto his glory.[27]

We are the first to acknowledge that there is much that is good and right in Beale's work. It is filled with rich insights and is worth careful reflection. Beale correctly sees a covenant in Genesis 1–3, and he speaks of the commission of Adam inherited by Noah, Abraham, and Israel. Nonetheless, he does not provide a detailed unpacking of the biblical covenants. Instead he treats creation and new creation as the main themes of Scripture, but in our view, creation and new creation only serve as the bookends of the plot structure and not the structure itself. Beale fails to use the covenants to develop adequately and properly the plot structure *between* creation and new creation, although we fully agree with his description of inaugurated eschatology. It is not the case that the canon merely provides a repetition of the patterns and themes in Genesis 1–3 as we progress across redemptive-history. Instead, the covenants provide the structure and unfold the developing plot line of Scripture, and a detailed investigation of those covenants is necessary to understand God's eternal plan of salvation centred in Christ. Each covenant must be first placed in its own historical/textual context and then viewed inter-textually and canonically if we are truly going to grasp something of the whole counsel of God, especially the glory of the new covenant our Lord has inaugurated. It is for this reason that we are convinced that Beale's otherwise full treatment of subjects is not sufficient when he comes to the end of his work. Since he does not provide a detailed treatment of the covenantal unfolding which reaches its climax in Christ and the new covenant, he, in our view, wrongly identifies Sunday as a Christian Sabbath when the former is a sign of the new creation and the latter is a sign of the first creation and (now fulfilled) old covenant. He also argues for infant baptism, thus confusing the sign of the new covenant with circumcision as the sign for the Abrahamic covenant. These are distinct and separate as covenants and covenant signs. Thus Sabbath and baptism are not sufficiently discussed in their covenantal contexts and fulfillment in Christ. In the end, Beale leaves us with a sophisticated treatment of covenant theology which we are convinced needs to be modified in light of the Bible's own unfolding of the biblical covenants.

Conclusion

The book *Kingdom through Covenant* was never intended to be the final word on biblical theology. It was intended to be programmatic and suggestive of a way forward. Let us think for a moment on the preposition "through" in the title, *Kingdom through Covenant*. The authors understand the "through" in two ways. First, God is establishing his rule within his creation *through* covenant relationships, relationships of faithful loyal love, not by force. Second, the Kingdom of God comes historical *through* a progression and series of covenants unfolded in the complete canon of Scripture. Understanding each of these covenants as well as putting them together the way Scripture does, is the beginning of a biblical theology that will lead to a better systematic theology.

---

1 Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

2 Edward W. Klink and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).

3 See ibid., 31, 41.

4 Ibid., 75.

5 Ibid., 96.

6 Ibid., 140.

7 Ibid., 168.

8 Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012).

9 Ibid., 42

10 Ibid., 43

11 Ibid., 40, cf. 36.

12 N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

13 On this point, see Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 290-311.

14 James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010).

15 For the use of the term, intra-systematic categories, see Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002).

16 Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).

17 T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009).

18 G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 8.

19 Ibid., 86.

20 Ibid., 15, 165.

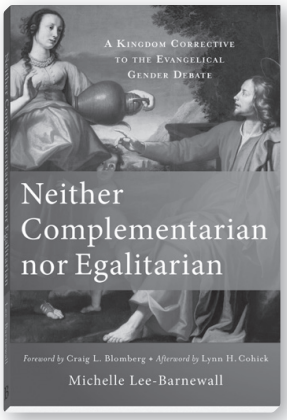
21 See footnote 8 for bibliography.

22 Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, 47.

23 Ibid., 112.

24 Ibid., 122.
25 Norbert Lohfink, *The Christian Meaning of the Old Testament*. Trans. of *Siegeslied am Schilfmeer* by R. A. Wilson (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1968).
26 G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).
27 Ibid., 87.

New from BAKER ACADEMIC



Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian

A Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate

Michelle Lee-Barnewall

978-0-8010-3957-7 • 240 pp. • $22.99p

"Read this book no matter which side of the debate you are on—and think afresh."

—**DARRELL BOCK**, Dallas Theological Seminary

Effective Generational Ministry

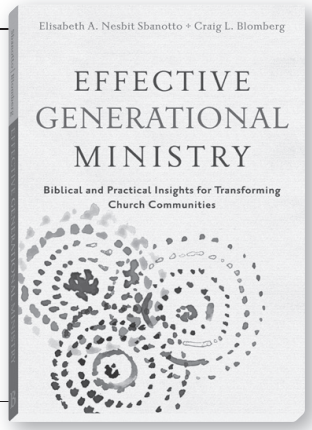
Biblical and Practical Insights for Transforming Church Communities

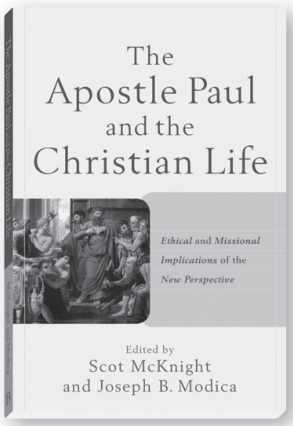
Elisabeth A. Nesbit Sbanotto and Craig L. Blomberg

978-0-8010-4948-4 • 304 pp. • $24.99p

"Equips ministers to effectively know, love, and serve the entire body of Christ."

—**DAVID SETRAN**, Wheaton College





The Apostle Paul and the Christian Life

Ethical and Missional Implications of the New Perspective

Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica, editors

978-0-8010-4976-7 • 224 pp. • $22.99p

"A stimulating and stirring read about what Paul means today!"

—**MICHAEL BIRD**, Ridley College

Baker Academic

bakeracademic.com

Available in bookstores or by calling 800.877.2665

Visit our blog: blog.bakeracademic.com

The Meaning of Circumcision in Israel: A Proposal for a Transfer of Rite from Egypt to Israel

John D. Meade

John D. Meade is Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Phoenix Seminary. Dr. Meade earned his Ph.D. in Old Testament at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is currently preparing a work on the ancient Christian canon lists for Oxford University Press (forthcoming 2017) and also the critical text of the hexaplaric fragments of Job for Peeters and the Hexapla Institute.

Introduction

The biblical text first mentions circumcision in Genesis 17, and researchers recognize that the meaning of the rite is innocuous in that context.[1] The following study attempts to illumine the meaning of the rite of circumcision in Genesis 17, and consequently Israel's circumcision in light of the background of the ancient Near East (ANE), specifically the Egyptian background.[2] In general, this paper presupposes the theses, which John Walton has outlined succinctly.[3] In particular, thesis two, "God often used existing institutions and converted them to his theological purposes," is useful when examining the issue of circumcision in the Old Testament (OT).[4] Genesis 17 does not assume a polemical nature, but rather assumes that the reader is already familiar with the rite of circumcision. If modern readers have the same understanding, then they would also be able to ascertain the significance of the Israelite rite.[5]

In order to demonstrate this point, I first argue for the probability of the Egyptian background to understanding Israelite circumcision over other less

possible ANE backgrounds. Second, I present the evidence of circumcision in Egypt around the time of Abraham, including a description of the actual rite itself, the age of the subject of the rite, the subjects of the rite, and the meaning of the rite in Egypt. Third, I endeavor to synthesize the conclusions from Egypt's practice and significance with what the OT reveals about circumcision in Genesis 17. This article argues that circumcision in Egypt functions as an initiatory rite to the service of the king-priest, identifying the priesthood as *belonging* to and *devoted* to the king-priest, who was also *affiliated* with the deity, Rā, through the same rite. It is this meaning that transfers to Abraham and Israel and illumines the meaning of circumcision in Israel's context.

The Probability of the Egyptian Background

From the biblical account of Abraham's sojourning, there are only three possible places where one could locate Abraham's background for understanding circumcision: "Ur of the Chaldeans," his sojourning in the land of Canaan, and Egypt.[6]

Ur of the Chaldeans

Genesis 11:28 says that Abraham was from "Ur of the Chaldeans." Some discussion has occurred over where exactly this Ur was. Most modern Bible atlases locate Abraham's Ur of the Chaldeans in southeast Mesopotamia on the west side of the Euphrates River in modern day Iraq, and show that Abraham's journey north to Haran commenced there. Another proposal by Cyrus Gordon would place Ur of the Chaldeans at Ura, which would be located directly northeast of Haran in North Syria.[7]

This geographical detail is significant if one posits a background for Abraham's circumcision in which it is understood as a polemic against and a rejection of his former country's (southern Ur) practice of non-circumcision.[8] If Abraham was not born in the East, then he probably never sojourned in a culture with a religion that did not practice circumcision, though one cannot be certain of the practice of peoples of the land of Canaan at this time (see below). Even if Abraham does come from the East (an area which did not practice circumcision), he still travels through North Syria on his way to Canaan, and might be introduced to the rite there.

Evidence of circumcision from three statues of warriors in North Syria dated around 2800 B.C. provides the earliest evidence of circumcision in the ANE to date.[9] These statues represent the full amputation of the prepuce similar to the operation, which the Hebrews would adopt about a millennium later.[10] Besides the evidence of these three statues, scholars have no more evidence of circumcision from this area. They do not know the significance of the rite or the proper subjects of it. Regarding the geographical origins of circumcision, Sasson argues tentatively, though probably rightly, that the rite of circumcision does originate in North Syria and travels south through Canaan to Egypt. He also seems to infer that Abraham would have received the rite from North Syria. Sasson's last inference remains only tentative for no scholar has ventured to argue exclusively for a North Syrian background for the circumcision of Abraham and Israel; rather, some propose the possibility of Abraham's acquaintance with the rite since Abraham arrives on the scene approximately a millennium after the date of the North Syrian evidence.[11]

The Land of Canaan

Genesis 12:5–9 records Abraham's first sojourn through the land of Canaan as he moves towards the South. DeRouchie is the first to suggest that West Semites in Palestine practiced circumcision with the operation of the full removal of the prepuce.[12] He introduces this evidence as possible contrary evidence to his own proposal which claimed only Israel performed circumcision with full amputation of the prepuce.[13] Since the Megiddo ivory dates after the time of Abraham and Israel's Exodus, even if DeRouchie's thirteenth century date is correct, and since this study does not depend on whether Israel's practice of full amputation of the prepuce is unique from the other nations, one may safely dismiss the Canaanite background to the circumcision of Abraham and Israel.[14]

Egypt

Genesis 12:10–20 transitions to Abraham's sojourn in Egypt causing Egypt to be considered a possible background for the circumcision of Abraham and Israel. However, not many scholars have explored this background.[15] James' suggestion is based on a nomadic reconstruction of the national history of Israel, and his insight into the transfer of the rite of circumcision from Egypt to Israel will be examined in more detail below.

Evidence of circumcision in Egypt is attested prior to Abraham[16] and contemporary with him (ca. XII dynasties=2134–1786 B.C.).[17] Any proposed background of circumcision must be able to explain how the same rite given to Abraham around 2000 B.C. in Genesis 17 also passes to the nation of Israel approximately 400 years later (Exod 4:24–26, 12:44,48; Lev 12:3; Josh 5:2–9).[18] The Egyptian background qualifies for this common milieu between Israel and her patriarchs. Another possibility is that the Aramean side of the family possessed the North Syrian tradition of circumcision and that Abram passed it down to his offspring along with the rest of the tradition of the promises.

Conclusion

Since one does not know the significance of circumcision in North Syria, it is impossible to draw comparisons between it and Abraham's circumcision except for the similar outward form of the full amputation of the prepuce. However, there are three reasons that make a North Syrian background improbable for Israel's circumcision. First, the temporal proximity of the Egyptian evidence of circumcision to the time of Abraham favors Egypt rather than the temporal remoteness of the evidence of circumcision from North Syria. The evidence from North Syria is too isolated to know certainly whether the rite was actually practiced during the time of Abraham, since we have no evidence of the rite in this location within a millennium of Abraham's life.

Second, if the rite travels from north to south, there is no way of knowing how it changed from culture to culture, if it even changed at all. If the rite of circumcision primitively was a fertility rite or a puberty rite related to marriage, as many scholars believe, then one may argue that Egypt did alter its meaning.[19] One does not know whether the Egyptians altered the significance of circumcision or preserved the same significance as North Syria. The formal operation differed (see Egyptian operation below), but this does not necessarily indicate a change in significance.

Third, and most importantly, an Egyptian background logically accounts for both Abraham and Israel, since Israel comes exclusively from Egypt. The other alternative milieus for Abraham cannot account for Israel's Egyptian milieu.

Egyptian Circumcision

Egyptology and ethnology provide evidence of circumcision from various periods of Egypt's history from the VI dynasty to the Roman period. Specialists have examined this evidence seeking answers to the following questions: circumcision technique, age of the subject, the subject of the rite, and the meaning of the rite. These aspects will be compared and contrasted with Israel's circumcision.

Circumcision Technique

Since the work of Frans Jonckheere, scholars have come to near universal agreement over Egyptian circumcision technique.[20] Describing the procedure, he says, "Thus we say that everything culminates to establish that, in Ancient Egypt, the surgical rite of circumcision consisted of an elementary maneuver: the liberation of the glans, obtained by making a facile dorsal splitting of the prepuce."[21] Therefore Egyptian circumcision does not consist of the full amputation of the prepuce, as Hebrew circumcision does.

This difference primarily (other differences remain) has caused scholars to recoil from establishing a relationship between Egyptian and Hebrew circumcision. Sasson calls this difference a "problem,"[22] which manifests itself in Joshua 5:2–9. Space does not permit a full exegesis of this text, but Sasson's conclusion invites some interaction. He interprets Israel's "second circumcision" in Joshua 5:2 as an "improvement" upon the prior incomplete Egyptian circumcision. He believes that Jonckheere's study provides warrant for this understanding. Also, he interprets 5:9 saying, "In this context, God's remark in verse 9 becomes clearer. When the deed was accomplished, he states: 'This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.'"[23] Sasson views the two circumcision techniques as incompatible, and therefore he seeks other contexts from which Israel might have received the rite.[24]

Joshua 5:2–9, however, contains difficulties for interpretation. Bruce Waltke presents two interpretive options:

> On the one hand, that portion of the united militia who were forty years and older may have had to be circumcised again because the Egyptian circumcision was an incomplete slit, unlike the Israelite complete circumcision. This interpretation best explains the emphasis on flint knives, which were plentiful in Palestine but

> not in Egypt, and the reference to the reproach of Egypt (Josh 5:9). On the other hand, that older portion may have been reckoned as the first circumcision, and those under forty, who were not circumcised in the desert, the second. This interpretation best suits verses 4–7.[25]

Waltke's second option is to be preferred. The discourse function of verses 4–7 (*waw* + non-verb) provides the background or the occasion for the second circumcision: all the ones who came out of Egypt were circumcised, but the ones born in the desert were *not circumcised*. The narrative resumes with verse 8 (*wayyʾhî*). The reproach of Egypt refers to the uncircumcision of the Israelites during the wilderness wandering, and is not necessarily a polemical statement against the incomplete Egyptian circumcision.[26] The problem was uncircumcision, not necessarily an incomplete circumcision.[27]

The question still remains whether the difference of outward form between the Egyptian and Israelite operations is problematic for establishing the transfer of the rite from Egypt to Israel. Although a difference of operation existed, one may still maintain the probability of the transfer of the rite from Egypt to Israel, since the same basic rite of cutting the male's prepuce does not change. God did not use a rite, which included the cutting of the ear or hand and transfer that rite to a Hebrew male's prepuce. This transfer would be less probable to imagine. In this case God took an already existing Egyptian rite of the incomplete cutting of the male's prepuce, with which Israel would have been familiar, and modified the operation for his purposes.

Age of the Subject of the Rite

For a comparative study of this nature, ascertaining the age of the subject submitting to this rite is important, for this understanding will also aid in focusing on who the culture saw fit to receive the rite. We will first examine the Egyptian evidence, compare it to the generally accepted assumption of circumcision in all cultures, and finally compare it to the Hebrew situation.

The Egyptian evidence for age of the subject is difficult to ascertain with certainty. Ability to make precise calculations of age based on textual evidence eludes scholars, thus one can only make generalizations based on pictorial evidence. The evidence from mummies is irrelevant for this question. Only the plastic representations advance our knowledge at this point, and even this evidence may not be as conclusive as one might presume.[28]

The evidence from Egypt points to an age range of 6–14,[29] causing scholars such as Jonckheere and Sasson to conclude that the rite may have two possible meanings: 1) a prenuptial or marriage rite, or 2) puberty rite or rite of passage into manhood.[30] Both of these scholars favor the second option, but the work of other scholars may bring more illumination to the work of Sasson and Jonckheere.

These conclusions pertaining to Egypt seem to agree with the generally accepted conclusion that those ancient civilizations which practiced circumcision, did so at either an age of entrance into manhood or at an age of entrance into marriage.[31] In the case of other civilizations one must remain content with these general conclusions. There is, however, more evidence from Egypt that casts light on the rite in question.

According to the known evidence from the ANE, Israel is the only nation to circumcise all of its male infants on the eighth day.[32] The significance of this contrast will be extracted, once the Egyptian significance of the rite is described.

The Subject of the Rite

A few scholars make a distinction between the question of subject and the question of age. The majority of scholars listed above collapse the age and subject questions drawing implications based on the age of the subject alone. For these scholars to conclude that circumcision in Egypt is a general marriage or puberty rite, they must also demonstrate that Egyptian males of all classes *generally* practiced circumcision, and show that circumcision was not *specifically a rule* for the royal and priestly classes. From the outset, it is interesting to note that Josephus recognizes the circumcision of Egyptian priests in Greco-Roman times. Furthermore, Aylward M. Blackwood notes, "By a law of Hadrian only priests might be circumcised. If a candidate proved his priestly descent and his freedom from blemish, permission was granted to circumcise. Until he had been circumcised, no person could exercise the priestly office."[33] This question is crucial for this study, and it has also been a relevant question for Egyptologists and ethnologists. However, not all of these scholars have probed the depths of this question equally.[34]

Though the evidence is not wholly conclusive, and there are still unknown factors due to research complications,[35] some scholars maintain that circumcision was obligatory and reserved for priests and royalty and not obligatory for the lower classes.[36] The case is established on the grounds that even

though evidence of circumcision exists among members of the lower class during the Ancient Empire (III–VI Dynasties=2680–2180 B.C.),[37] it is probably not a general or obligatory practice in this class, since we have evidence of uncircumcised Egyptians from this time.[38] However, there is enough evidence to conclude that circumcision was obligatory for priestly and royal classes, for the evidence from these mummies and texts indicates that males of the royal-priestly courts submitted to circumcision from the time of the Ancient Kingdom.[39]

Two pieces of textual evidence must be exposited. The first is from the 1st Intermediate Period (2180–2040 B.C.), which is just prior to the time of Abraham. Jonckheere accidentally omitted this piece of evidence from his study, but Stracmans has examined it in detail. Naga-Ed-Dêr contained 87 stelae, which Dows Dunham collected and examined. Of particular interest for this study, stele 84 mentions circumcision.[40] Besides the simple reference to circumcision in this text, there are other relevant facts for this study. Stracmans comments on both the picture and the text. The picture depicts Ouha standing in the appropriate or royal stance, but more importantly Ouha is "holding a scepter of consecration with one hand, and a rod of ceremony in the other."[41] Stracmans draws attention to other details in the text of the stele that both *ANET* and Dunham neglect: the speaker, Ouha, identifies himself among other appellations as the Chancellor of the King … Lector-Priest.[42] In this role, he most probably belonged to the royal clergy along with the majority of the young men of the palace. At this title, he had to be circumcised in his adolescence along with 120 of his fellows.[43] Stracmans interprets the scene as a boast at the memory of the initiation ceremony, which Ouha and 120 others had to endure so that they might enter into the service of the king-priest.

The second piece of evidence comes from the XII dynasty (ca. 2000 B.C.), which is contemporary to Abraham. Stracmans notes that although Jonckheere examined one of these three texts, he neglected its full implications for the subject and meaning of Egyptian circumcision.[44] The three texts have one common component: they refer to royal members of the palace. The second and third texts have a common component since they clearly refer to circumcision,[45] while the first text refers conspicuously to "when the knot was not yet loosed to me."[46] The genre of these texts is biography or autobiography constructed in the royal stereotypical form.[47] These texts

do not refer to kings, but it is often the case that these themes and eulogies of the stelae of princes and rulers of the Court were borrowed from the stelae and royal monuments raised in honor of the kings.[48] As members of the king's court they would naturally undergo circumcision, since the king himself underwent circumcision.[49]

We may make some preliminary conclusions concerning Egyptian circumcision. First, Egyptian technique differed from the Hebrew technique since the former was only an incision of the prepuce, while the latter fully amputated the prepuce. Second, the evidence indicates that Egyptian males were circumcised between 6–14 years old. Third, the evidence indicates that not all Egyptian males of the lower class underwent circumcision in the Ancient Kingdom, showing that the rite was not obligatory or general for this class. In contrast the evidence seems to indicate that circumcision was the rule for the king and his priests from the earliest times.[50] This last conclusion constitutes the final point of contrast with the rite in Israel, since circumcision was a general rite applied to *every* male Israelite (Gen 17:10). Though the subject of the rite differs between the cultures, it is the Egyptian circumcision of priests, which will illumine the meaning of the right in the case of Israel.

Meaning of the Rite

Since Egyptian circumcision has more significance than a puberty rite or a marriage/fertility rite, one should seek to assign another meaning to Egyptian circumcision.[51] Proponents of the puberty/marriage rite views have not sufficiently interacted with all of the available evidence from Egypt, and they have not provided satisfactory interpretations of the evidence. Neither do meanings of hygiene or medical procedure explain the evidence.[52] Here we attempt to provide an alternative proposal, which establishes the special, obligatory, and ancient character of the circumcision of priests in Egypt.

The work of Stracmans has already introduced the idea of initiation, which would mean that circumcision "aggregates the young circumcised to the service and to the cult of the reigning king."[53] One may perceive the evidence of the initiatory nature of circumcision in Egypt, if one is acquainted with the general characteristics of initiation rites.[54] Evidence of these characteristics in Egypt demonstrates that circumcision was indeed part of an initiatory rite in Ancient Egypt.[55] Stracmans' work on the Naga-Ed-Dêr stele also

indicated the presence of "games" (the scratching and the clawing) at the time of circumcision.[56] Stracmans combines the evidence of this stele with the bas-relief of the British Museum and compared it to modern practice and concluded that Ancient Egyptian circumcision was part of an initiation ceremony, in particular an initiation into the royal clergy.

Although Stracmans, Foucart, James, and Blackwood recognize the initiatory nature of Egyptian circumcision, they must still provide more specific conclusions. What does it mean to enter the service of the king-priest, who also was circumcised? What did it mean for the king-priest to be circumcised? A reference to the circumcision of Rā himself is crucial at this juncture, for it clarifies the meaning of the circumcision of the Pharaoh himself.[57] When one understands the circumcision of Pharaoh as an imitation of Rā's circumcision, it then may be understood as an identification sign of belonging or affiliation with the deity. The same meaning of affiliation would also apply to the royal clergy of the Pharaoh. As E. O. James comments on the transfer of the rite in Egypt to Israel, he also recognizes the initiatory meaning of the rite in Egypt:

> If the original conception of circumcision [in Egypt] was that of deification, or union with a god, as in the consecration ceremony, the rite would readily become a covenant sign when once the divine kingship was abandoned in favor of the notion of a holy nation consecrated to Jahweh. If such installation was part of the original pattern of myth and ritual which influenced Hebrew religion in its formative period, it has undergone a process of disintegration in its fresh environment. This may have resulted from its transmission through the Canaanites, if Gilgal was an ancient sanctuary at which initiation ceremonies were performed.[58]

James has correctly grasped the significance of circumcision in Egypt, but he provides objections to a full transfer of these ideas to the Israelite rite asserting that Canaan may have mediated the rite to Israel.

Conclusion

The conclusions of the above section have moved from more probable to less probable. The evidence certainly indicates that Egypt practiced an incomplete circumcision as opposed to Israel's complete amputation of the prepuce. Furthermore, no evidence indicates that Egyptians circumcised their infants, but Egyptian males were circumcised around the age of adolescence

or younger (ca. 6–14 years of age).

The evidence for the subject of circumcision was found to be conflicting, and therefore an obstacle to certainty. Since there is evidence of circumcision outside of the royal-priestly classes (in the Ancient Kingdom), conclusions concerning the subject of the rite must remain tentative. However, there is evidence of uncircumcision among the lower classes, and circumcision among the royal-priestly class was the rule according to the textual and mummy evidence. Therefore, the rite was obligatory for all priests and kings, but not obligatory for the laity.

The assignment of meaning to circumcision proved to be the most challenging. Some scholars favored a puberty rite based on the age question alone (see Sasson and Jonckheere), while others considered it a rite of initiation into the cult, as a sign which identified one as specially devoted to the god for service. In the final analysis, the conclusion that accounted for the most evidence and was able to explain the circumcision of Rā and the circumcision of the royal court of the Pharaoh was that Egyptian circumcision functioned as *a specific, voluntary, and initiatory rite to identify and affiliate the subject with the deity and to signify devotion to the same deity*.

Synthesis with Israel's Circumcision

Egyptologists and ethnologists have devoted significant time to the study of Egyptian circumcision, but generally they have presented their research irrespective of Israel's circumcision with the exception of an occasional passing comment.[59] With rare exception, biblical scholars have neglected to incorporate the insights of these scholars into their research.[60] Therefore, a thoroughgoing synthesis of the above conclusions with the Israelite practice still needs to be explored, considering particularly how Israel might have received and understood the modifications to the Egyptian rite of circumcision. We will first review the putative obstacles of the proposed transfer, and then we will examine the ways that Egyptian circumcision aids in understanding Israelite circumcision.

Putative Obstacles

I have already highlighted the differences between the two practices (technique, age, specific to priesthood), and have noted where scholars have viewed

these differences as problems or obstacles for the transfer between Egyptian and Israelite cultures. The underlying assumption of these scholars is probably that the rite must be an exact parallel in order to conclude with certainty that the Israelites obtained the rite from the Egyptians. However, one must consider the possibility that God modifies already existing structures and makes them productive in his own revelation to his people.[61] For example, the difference of age could be interpreted as God revealing to every Israelite family through circumcision that the male child is already consecrated to God, and does not need to wait till adolescence for initiation through circumcision into the family of the priesthood, the kingdom of priests. On the eighth day, his initiation is complete. Furthermore, the difference of subjects of the rite would communicate to *every* Israelite male and his family that he is a priest to God and affiliated with the priesthood consecrated to Yahweh, whereas in Egypt, only *certain* males would have this type of relationship with the deity. Therefore the alleged obstacles of some scholars actually become the grounds for theologizing in the Israelite context.[62]

One more possible objection remains for our proposal of the transfer of the rite of circumcision from Egypt to Israel. We have already alluded to James' objection to the transfer of *meaning*, even though James concludes that Egypt participates in Israel's obtaining of circumcision.[63] However, he then claims that the *meaning* changed in the transfer process. In particular, James argues that the notion of divine kingship was abandoned in favor of the notion of a holy nation consecrated to Yahweh,[64] but it is precisely at this point that James' reconstruction becomes unpersuasive. First, James assumes a nomadic stage in the history of Israel, where some Hebrew tribes may have received the rite of circumcision from the Canaanites without its significance for the king-priest of Egypt. As a related point, James also depends on source critical theory, which does not place circumcision in prominence until the post-exilic period. But some have suggested that P comes before D, and therefore P would be proximate to the monarchy.[65] Therefore, even if this theory is granted, circumcision and the divine kingship would be in sharp focus simultaneously. Second, the canonical shape of the text presents Israel as a son of God (Exod 4:22–23) after the pattern of Adam (Gen 1:26; Genesis 9), which indicates that Israel resumes the role of viceroy, which began with Adam and was upheld with Noah. James perceives correctly the role of Israel's monarchy in 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 2, but he does not note

that according to the canonical shape of the text the Davidic monarchy is instituted in order to accomplish God's plan for the nation (Exod 19:4–6). These sons of God are affiliated with the God of Israel as his representatives in a similar way that Pharaoh was affiliated with the deity.

Instead of parsing monarchy and circumcision as James deems necessary, the better synthesis will preserve these two notions side by side. This means that Israelite circumcision will still identify the nation of Israel as the king-priest, the son of Yahweh, consecrated to his service. As an identity sign, this sign would also function as a reminder of Israel's relationship to Yahweh according to Fox.

The alleged objections of (1) the difference between the external forms of circumcision and (2) the reconstructed transfer process are not persuasive enough to overturn the thesis that God revealed circumcision to Abraham and Israel through the Egyptian rite and significance, though he modified important aspects of it. In light of the Egyptian background, these modifications spotlight the theological significance of circumcision for Israel.[66]

Israelite Circumcision in Light of Egypt

The Egyptian background of circumcision illumines the OT text in at least three places in which Yahweh comes into covenant relationship with his servants. First, and most importantly, God adds the rite of circumcision to an already existing covenant relationship (cf. Gen 15:18, where the Hebrew verb כרת means to initiate a covenant.).[67] What does circumcision contribute to this covenantal relationship? The answers to this question have rested between viewing Abraham's circumcision as a reminder to God to keep his promise of posterity[68] to a multi-valent meaning including malediction and consecration.[69]

This study agrees with the latter of these conclusions. One cannot simply reduce Genesis 17 to fertility and progeny, since Genesis 17:1–2 reviews the relational-covenantal nature of the Abrahamic narrative. The covenant includes other notions such as nation, name, and blessing (Gen 12:1–3).[70] Second, Genesis 9:14–15 specifically indicates that the sign of the rainbow is to remind God, whereas Genesis 17 gives no such explicit indication.[71] Third, Fox relies on the alleged original meaning of circumcision as fertility rite, which causes him to focus on progeny in this text.[72] It should be clear that Fox cannot rely so confidently on this meaning of circumcision, since at least Egypt does not seem to admit of such significance.

Although others have concluded that circumcision means consecration, their conclusions may be further buttressed by these conclusions, since this study properly locates this meaning in the ANE at a time contemporary with Abraham and Israel. According to the Egyptian background already ascertained, circumcision functions as a sign of remembrance to Abraham and his offspring that they are affiliated with Yahweh or devoted to him, just as the king-priest and his clergy in Egypt were specially devoted to the deity. This conclusion about circumcision corresponds well with the already inaugurated covenant relationship of Genesis 15:18. The call to relationship and covenantal responsibility to God in Genesis 17:1–2 become signified in the rite of circumcision.

Second, just as the king-priest was the son of the god in Egypt, and was consecrated to him through circumcision,[73] Israel as the first born son of Yahweh (Exod 4:22–23) has undergone and will undergo circumcision (Josh 5:2–9) in order to be consecrated to his service.[74]

Third, only the priests were obligated to be circumcised in Egypt, but in Israel *every* male was to be circumcised on the eighth day (Gen 17:12), signifying that Abraham's family consists of priests. Later in the story Israel is called a *kingdom of priests* and a holy nation (Exod 19:6). The phrase "holy nation" also means consecrated to God or belonging to God and would complement the meaning of kingdom of priests.[75] As a kingdom of priests, circumcision is the appropriate sign for the people of Israel, for it will remind every male Israelite that he is a priest, specially consecrated to Yahweh and his service.

Conclusion

We have argued that the most plausible background for understanding Abraham's and Israel's circumcision is Egypt. Egypt satisfies the common milieu criterion, necessary for their understanding of circumcision. Second, we argued that circumcision in Egypt means affiliation or identification with the deity and devotion to his service. The rite was obligatory for all priests to the deity, while the evidence suggests that circumcision was not forced upon the laity. Third, we argued that although formal differences existed between the Egyptian rite and the Israelite rite, these differences actually functioned as the grounds for significant theologizing in Israel. In Israel every male baby is consecrated or devoted to God at eight days old. The family of Abraham and Sarah were to be signified as the priesthood of Yahweh from birth.

Appendix: Extra-biblical Evidence of Circumcision[76]

No.	Date	Location	Ancient Source	Subject of Circumcision	Modern Source
1	4th Millennium BCE	Egypt	Palette	Enemies of Egypt (Western Asiatics?)	Sasson, 1966; Jonckheere, 1951
2	2800 BCE	ʻAmuq valley (North Syria)	3 Bronze Figurines	3 Warriors	Sasson, 1966
3	VI Dynasty (c. 2200 BCE)	Egypt (Saqqara)	Text + Plastique	12–14 year old (judging from plastique)	Jonckheere, 1951
4	First Intermediate Period (c. 2180–2040 BCE)	Egypt (Naga-ed-Dêr)	Stele 84	Ouha, Lector-Priest	Stracmans, 1955
5	XII Dynasty (c. 2134–1786 BCE)	Egypt (Khnoumhetep II of Beni-Hassan)	Stele	A prince of the King (underwent circumcision as a child)	Jonckheere, 1951; Stracmans, 1959
6	XII Dynasty (c. 2134–1786 BCE)	Egypt	Stele (preserved in Florence)	Sesostris 1st (child)	Stracmans, 1959
7	XII Dynasty (c. 2134–1786 BCE)	Egypt (Heliopolis)	Stele (copy on leather from the New Kingdom)	Sesostris 1st (child)	Stracmans, 1959
8	Beginning of New Empire (1552–1069 BCE)	Egypt	Book of the Dead (papyrus text)	Rā	Jonckheere, 1951
9	XIX Dynasty (c. 1552–1069 BCE)	Egypt (Ruins of Ramesses)	Text (ostracon)	?	Jonckheere, 1951
10	New Empire (c. 1552–1069 BCE)	Egypt (Karnak)	Plastique	6–8 year old	Jonckheere, 1951
11	c. 1500 BCE	Egypt	Ebers Papyrus (88, 10–12)	?	Jonckheere, 1951
12	c. 13th Century BCE	Megiddo	Ivory	Prisoners	DeRouchie, 2004
13	XXV Dynasty (c. 800 BCE)	Egypt	Stele (Piankhi)	King was "pure" in the sense of circumcised	Jonckheere, 1951

1 Michael V. Fox, "The Sign of the Covenant: Circumcision in Light of the Priestly *ʼôt* Etiologies," *RB* 81 (1974): 557. John Goldingay, "The Significance of Circumcision," *JSOT* 88 (2000): 3.

2 Cf. the Appendix listing the relevant evidence from Egypt and elsewhere in the ancient Near East.

3 John H. Walton, "Ancient Near Eastern Background Studies," *Dictionary for the Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, 40–45.

4 Ibid., 42. Though Walton provides circumcision as an example of this thesis, I do not accept his particular interpretation of Scripture's use of circumcision in the ANE, and I will provide an alternative interpretation, which will still remain consistent with Walton's point.

5 For a biblical-theological treatment of circumcision, cf. John D. Meade "Circumcision of the Heart in Leviticus and Deuteronomy: Divine Means for Resolving Curse and Bringing Blessing" *SBJT* (2014): 59–85; Idem, "Circumcision of the Flesh to Circumcision of the Heart: The Developing Typology of the

Sign of the Abrahamic Covenant" in *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville: B&H, 2016), 127–158.

6 The writer was surprised at the omission of the possibility of an Egyptian background on the part of those scholars who considered this question. See Jason S. DeRouchie, "Circumcision in the Hebrew Bible and Targums: Theology, Rhetoric, and the Handling of Metaphor," *BBR* 14 (2004): 189 n. 25. DeRouchie is exemplary in this respect, since he considers Ur of the Chaldeans and Canaan, but he omits Egypt from discussion. Meredith G. Kline, "Oath and Ordeal Signs," *WTJ* 27 (1964–65): 115–39; Fox, "Sign of the Covenant," 557–96; Goldingay, "Significance of Circumcision," 3–18; Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (trans. John McHugh; New York: Mcgraw-Hill Book Company, 1961).

7 Cyrus H. Gordon, "Abraham and the Merchants of Ura," *JNES* 17 (1958): 30–31. See also Cyrus H. Gordon, "Abraham of Ur," in *Hebrew and Semitic Studies Presented to G. R. Driver* (eds. D. W. Thomas and W. D. McHardy; Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 77–84. More recently Hershel Shanks has defended this proposal in Hershel Shanks, "Abraham's Ur: Is the Pope Going to the Wrong Place?" *BAR* 26/1 (Jan/Feb 2000): 16–19, 66–67. See Shank's map on page 19 for the contrast between the two proposed locations. Gordon handles the seeming linguistic discrepancy between the two names as an inter-Semitic difference. The *-a* in Ura may be long (Aramaic definite article "the City or Station," cf. LXX) or short in which case it would be indicating the oblique case of a diptotic place name. Either way, this ending is not part of the root and would be dropped in later Hebrew. This view accounts for some of the geographical problems with the southern Ur, such as the crossing of the Euphrates (e.g. Josh 24:2–3) and the mention of the Kesed (Kasdim; "Chaldeans") in Gen 22:22 shortly after Aram.

8 There is no evidence of circumcision in Eastern Semitic countries such as Assyria and Babylon. See Jack M. Sasson, "Circumcision in the Ancient Near East," *JBL* 85 (1966): 476. Also for this particular proposal of the significance of circumcision in Gen 17 and its deft refutation, see DeRouchie, "Circumcision," 189 n. 25.

9 Sasson, "Circumcision," 476.

10 Ibid., 475–6.

11 Along with Sasson, see DeRouchie, "Circumcision," 189 n. 25.

12 DeRouchie has introduced a thirteenth century ivory plaque from Megiddo into the discussion. For the history of interpretation of this ivory see DeRouchie, "Circumcision in the Hebrew Bible and Targums," 188 n. 24. The picture represents two nude prisoners circumcised with the full amputation of the foreskin in a way similar to the Hebrew practice (cf. *ANEP*, 332).

13 This evidence would not be the only problem to DeRouchie's proposal. DeRouchie does not seem conscious of the fact that he has appealed to North Syrian evidence (full amputation of the prepuce) possibly to establish Abraham's circumcision, but then proceeds to claim that only Israel from 2000 B.C. to roughly 125 AD practiced the rite in this way. Either DeRouchie is certain that North Syria no longer practiced the rite in this way around 2000 B.C., which may weaken the evidence for Abraham's reception of the rite from the North, or DeRouchie is simply inconsistent on this very complicated point.

14 Jer 9:24–25 only mentions those peoples, which practice incomplete circumcision in Arabia, Egypt, and Canaan (Edom, Ammon and Moab). We will revisit this point below, but see Richard C. Steiner, "Incomplete Circumcision in Egypt and Edom: Jeremiah (9:24–25) in the Light of Josephus and Jonckheere," *JBL* 118 (1999): 497–505. For primary sources, which refer to the practice of circumcision among other nations without reference to mode of operation, see Herodotus, *Historia* 2.36, 37, 104. Herodotus concludes that the Egyptians, Colchians, and Ethiopians were the only nations to have practiced circumcision at first, and he could not decide which nation received the rite from the other. For circumcision among the Arabs, see Josephus, *Ant.* 1.214. For Philo's statement concerning the circumcision of Jews, Arabs, Egyptians, Ethiopians, and "nearly all those who inhabit the southern regions near the torrid zone" see Philo, *Supplement I* 3.48. For circumcision among the Idumaeans, see Josephus, *Ant*.12.257–8. For a detailed discussion of whether Jer 9:24–25 refers to the inception of circumcision among the Idumaeans (traditional reading) or whether at this time they conform their already existing practice of circumcision to that of the Jews, see Steiner, "Incomplete Circumcision," 503–4.

15 An exception to the rule is E. O. James, "Initiatory Rituals," in *Myth and Ritual* (ed. S. H. Hooke; London: Oxford, 1933), 155. James comments, "The cumulative effect of this evidence justifies us in supposing that the sojourn of a section of the Hebrew tribes in the valley of the Nile may have played some part in the adoption of the rite as the initiation *par excellence* into the covenant of Israel."

16 See *ANEP*, 629 for a picture of the well-known relief from the VI Dynasty (ca. 2180) from Sakkarah. Dates in this paper depend on Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Egypt," in *NBD* 294. Kitchen locates Abraham during the

Egyptian XI–XII dynasties (ca. 2134–1786 B.C.).

17 Frans, Jonckheere, "La circonsion [*sic*] des anciens égyptiens," *Centaurus* 1 (1951): 214. Jonckheere points to a text drawn from the funerary biography of a prince from the Middle Empire, Knoumhetep II of Beni-Hasan of the XII Dynasty (ca. 2180–1786 B.C.), which clearly evidences the practice of circumcision during this time. He concludes, "The phrase of Khnoumhetep thus cleanly locks up a precise indication referring to circumcision."

18 Historical critical explanations normally assign Gen 17 to P (postexilic), while they assign Exod 4:24–26 to J or E (the monarchy). William E. Propp assigns Josh 5:2–9 to P as well. See William H. Propp, "The Origins of Infant Circumcision in Israel," *HAR* 11 (1987): 357, 359.

19 This assertion regarding the origin of circumcision is prevalent in the literature, but I could not find the ancient evidence which supports it. See the examples of Fox, "Sign of the Covenant," 591–2; De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 47; Adolphe Lods, *Israel: From its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century* (trans. S.H. Hooke; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD., 1932), 198; Paul R. Williamson, "Circumcision," in *DOTP*, 122; Propp, "Origins of Infant Circumcision," 355 n. 1. Fox attempts to give anthropological evidence, which reveals that some tribes perform circumcision before marriage today, but although anthropological studies have a crucial role in this discussion, one must, as Fox does, remember the tenuous nature of such evidence, when attempting to establish ancient practice and significance (Fox, "Sign of the Covenant," 591).

20 Sasson, "Circumcision," 474; Steiner, "Incomplete Circumcision," 503; and DeRouchie, "Circumcision," 187 accept the conclusions of Jonckheere's study. For a dissenting opinion see Paul Ghalioungui, *Magic and Medical Science in Ancient Egypt* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), 96–97. Ghalioungui's reason for doubt comes from the Greek historian Strabo, who may indicate two parts to the circumcision operation: 1) the longitudinal cut on the medial line, and 2) then a circular one, around the base of the first. However, even Ghalioungui recognizes that one must be cautious with Strabo's statements. In the final analysis, Jonckheere's primary evidence from the *plastiques* and from mummies (see note 21) combined with Jer 9:24–25 should take priority over the comments of Strabo.

21 Jonckheere, "Circoncision," 228. Jonckheere indicates that two procedures of incomplete circumcision existed in Egypt: either 1) to longitudinally split the prepuce on the medial line, or 2) to make immediately an excision taking away a triangular scrap (225; for comparison see Fig. 3, 226; see Fig. 4 and 5 for the evidence of both procedures).

22 Sasson, "Circumcision," 474.

23 Ibid., 474.

24 Ibid., 474. In addition to the difference of circumcision technique between Egypt and Israel, Sasson also includes the difference in the age of the subject of circumcision (see below) and the subject itself (see below). He notes that the question of whether circumcision was universal or obligatory in Egypt remains undecided.

25 Bruce K. Waltke, "Circumcision," *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity* (eds. R. Banks and R. P. Stevens; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997), 144.

26 Cf. Gen 34:14 where uncircumcision is identified as a "reproach."

27 Jer 9:24–25 attests that Scripture makes this distinction between uncircumcised (reproach) and incomplete or "circumcised with the foreskin." See Steiner, "Incomplete Circumcision," 503. Steiner thinks that Jonckheere's conclusions furnish more support to his understanding of Jer 9:24–25, than Sasson's conclusion on Josh 5:2 (503).

28 Jonckheere, "Circoncision," 231. He says, "It [age] must be decided by interpreting the age attained by the individuals reproduced on the two reliefs speaking of circumcision. Now, do we need to recall that in Egypt the representation of the human figure is very often conventional? The man is generally reproduced without taking account of his age and without always taking care to endow him with an express fullness of physique."

29 Ghalioungui, *Magic and Medical Science in Egypt*, 150.

30 Jonckheere, "Circoncision," 232. Sasson, "Circumcision," 474. Sasson says, "In Egypt, however, texts, sculptures, and mummies seem to support the conclusion that babies never underwent the operation; it was reserved for either a period of prenuptial ceremonies or, more likely, for initiation into the state of manhood." The evidence only confirms the first part of Sasson's statement concerning babies, but the evidence does not confirm his positive proposal.

31 In addition to the sources mentioned in n. 19, see Robert G. Hall, "Circumcision," *ABD* 1:1026; Philip J. King, "Circumcision: Who Did It, Who Didn't and Why," *BAR* (Jul/Aug 2006): 50.

32 King, "Circumcision," 50.

[33] See Josephus, *Against Apion*, trans. by H. St. J. Thackeray, in *Josephus I*, ed. by G.P. Goold, [LCL], vol. 186 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 349. Josephus' testimony may indicate ancient practice, but it certainly remains consistent with Egyptian practice in Greco-Roman times. See Aylward M. Blackwood, "Priest, Priesthood (Egyptian)," in *ERE* (ed. James Hastings; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 299b.

[34] For scholars who only question but do not seek to answer whether circumcision was general/specific and obligated/voluntary in Egypt, see Jonckheere, "Circoncision," 231; Sasson, "Circumcision in the Ancient Near East," 474 (cf. n. 10). Unfortunately, other scholars do not even seem to be aware of the question when they attempt to understand the significance of circumcision in the OT, see Fox, "The Sign of the Covenant . . .," 592; Goldingay, "The Significance of Circumcision," 3–18; Hall, "Circumcision," 1026; de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions,* 47; Lods, *Israel: From its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century*, 198; King, "Circumcision: Who Did It, Who Didn't and Why," 48–55.

[35] George Foucart, "Circumcision (Egyptian)," in *ERE* (ed. James Hastings; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 674a. Foucart mentions that early in mummy research, the mummies of the high priests of Amon and their families were scattered all over the world and distributed among 17 museums. Unfortunately the strength of that collection was its unity.

[36] Foucart, "Circumcision (Egyptian)," 674a–b, 675b.

[37] Ibid., 673a. Foucart indicates that for this time period nothing more may be said about the generality or the character of the practice. See also James, "Initiatory Rituals," 155.

[38] Maurice Stracmans, "Encore un texte peu connue relative à la circoncision des anciens égyptiens," *Archivo Internationale di Etnografia e Preistoria*, 2 (1959): 11–12. Unfortunately, most scholars have either overlooked the research of Stracmans, or they have not presented his ideas fully enough for others to appreciate his work. Sasson is an example of the latter, for he mentions the work of Stracmans, but he does not give the reader a lucid presentation of his evidence or his arguments. See Sasson, "Circumcision in the Ancient Near East," 474 (cf. n. 10).

[39] Foucart, "Circumcision (Egyptian)," 674a–b. Blackwood, "Priest, Priesthood (Egyptian)," 299b–300a. Stracmans, "Encore un texte peu connue…," 11–12. The meaning of this conclusion will be unpacked in the next section.

[40] Dows Dunham, *Naga-Ed-Dêr Stelae of the First Intermediate Period*, (London: Humphrey Milford, 1937). See also *ANET*, 326; Maurice Stracmans, "A propos d'un texte relatif à la circoncision égyptienne (1re période intermédiaire)," *Mélanges Isidore Lévy* (1955): 631–639. A slight discrepancy appears in the translation of the verb tenses between Dunham and Stracmans. Stracmans understands the verbs as pluperfect, while Dunham understood them as simple past. I follow Stracmans, "(When) I had been circumcised along with 120 men, there was not any among them that I had struck, there was not any among them who had struck me; there was not any among them whom I had scratched, there was not any among them who had scratched me" (Stracmans, 635).

[41] Stracmans, "A propos d'un texte relatif à la circoncision égyptienne…," 633. *ANET* and Dunham do not mention this point. Dunham simply describes this part of the picture as "holding staff in left hand and wand in right hand." See Dunham, *Naga-Ed-Dêr Stelae…* , 103–4. Dunham understands this scene much differently than Stracmans. He says, "Whether the sentence is to be taken quite literally, as referring to a group ceremony involving 120 youths, is doubtful; it may well be a figurative way of saying that, at his coming of age, he was popular and on good terms with a large group of youths with whom he associated." *ANET* does not comment on the picture either, and they understand the text as indicating amazement "that so large a group should have been circumcised without injury to the youths or without any youth reacting violently" (326). Dunham's interpretation is almost certainly wrong, since there is no reason to employ a figurative reading. *ANET*'s reading is closer to the truth, but this interpretation depends on the reading of the painful procedure at Sakkarah, which leads them to believe that the clawing and scratching refers to the circumcision itself.

[42] For the significance of this role in the priesthood, see Blackwood, "Priest, Priesthood (Egyptian)," 301a.

[43] Stracmans, "A propos d'un texte relatif à la circoncision égyptienne…," 634.

[44] Stracmans, "Encore un texte peu connue…," 7. A full account of the evidence cannot be given here, but only the major contours of Stracmans' argument.

[45] Ibid., 8–9. The texts containing circumcision may be translated, (2) "as a boy whom the foreskin *was not* loosed," and (3) "finding me in the palace (royal) in the state of a child, not yet circumcised."

[46] Ibid., 8. Stracmans returns to the reading of the knot, and he interprets it as reference to the sash, which would be conferred on the male at the time of his circumcision (14). Thus these texts refer to the same type of ceremony.

47 Ibid., 10.

48 Ibid., 10.

49 Stracmans, "Encore un texte peu connue…," 11.

50 Blackwood, "Priest, Priesthood (Egyptian)," 299b–300a. He says, "It is probable that admission to the priesthood entailed circumcision as far back as the Old Kingdom [2680–2180 B.C.], for even *ka*-servants, who probably were not as a rule *we-eb* priests were circumcised. Griffith suggests that the descriptive label attached to one of the two groups in the scene in question, viz. *sbt hm-k*;, should be rendered 'qualifying the *ka*-servants by circumcision.'" Griffith's "scene in question" refers to the staff of the temple of Osiris at Abydos or to that of Anubis at Illahūn (301b).

51 Foucart, "Circumcision (Egyptian)," 675b. Foucart concludes, "Among the numerous explanations suggested for circumcision in general, we must first of all, for reasons given above, exclude those that connect it, directly or indirectly, with puberty…"

52 Ibid., 675b. See also Ghalioungui, *Magic and Medical Science in Egypt*, 98.

53 Stracmans, "Encore un texte peu connue…," 14.

54 Goblet D'Alviella, "Initiation (Introductory and Primitive)," in *ERE* (ed. James Hastings; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 317b. He notes the following characteristics of initiation rituals: "mystic dances, the use of bull-roarer, daubing with clay and washing this off, performances with serpents and other mad-doings; a simulation of death and resurrection, the granting of a new name to the initiated, the use of masks or other disguises." D'Alviella includes circumcision under "separation rites," but he also lists circumcision under the rubric of "admission rites", when he says, "On the other hand, the mutilations which were classes under separation rites (circumcision, the drawing of a tooth, the removal of a phalanx, etc.) may also be taken as admission rites when their object is to test the courage of the neophytes and their power of resistance, *or to set a mark on them by which they will know each other*" (318b). This last point will become significant below.

55 Maurice Stracmans, "Un rite d'initiation a masque d'animal dans la plus ancienne religion egyptienne?" *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves*, XII (1952): 427–440. Stracmans examines the bas-relief from the Ancient Empire n° 994 in the British Museum, and discerns an animal mask, games (or dances?), and a separation aspect to the ritual. Stracmans posits that this scene depicts events consecutive to circumcision and not, as with Ankh-ma-hor, to a representation of the circumcision proper (432).

56 Stracmans, "A propos d'un texte relatif à la circoncision égyptienne…," 636. He says, "It [the scratching and the clawing] concerns, to the contrary [Dunham's thesis of popularity], from all evidence, *an allusion to the ordeals of endurance* and others, which accompanied and still accompany in our days the ceremonies of circumcision in Africa" (emphasis added).

57 For this reference in the Egyptian *Book of Deaths*, see Jonckheere, "Circoncision," 215. For the most probable meaning of this reference, see Foucart, "Circumcision (Egyptian)," 676b. He says, "Being thus led by a process of elimination to see in circumcision the idea of a mark of submission to a god, a sign of *initiation* into a god, or *alliance* with a god, we may now state that the obscure passage, already quoted, in which mention is made of 'Rā mutilating himself,' may have a value far beyond thought. Circumcision would then be an imitation of the action of Rā… *It would be a sign of admission into the company of those who belonged to the family and household of the god*" (emphasis added). Foucart clearly states that circumcision is not a mark of slavery, since the king and priests were considered sons and relatives of the god. In this way the physical sign of circumcision would be an *identification mark*, similar to tattooing or other cuttings that a particular family or tribe might do (676b). Foucart also leaves open the possibility of circumcision as a rite of ceremonial purity of the people in service to their god (676b).

58 James, "Initiatory Rituals," 157.

59 Jonckheere, "Circoncision," 228. He provides a possible explanation for how the Jews and Egyptians could have "two distinct techniques, two clear cutting methods" by suggesting that the two rites could have arose independently. In n. 58 he focuses on another difference, "Another fundamental distinction between the two rites is the age at which they take place; while with the Jews circumcision takes place on the eighth day after birth, we will see that with the Egyptians, some boys are near puberty or even adolescents when one submits to this mutilation."

60 Jack Sasson's and Richard Steiner's articles remain as exceptions to this rule, although their analyses are incomplete.

61 G. K. Beale, "Myth, History, and Inspiration: A Review Article of Inspiration and Incarnation by Peter Enns," *JETS* 49 (2006): 290.

62 One may object saying that Israel has a distinct priesthood within the nation, and that the laity and the priesthood were never considered to be the same cult at any point in the history of Israel. While this point

is true, the Levites also underwent circumcision and thus they, as Israelites, were consecrated to Yahweh. Their family lineage is what qualified them to serve in the cult of Israel, but each Levite had to be circumcised primarily to identify themselves with Yahweh's nation.

63 James, "Initiatory Rituals," 155.

64 Ibid., 157. "Mr. Hocart has shown that initiation persists mainly in those communities in which the divine kingship has been discarded. If this cult existed in Palestine, as seems probable from the foregoing evidence, it was certainly in abeyance when the literature of the Old Testament took its present form, though we may hesitate to affirm that Israel was never conscious of the identification of the king with the god. It is significant, however, that, as the ancient conception of kingship disappeared, the institution of circumcision came into greater prominence. After the Exile it acquired a dominant place in Jewish ritual."

65 See Fox, "The Sign of the Covenant . . .," 559.

66 Ibid., 567–8.

67 Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 152–161; Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, *NAC*, (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2005), 195.

68 The sign would function in similar manner to Genesis 9:13. Fox, "The Sign of the Covenant…," 595. Stephen Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 81. Dempster follows Fox's study since he believes that the promise of descendants is the focus of the context. My study does not deny the references to progeny in Gen 17 but maintains a both/and interpretation. Thus Gen. 17 is about both the progeny of Abraham and the consecration of the same progeny to Yahweh and the service of Yahweh.

69 Kline, "Oath and Ordeal Signs," 115, esp. 120. Kline concludes that circumcision as a symbolic oath sanction has two functions: malediction and consecration. Kline has conducted a very important study with conclusions similar to my own, especially regarding consecration. However, he establishes his study on research of ancient Assyrian treaties from around the eighth century B.C., which does not seem as probable of a foundation for what the rite would have meant for Abraham and the Israel of the Exodus. However, a maledictory function may be clearly perceived from the text itself (Gen 17:14), and the consecration meaning may be grasped from Jer 4:4, though this text occurs much later. See also DeRouchie, "Circumcision in the Hebrew Bible…," 202–3. DeRouchie concludes similarly to Kline, "The imagery emphasized the Lord's call to covenant fidelity, which meant separation from pagan practices and loyalty to God and his ways. Circumcision also symbolized the covenant curse of excision if loyalty to the Lord was not lived out." For similar conclusions see in addition W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants,* (UK: Paternoster Press, 1997), 74.

70 Note also the repetition of וְהָיָה in Gen 17:1, which only occurs in these two texts in the book of Genesis. Gen 17, therefore, alludes to the original promises of Gen 12:2–3, where God commands Abraham to be a blessing, and now here, in covenant relationship, "be blameless."

71 In this way, Gen 17 may be more like the sign of the Sabbath in Exod 31:13, which was to remind the Israelites that the Lord sanctifies them.

72 Fox, "The Sign of the Covenant…," 591, esp. 593. Fox says, "If in Israel, as in most other places, circumcision was originally a puberty or marriage rite, we may surmise that here too circumcision was a preparation for the most important aspect of this turn in the life cycle—reproduction. This connection significantly appears in Gen. XVII, where circumcision is the human expression of God's covenant with Abraham, the major and original part of which is the promise of great posterity."

73 Blackwood, "Priest, Priesthood (Egyptian)," 293b–294a.

74 Note the reference to service in Exod 4:23. The Egyptian Pharaoh would have understood the concept of the son of God serving God. He will also understand that circumcision was the way into this service.

75 For a challenge to the thoroughgoing thesis that קדשׁ means "to cut" and therefore "separate" see C. B. Costecalde, "SACRÉ(ET SAINTETÉ)," in *Dictionare De La Bible Suplément* (ed. L. Pirot; Paris: Letouzey and Ané, Éditeurs, 1985), 1392–3. One of his conclusions is as follows, "In the non-biblical Semitic texts 'to be consecrated' is not 'to be separated', but 'to approach': the consecration is contrary to the separation. One imagines already the possible consequences of this positive sense in the ritual and ethical biblical texts in which the derivatives of the root *qds* appear." Although קדשׁ does not appear with מול in any context, circumcision as a sign of consecration or devotion and affiliation to Yahweh would certainly be a sufficient sign to remind Israel that they are a *holy* (devoted to and affiliated with Yahweh) nation and a royal priesthood.

76 The table contains all texts mentioning circumcision in Egypt along with the three bronze figurines from the 'Amuq valley and the ivory from Megiddo. It does not contain every instance of mummy and plastique evidence from Egypt. For comments on these, see the article by Jonckheere, 1951.

Glory Veiled in the Tabernacle of Flesh: Exodus 33-34 in the Gospel of John

Ardel B. Caneday

Ardel B. Caneday is Professor of New Testament and Greek at the University of Northwestern in Saint Paul, Minnesota. He earned his Ph.D. in New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Dr. Caneday is the co-editor (with Matthew Barrett) of *Four Views on the Historical Adam* (Zondervan, 2013) and the author of *Must Christians Always Forgive?* (Center for Christian Leadership, 2011). He has also written many scholarly book reviews and articles, including essays in two significant edited volumes: *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Paternoster, 2009) and *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in its Ancient Context* (T & T Clark, 2008). Dr. Caneday is also the co-author (with Thomas R. Schreiner) of *The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance* (InterVarsity, 2001).

Introduction

Upon returning from Sinai to the Israelite camp with covenant tablets in hand, Moses shatters them to signify Israel's breach of the covenant's first commandment because they "exchanged their Glory for an image of a bull, which eats grass" (Ps 106:19-20; Ex 32:19).[1] Moses intercedes on behalf of Israel before the Lord, speaking "face to face" with him (Ex 33:11; Num 12:6-8), and the Lord calls him to the mountain to renew the covenant Israel broke. This renewal is unlike the God's initial inscription of the covenant when the Israelites saw the Lord's glory hover as a cloud and "like a consuming fire on top of the mountain" (Ex 24:15-17). Now, Moses alone witnesses

the Lord's presence while interceding on Israel's behalf. He wants assurance that the Lord will go with Israel, so he petitions, "Now show me your own glory" (Ex 33:18). The Lord grants Moses' petition with provisos of mercy.[2]

So, Moses witnesses a private theophany at the covenant renewal, for the Lord passed by intoning, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished" (34:6-7). God warns the prophet with whom he speaks "face to face," "But you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live" (33:20).[3] Even so, when Moses descends Sinai he bears the Law covenant but also the Lord's glory radiating from his face. He mediates both among the Israelites.[4] As the Lord veils himself from Moses in the very act of revealing his glory, so God veils himself from Israel as he reveals himself through his earthly mediator who veils the radiance of God's glory shining from his face.[5]

Other than two uses of Exodus 33-34 in Paul's letters,[6] its strongest allusions in the NT occur in the Synoptic Gospels' accounts of Jesus' Transfiguration. Its echoes also resonate in John's prologue, in 1:14-18. The covenant summarized in the ten words (τοὺς δέκα λόγους, Ex 34:28) etched in tablets of stone (τὰ ῥήματα ἐπὶ τῶν πλακῶν τῆς διαθήκης, vs. 28) is fulfilled and replaced by the covenant embodied in the Word made flesh, who pitched his tent among us. "Glory," mentioned twice, is the featured echo around which other echoes seem to collocate and are swept into pericopes throughout John's Gospel via the prologue as a portal.[7] As if imitating the revelation of the Word's glory concealed in flesh, verbal and conceptual allusions to Exodus 33-34 signal that the Word's being made flesh fulfills Moses' ancient petition, "Now show me your own glory" (Ex 33:18). Thus, John announces, "We have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The theophanic revelation of God's character, disclosed as he passed by Moses when renewing the covenant on Sinai, is now most fully revealed in the Word made flesh who, by disclosure of his glory, inaugurates the new covenant. As the making of the old covenant foreshadowed ratification of the new, so the divine promise is fulfilled: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you" (Ex 34:10). Yet, as God's marvels

and awesome deeds hardened ancient Israel, so the Word's display of his glory in signs and wonders blinds eyes and hardens hearts of Israelites again, this time provoking them to lift him up in crucifixion, which contrary to their designs turns out to be the Word's hour of exalted glorification (John 12:32-33) as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. The cross of Christ brings the verdict of divine judgment forward from the Last Day so that everyone who believes in him "is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (3:18).[8] Thus, in fulfillment of Exodus 34:7, the Word ratifies the new covenant as he "takes away sins" (ἀφαιρῶν ... ἁμαρτίας, LXX; cf. ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου, John 1:29) but also "does not leave the guilty unpunished."[9]

"We Have Seen His Glory"—What Did the Apostle John See?

Exodus 33-34 figures prominently within the Synoptic Gospels' accounts of Jesus' Transfiguration. Luke indicates that Jesus' face changes and his garments become dazzling white, and he stands "in glory" with Moses and Elijah conversing with them about his "exodus" (9:29-31). Echoes from the Lord's theophany that envelops Moses on Mount Sinai resonate in the Transfiguration pericopes of the Synoptic Gospels (esp. Mark 9:2-13).[10] In fulfillment of his own prediction, some of Jesus' disciples do not die before seeing the kingdom of God (Mark 9:1; Matt 16:28; Luke 9:27), for his appearing "in glory" on the mountain is a harbinger of Messiah's coming "in his glory" in the Last Day (Luke 9:26).[11] The effulgent but passing theophanic disclosure of his glory on the mountain reveals the presence of the divine glory in Jesus, foreshadowed by the Lord's glory as witnessed by Moses on Sinai but now portending Jesus' eschatological coming "in his glory," according to the Synoptic Evangelists.

If John, one of three privileged disciples who witnessed Jesus' Transfiguration wrote the Fourth Gospel, no account of Jesus' glory breaking forth through effulgent face and garments on the mountain as the other Evangelists do may seem conspicuously absent. John's only reference to Messiah's glory as luminosity occurs at the climax of the Book of Signs when he concludes his quotations from Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10—"Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke concerning him" (John 12:41).[12] The theophany

that Isaiah witnessed was a revelation of Jesus himself in resplendent glory. Therefore, it is arresting that John places his evocative allusions to the Sinaitic theophany in his prologue where he strikes the first note in a series of discernible harmonic echoes that reverberate throughout his composition like thematic reprisals in an overture.

John announces, "And the Word was made flesh and tented among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14). This announcement sounds a full and resonant chord of verbal and conceptual echoes from Exodus 33-34. Verbal echoes— "tented," and "glory" (Jn 1:14), πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (cf. 16), and "for no man may see my face and live" (LXX) (cf. 1:18)—are readily discernible. Conceptual echoes are more elusive, for they entail the composite of the verbal echoes with the addition of the Word's preexistence (πρῶτός μου ἦν, 1:15). The Word, who was with God in the beginning, who was God, whose theophany illuminated Sinai long ago (cf. 1:5), who anthropomorphically revealed himself throughout the Scriptures, and who inhabited the Tent of Meeting (Ex 33:7), who "pitched his tent among us" (my translation, John 1:14) to reveal (ἐξηγήσατο, 1:18) the Father who cannot be seen (θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε, 1:18).[13]

The unseen God, who revealed himself in anthropomorphic word (הַדָּבָר, τὸν λόγον, Ex 33:17) and made himself manifest in theophanic presence (כָּבוֹד, μου ἡ δόξα, 33:22), was made flesh (ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο). John hints at the incomprehensible magnitude of the Word's incarnation by joining δόξα and σάρξ, neither as opposites nor as one overwhelming the other. Rather the Word's δόξα is unveiled in the veil of σάρξ.[14] This "δόξα is not to be seen *alongside* the σάρξ, nor *through* the σάρξ as through a window; it is to be seen in the σάρξ and nowhere else."[15] The theophanic Glory on Sinai that irradiated Moses' face with luminosity as the Lord passed by him on the mountain and subsequently filled the tabernacle (Ex 34:29-35; 40:34-35), has taken up residence in the sanctuary of σάρξ.[16] That the Word came to reside in the tabernacle of flesh does not diminish his glory but rather accents it with "glory as of the unique Son from the Father" (δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός).[17] This Glory is not a theophanic representation of the unseen God but is God's beloved Son made flesh, made human.[18] Herein is mystery. The Word's divine glory is seen in the Word's human mortality (cf. 1 Tim 3:16).

So, what does John claim to have seen which he calls ἡ δόξα αὐτοῦ? Within his use of δόξα, it is likely that John implies two features found in his allusions

to Exodus 33-34—(1) the visible appearance of God (Ex 33:20-23; 34:3, 29-30 LXX); and (2) the intrinsic character of God (Ex 33:18-19; 34:6-7 LXX)—with both having in view the aspect of ἔνδοξα, "glorious things verifying the presence of God" (Ex 34:10 LXX).[19] In John, ἡ δόξα αὐτοῦ does not refer to Jesus' physical form nor to luminosity but to the Word's disclosure of his divine identity and attributes just as in the Sinai theophany God's attributes are the primary focus.[20] For when the Lord replies to Moses' request—"Now show me your own glory"—he declares, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence" (Ex 33:18-19). Thus, when the Lord fulfills the request, he declares his name, "The Lord, the Lord," and expounds his name, "the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished" (34:6-7). Many have affirmed that πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀλήθειας in the Gospel translates רַב־חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת, referring to the decisive characterization of the covenant-keeping God who is "rich in faithful love and truth" (HSCB, 34:6).[21] Though John's wording deviates from the Septuagint, πολυέλεος καὶ ἀληθινός (34:6), many reasonably have argued that πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀλήθειας reflects John's own translation of the Hebrew text (רַב־חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת).[22] Jesus' "glory is the radiance of the character of God, the grace and truth about which Moses heard, but which the disciples of Jesus have seen in his human person and life."[23]

John's fourfold use of χάρις in his prologue but not elsewhere in the Gospel suggests that it refers to the Lord's "covenant presence" which is now realized in the person of Christ Jesus, the "Covenant Presence."[24] It is for this presence that Moses petitioned the Lord: "And how will it be truly known that I have found *favor* with you, both I and your people, other than if you go along with us? And we shall be *glorified*, both I and your people, above all the nations that are on the earth."[25] The Lord assured Moses, "Even this *word* that you have spoken, I will do for you. For you have found *favor* before me, and I know you above all others" (Ex 33:17).[26] It is at this point that Moses requests, "Show me your own *glory*!" (Δεῖξόν μοι τὴν σεαυτοῦ δόξαν, 33:18). The Lord provided many marvelous manifestations of his presence with ancient Israel, but now John announces, "And the Word was made flesh and tented among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Given John's

use of χάρις four times in the prologue why is it absent after the prologue? Verbal absence of χάρις points to Jesus Christ who is "full of grace and truth" (πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας) as God's χάρις, divine *Presence* incarnate. He is divine glory in the tabernacle of flesh. Therefore, the Christ expounds the Father to us (ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο, 1:18). So, to see the Son is to see the Father (14:9).

In 1:14, to which noun does indeclinable πλήρης attach? Is πλήρης deliberately ambiguous grammatically so that John can allow for multiple connections?[27] Is it nominative, in agreement with ὁ λόγος? Is it genitive, agreeing with πατρός?[28] Or, is it not in formal agreement with any word? If the latter, many identify it as modifying τὴν δόξαν.[29] This seems likely, so that God's glory revealed in the Word incarnate is "full of grace and truth."[30] Unlike χάρις, ἀλήθεια appears twenty-five times in the Gospel and its cognate adjectives, ἀληθινός and ἀληθής occur nine and fourteen times respectively. Use of "the true light" (τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν) in 1:9 is instructive concerning John's uses of "truth" (ἀλήθεια) in 1:14 and 17. It is evident that ἀλήθεια in these verses speaks of truthfulness, a divine quality revealed in the incarnate Word with two distinguishable connotations: (1) *veracity*, corresponding with fact, as in "the one who does the *truth* comes into the light" (3:21); and (2) *veritableness*, original or real over against copy or shadow, as in "*true* worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and *truth*" (4:23).[31]

The Word as "true light" (1:5) hardly contrasts with "false light." Rather, the Word is "veritable light" in contrast to the Baptist who "was not that light" but only bore witness to the light (1:9). Thus, ἀλήθεια in 1:14 and 17 features *divine verity*, not unlike "the exact imprint of the divine essence." (Heb 1:3).[32] Consideration of 1:17 confirms this, for the contrast John draws—"the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"—surely does not mean that the law was false. Geerhardus Vos expresses it well: "The law was not yet the highest, antitypical grace which was necessary to constitute it 'truth'; it was typical adumbration, but it was not on that account 'false' in the invidious sense."[33] The law, which entailed grace (1:16), foreshadowed the verity that comes now through Jesus Christ who is "grace and truth." Thus, the grace of the law mediated through Moses (διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη) found its fulfillment and replacement in the grace (χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος, 1:16)[34] that came through Jesus Christ "who has God's grace and truth at his disposal."[35] The law "was given" (ἐδόθη) "through

Moses," but "grace and truth" *came* (ἐγένετο) "through Jesus Christ" (1:17) just as the Word *became* (ἐγένετο) flesh. Thus, covenant-keeping (i.e., grace and truth) is of the essence of the Word's very nature and character. The law covenant etched in tablets and lodged in an ark residing in a tent engulfed with effulgent glory yields to the grace covenant that comes through Jesus Christ whose effulgent glory inhabits the tabernacle of flesh, veiled from human eyes. It is as Thomas Aquinas wrote:

> Wondrous revelation, verity and grace.
> Lo, in Heaven's Glory I see thee face to face.
> Light of endless light whom heav'n and earth adore,
> Fill me with thy radiance, now and evermore.[36]

New Covenant Ratification in the Word's Display of Glory

A couple of decades ago John Pryor demonstrated that, even though John's Gospel does not use διαθήκη, "covenantal notions are of primary importance" throughout.[37] Of all the covenantal imageries in John's Gospel, Pryor identifies the allusions to Exodus 33-34 in 1:14 as the "most powerful."[38] In keeping with Moses' petition, essential to the Lord's renewal of his covenant with Israel is his promise to dwell among the people typified by the tabernacle (Ex 33:12-17; 25:8). Even so, the Lord's tabernacle was outside the camp of the Israelites (Ex 33:7). By way of contrast, the Word incarnate "pitched his tabernacle among us." This confirms that John 1:14 entails affirmation that God has established his covenant with his latter day people in Messiah.[39] Allusions to the theophanic presence of the Lord with Moses at the Sinaitic renewal of the covenant in Exodus 33-34 begin in John 1:14 and are reprised throughout the Gospel, thus signifying that the Gospel narrates God's ratification of the new covenant in the incarnate Word.[40]

John does not structure his Gospel upon appeals to new covenant terminology from Ezekiel or Jeremiah. Instead, when he presents Jesus as replacing Israel by fulfilling the promise of the new covenant, so that believing in him is entrance into covenant union with God, John takes readers "back to the primary covenantal texts" to "demonstrate that they are now truly and only fulfilled" in the Word incarnate.[41] That John's Gospel presents the Son of God as inaugurating the promised new covenant is demonstrated by others also

who make a convincing case that the structure of Jesus' farewell discourse is patterned after that of Moses in Deuteronomy 31-33.[42] Add to this Jesus' announcement to his "cleansed" disciples (after Judas' departure), "I am the true vine" (John 15:1), signaling that he is the veritable Israel (cf. Ps 80:12-19) in whom resides his new people consisting of the nucleus of the disciples present with him.

Yet, there is more to be teased out of the allusions in John 1:14 to Exodus 33-34. For 34:10 reads, "Then the Lord said: 'I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do *wonders never before done in any nation in all the world*. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you'" (Ex 34:10).[43] The Lord assures Moses of his presence (χάρις) that will be manifest by doing wonders (ποιήσω ἔνδοξα) and awesome deeds (θαυμαστά) which ratify the renewed covenant. Likewise, Jesus performs incomparable signs (σήμεια), wonders (τέρατα), and works (ἔργα) that signal God's ratifying of the new covenant in the Word incarnate whose glory (δόξα) is revealed in his deeds, but especially in his being lifted up to die. These terms accent the covenant's ratification in Exodus 34 and they occur in collocation with δόξα throughout John's Gospel, beginning in 1:14.

Jesus' words and deeds show his awareness that his establishment of the new covenant echoes the renewal of the Sinai covenant where Israel's recalcitrance was the backdrop for ratification. So also the Jews' persistent stubbornness situated the establishment of the new covenant. Thus, divine glory unveiled in the en-fleshed Word entails mystery that is at the core of conflict in John's Gospel as Messiah engages his mission to establish God's covenant, ever faithfully progressing toward his glorification through crucifixion (7:39; 12:16, 23; 12:28-29; 13:31-32). John tells of Jesus' attributes by way of reporting his teachings, his acts, and especially his signs which unveil Messiah's glory, incrementally amplifying his divine nature and attributes as his hour of exaltation by crucifixion approaches, which declares the divine "judgment of this world" and casts out "the ruler of this world" (12:31-32). John features a series of selected signs that Jesus performs, punctuating these narratives with various allusions to Exodus 33-34, and encloses the signs with two that aid interpretation of all the signs—his turning water to wine and his raising of Lazarus.[44]

It is by performing these signs that Jesus unveils his glory. The Word, whose divine attributes are veiled in flesh within plain sight, unveils his divine

character in his signs. So, when Jesus turns water into wine he "reveals his glory; and his disciples believe in him" (John 2:11). By including limited but necessary descriptive details, John's account mimics Jesus' unpretentious performance of the sign. Thus, in keeping with his simultaneously simple and profound style, John straightforwardly presents the first sign as an acted parable.[45] Mystery envelops the sign even in the Gospel's telling it, for as a riddle conveys hints of its solution, both the sign's performance and its narration brim with clues suggestive of rich import without spilling its symbolic meaning.[46] At this juncture, John's evocative telling of the miracle entails more than he discloses, for without explanation he indicates that the sign reveals Jesus' glory and incites his disciples to believe in him (2:1-11; cf. 20:30-31).[47] Readers might wish that the Evangelist had interpreted the sign for them, offering more than simply stating that by it Jesus displayed his glory. John's account preserves the parabolic nature of Jesus' sign and dignifies his glory, glory both unveiled and veiled, that both gives sight and blinds. Thus, the miracle's significance, evocative and elusive, begins to emerge as the Gospel's narrative unfolds throughout the subsequent paragraphs but especially in 3:22-30.[48]

The signs that John reports, which Jesus performs with propitious timing on Sabbath days and during Feast days, especially Passover and Tabernacles, disclose his identity and reveal his divine character. These signs stir belief in Jesus but also provoke others to reject him. His signs, whether miraculous or non-miraculous, incite religious leaders among the Jews—Pharisees, chief priests, the Sanhedrin—to protect their domains of authority, especially the Temple and synagogues, including the religious activities these institutions represent. Thus, when Jesus banishes merchants and money changers from the Temple and rebukes them with Scripture (Ps 69:9), the Jewish leaders interrogate him, "What sign do you show that authorizes you to do this?" (John 2:18). He gives them a sign in the form of a riddle: "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days" (2:19).[49] His riddle, in which he unveils that he will replace the Temple, exposes their blindness, for they think that he speaks of the Temple edifice, but he refers to his body (2:21).

The Jews' fascination with signs and wonders for easing the troubles of life blinds their eyes to the glory Jesus unveils in his signs. The Jews reprise their forefather's recalcitrance that occasioned renewal of the first covenant, for now their obduracy gives rise to the ratification of the new covenant.

As their forefathers became blind to marvels in the wilderness (θαυμαστά, Ex 34:10), Jesus' unveiling his glory with marvelous deeds blinds Israel again. Thus, he brings judgment by replacing Israel as the True Israel (cf. John 15:1) in order that he might become the savior of the world (4:42). So, Jesus rebukes fellow Galileans blinded by the signs he performs during Passover in Jerusalem (4:45; cf. 2:23; 3:2): "Unless you see signs and wonders, you do not believe" (4:48). They, however, persist in their blind amazement which Jesus addresses when he announces, "the Father loves the Son and manifests to him [δείκνυσιν αὐτῷ] all that he himself is doing" and the Father "will manifest to him greater works [δείξει αὐτῷ ἔργα] in order that you might be amazed [θαυμάζητε]" (5:20).[50] What greater works? Jesus explains, "Be not amazed at this [μὴ θαυμάζετε], for an hour is coming in which all who are in their tombs will hear his voice and will come out" (5:28-29).

As with his signs, Jesus' teaching in the Temple also amazes (ἐθαύμαζον) the Jews who wonder, "How does this man possess learning without having been instructed?" (7:15). Jesus confounds them again after they accuse him of having a demon and of being delusional: "I did one work [ἔργα], and you all are amazed" (7:21). John reports that, with pretentious intonation, Jewish gatekeepers of synagogues order the man to whom Jesus gave sight to disclose where his healer is: "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner" (9:24). With sardonic astonishment, the man responds, "Herein is an amazing thing [τὸ θαυμαστόν], that you do not know from where he comes, and yet he opened my eyes! . . . From the beginning of time it has not been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything" (9:30-32).[51] This now sighted man effectively summarizes the amazing blindness of the Jews. After the sighted man encounters Jesus again, he does "give glory to God," not as ordered by the Pharisees, but by believing in the Son of Man and by worshiping him (9:35-38). It is then that Jesus announces, "For judgment I came into the world, that those who do not see might see, and those who see might be made blind" (9:39). Pharisees who hear his riddle presume, "We also are not blind, are we?" (9:40). Content with their darkness, they stand condemned.

Likewise, John reports the final sign as featuring Jesus' glory. He does so with a prelude as with his healing of the man born blind, "in order that the works of God might be displayed in him" (ἵνα φανερωθῇ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν

αὐτῷ, 9:3). So when news arrives concerning Lazarus, Jesus purposely delays going to Bethany and announces that his friend's "illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (11:4). At Lazarus' tomb, in response to Martha's concern over the stink of decaying flesh, Jesus reminds her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (11:40). Just as when John reports the effects of Jesus' first sign upon his disciples, he adds that when many mourners who accompanied Mary saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead, they "believed in him" (11:45).

Jesus unveils his glory in "the works of God," including giving eyes to those who do not see (9:3-5), even giving light to those who sleep in death's darkness (11:4, 9-11, 37). Neither darkness from birth nor darkness of death escapes the penetrating light of the Word's glory, who with a word can give sight to both. Thus, Jesus' unveiled glory rebukes the blindness of those Jews whose mourning of Lazarus' death as unnecessary incites them blindly to bemoan, "Could not this one who opened the eyes of the blind man kept this man from dying?" (John 11:37).

However, as the mystery of the Word's glory in flesh unveiled in signs prompts belief, it also incites conflict that crescendos and reaches its apex with his raising of Lazarus and Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. The religious cabal of Chief Priests, Pharisees, and the Council confirms their blindness: "What are we going to do, because this man performs many signs? If we tolerate him in this manner, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take over our place and our nation" (11:48). Messiah's signs, which simultaneously veil and unveil his glory, blind them. For the Light of the World both gives sight to the blind and blinds those who claim they can see (John 9:1-7, 35-41; 12:36-43).

Jesus knows his mission is to establish the new covenant by his sacrificial death as he declares, "The works which I do in my Father's name, these bear witness concerning me, but you do not believe because you are not of my sheep ... I have shown you many good works from the Father. On account of which work do you want to stone me?" (10:25, 32). Cognizant that his mission blinds those who claim to see and gives sight to others who acknowledge their blindness, Jesus summarizes the impact of his glorious deeds and signs, "If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father" (15:24).

The more public his signs are and the more marvelous they become the more vividly Jesus reveals his divine identity and character in the signs. The more clearly he announces his mission of redemption the more hostile his opponents become, for Jesus unveils his glory by way of his marvelous signs and wondrous works to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy (12:39-41; Isa 6:10). By opening the blind eyes of one human he blinds the eyes of others. By raising Lazarus from death's pall Jesus confirms death's grip upon those who plot his death. Israel's hardness is fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (John 12:38). Jesus' hour has come to confirm the new covenant by his sacrificial death: "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" (12:27-28). It is at this juncture in John's Gospel, by way of allusion to Isaiah 52:13, that two motifs—"being lifted up" (ὑψόω, 3:14, 8:28; 12:32, 34) and "glory"/"being glorified" (δόξα-δοξάζω, 1:14; 12:41)—merge as Jesus announces how he will die. "Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, if I am lifted from the earth, I will draw all people to myself. He said this signifying by what kind of death he was about to die" (12:32-33). Then the incarnate Word issues a judicial pronouncement against the Jews followed by acting out his word of judgment in parabolic form by departing and hiding himself from the Jews (ἀπελθὼν ἐκρύβη ἀπ' αὐτῶν, 12:36b). The Word, who openly unveils his en-fleshed glory in his signs, hides his glory from the crowd, confirming them in their blindness.

Now that the work of unveiling his glory in his signs reaches its apex, his hour arrives to fulfill the climactic feature of the new covenant anticipated long ago on Sinai and prophesied by the Baptist, "taking away sins and iniquities" (Ex 34:9 LXX; John 1:29).[52] After Jesus humbles himself as a servant on behalf of others and foreshadows his crucifixion by the symbolic act of cleansing his disciples' feet, he summons Judas to depart into the night of his perdition to activate the arrest, which brings Messiah to a mock trial, a mock coronation, and a mock enthronement (19:19-22), his crucifixion, which truly is his exaltation (12:30).[53] So then, Jesus fittingly says, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once" (13:31-32). What seems to be the conquest of Jesus' zealous opponents

becomes the glorious fulfillment of the mission he was sent to accomplish. "Jesus' death is John's *peripeteia*, the falsification of expectation; 'the end comes as expected, but not in the manner expected.' The crucifixion is part of Jesus' glorification."[54]

Conclusion

If the opening lines of John's prologue summon echoes from the creation account of Genesis, the latter verses of the prologue recall a cluster of allusions to the Lord's renewal of his covenant with Israel as told in Exodus 33-34. John's double mention of δόξα—"We have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father"—draws seeing eyes and hearing ears to Scripture's record of Moses' petition for the Lord's presence to go with Israel to signify his favor (χάρις) and his request, "Now show me your own glory," as assurance of the Lord's χάρις (Ex 33:12-18). In John's prologue, δόξα, like a theme introduced in an overture, stresses a thematic sequence of several verbal and conceptual echoes from Exodus 33-34, most of which are verbally reprised repeatedly throughout John's composition, especially in collocation with δόξα and δοξάζω. Around these verbal echoes from Exodus 33-34 a discernible pattern emerges that presents Jesus Christ, through whom grace and truth came, as ratifying God's new covenant. Jesus ratifies the new covenant by his signs and by his atoning death which his signs adumbrate. Christ's signs display his glory with works "never before done in any nation in all the world" (Ex 34:10) but now testify concerning his divine nature, for "From the beginning of time it has not been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind" (John 9:32). To fulfill God's purpose in his Son, Jesus' signs provoke blindness that opposes him and persecutes him by lifting him up upon the cross at his appointed "hour." Herein is the Word's δόξα, which he acknowledges with anguish but purposed to complete his divine mission: "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this very purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name" (12:27-28).

---

1 The LXX reads, καὶ ἠλλάξαντο τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν ἐν ὁμοιώματι μόσχου ἔσθοντος χόρτον (Ps 105:20); and the

Hebrew reads, וַיָּמִירוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדָם בְּתַבְנִית שׁוֹר אֹכֵל עֵשֶׂב (Ps 106:20). The Hebrew reads, "and they exchanged their glory" (Ps 106:20), but the LXX of Codex Alexandrinus reads, "and they exchanged *his* glory." The NRSV preserves this variant by supplying the referent, God, for the pronoun: "They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass."

2 "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." Then the Lord said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen" (Ex 33:19-20 NIV). Sailhamer observes, "In the first revelation of God's glory at Sinai, Moses explained to the people that its purpose had been to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning" (20:20). After the incident with the golden calf, however, the revelation of God's glory had a quite different purpose. When Moses asked to see God's glory, the Lord answered, 'I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you. . . . I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion' (33:19). Surprisingly, what Moses learned about God's glory after the 'great sin' (32:30) of the golden calf was not further fear of God but rather that he was a gracious God, full of compassion" (*The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992], 315).

3 The LXX reads, καὶ ἔπεν Οὐ δυνήσῃ ἰδεῖν μου τὸ πρόσωπον, οὐ γὰρ μὴ ἴδῃ ἄνθρωπος τὸ πρόσωπόν μου καὶ ζήσεται.

4 Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 222.

5 Hafemann explains, "The veil of Moses makes it possible for the glory of God to be in the midst of the people, albeit now mediated through Moses, without destroying them. As such, the veil . . . functions in the same way as the fence around the bottom of Mt. Sinai in Exod. 19:12 and the curtain . . . before the 'holy of holies' in the tabernacle as that which both separates and protects the people from the glory of God" (*Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 223).

6 Allusions to Exod 34 feature prominently in Paul's letter to the Corinthians when he contrasts the glory of the old covenant with the glory of the new (2 Cor 3:7-18). Paul also cites Exod 33:11 in Rom 9:15 concerning God's righteousness.

7

Covenant Renewal & New Covenant Ratification	
καὶ κατέβη κύριος ἐν νεφέλῃ καὶ παρέστη αὐτῷ ἐκεῖ, καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου. καὶ παρῆλθεν κύριος πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκάλεσεν Κύριος ὁ θεὸς οἰκτίρμων καὶ ἐλεήμων, μακρόθυμος καὶ **πολυέλεος καὶ ἀληθινὸς** καὶ δικαιοσύνην διατηρῶν καὶ ποιῶν ἔλεος εἰς χιλιάδας, **ἀφαιρῶν** ἀνομίας καὶ ἀδικίας καὶ **ἁμαρτίας**, καὶ οὐ καθαριεῖ τὸν ἔνοχον ἐπάγων ἀνομίας πατέρων ἐπὶ τέκνα καὶ ἐπὶ τέκνα τέκνων ἐπὶ τρίτην καὶ τετάρτην γενεάν. καὶ σπεύσας Μωϋσῆς κύψας ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν προσεκύνησεν καὶ εἶ᾽πεν Εἰ εὕρηκα χάριν ἐνώπιόν σου, συμπορευθήτω ὁ κύριός μου μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν, ὁ λαὸς γὰρ σκληροτράχηλός ἐστιν, καὶ **ἀφελεῖς σὺ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν** καὶ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν, καὶ ἐσόμεθα σοί. καὶ εἶ᾽πεν κύριος πρὸς Μωϋσῆν Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ τίθημί σοι διαθήκην, ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ σου **ποιήσω ἔνδοξα**, ἃ οὐ γέγονεν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει, καὶ ὄψεται πᾶς ὁ λαός, ἐν οἷ᾽ς εἶ᾽ σύ, **τὰ ἔργα κυρίου** ὅτι **θαυμαστά ἐστιν ἃ ἐγὼ ποιήσω σοι** (Exodus 34:5-10).	
Exodus 33-34	**John 1:14-18**
הַדָּבָר τὸν λόγον (LXX 33:17)	ὁ λόγος (1:1-2, 14)
אֶת־הָאֹהֶל , וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה מָלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן σκηνή, δόξης κυρίου ἐπλήσθη ἡ σκηνή (33:7; [34:29-35]; 40:34-35)	ἐσκήνωσεν (1:14)
כָּבוֹד μου ἡ δόξα (33:22)	δόξα (1:14)
וְרַב־חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת πολυέλεος καὶ ἀληθινός (34:6)	πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (1:14)
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כְּתָב־לְךָ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωϋσῆν Γράψον σεαυτῷ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα (34:27-28)	ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο (1:17)
לֹא־יִרְאַנִי הָאָדָם וָחָי οὐ γὰρ μὴ ἴδῃ ἄνθρωπος τὸ πρόσωπόν μου καὶ ζήσεται (33:20)	Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε (1:18)

[8] See, A. B. Caneday, "God's Incarnate Son as the Embodiment of Last Day Resurrection: Eternal Life as Justification in John's Gospel," *SBJT* 18.4 (2014): 67-88. Andreas Köstenberger rightly observes, "in an important sense, God's judgment was already brought about by the light's coming into the world in the incarnation of the Son (1:14). This coming of the light into the world, in turn, confronts people everywhere with the decision of whether to embrace the light or to go into hiding and persist in darkness" (*A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009], 468-469).

[9] All who reject God's Son incur divine judgment, but all who believe in him "escape judgment already in the here and now (5:24), though the final judgment awaits the end of time (5:28-29)" (Köstenberger, *Theology of John*, 469).

[10] See Matt 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36.

[11] See Darrell L. Bock, *Luke* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1994), 1.859. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 380. Instead of ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ, Mark 8:38 and Matt 27 have ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ.

[12] Cf. Alexander Tsutserov, *Glory, Grace, and Truth: Ratification of the Sinaitic Covenant according to the Gospel of John* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 147.

[13] Many point to Sirach 24:8 as a likely backdrop for John's use of ἐσκήνωσεν in 1:14: "The one who created wisdom caused her tabernacle (σκηνήν) to rest; thus she was to dwell (κατασκήνωσον) in Jacob" (See Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003], 1.408-409).

[14] Cf. Stephen Voorwinde, "John's Prologue: Beyond Some Impasses of Twentieth-Century Scholarship," *WTJ* 63 (2002): 40.

[15] Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (trans. George R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 63.

[16] Use of ἐσκήνωσεν in John 1:14 doubtless alludes to the σκήνη of Exodus (cf. 33:7-11; 34:22 allusion to booths; 40:34-35). Likely, reference is to the tabernacle called "the tent" (Ex 26:7) where the Lord would dwell (Ex 25:8) or the "tent of meeting" located "outside the camp some distance away" (Ex 29:42-43; 33:7). The "tent of meeting" seems to have been a provisional tent of meeting with God until the construction of the tabernacle (Ex 36:8-38). After the Israelites constructed the tabernacle, it seems the "tent of meeting" became another designation for the tabernacle (Ex 40:29, 34). Moses would enter the provisional tent to meet the Lord. The Lord would signify his presence with the cloud's descent and station it at the door outside (Ex 33:9-10). Inside the tent, the Lord would speak with Moses face to face (33:11). This way the tent of meeting functioned like the cleft of the rock in which the Lord placed Moses to preserve his life as his glory passed by (Ex. 34:22-23). Later, the tabernacle would stand in the midst of the Israelite camp, and the cloud of glory rested not outside the door but inside the tent, so at first Moses had to stay outside (Ex. 40:34-35). Because the tent of meeting and the tabernacle merge as one we should hardly try to distinguish whether John 1:14 alludes to one or the other.

[17] See Keener on μονογενής in the LXX to translate יחיד ("only son"). Because μονογενής often translates יחיד, the Hebrew could also be translated with ἀγαπητός, as Isaac was called (Gen 22:2). So, "it was natural that μονογενής should eventually adopt nuances of ἀγαπητός in biblically saturated Jewish Greek" (*The Gospel of John*, 1.414-15).

[18] "John makes it clear that what the community saw of Jesus was an intimate picture of the divine nature, for the statement 'we beheld his glory' is further filled out and elaborated by the detail that this was the glory as of the unique Son of the Father, one bearing the entire essence of the Father and coming directly from his presence, and whom to see is to see the Father" (William J. Dumbrell, "Grace and Truth: The Progress of the Argument of the Prologue of John's Gospel," in *Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honor of J. I. Packer* [eds. Donald Lewis & Alister McGrath; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996], 115). Cf. D. A. Fennema, "John 1:18 'God the Only Son,'" *NTS* 31 (1985): 126.

[19] Tsutserov, *Glory, Grace, and Truth*, 146.

[20] Ibid., 148. Tsutserov claims, "The character of God is the main issue at Sinai. True, the appearance of the *doxa* of the Lord is encountered on the mountain (Exod 33:20-23; cf. Num 12:8 LXX) ... The radically new element of the knowledge of God gained at the Sinaitic theophany is an insight into the qualities of the Lord's character. Now these qualities of the divine character (*doxa*) *plērēs charitos kai alētheias*, are evident in the Word became flesh."

[21] See, e.g., C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, (London: SPCK, 1967), 139; D. A. Carson, *John*, 129; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1.418.

[22] Richard Bauckham claims that Tsutserov (*Glory, Grace, and Truth*, 39-161) convincingly shows that "full of grace and truth" (1:14) alludes to "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34:6), translating

"the Hebrew of Exodus 34:6" but departing "from the Septuagint translation" (p. ix).

23 Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2015), 52.

24 Cf. Tsutserov, *Glory, Grace, and Truth*, 166-70.

25 The text of Ex 33:16 in the LXX is noteworthy: καὶ πῶς γνωστὸν ἔσται ἀληθῶς ὅτι εὕρηκα χάριν παρὰ σοί, ἐγώ τε καὶ ὁ λαός σου, ἀλλ' ἢ συμπορευομένου σου μεθ' ἡμῶν; καὶ ἐνδοξασθήσομαι ἐγώ τε καὶ ὁ λαός σου παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ὅσα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐστιν. Concerning δόξα/δοξάζω as distinguishing God's people, cf. John 17:22-23— καγὼ τὴν ***δόξαν ἣν δέδωκας μοι δέδωκα αὐτοις***, ἵνα ὦσιν ἓν καθὼς ἡμεις ἕν· ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ σὺ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα ὦσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν, ἵνα γινώσκῃ ὁ κόσμος ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας καὶ ἠγάπησας αὐτοὺς καθὼς ἐμὲ ἠγάπησας.

26 The text of Ex 33:17 in the LXX is also noteworthy: καὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωϋσῆν Καὶ τοῦτόν σοι τὸν ***λόγον***, ὃν εἴρηκας, ποιήσω, εὕρηκας γὰρ χάριν ἐνώπιόν μου, καὶ οἶδά σε παρὰ πάντας.

27 Tsutserov argues this (*Glory, Grace, and Truth*, 163). He claims that πλήρης is descriptive of (1) δόξα, with connotations that touch both appearance and attributes; and (2) of πατήρ and λόγος (μονογενής), both possessing the attributes of χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.

28 Cf., ibid., 163.

29 See, e.g., Keener, *Gospel of John* 1.417; Carson, *John*, 129.

30 Ibid.

31 Cf. Geerhardus Vos, "'True' and 'Truth' in Johannine Writings," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos* (ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1980), 343-51.

32 Cf. "who is the radiance of glory and the exact imprint of divine essence" (ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, Heb 1:3).

33 Ibid., 349. Cf. these uses of the adjectives, ἀληθινός—true light (1:9); true worshipers in spirit and truth (4:23); true bread from heaven (6:32); true vine (15:1); the only true God (17:3); ἀληθής true food and true drink (6:55).

34 See Ruth B. Edwards, "ΧΑΡΙΝ ΑΝΤΙ ΧΑΡΙΤΟΣ (John 1:16): Grace and the Law in the Johannine Prologue," *JSNT* 32 (1988): 3-15. She demonstrates that many "leading Fathers of the Greek Church all thought that χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος referred to the replacement of the Mosaic Law by the Gospel" (Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Origen, Theophylact, also Jerome, p. 7). Cf. Carson, *John*, 132-34, who accepts and advances the same interpretation.

35 Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (trans. John Vriend; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 58.

36 My citation alters the wording by inversion, in keeping with the words sung by the University of Northwestern choir under the direction of Mr. Timothy Sawyer. Below are the lyrics as originally written. The Latin text of "*Adoro te devote*" (Jesus, I Adore Thee) is attributed to Thomas Aquinas (1227-74). The English underlay is adapted by Stephen Caracciolo, which at times is a loose translation of Aquinas' text and at other points is a rhymed and metered interpretation of the prologue of John's Gospel.

Jesus I adore thee, Word of truth and grace,
Who in glory shineth light upon our race.
Christ, to thee surrendered, my whole heart is bowed.
Alpha and Omega, thou true Son of God.

Taste and touch and vision to discern thee fail;
Faith that comes by hearing, pierces through the veil.
I believe whate'er the Son of God hath told.
What the truth hath spoken that for truth I hold.

Word of God incarnate, Lord of life and light,
Teach me how to love and worship thee aright.
Holy Spirit, ever 'bide within my heart,
Speaking thy commandments, telling all thou art.

Wondrous revelation, verity and grace.
Lo, in glory's heav'n I see thee face to face.
Light of endless light whom heav'n and earth adore,
Fill me with thy radiance, now and evermore.

37 John W. Pryor, *John: Evangelist of the Covenant People: The Narrative & Themes of the Fourth Gospel*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 157. Cf. idem, "Covenant and Community in John's Gospel, *RTR* 47 (1988): 44-51.

38 Ibid., 158. Cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, "The Covenant-Conception in the First Epistle of John," *ET* 28 (1916): 23-26; Edward Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant: A Study of "einai en" and "menein en" in the First Letter of Saint John* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978). Concerning Malatesta's work, Carl B. Hoch, Jr. observes, "Malestata's study shows that the words 'new covenant' do not have to be used by a writer for him to have the new covenant in view. Words drawn from the Old Testament texts (particularly the Septuagint version) speaking of the new covenant (and the words 'new covenant' do not occur in all of these texts!) can so permeate the vocabulary and conceptuality of the writer that the new covenant plays a central role in his thinking. This type of study needs to be done in both Testaments to provide a full exposition of these portions of Scripture where the concept of the new covenant is in view, although the actual words, 'new covenant,' are absent" (*All Things New: The Significance of Newness for Biblical Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995], 127). Cf. Sherri, Brown, *Gift Upon Gift: Covenant Through Word in the Gospel of John* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010).

39 John reiterates this in Revel 21:3—"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God'" (Ibid., 158). Pryor comments, "The motif of divine presence in Israel as the sure sign of their covenant status was a central motif of the Old Testament. At the beginning of their life as a nation, God promises to dwell among the people and this is symbolised by the sanctuary/tabernacle (Ex 25:8). God is constantly in or with his people (Num 14:14; 1 Kings 18:36), he dwells among them (Ex 29:45-46; Deut 12:1). The most fearful judgement that Israel can experience is for Yahweh to withdraw his presence from them (Deut 1:42; 31:17). In the light of this most powerful of symbols in Old Testament religion, 1:14 can be nothing else than a claim by the Johannine community to be the true, eschatological heirs of the experience of Israel in the past. Indeed . . . we can go further, for 1:14 is especially reminiscent of Ex 33:7, so that a contrast is set up between Yahweh who dwells outside the camp of Israel and the incarnate Logos who dwelt 'among us'. John of Patmos has expressed it well: 'Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and they shall be his people, and he shall be their God' (Rev 21:3). For the evangelist, that eschatological fulfilment has been met by the coming of Jesus among his own."

40 "While covenant terminology may not be used as frequently in the New Testament . . . the concept . . . lies at the very heart of New Testament theology. . . . It is thus clear that the concept of covenant is much more pervasive in both Testaments than the mere frequency of explicit covenant terminology might lead one to conclude" Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose* (NSBT 23; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 33. Williamson adds, "As well as its fundamental role in understanding the Bible as a whole, the covenant idea is essential for unlocking numerous biblical texts. Indeed, arguably, the meaning of many texts will be skewed unless covenant is brought into the hermeneutical enterprise. . . . Therefore, by reading texts against their implicit or explicit covenantal backcloth, their theological significance and practical import generally become so much clearer" (p. 33).

41 Pryor, *John: Evangelist of the Covenant People*, 160.

42 Among others, Köstenberger suggests that the Fourth Gospel's presentation of Jesus' farewell discourse, though perhaps not patterned after "the Second Temple testament genre . . . may merely build on the precedent of the patriarchal deathbed blessings and Moses' final words in Deuteronomy. There is the familiar instruction in virtue—'love one another (13:34; 15:17); there is talk about Jesus' impending death or 'departure' (13:33, 36; 14:5-6, 12, 28); and there are words of comfort to those about to be left behind (13:36; 14:1-3, 18, 27-28)" (*John* [BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004], 396-97). Cf. Harold W. Attridge, "Genre-Bending in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 121 (2002): 3-21.

43 καὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωϋσῆν Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ τίθημί σοι διαθήκην, ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ σου ποιήσω ἔνδοξα, ἃ οὐ γέγονεν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει, καὶ ὄψεται πᾶς ὁ λαός, ἐν οἷς εἶ σύ, τὰ ἔργα κυρίου ὅτι θαυμαστά ἐστιν ἃ ἐγὼ ποιήσω σοι (Ex 34:10; LXX).

44 Raymond E. Brown is credited with coining the widely accepted designations for the two major divisions of John's Gospel—The Book of Signs (1:19-12:50) and The Book of Glory (13:1-20:31)—with the prologue (1:1-18) and epilogue (21:1-25) as anchors. See his *The Gospel according to John*, vol. 29 (The Anchor Bible; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), cxxxviii. Earlier, C. H. Dodd identified 2:1-12:50 as "The Book of Signs" (*The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge: University Press, 1953], 297).

45 C. H. Dodd correctly observes, "The story, then, is not to be taken at its face value. Its true meaning lies

deeper. We are given no direct clue to this deeper meaning, as we are for some other σημεῖα" (*The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge: University Press, 1953], 297).

46 On Jesus' use of spoken riddles, see Tom Thatcher, *Jesus the Riddler: The Power of Ambiguity in the Gospels* (Louisville & London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

47 Cf. Carson, who also takes Jesus' first miraculous sign as an "acted parable" (*John*, 172). What I mean and what Carson means by "acted parable" is not what Herman Ridderbos rejects when he states, "Miracle is neither parabolic story nor symbolic action" (*Gospel of John*, 100). Ridderbos' immediately preceding sentence is instructive, for he states, "Any suggestion that in the Fourth Gospel one can separate 'flesh' and 'glory,' history and revelation, violates the most specific aspect of that Gospel's character." That Ridderbos does not object to acknowledging that Jesus' miracles were "acted parables" is apparent when he observes that "a distinctive of the Fourth Gospel is its repeated linking of miracles with lengthy conversations focused on the *meaning* of the miracles in the framework of Jesus' self-revelation as the Christ, the Son of God (so chs. 5, 6, 9, and 11). If one fails to see that connection and hence also the deeper spiritual significance of the miracles, the one has not 'see' the signs (6:26), and faith that rests solely on miracle 'as such' has fundamentally forfeited its claim to that name (cf. e.g., 2:23ff; 3:2 with 3:1f; 4:48)" (pp. 100-101).

48 Cf. A. B. Caneday, "John in the Middle: Jews, Purification, and Jesus—John 2:1-11 and 3:22-30," an unpublished paper presented at International Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting at the University of St. Andrews, St. Andrews, Scotland, July 10, 2013.

49 On Jesus' clearing of the Temple as one of John's seven signs, see Andreas Köstenberger, "The Seventh Sign: A Study in John's Christology," *BBR* 5 (1995), 87-103.

50 Hear the echo of Moses' petition to the Lord: Δεῖξόν μοι τὴν σεαυτοῦ δόξαν (Ex 33:18). Hear also the echo of θαυμαστά (Ex 34:10).

51 Again, hear the echoes of Ex 34:10—"Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you."

52 An echo of Ex 34:9 LXX (καὶ ἀφελεῖς σὺ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν καὶ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν,) seems plausible in the Baptist's declaration, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου, John 1:29). The cognates, αἴρω and ἀπαιρέω, are evident. Cf. ἀπαιρέω with the object, τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, in ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι αὐτοῦ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν (Isa 27:9), cited as integrated into Paul's quotation of Isa 59:20-21, also a covenant ratification passage (Rom 11:26-27). I take John's saying—ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου—in essentially the same way Herman Ridderbos does. "[I]t is clear that in Jesus the boundaries of the old are absolutely transcended in regard to the place of worship, the manner of God's indwelling, the way of reconciliation (cf. e.g., 4:21ff), and also the effect of all this for the whole world. It is—as clearly apparent from the context . . .—that wholly other and superior dimension in the effectuation of reconciliation between God and the world that the lamb of God, as presently pointed out by John, provides, and that not only with a view to John's own mission but also with reference to the entire dispensation of salvation in force up to this point. "For that reason, those interpreters who speak here of a *terminus gloriae* or title of power . . . are correct in substance. Jesus is the Lamb provided by God, but in this passage not in his capacity as one who will humble himself to death, but in his God-given power and authority to take away the sin of the world and thus to open the way to God for the whole world. That all this will also require him to give himself for the life of the world will emerge in ever clearer terms in what follows, that is, in the disclosure by Jesus himself of the deepest secret of his mission. . . . But there, too, in keeping with the nature of this Gospel's soteriology, this will be constantly accompanied by an appeal to the 'power' granted to Jesus by the Father. It will be depicted, that is, as the self-surrender of the Son of man who descended from heaven (. . . 3:13ff. and 6:53), 'into whose hands' 'the father has given all things (13:1, 3) and who has 'power to lay down his life and to take it up again' (10:17f.)" (*The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* [trans. John Vriend; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997], 74-75).

53 "And it was night." "Doubtless this is historical reminiscence, but it is also profound theology. Even though 'the paschal moon was shining at the full' ... Judas was swallowed up by the most awful darkness, indeed by outer darkness (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30) ... But in another way it was also the night time for Jesus: it was the hour of the power of darkness (Lk. 22:53)" (Carson, *John*, 476).

54 R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (paperback ed. 1987; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 88.

The Nature of the New Covenant: A Case Study in Ephesians 2:11-22

Joshua M. Greever

Joshua M. Greever is professor of New Testament at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, AZ. He received his Ph.D. in New Testament from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and has authored several articles reflecting on Paul's understanding of the relationship between faith and works, the nature of the church, and the intersection of faith and vocation in the Christian life.

Introduction

Although it has traditionally been commonplace throughout church history to affirm the prominence of the new covenant in Scripture to some degree or another, recently new studies have sought to show in what way the new covenant is prominent and how it relates to the biblical metanarrative and specifically to the other major biblical covenants.[1] In particular, recent discussion has centered on a perspective labeled "progressive covenantalism," which attempts to provide a mediating position between dispensationalism and covenant theology.[2] In this scheme the new covenant is seen as the culmination of the biblical storyline, such that all of God's covenant promises in the OT have reached their fulfillment in the new covenant inaugurated by Christ. Jesus is the true Adam, the true Israel, and the true David, and therefore the true recipient of the covenant promises. This christotelic hermeneutic clarifies *in what way* Christ fulfills the OT's covenant promises, such as the Abrahamic promises of land and descendants, and therefore it clarifies *in what way* the new covenant relates to those covenant promises.

In light of this recent discussion, this article seeks to use Ephesians 2:11-22 as a case study in order to examine more carefully the nature of the new covenant, particularly in Paul's theology.[3] The purpose is not to impose a particular theological system upon the text but to glean from the text certain observations that can speak to Paul's theology of the new covenant. In the final analysis, I will contend that "progressive covenantalism" is fundamentally correct in its hermeneutical perspective, and I will offer several concluding observations regarding the nature and prominence of the new covenant in Paul's theology.

Ephesians 2:11-22 and the New Covenant

Ephesians 2:11-22 is a particularly fruitful text for analysis of the new covenant, for in it Paul describes the Gentiles' plight, solution, and new identity in light of the covenant concept. Significantly, the only time the word "covenant" (*diathēkē*) occurs in Ephesians is in 2:12, where Paul reminds the Gentiles that at one time they were "strangers to the covenants of the promise." The covenantal nature of the Gentiles' plight, then, is explicit. But this does not exhaust the covenantal concept in the passage, for there are other words and phrases that implicitly demonstrate that the new covenant was central to Paul's understanding of the Gentiles' *plight* and *solution* and their *new identity* in Christ. The categories of the Gentiles' plight, solution, and new identity serve as the structure of the text, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Structure of Ephesians 2:11-22

2:11-12	Plight of the Gentiles	Strangers to the Covenants
2:13-18	Solution for the Gentiles	Brought into a Covenant of Peace
2:19-22	New Identity of the Gentiles	Members of the New Covenant Community

Ephesians 2:11-12 describes the plight of the Gentiles, 2:13-18 the solution for the Gentiles, and 2:19-22 the new identity of the Gentiles as full and equal members of the people of God. Each of these sections are cast in light of the Gentiles' covenant relationship (or lack thereof) to God and his people. Hence, one could summarize the message of 2:11-22 in this way: "Even though at one time the Gentiles were not in a covenant relationship with God, by his grace they have been brought into a new covenant relationship with God through the death of Christ, and as a result they are now and will forever be full members of the new covenant community."

The Covenantal Plight of the Gentiles (2:11-12)

In 2:11-12, Paul calls on the Gentiles to remember their covenantal plight in redemptive history and in their own experience prior to conversion.[4] In verse 11 he reminds them that they were popularly known among ethnic Jews as "the uncircumcised."[5] From a physical perspective, the Gentile believers were uncircumcised; they had never received the physical sign of the Abrahamic covenant, circumcision of the foreskin (Gen 17:11; *Jub.* 15:33-34), which also came to be associated with the Mosaic covenant (Gal 5:3).[6] From a salvation-historical perspective, circumcision had been the rite of initiation into a covenant relationship with God and his people.[7] This relationship the Gentiles had by and large failed to experience in the OT.

However, in 2:11 Paul hints that physical circumcision no longer counts for covenant membership after the coming of Christ, since he describes the character of that circumcision as something handmade and strictly physical (*en sarki cheiropoiētou*). Now that Christ has come, physical circumcision is not supernatural and inward but natural and outward. In other words, this negative perspective on physical circumcision anticipates that the covenantal plight of the Gentiles was *not* resolved through a return to the old covenant that God made with Israel at Sinai, or through a return merely to the covenant with Abraham. If there was to be a covenantal solution for the Gentiles, as Paul later argues, it would be a different kind of covenant with a different sign. Indeed, it would be a new covenant whose sign was not outward and something handmade but something inward, supernatural, and divinely-made—or as Paul can describe it elsewhere, a circumcision of the heart (Col 2:11). Hence, the mark of membership in this new covenant would not be defined along the same

genealogical and ethnic lines as defined within the old covenant, but along the lines of changed hearts that trust and hope in the Lord. Faith in Jesus Christ would be the mark of membership in this new covenant.

In 2:12 Paul continues the covenantal plight of the Gentiles with a fivefold description that serves to highlight their plight. At one time they had been "separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of the promise, without hope, and without God in the world." It is difficult to see how Paul could have described a direr situation for the Gentiles! The fact that the Gentiles at one time were in this predicament meant that they had no hope of salvation but only the fearful expectation of life in the world without God and never-ending judgment and torment in the life to come.

Most significant in this chain is that the Gentiles were separated from Christ, for to be separated from the hope of Israel's Messiah entailed separation from any of Israel's promises and privileges. From this perspective, to have Christ is to have everything; to be separated from Christ is to have nothing. The Gentiles had nothing: they did not have the right of citizenship (*politeia*) within the people of God, and they had no place within the covenants of Israel. As a result, they were utterly hopeless and godless in the world.

The covenants the Gentiles were estranged from consisted of all the covenants properly associated with Israel: the Abrahamic, Sinai, Davidic, and new covenant.[8] The covenant with Abraham held forth the promise of blessing for the Gentiles (Gen 12:3), but Abraham's offspring had to be physically circumcised. The covenant at Sinai, which flowed from the promise to Abraham, was a covenant made with the nation of Israel and was structured along national and ethnic lines. The covenant with David, which also flowed from the promise to Abraham and held forth the promise of blessing for the Gentiles (see 2 Sam 7:19; Ps 72:8-11), was a covenant with David and his descendants as kings of God's people. Finally, even the new covenant, as Jeremiah 31:31 makes clear, was a covenant to be made "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." In other words, all these covenants, properly speaking, were Israel's covenants and thus the Gentiles were "strangers" to them.

It is instructive to note at this point that Paul does not treat the covenantal plight of the Gentiles as insignificant. On the contrary, it was a dire predicament, for to be outside a covenant relationship with God and his people was akin to having no hope and to be without God in the world. It was a way of saying that the whole trajectory or stream of salvation in the OT was

flowing, and the Gentiles were not in the stream! The concept of a covenant relationship with God and others, then, is at the heart of Paul's soteriology and ecclesiology. It has everything to do with a person's salvation and what it means to be at peace with God and at peace with one another. The place where soteriology and ecclesiology intersect is at the covenant concept. In this sense it is at the heart of Paul's gospel and is central in the grand scheme and storyline of the Bible. Not surprisingly, then, since the plight of the Gentiles was framed in a covenantal way, in 2:13-18 Paul unpacks the solution for the Gentiles in a correspondingly covenantal manner.

The Covenantal Solution for the Gentiles (2:13-18)

As Paul moves to the solution for the Gentiles, he emphasizes the notion of reconciliation and peace with God and with one another. The main point is stated in 2:13: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." To what, or to whom, were the Gentiles brought near? Certainly they were brought near to God's people, but it is sometimes lost on the reader that in 2:14-18 the underlying assumption is that the Gentiles have been brought near *to God* by the blood of Christ. As 2:16 says, Jesus died "in order to reconcile the two (Jews and Gentiles) in one body *to God* through the cross, having killed the enmity in himself." Or as 2:18 puts it, "For through him we both have access in one Spirit *to the Father*." In other words, Jesus died to reconcile people to God, to bring them "near" God so that they might be at peace with God and have access into his presence. Hence, the nearness achieved through the death of Christ in 2:13 is not merely horizontal but also—and in some sense, more fundamentally—vertical.

Nevertheless, 2:14-18 also emphasizes that Jesus also accomplished a horizontal reconciliation where the Gentiles have been brought near to God's people. An examination of the frequent use of the numerals "one" and "two" testify to this fact.

2:14 he made us *both one*[9]
2:15 he might create in himself *one* new man in place of the *two*
2:16 he might reconcile *both* in *one* body
2:18 through him we *both* have access in *one* Spirit to the Father

In other words, humanity is comprised of two groups, Jews and Gentiles. Gentiles are "far off" and Jews are "near" (2:17). Until the time of Christ there

was enmity between Jews and Gentiles, but now in Christ such enmity—what Paul calls in 2:14 the "dividing wall of hostility"—has been broken down.

The source of this hostility must have something to do with the law of Moses, as the flow of 2:14-15 indicates. In 2:14 Jesus is defined as "our peace," for he unified Jews and Gentiles by "destroying the dividing wall of hostility in his flesh." Although there is much discussion regarding which wall Jesus destroyed, the most likely explanation is in 2:15: Jesus' destruction of the wall is equivalent to his "abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances."[10] In other words, the law of commandments and ordinances *is* the wall! In order for Jews and Gentiles to be unified as God's "one new man" (v. 15), then the law had to be abolished.[11]

Now of course, this is where the covenant concept comes back into the discussion, for the law is nothing other than the old covenant made at Sinai with Israel (see Exodus 19-24). This law-covenant was nationalistic and was drawn along lines of ethnicity and nationality. Hence, to be in the covenant community one had to submit and adhere to the religious and civil stipulations of the covenant (e.g., circumcision, food laws, festivals, etc.). In essence, Gentile converts were required to submit to the Jewish way of life, and in this sense the old covenant was a dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles. As such, if Gentiles were to be members of the covenant community *as Gentiles*, a new covenant needed to be established with different stipulations. It was this old covenantal wall that Jesus abolished by his death, so that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord may be saved" (Joel 2:32; Rom 10:13).[12]

But the old covenant was not only a dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles; it also divided humanity from God. Verses 15-16 are carefully structured to show that the abolition of the old covenant served two purposes: (1) to unite Jews and Gentiles, and (2) to reconcile Jews and Gentiles to God.

2:15a By abolishing the law of commandments in ordinances
2:15b-16 In order that
He might <u>create</u> the two into one new humanity
So making peace
He might <u>reconcile</u> both in one body to God
By killing the enmity in himself

As it relates to Jews and Gentiles, the abolition of the law meant a new creation and a new humanity; as it relates to humanity's relationship to God, the abolition of the law entailed that "both" Jews and Gentiles can now find

reconciliation to God in Christ alone. The implication for the nature of old law-covenant is that it was a problem both horizontally (in excluding the Gentiles from the people of God) and vertically (in excluding humanity from God). It provided "enmity" (*echthros*) between people (2:14) and "enmity" (*echthros*) between people and God (2:16).

Even though it is clear that the Sinai law-covenant could not bring life, this did not mean for Paul that the covenant itself was evil. Indeed, the problem with the covenant was a function of the deeper problem within humanity. As Paul can affirm in Romans 7:12, "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good." The law was given by God, and so it was good. The problem was that it was used by sin to deceive and produce all manner of sin, so as to kill humanity (Rom 7:7-11). So the "problem" with the old covenant—if one can speak in those terms—was simply that it was not designed to overcome human sin. One the one hand, it was designed to bring life (e.g., Lev 18:5), yet on the other hand, it was impotent or powerless to bring life to people on account of sin and hardness of heart. So in effect, the old covenant did *not* bring life but only death. Or as Paul puts it in Ephesians 2:14, it was in the end a "dividing wall of hostility"!

Jesus as "Our Peace" (2:14)

The focus of Paul's argument up to this point has primarily been negative: Jesus is "our peace" inasmuch as he did away with the old covenant as a "wall of hostility." Thus far the covenantal plight of the Gentiles has been solved by the removal of a covenant that barred them from God and his people. But the argument does not remain purely negative: Jesus also is "our peace" in that he established by his death a new "covenant of peace" in which Jewish and Gentile Christians have access to God.

The term "peace" (*eirēnē*) is the dominant term Paul uses throughout 2:13-18 to describe the positive effects of Jesus' death. In 2:14 Jesus is described as "our peace," a designation that may hearken back to Isaiah 9:6 (MT 9:5).[13] In 2:15 the result of his new creation activity is "peace."[14] And in 2:17 he "came and preached peace" to both Jews and Gentiles.[15] And even where the word *eirēnē* is absent, the concept of peace is present in the language of nearness (2:13), reconciliation (2:16), and access to the father (2:18).

Further, the basis for this peace is the death of Christ. In 2:13 nearness to God comes "by the blood of Christ," a reference to Jesus' death as a sacrifice.

In 2:14 Jesus destroys the dividing wall of hostility "in his flesh," which refers primarily, if not exclusively, to his death.[16] Finally, in 2:16 Jesus reconciles humanity to God "through the cross."[17] Hence, the death of Christ in 2:13-18 is a sacrificial death that produces peace between people and God. The goal or solution is peace, and the means is the cross.

Since the term "peace" is crucial to understand the solution for the Gentiles, it is necessary to discern what kind of peace Jesus brings. The Greek term *eirēnē* can describe merely the absence of hostility, in which enemies lay down their weapons against one another. But it can also indicate the presence of a relationship of love, loyalty, and faithfulness, which is, we might add, the nature and goal of a covenant relationship. This meaning of *eirēnē* comports with the Hebrew term *shālôm*, which describes the total well-being of an individual or relationship.[18]

The meaning of *eirēnē* in Ephesians 2:13-18 is clarified by a close analysis of 2:17, which claims that Jesus "came and preached peace to you who were far off [Gentiles] and peace to those who were near [Jews]." This double proclamation of peace derives from Isaiah 57:19, "Peace, peace, to the far and to the near." In Isaiah the double proclamation of peace appears at the beginning of the phrase and then describes the recipients of the peace, namely, the "far" and the "near." Paul reworks and reassigns the double proclamation of peace so as to clarify that the recipients of peace are both "far" and "near."

Peace to the "Far" and "Near" in Isaiah 56-57

That Paul is consciously alluding to Isaiah 57:19 is confirmed by an examination of the immediate context in Isaiah, for Isaiah is in the midst of redefining who constitutes the true people of God—or as Paul can say, "one new man" (Eph 2:15). In Isaiah 56:1-2 the person who "keeps justice and does righteousness" and who ensures the Sabbath is not profaned will receive God's salvation and righteousness. This redefinition of the people of God is clarified in Isaiah 56:3-8 where even the "foreigner" and "eunuch"—those who are outcasts in Israel and do not share Israel's covenantal privileges—have an opportunity to be part of God's people. Indeed, if they are true members of the covenant community, God will "give them an everlasting name" (56:5) and will "bring [them] to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer" (56:7). Moreover, these previous covenantal outcasts serve as priests in the very temple of God, for they "minister" (*shārat*) to

the Lord in the temple and offer burnt offerings and sacrifices (56:6-7).[19] In other words, the picture is *not* one in which foreigners and eunuchs are only peripheral members in God's people; rather, they are full members of God's people and have equal access to the temple presence of God on his holy mountain! Indeed, Isaiah 56 portrays a new community reconstituted along the lines of covenant faithfulness ("those who hold fast my covenant").

Conversely, Isaiah 56:9-57:13 redefines God's people by warning Israel that persistence in idolatry would only bring destruction. Israel cannot trust in their genealogy or covenantal privileges. Rather, "he who takes refuge in me shall possess the land and shall inherit my holy mountain" (57:13), for God chooses to dwell "with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit" (57:15). Those who trust in and humble themselves before the Lord, then, will be healed and comforted (57:18). They are the new creation of God, because God himself "creates the fruit of lips" (57:19a).[20] In this context comes Isaiah's double proclamation of peace: "Peace, peace, to the far and to the near, says Yahweh, and I will heal him" (57:19b).

The proclamation of peace in Isaiah 57:19, then, is a universal proclamation of restoration and salvation. It is issued to the "far" and the "near," signifying that both Jews and Gentiles are invited to put away their sin and idolatry and to turn to the Lord in repentance and faith.[21] Those who experience this peace find more than a mere absence of hostility toward God, but instead find comfort, healing, and restoration.[22]

Peace through the Death of the Servant in Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Although the worldwide invitation for salvation is clear enough from Isaiah 57:19, the questions remain: How will a person qualify to receive this peace with God? Who in the entire world "keeps justice and does righteousness"? Who "chooses the things that please God and holds fast to his covenant"? These questions remain, for Isaiah 57:20-21—the last two verses of Isaiah 57—reiterate that the wicked will *not* receive this peace: "But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. 'There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the wicked'" (ESV). In fact, Isaiah 57:21 is echoed in Isaiah 48:22, "'There is no peace,' says Yahweh, 'for the wicked'" (cf. Isa 53:6; 59:1-2; 64:6). Like a tolling bell, this phrase reminded Israel and all of humanity that God is holy and will not tolerate sin and unrighteousness. So how can anyone, whether Jew or Gentile, find peace with God?

This tension is resolved in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, which is Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song. Although space prevents a detailed analysis, a crucial verse that resolves the tension is Isaiah 53:5, where the servant dies as a substitute for the sins of the people: "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." The first pair of lines in this verse describe *on what account* the servant died ("for our transgressions" / "for our iniquities"), whereas the second pair describe *the purpose for which* the servant died ("for our peace" / "we are healed"). The terms "peace" (*shalom*) and "healing" (*rapa'*) are the same two terms that are offered to the far and the near in Isaiah 57:19 ("*peace, peace* to the far and the near, and I will *heal* him")![23] In other words, the promise of peace and healing in Isaiah 57:19 is directly connected to and based on the substitutionary death of the servant in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song. The only way for a sinful humanity to be reconciled to God is through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ.

The New Covenant of Peace in Isaiah 54-55

We have already noted how Isaiah's concept of peace with God connotes much more than the absence of hostility but involves concepts of restoration and reconciliation. But we can press even further, for this peace is defined in Isaiah 54-55 as the peace of a new and everlasting covenant.

In Isaiah 54-55 God promises once again to show compassion on his people. He was the Maker, the Husband, and the Redeemer of his people, and so the return from spiritual exile would entail the beginning of unceasing and endless compassion on his people. In fact, God compares the everlasting nature of his compassion with the covenant with creation in the days of Noah (54:9-10). As God had sworn in an "everlasting covenant" never again to destroy the earth with a flood (cf. Gen 9:16), so God swears in a new "covenant of peace" (*berit shalom*) never again to be angry with his people. In fact, even if God's covenant with creation could be overturned (54:10a), yet God's covenant of peace would stand firm (54:10b). For this reason, the same covenant is described as the "everlasting covenant" in the next chapter (55:3). The "everlasting covenant" in 55:3 is a covenant based on the faithfulness of the greater David, Jesus Christ (55:3; cf. Acts 13:34),[24] and as a result this covenant ensures that Zion's children will experience "great peace" (54:13) and "abundant pardon" (55:7). Indeed, in 55:12 all

the nations are invited to join in the joy and "peace" of Zion as the creation itself breaks forth in song.

To summarize the immediate context of Isaiah 57:19, the proclamation of peace to the "far" and the "near" is a universal invitation to be reconciled to God and to join the new covenant community (Isaiah 56-57). The *basis* for the proclamation of peace is the sacrificial, substitutionary death of the servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12), and the *result* of his death is an everlasting covenant of peace (Isaiah 54-55). It is no wonder that Paul, along with Isaiah, can call his gospel the "gospel of peace" (Eph 6:15; cf. Isa 52:7).

In Ephesians 2:17, then, Paul's citation of Isaiah 57:19 provides an interpretive window through which we may apply Isaiah's rich and robust concept of covenantal peace to Paul's concept of Jesus as "our peace." For Paul, the time of fulfillment of Isaiah's promises was at hand. Jesus is "our peace" precisely because he was the servant of the Lord, who by his death inaugurated the new and everlasting covenant of peace. It is a covenant for a worldwide audience—the near and the far—so that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The invitation is not limited by one's ethnicity, for even the eunuch and the foreigner can now join themselves to the one people of God, and this "one new man" is constituted along the lines of one's relationship to Christ. And so the time is at hand, Paul says, for the heralding of the "gospel of peace" (see Eph 6:15).

Hence, in Ephesians 2:13-18 the covenantal plight of the Gentiles is solved *negatively* through the abolition of the old law-covenant, as well as *positively* through the inauguration of the new covenant. The Gentiles' lack of outward circumcision, their previous alienation from God, and their estrangement from the covenants of the promise in 2:11-12 are fully resolved, for through the death of Christ the Gentiles are granted to become members of the new covenant, wherein they are at peace with God and one another in the new covenant community.

The Covenantal Identity of the Gentiles (2:19-22)

As a result of the new covenant work of Christ, the Gentiles obtain a new identity and status in 2:19-22. Not surprisingly, their identity is described in covenantal terms. Once "strangers (*xenoi*) to the covenants of the promise" (2:12), now in Christ Gentiles are "no longer strangers (*xenoi*)" (2:19).

Once alienated from the citizenship (*politeia*) of Israel (2:12), now in Christ Gentiles are "fellow citizens" (*sympolitai*) with God's people (2:19). Now in Christ the Gentiles have all the rights and privileges of the saints: "the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (3:6).

Moreover, in a way reminiscent of Isaiah's eunuch and the foreigner who minister before the Lord in the temple (Isa 56:6-7), so now Gentile believers are described as members of God's new temple. They are "members of God's household" (2:19b) and are built on a firm christological and apostolic foundation (2:20). They themselves as God's people form the building materials for the temple, and God himself dwells among them (2:21-22).

The promise of God's everlasting temple presence is consonant with the promise of an everlasting covenant. In Ezekiel 37:26-28 God promises an everlasting temple with an everlasting covenant.

> I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore. (ESV)

The raising of the new temple in Ezekiel coincides with God's everlasting covenant presence among his people (cf. Rev 21:3).[25] Hence, the Gentiles' new identity and status as full members of God's people and integral building materials of God's temple confirm that they are recipients of the promises of the new covenant.

Conclusion: Ephesians 2:11-22 and the Nature of the New Covenant

This analysis of Ephesians 2:11-22 has demonstrated that the Gentiles' plight, solution, and new identity are cast in light of the new covenant. Their plight was explicitly covenantal, for they were strangers to Israel's covenants (2:11-12). Correspondingly, their solution was implicitly covenantal, for Jesus provided reconciliation to God and one another by means of his sacrificial

death that inaugurated Isaiah's covenant of peace (2:13-18). Finally, their new identity in God's "house" was likewise framed against the backdrop of the prophetic expectation that the new and everlasting temple presence of God would coincide with the inauguration of a new and everlasting covenant (2:19-22).

Since 2:11-22 provides a window into the nature of the new covenant, it remains for us to draw some theological conclusions concerning the role of the new covenant in Paul's theology. First, Ephesians 2:11-22 demonstrates that the new covenant is at the heart of Paul's gospel, for the new covenant contains the message of reconciliation with God and one another. The solution for the Gentiles in 2:13-18 is shot through with the language of "peace," which I have shown primarily derives from Isaiah's "covenant of peace." It is no wonder, then, that Paul can refer to his own gospel as the "gospel of peace" (Eph 6:15).[26] In other words, the reason why the gospel is good news for the Gentiles is because in it the Gentiles have been brought into a *new covenant of peace* with God and God's people by the death of Christ, and as a result they have access into the temple presence of God. It is certainly the case that Paul can describe his gospel without referring explicitly to the new covenant, but it is just as certain that when Paul refers to the new covenant, he is describing his gospel.[27]

Second, Ephesians 2:11-22 demonstrates that in Paul's theology the new covenant contains elements of continuity and discontinuity with the major biblical covenants in the OT. The continuity is framed in terms of fulfillment of OT promises, such as Isaiah 57:19 and Ezekiel 37:26-28 (peace with God, God's everlasting presence, etc.). Indeed, the way in which Paul frames the plight of the Gentiles in 2:11-12 and finds it resolved in 2:19 assumes that the hope of Israel expressed in "the covenants of the promise" has now come to fruition in the person and work of Christ. In other words, the stream of redemptive history described in the OT has now been fulfilled in the New, a stream into which the Gentiles have now been assimilated by faith in Christ.

Still, there are elements of discontinuity in 2:11-22 as well. Now that Christ has come, Paul can describe physical circumcision as something "made in the flesh by hands" (2:11). Now that the "age to come" has dawned in Christ—note the eschatologically-charged "but now" (*nyni de*) in 2:13—Israel's law-covenant is obsolete, having been abolished by Christ (2:14-15).[28] The element of newness is evident in 2:15, for in Christ the people of God

are now described as "one new man." Jesus, who is the "last Adam" and the "second man" (1 Cor 15:45-47), brings into effect a new creation with a new humanity identified and defined by their relationship to Jesus (Eph 4:22-24). This new reality is described as "the mystery of Christ" in 3:4-6, for in him the Gentiles are full and legitimate members of God's people. Such discontinuity demonstrates that the nature of the new covenant is qualitatively new.

Third, neither dispensationalism nor covenant theology completely satisfies the biblical data of Ephesians 2:11-22. On the one hand, at the heart of dispensationalism is the distinction between Israel and the church, but Paul's teaching concerning the "one new man" in Christ suggests there is a *unified people of God* reconstituted along the lines of faith in Christ, as opposed to *distinct peoples of God* within the same covenant community. In a context where Paul is at pains to emphasize that the "two" have now become "one" in Christ, it would be odd if Paul continued to distinguish between Jewish and Gentile believers, either in terms of their *identity* or *function* in the kingdom of Christ (cf. Eph 5:5).[29]

On the other hand, at the heart of covenant theology is the notion that the new covenant community in the present age is mixed with believers and unbelievers. But this conclusion seems to conflict with Ephesians 2:11-22, in which all members of the new covenant community have been reconciled to God through the death of Christ (2:13, 16). In Paul's theology, to be a member of the new covenant community *is* to be at peace with God, for the covenant is defined as a "covenant of peace." To be a member of this new covenant *is* to be a member of the "one new man," all of whom have put on Christ (2:15; cf. 4:22-24). To be part of God's household *is* to be part of God's temple and thus to have unhindered access into his presence by the Spirit (2:18-22; cf. Isa 56:6-7). This new reality in which every covenant member "knows the Lord" (cf. Jer 31:34) is precisely why Paul can regard physical circumcision as irrelevant in 2:11. Now that the new covenant has dawned in Christ, Paul does not regard Gentiles in the new covenant as truly "uncircumcised" any longer, for the inward circumcision of the heart to which physical circumcision pointed has become a reality for them in the new covenant community (cf. Col 2:11). Now that they are in Christ, they are Gentiles, but only "in the flesh" (2:11a); from the Jewish perspective they are known as "the uncircumcision," but from Paul's perspective they are the true circumcision (2:11b; cf. Rom 2:28-29; Phil 3:3).[30] This community-wide

circumcision of the heart *is* the mark of membership in God's people, a people defined not by genealogy and ethnicity but by regenerate hearts.[31]

In conclusion, this analysis of Ephesians 2:11-22 serves to undergird and corroborate the christotelic hermeneutic outlined in "progressive covenantalism." The mediating position forged strikes the right balance in explaining how the new covenant contains elements of both continuity and discontinuity. Further, its emphasis on Christ as the nexus and fulfillment of all the promises of God is a welcome proposal for understanding the manner in which Paul views how Isaiah's promises are applied legitimately to Gentile Christians.

Nevertheless, more exegetical analysis is needed, for any theological system will stand or fall inasmuch as it remains faithful to the witness of Scripture. Let us, then, be like the noble Jews in Berea, who "received the word with all eagerness, searching the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

---

1 This paper was originally presented on July 23, 2015 at the Council on Biblical Theology in Franklin, TN. It has been revised and expanded for publication in this journal. I am grateful for Peter Gentry's insightful feedback following the original presentation of the paper.

2 Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012). See also *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies* (ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker; Nashville: B&H, 2016). There have been numerous and variegated responses to Gentry and Wellum's work (e.g., Michael J. Vlach, "Have They Found a Better Way? An Analysis of Gentry and Wellum's *Kingdom through Covenant*," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 24.1 [2013]: 5-24; Samuel Renihan, "Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants: A Review Article," *Journal of the Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies* [2014]: 153-76).

3 Unfortunately, Ephesians 2:11-22 has largely been overlooked as a text that could shed light on Paul's theology of the new covenant, for some Pauline scholars questions Pauline authorship of the letter. Even among those who contend for Pauline authorship, this text has been overshadowed by other more obvious "new covenant" texts, such as 2 Corinthians 3 and Galatians 3-4. For a convincing defense of Pauline authorship see Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 2-61.

4 Many commentators (e.g., Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998], 239-40) rightly note that the call for the Gentiles to remember what God has done for them parallels the Deuteronomic call for Israel to remember what God did for them (Deut 5:15; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22); contra Francis W. Beare (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, in vol. 10 of *The Interpreter's Bible* [ed. George Arthur Buttrick; Nashville: Abingdon, 1953], 649) and John Muddiman (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* [Black's New Testament Commentaries; London: Continuum, 2001], 116), who think it is evidence of a post-Pauline situation. Even though grammatically the object of *hoti* is 2:12, Paul wants the Gentiles to remember not only who they were apart from Christ but also his reconciling work for them in Christ in 2:13-18 (contra Best, *Ephesians*, 244-45). This is already a hint that Paul considers the Gentiles to be full members of the new community of God.

5 Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations reflect the author's translation.

6 That the Jews were not the only people to use the ritual of circumcision has been used as an argument for Ephesians as a pseudonymous letter, for it is averred that Paul would have known of the practice elsewhere

(e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 239). But the perspective of Ephesians at this point—a perspective with which Paul agreed—incorporates a specifically salvation-historical perception of the Gentiles, in which the Jews considered themselves to be the "true circumcision" and all Gentiles to be uncircumcised before God.

7 Tet-Lim N. Yee (*Jews, Gentiles and Ethnic Reconciliation: Paul's Jewish Identity and Ephesians* [Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 130; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 78-81) rightly notes the intimate connection between the Jewish rite of circumcision and the covenant relationship.

8 So Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians* (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 155; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 189. Neither the covenant with Adam (C. Leslie Mitton, *Ephesians* [New Century Bible; London: Oliphants, 1976], 103) nor the covenant with Noah (Larry J. Kreitzer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* [Epworth Commentaries; London: Epworth, 1997], 81; Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 121) are likely in view, for those covenants were not made only with Israel but with all humanity. The OT does not think of a plurality of covenants with the patriarchs (contra Charles J. Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: With a Critical and Grammatical Commentary, and a Revised Translation* [5th ed.; London: Longmans, Green, 1884], 45; S. D. F. Salmond, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, in vol. 3 of *The Expositor's Greek Testament* [ed. W. Robertson Nicoll; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.], 292; cf. Sir 44:12, 18; Wis 18:22; 2 Macc 8:15), nor one Abrahamic covenant with repeated renewals (contra Best, *Ephesians*, 242), nor does it support the notion of one "covenant of grace" with many reaffirmations (contra William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967], 130; rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 358).

9 It is a grammatical curiosity that in 2:14 the word "both" is neuter (*ta amphotera*), whereas in 2:16 it is plural (*tous amphoterous*). Frank Thielman (*Ephesians* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010], 164 [following Best, *Ephesians*, 252]) contends that the neuter connotes spatial imagery in 2:14. In any case, there does not seem to be much difference between the gender switch (so Markus Barth, *Ephesians* [The Anchor Bible, vol. 34; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974], 262-63).

10 For an exhaustive list of possibilities regarding the possible referent of the wall, see Barth, *Ephesians*, 283-87.

11 There is no indication in 2:15 that any part of the old covenant is still binding on believers; rather, the old covenant in its entirety is abolished. Some have held to a tripartite view of the law and that the "law of commandments expressed in ordinances" only refers to the ceremonial or civil aspects of the law, so that the moral law is still in effect (e.g., Peter Balla, "Is the Law Abolished According to Eph. 2:15?" *European Journal of Theology* 3 [1994]: 9-16; John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians* [trans. T. H. L. Parker; vol. 11 of *Calvin's Commentaries*; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965], 150-51; Hendriksen, *Ephesians*, 135). But it is far from clear that the Mosaic law-covenant was intended to have a tripartite division (so Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 355), the phrase "law of commandments in ordinances" itself does not admit of any distinctions but describes the whole Mosaic law-covenant in a plenary fashion typical of the literary style of Ephesians (cf. 1:17; 2:7; so Arnold, *Ephesians*, 163; Best, *Ephesians*, 260; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* [WBC, vol. 42; Dallas: Word Books, 1990], 142). Further, even if one were to grant the tripartite division of the law, in 2:14-15 the law serves not only as a horizontal but also as a vertical barrier—a function certainly inclusive of the so-called "moral law"!

12 Scholars generally associated with the "New Perspective on Paul" have rightly noted that the law raised barriers, or "boundary markers," between the Jews and Gentiles (see esp. James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays* [WUNT 185; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005]).

13 Cf. Micah 5:5 (MT 5:4). So Peter Stuhlmacher, "'He is our Peace' (Eph. 2:14): On the Exegesis and Significance of Eph. 2:14-18," in *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* (trans. Everett R. Kalin; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 182-200; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary* (trans. H. Heron; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 112; contra Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 127.

14 Present participles (*poiōn*) subsequent to the main verb of the clause (*ktisē*) regularly convey the result of the action of the main verb (Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* [2nd ed.; Biblical Languages: Greek 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 188; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 638).

15 One need not decide the particular time of Jesus' proclamation in 2:17. For a discussion of the many interpretations of *elthōn* in 2:17, see Best (*Ephesians*, 271-73) who thinks the "least objectionable" option is either Christ's preaching either during his earthly ministry (cf. John 20:19-21; Acts 10:36-38) or through those who preach the gospel now.

16 So most commentators (e.g., Barth, *Ephesians*, 302-04; cf. Col 1:22).

17 It is possible for the pronoun *autō* in 2:16 to refer to Jesus or his cross (*stauros*), the latter of which would indicate that enmity between God and humanity was "killed" at the cross.

[18] Claus Westermann, "Peace (*Shalom*) in the Old Testament," in *The Meaning of Peace: Biblical Studies* (ed. Perry B. Yoder and Willard M. Swartley; trans. Walter W. Sawatsky; 2nd ed.; Studies in Peace and Scripture, vol. 2; Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2001), 37-70.

[19] The verb *sharat* is commonly used of a special priestly service of worship (see Num 3:6; Deut 10:8; 17:12; 1 Chr 15:2; Isa 61:6).

[20] The fruit of lips could be a reference to the praise of worshipers, although in the context of Isaiah—he lived among a people of "unclean lips" (Isa 6:5)—the phrase aptly describes any kind of right speech within God's people. The transformation and healing of Zion is complete when everyone in the community speaks what is right and true at all times (cf. Zech 8:16; Eph 4:25, 29). This transformation owes entirely to God's work of new "creation" (*bara'*).

[21] Thorsten Moritz (*A Profound Mystery: The Use of the OT in Ephesians* [Supplements to Novum Testamentum, vol. 85; Leiden: Brill, 1996], 32-34) rightly contends the "near" and the "far" in Isaiah 57:19 refer to Jews and Gentiles, respectively, as opposed to Jews living in the land and those in the diaspora.

[22] J. Alec Motyer (*The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993], 477) notes that the double use of the term "peace" connotes "what is superlative in kind and total in extent, the truest peace and peace to the exclusion of all else" (cf. Isa 26:3).

[23] The verb *rapa'* occurs only 7x in Isaiah (6:10; 19:22 [2x]; 30:26; 53:5; 57:18, 19), heightening the plausibility that the promise of healing in 57:18-19 is based on the healing provided by the servant's death in 53:5.

[24] For a defense of the interpretation of the "faithful *heseds* of David" (Isa 55:3) adopted here, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 407-21.

[25] See also Exodus 15:17; 1 Kings 8:39, 43, 49 (= 2 Chr 6:30, 33, 39); 2 Chronicles 30:27; 3 Maccabees 2:15; Psalms 33:14; 76:2; Daniel 2:11.

[26] Strikingly, Ephesians 6:14-17 is likewise pregnant with allusions to Isaiah (11:5; 52:7; 59:17).

[27] Sometimes it has been averred that Paul held an attitude of ambivalence towards the concept of covenant because Paul only used the term "covenant" (*diathēkē*) in polemical contexts (e.g., James D. G. Dunn, "Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology? Reflections on Romans 9:4 and 11:27," in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period* [ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo; Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 71; Leiden: Brill, 2004], 287-307). But this approach overlooks the fact that for Paul a term like "peace" (*eirēnē*) often flies in the same semantic orbit as the term *diathēkē*.

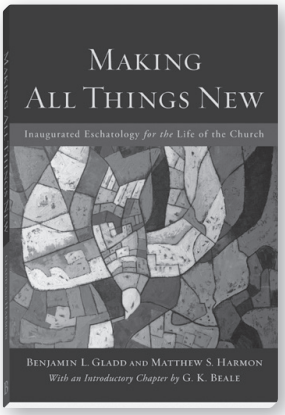
[28] Paul frequently uses *nyni de* to show that in Christ God's saving promises have ultimately and eschatologically arrived (Rom 3:21; 6:22; 7:6; 1 Cor 15:20; Col 1:22).

[29] Sometimes it is argued that the "one new man" in 2:15 shows only that the Gentiles are on the same "spiritual plane in their relationship to God" as the Jews, but that Israel maintains a "specific identity and corresponding function in God's historical kingdom program" (Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: the Interface between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993], 218); see also the discussion on this point in *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church: The Search for Definition* (ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992). But the parallel between 2:11-12 and 2:19-22 shows that everything Israel once possessed—including "kingdom" elements like the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of "citizenship" (*politeia* in 2:12, 19)—the Gentiles now also possess.

[30] The participle *legomenē* ("so-called") probably reflects Paul's negative outlook on outward circumcision (rightly Mitton, *Ephesians*, 102; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 153).

[31] This is not to say, of course, that everyone on a church membership roll is truly regenerate. Still, churches should strive to align their membership within the congregation to reflect accurately the regenerate nature of the new covenant community.

New from BAKER ACADEMIC



Making All Things New

Inaugurated Eschatology for the Life of the Church

Benjamin L. Gladd and Matthew S. Harmon

978-0-8010-4960-6 • 224 pp. • $19.99p

"Gladd and Harmon demonstrate that eschatology permeates every aspect of ministry. . . . Readers will be instructed, edified, and encouraged."

—**THOMAS SCHREINER**, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Church

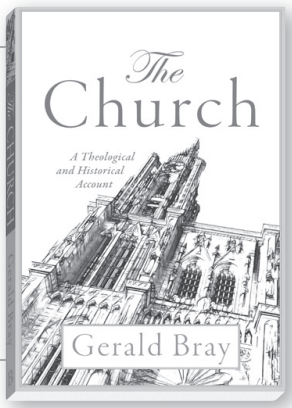
A Theological and Historical Account

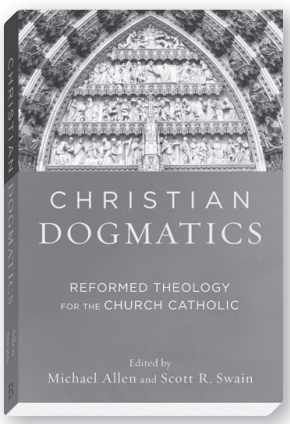
Gerald Bray

978-0-8010-3086-4 • 288 pp. • $24.99p

"Destined to become the go-to classic for an overview of Protestant ecclesiology."

—**BRYAN LITFIN**, Moody Bible Institute





Christian Dogmatics

Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic

Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, editors

978-0-8010-4894-4 • 416 pp. • $36.99p

"Significant contributions from a range of respected scholars. This is a gift to the entire church."

—**FRED SANDERS**, Biola University

Baker Academic

bakeracademic.com

Available in bookstores or by calling 800.877.2665

Visit our blog: blog.bakeracademic.com

Paedocommunion, Paedobaptism, and Covenant Theology: A Baptist Assessment and Critique

Brent E. Parker

Brent E. Parker is a PhD candidate in systematic theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and assistant editor of *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*. He is the co-editor of and a contributor in *Progressive Covenantalism* (B&H Academic, 2016).

Introduction

One of the distinguishing marks of the Church is the proper administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper.[1] Since the time of the Reformation when these two visible signs were recognized as ordained by Christ, they have been hotly debated. The correct mode and the proper recipients of baptism have a long pedigree of opposing viewpoints, and the nature of the Lord's Supper has been historically contentious as well. More recently, however, the inclusion of all children of believing parents to the Lord's Table, a practice known as paedocommunion, has become a contested issue among Anglican[2] and especially Reformed and Presbyterian circles.[3] Advocates of paedocommunion assert that baptized children or infants who are physically capable of eating should participate in the Lord's Supper.[4] On the other hand, many paedobaptists reject this practice and seek to maintain what they believe is the biblical teaching (including the teaching of John Calvin and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*) that the Lord's Supper should be reserved only for those who have consciously responded to God's grace in Christ.

Interestingly, some of the impetus among covenant theologians and pastors to include children in communion is derived from Baptist polemics. Baptists claim that hermeneutical consistency in covenant or federal theology demands that if infants are baptized into the church, then so should they have a share in the other ordinance, the Lord's Supper.[5] Thus, proponents of infant communion, desiring to see their covenantal theology worked out consistently, assert that all members of the new covenant community, believers and their children, should participate in the Lord's Supper.[6] Furthermore, motivation is found for incorporating infants or children who have not reached the age of discernment, based on the fact that children participated in the Passover feast and were included in other OT meals and sacrificial feasts. These OT covenantal meals, especially the Passover, have been replaced by the Lord's Supper. The new covenant meal is more beneficial and should have no less than the privileges that children enjoyed in the old covenant administration. Considerations of 1 Corinthians 11 also drive paedocommunion impulses. Lastly, evidence from church history on the practice of infant communion, in conjunction with analogous historical arguments for the practice of infant baptism in the early church, is also used to affirm paedocommunion. Each of these arguments, however, is strongly opposed by traditional Reformed paedobaptists as they seek to maintain that communion is only for those who have made a conscious and public profession of faith.

In this article, I will present the paedocommunion argument and its interpretative approach to the Passover and Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 11, before I reject it. I will do so in five steps: (1) set the paedocommunion argument in the overall system of covenant theology; (2) outline the hermeneutics of paedocommunion; (3) describe the key arguments for the paedocommunion view; (4) outline the response to the paedocommunion argument from those who embrace paedobaptism; and finally (5) present my biblical-theological critique of paedocommunion (and its corollary paedobaptism) from a Baptist view. The goal of the entire paper is to demonstrate that the paedocommunion view is consistent with covenant theology, unlike those within covenant theology who reject it, but it ultimately flounders on their understanding of the nature of the new covenant, coupled with their misunderstanding of the national and typological aspects of the Passover. On both these counts, the argument for paedocommunion and paedobaptism

fail. The history of paedocommunion in the early and medieval church, although important, will not be addressed given space limitations.[7]

Covenant Theology as the Theological Framework Governing Paedocommunion

Baptist theologian Paul Jewett noted that the argument from circumcision to infant baptism, which was so pivotal and central to the whole debate of paedobaptism, reflected "the more basic theological principle of continuity in redemptive revelation."[8] The same theological principle is also of crucial importance in the debate regarding paedocommunion. "The same issues that arise in the debate over infant and child observance of the Lord's Supper," observes Keidel, "appear also in the debate over infant baptism."[9] Indeed, if the foundational argument of infant baptism rests on a unified covenant of grace evidenced in both the New and Old Testaments,[10] such is the same for the presentation for paedocommunion.

Basically stated, following the fall of Adam recorded in Genesis 3, God initiated "the covenant of grace" which extends through the OT and NT as his saving work across redemptive history displays a continuity: OT believers received salvation from the gospel of Christ to come, and NT believers receive salvation in the gospel of Christ who has come.[11] Further, the Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and even the new covenant–albeit in a more glorious and fulfilled sense–are all administrations or expressions of this one overarching covenant of grace.[12] Though the various administrations of the covenant of grace are diverse and particular in terms of mode, the substance does not change; the successive administrations are essentially the one and same covenant of grace.[13] The implications of this framework, which both paedobaptists and paedocommunionists adopt,[14] include first, the continuity of the people of God–one church progressing throughout all of redemptive history–and second, membership in the covenant community is for believers and their children—also known as the genealogical principle and linked to the household codes[15] and lastly, the continuity of the essential meaning of the covenant signs and seals (e.g., the spiritual realities of circumcision are replaced in baptism even though the signs–cutting of foreskin versus water–are different).[16] A critical aspect of covenant theology is that the church, like Israel, is a mixed people with the invisible church consisting of all of God's

true elect and the visible church reflecting a community of believers and unbelievers. From this theological grid, paedobaptism is asserted; baptism replaces circumcision (Col 2:11-12; Rom 2:29; 4:11) because they both signify and anticipate the realities of the gospel.[17]

It is important to note that the argument for paedocommunion is placed within the overall theological framework of covenant theology. Peter Leithart states it this way:

> Simply put, the most common Reformed argument for infant baptism is this: (male) children were included in Israel in the Old Testament; Israel and the church are the same people, bearers of the same promise; therefore, just as (male) children were marked for inclusion by circumcision in the old covenant, so children should be marked for inclusion by baptism in the new covenant. The argument for inclusion of young children in the Lord's Supper has the same structure: children ate with their parents at the feasts of Israel; Israel and the church are the same people; therefore, children should participate in the Christian feast.[18]

The Hermeneutics of Paedocommunion

Before turning to the specific arguments for paedocommunion, I will outline some hermeneutical issues pertaining to it. Leithart has laid down the assumed but often unstated hermeneutical principles of "paedo-arguments."[19] These are important, Leithart contends, because such unexamined presuppositions have led to hermeneutical inconsistencies among paedobaptists.[20]

The first hermeneutical issue that paedo-arguments assume is that the "ceremonial" regulations associated with the liturgical forms and patterns of the old covenant have "ceremonial" import in the new covenant era.[21] Just as there are ritual ordinances that require circumcision on the eighth day and govern the access to and manner of Israel's feasts, so there are ceremonial regulations for the church with reference to the admission requirements to baptism and the practice of the Lord's Supper. "Accepting that infant circumcision supports infant baptism logically entails accepting that ceremonial regulations of the Old can be applied as ceremonial regulations in the New."[22]

A second hermeneutical assumption of paedo-arguments involves typology. OT persons, events, institutions typify not only Jesus, but also the *totus Christus*, the whole Christ in terms of head and body.[23] The Augustinian

principle of *totus Christus* means that the OT typifies not only Christ, but also the church and that such OT types will "have some regulatory authority in the church."[24] Leithart offers an example of this principle. Israel's exodus-wilderness wanderings are typologically applied to Christ in Matthew 3-4 as one observes that Jesus' sonship, baptism, and wilderness temptation experiences all correspond to the exodus and wilderness wanderings of the nation of Israel. However, the second aspect of the hermeneutic of *totus Christus* is given in Paul's treatment of the exodus-wilderness narrative. Paul employs an ecclesiological typology when he applies the Israel wilderness experience to the story of the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 10:6-11.[25] In this passage, Israel's wilderness wanderings foreshadow not so much the story of Christ but the Corinthian church.[26] Thus, the Augustinian principle of *totus Christus* is at least implicitly affirmed by paedocommunion advocates.

The third hermeneutical point is that paedo-arguments do not claim complete continuity between the institutions of the Old and New Testaments.[27] Clearly, baptism does not involve the removal of the foreskin. Furthermore, the inclusion of children in the Passover applies to the situation of children at the Lord's Table but still assumes discerning areas of similarity between the two meals while maintaining the evident dissimilarities (e.g., the consumable elements in each meal).

Key Arguments for Paedocommunion

Having sketched the theological framework of covenant theology and some hermeneutical assumptions of paedocommunion advocates, I now turn to the key arguments for the view.

The Paedocommunion Covenant Argument

A key argument for covenant communion is that all members of the new covenant should receive the privileges of that covenant. If baptism is the sign of entrance into the new covenant community, then the ongoing sign of the new covenant relationship with God, the Lord's Supper, should be granted to all members.[28] One aspect of this argument draws from the genealogical principle which is also utilized for the case of infant baptism.[29] Strawbridge appeals to this principle and applies it to paedocommunion and thereby seeks to correct what he views as an inconsistent theology and practice among covenant theologians.

With the baptism of infants based on covenantal inclusion, Strawbridge argues that the case is even more explicitly true for communion. Baptism is not explicitly called a covenant sign in Scripture, but communion is specifically called such, being identified as the new covenant sacrament in Luke 22:20.[30] Also, generational inclusion, according to Strawbridge, is "explicit in all covenant administrations in Scripture."[31] Beginning with Adam, one observes that all the children of Adam are involved (1 Cor 15:22; Rom 5:12). The Noahic covenant involved the salvation of his household (Heb 11:7).[32] The patriarchs (Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) performed sacrifices for their entire families, and with the Abrahamic covenant circumcision was given as a representative sign for Abraham and all his descendants throughout their generations (Gen 17:7, 9). In addition, during the Mosaic administration the blood of the Passover lamb preserved the firstborn, and the Passover was to be observed as an ordinance for Israel and their children forever (Exod 12:24). For the Davidic covenant, Strawbridge appeals to Psalm 89:3-4, since God confirms his promise to David in establishing his seed and building up his throne to all generations. Therefore, this brief survey of the covenantal framework of the OT demonstrates, according to Strawbridge, that the "pattern of covenant administration includes the principle of family inclusion and successive generations in both covenant content and covenant recipients of the signs."[33] The visibility of signs and seals of the covenant promises is inclusive of the children of believers, claims Strawbridge, and so he argues from new covenant consistency as well. New covenant passages (Deut 30:6 and Jer 31:8, 17) with references to "descendants" and "children" indicate the inclusion of children.[34] Additional evidence in the NT suggest that the offspring of covenant participants are explicitly included with the promise to "you and your seed" (Luke 1:17; 1:49-50; Acts 2:39; and Acts 13:32-33).[35] If children of believers are in the new covenant, the logical entailment is that the cup of the new covenant, signifying the purchased redemption, should be extended to them.[36]

The involvement of children in the covenants leads to further conceptual problems in terms of membership, as traditional paedobaptists are viewed as inconsistent. Strawbridge argues that there is no conception of "half-covenant, halfway covenant members" in the Bible.[37] No biblical proof is available to maintain a two-tiered membership in the church (communicant and non-communicant) or for the practice of requiring "as a rite the profession

of faith on the part of covenant children as the prerequisite for entrance into the fullness of their covenant privileges."[38] Similarly, Strawbridge points out the inconsistency and incoherence of marking off baptized children as "non-communing" members, for membership "signifies participation or being part of something, in this case Christ's body and the community of his people (cf. 1 Cor. 1:9; 7:14). But 'participation in' is conceptually identical to 'communion in'—biblical *koinōnia* …" and furthermore, a "static category of 'non-communing member' is like saying there is a 'non-communing communer,' or a 'non-participating participator,' or a 'non-member member."[39]

To not allow baptized infants a part in the Lord's Supper also brings about the issue of church discipline and the unity of the church. Keidel states it this way:

> The Westminster Confession of Faith states that 'sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God … to put a *visible* difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the world …' By continually denying baptized infants and children the right to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the pedobaptist [*sic*] puts them with the rest of the world. But why should covenant members be denied the covenant meal, as if they were outside the covenant?[40]

Moreover, if baptized infants and children are excluded, could this not be seen as a form of discipline, since denial of the Lord's Supper is a serious component of church discipline?[41] Clearly, confessional continuity would seem to require paedocommunion since the *Westminster Confession of Faith* affirms that the sacraments represent Christ, supply his benefits, and serve as a demarcation of those who belong to the church and those outside, but then the confession also "defines the visible church as 'all those … that profess the true religion, together with their children' (25:2)."[42] Furthermore, the confession "maintains that 'the sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the New' (27:5)."[43] If such standards apply to paedobaptism, then these same principles ought to be employed for paedocommunion. Lastly, Keidel also points out that baptized infants should not be excluded from the Lord's Supper, for to do so would "deny them the privilege of showing the unity of the visible church into which they were baptized."[44]

The Paedocommunion Argument from the Passover and Covenant Meals

Alongside the appeal to consistency in covenant membership, paedocommunion advocates marshal evidence for the inclusion of children at the Lord's Table from the OT witness of children participating in sacrificial meals, especially the Passover (see Exod 12:3, 6, 19, 47; and sacrificial meals generally included sons and daughters, Deut 12:6-7, 12, 18; 16:11, 14).[45] Once again, implications of covenant theology (the same substance of the covenant of grace across the canon, the mixed assembly of the church, etc.) and the hermeneutical principles described by Leithart play an important role. For example, the typological hermeneutic with the principle of *totus Christus* is observed in these remarks of Mason: "As Christ's death typologically fulfilled the redemptive sacrifice of the Passover lamb and so brought about a new exodus, so the Church's memorial meal, the Lord's Supper, typologically fulfills Israel's memorial meal, the annual Passover."[46] Furthermore, Keidel and others claim that the inclusion of infants in the Lord's Supper, based on the Passover, is formally similar to paedobaptist argumentation. Paedobaptists contend that infant baptism has the same essential meaning of the initiatory rite of circumcision and thus replaces it in the new covenant era.[47] The same hermeneutical principles are applied to the situation of the other ordinance–the Lord's Supper–since this NT sacrament replaces the Passover and possesses the same essential meaning.[48] In what follows, paedocommunion adherents argue that the connections of the Passover to the Lord's Supper will have a direct bearing on the question of who participates in the Lord's Supper.

The main thesis of Keidel and other paedocommunion proponents is that because the OT presents infant and child members of the "visible church" participating in the Passover feast, and because the Passover is typologically fulfilled in the Lord's Supper, infant members of the NT visible church are commanded to partake of the Lord's Supper if they are physically capable of eating.[49] The specific association between these OT and NT ordinances is based upon the institution of the Lord's Supper in the Synoptic Gospels. In the Synoptic Gospels, the Last Supper is presented as a Passover meal as the disciples and Jesus speak of eating the Passover (Matt 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7-9) and the disciples go before Jesus to prepare the Passover meal (Matt 26:19; Mark 14:16; Luke 22:13).[50] In fact, the essential

unity between the Lord's Supper and the Passover meals is, according to the paedocommunion view, demonstrated in that they are both sacrificial meals.[51] Propitiation for sins was always accomplished through the Passover meals as lambs were sacrificed beforehand (the slaughter of the lamb is expressly termed a "sacrifice" in Exod 12:27; 23:18; 34:25). The Passover meals were more than just memorial feasts, but also essentially a sacrifice for atonement–the lamb serving as a substitute–for the forgiveness of sins since in the first Passover meal God redeemed Israel's firstborn sons from death, sparing them the divine punishment inflicted upon the Egyptians, and as a consequent blessing, the deliverance from the hand of Egypt.[52] The Lord's Supper is a sacrificial meal, "not because a sacrifice is made during the meal, nor because Christ's sacrificed body is physically present in some sense, but because participants consume the bread and wine which signify Christ's sacrificed body and blood."[53] The Lord's Supper, then, is viewed as having the "same essential meaning" as the Passover although it is its new covenant replacement.[54]

Highlighting the essential meaning between two, Keidel offers several reasons for affirming that the Passover meal was also replaced by the Lord's Supper.[55] Christ directly transformed the Passover into a celebration of the Lord's Supper as the elements of the Passover were invested with new meaning in Christ's words of institution (Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-24).[56] Second, the continuity extends even into the eschaton as Jesus identifies both the Passover and the Lord's Supper with the messianic banquet, for Jesus says that he will not eat of the Passover until the kingdom of God is brought to full completion (Luke 22:15-18). As a result, if "the messianic banquet fulfills both the Passover meal and the Lord's Supper, there must be a direct correspondence between the Passover meal and the Lord's Supper as well, and the Lord's Supper may therefore be said to replace the Passover."[57] The third reason offered is based on Paul's statement that Christ is the Passover who has been sacrificed (1 Cor 5:21). "If the Lord's Supper is a feeding upon that which signifies the sacrificed Christ, and if the sacrificed Christ is among other things, a Passover sacrifice ... then the Lord's Supper is a feeding upon that which signifies a Passover sacrifice and should thus be considered a Passover meal."[58] Lastly, given the common meanings with both being sacrificial meals, the "efficacy of the Passover" sacrifices rest completely on Christ's once and for all atoning work (Heb 10:4).[59] However, even though

the Passover features animal sacrifices while the Lord's Supper presents the 'true' sacrifice, the benefits of the Passover–the deliverance of the firstborn and redemption from Egypt–as well as the benefits of the Lord's Supper–the deliverance from bondage to sin and freedom from the curse upon the earth (Rom 8:22-23; Rev 21:1ff)–both rest "upon the prior sacrifice of atonement and the forgiveness of sins obtainable therefrom."[60]

From all of this, Keidel concludes: "If then circumcised infants and children were commanded to eat the Passover meals if physically capable and if the Lord's Supper replaces and has essentially the same meaning as the Passover meals, why should not baptized infants and children be required as well to eat the Lord's Supper, if physically capable?"[61]

The Paedocommunion Argument from 1 Corinthians 11

In addition to the above arguments,[62] proponents claim support from Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 11.[63] In verses 17-34 Paul lays down warnings for the proper observance of the Lord's Table, specifically as they relate to counteracting the divisions that existed among the Corinthians. For the issue of paedocommunion, the crux is 1 Corinthians 11:28-29 since Paul calls on the communicants to examine themselves and to discern the Lord's body. Keidel's main contention is that there is nothing stated in this chapter which would necessitate the application of Paul's requirements to infants and children.[64] Such words as "remembrance" (v. 24, 25), "examine" (v. 28), and "judge" (v. 29) are part of statements and warnings that are addressed to a specific audience within the church; in other words, we should not assume that their reference is unlimited.[65] Davies argues that the Paul's instruction is against factiousness and drunkenness; therefore, the call to self-examination is a moral demand such that the warning does not apply to children unless they too were somehow guilty of the kind of divisive misconduct.[66]

Moreover, universal terms and phrases such as "whoever" (1 Cor 11:27), "let a man" (v. 28), "he who" (v. 29) and "anyone" (v. 34) may be unlimited, but there are many contexts where such words reference a specific group.[67] The mere usage of terms in 1 Corinthians 11 does not mean that the unlimited reference may be assumed. Thus, given the contextual ambiguity of these terms, Keidel proposes that another passage does illuminate the question, that being the Passover celebration.[68] Keidel assumes his previous analysis of the Passover that all children were included even though their understanding of

the OT rite was quite limited. With 1 Corinthians 11 not directly addressing whether children should have to examine and discern the body in order to participate, "the analogy between the Lord's Supper and the Passover feast indicates that this spiritual discernment is unnecessary for them" and thus Keidel concludes that 1 Corinthians 11 is specifically addressed to the adult members of the church alone.[69]

Finally, paedocommunion supporters argue that 1 Corinthians 10-11 is crucial for understanding the relation between Lord's Supper and the unity and solidarity of the body of Christ (see 1 Cor 10:16b-17).[70] The problem with the Corinthians was that they did not discern the body of the Lord (1 Cor 11:29), which means they were not properly understanding the unity of the church; they were unworthily participating because of divisive behavior such as failing to wait for others and having greedy irreverence for fellow Christians (1 Cor 11:33-34).[71] Instead, a "man 'proves himself' [1 Cor 11:28] by *how* he eats, not how much he understands or how thoroughly he searches his heart."[72] Meyers asserts that it is not children who fail to discern the unity of the body of Christ, but rather those who bar covenant children a place at the Lord's Table.[73] Paul's commands do not exclude children; instead, they call on the adults who were disrupting the unity of the community, causing factionalism, and profaning the Lord's Supper to come to repentance and to judge oneself rightly.[74] From the paedocommunion standpoint, factionalism arises when covenant children are not allowed to participate in the Lord's Supper.

Paedobaptist Responses to Infant Communion

The arguments in favor of paedocommunion, namely, covenant membership and genealogical inclusion, mandate that new covenant children have access to the Lord's Supper, including the arguments based on the Lord's Supper as the fulfillment and replacement of the Passover. Also, 1 Corinthians 10-11 re-enforced the claim as the commands in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 were directed only to those who were causing divisions in the church. Despite these arguments, traditional paedobaptists have rejected them for the view that only believers, i.e., individuals who consciously and volitionally place their faith in Christ, are to be communicants.

Traditionally, paedobaptists have exclusively appealed to 1 Corinthians

11 to defend the view that only professing believers should participate in the Lord's Supper. For example, Calvin and Berkhof insist that Paul requires mental and spiritual engagement to participate in the Lord's Supper because the Corinthians are called to self-examination prior to the celebration.[75] Furthermore, Calvin cites the Lord's command of remembrance (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:25) and the proclamation of the Lord's death (1 Cor 11:26) when participating in the Lord's Supper as actions reserved for older persons who are capable of comprehending such things.[76] Recently, Venema argues that the paedocommunion interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is unduly restrictive because a careful analysis suggests that 1 Corinthians 11:27-32 represents a shift from addressing the abuses that characterized the situation at Corinth to a more general treatment of how all recipients are to receive the bread and the wine.[77] The section shifts to third person, indicating the stipulations of examining and discerning the body have general application to any believer who should receive the ordinance.[78] As a result, these instructions of Paul limit admission to the table because they pertain to only those capable of professing belief in Christ.

The paedocommunion assertion that the participation of children during the Passover is instructive for the church since the Passover is the OT type for the Lord's Supper (antitype) has had varied responses. Berkhof concedes that children were allowed to eat the Passover but denies the same for children in the new covenant administration because of 1 Corinthians 11:28.[79] Calvin and Murray, however, appeal to Exodus 12:26 as an indication that not all the children participated in the first Passover, but only those able to inquire into its meaning.[80] Bavinck points out that subsequent Passover meals were not household celebrations but took place in Jerusalem and excluded children. Furthermore, Beckwith builds on this observation and argues that the Lord's Supper had its true antecedent or background in these subsequent Passovers and not in the first Passover which occurred in Egypt.[81]

Venema picks up on all of the above points save Berkhof's concession and provides a thorough evaluation.[82] First, the stipulations for later Passover meals commanded men to participate but did not require women and children to make the pilgrimage (Exod 23:17: 34:23; Deut 16:16). Secondly, Venema finds it unclear that younger children would eat the elements of the Passover, especially the roasted lamb and bitter herbs. Moreover, the subsequent Passover meals added the element of wine, so the cup of blessing

would not have been suitable for children. Thirdly, the catechetical element (Exod 12:26) may not argue conclusively against paedocommunion but is suggestive that some understanding was required before participating. Nevertheless, the spiritual significance of the Passover still benefited even those who did not partake of all the elements. Fourthly, Venema appeals to the historic practice of Judaism as the intertestamental period shows no explicit indications that women and children participated in the Passover feast. Lastly and most importantly, Venema argues that there are too many differences between the Passover and the Lord's Supper to allow the inferences of the former to dictate the practice of the latter.[83] Christ's words of institution (Mark 14:24; Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20) draw from the covenant renewal ceremony of Exodus 24, which means he did not directly connect the Supper with the Passover; furthermore, the "Lord's Supper is a new covenant observance that commemorates Christ's sacrificial death, which is the fulfillment of *all the types and ceremonies of the law, especially the sin and guilt offerings of the old covenant*."[84] So while the Lord's Supper is related to and fulfills the Passover meal, all of the OT sacrifices are more pertinent since they "typify atonement for the guilt of sin."[85] Thus, the historical/typological connection between the Passover and Lord's Supper does not work as the paedocommunion view contends.

Many of the paedobaptist responses to paedocommunion focus on the specific Passover and Lord's Supper texts as seen above. However, very little is directed towards the overall covenantal argument. Nevertheless, Venema broaches the topic, asserting that the covenant of grace is not properly understood among paedocommunion advocates. The traditional conception of Reformed theology made a distinction "between the covenant in its historical administration, which includes all professing believers and their children, and the covenant in its fruitfulness as a saving communion of life."[86] This provides accounting for the fact that some of those under the covenant administration are non-elect. Thus, the distinction disarms the sacramentalism of paedocommunion, for the "claim that all believers and their children already enjoy full participation in Christ, and ought therefore to be nourished in the Christ at the Table of the Lord, is seen to be an unwarranted exaggeration of what covenant membership entails."[87] In this sense, baptized members must respond to the gospel promise in Christ by way of public profession, and participation in the Lord's Supper provides the unique sacramental means of ensuring the

exercise of faith.[88] Finally, having passive and active subjects in baptism and the Lord's Supper, respectively, does not exclude the benefits of the covenant of grace to children. Covenant members have real privileges, but there are also covenantal responsibilities, and the invitation to the Lord's Supper obligates its recipients to come by faith after self-examination.[89]

A Baptist Assessment and Critique of Paedocommunion

In the debate over paedocommunion, the traditional paedobaptists have offered some arguments that would cohere or resonate with the Baptist understanding for limiting the ordinance to believers only. Yet, the traditional Reformed arguments do not ultimately challenge the core theological rationale for infant communion since they too subscribe to the covenant of grace framework and adhere to the same hermeneutical entailments, namely, the genealogical principle, the mixed assembly of the church, and the continuity of covenantal signs. From a Baptist perspective of this controversy, arguments regarding whether or not children ate the Passover in the OT are not germane to the issue of infant communion, nor do such arguments delve into the crux of the problem.[90] The more critical factors are how paedocommunion supporters (and paedobaptists) put the Old and New Testaments together, interpret the covenants, and associate covenant signs to each other. Ultimately, both paedobaptists and paedocommunion advocates foist "the covenant of grace" framework upon the Bible and end up flattening the OT and the NT, missing the covenantal discontinuities across redemptive history, and diminishing the newness associated with the nature and structure of the new covenant.[91] Before critically evaluating the paedocommunion argument and their claim that the Passover and the Lord's Supper share the same essential meaning, a foray is needed into why the paedobaptist rejection of infant communion demonstrates a hermeneutical inconsistency given their commitments to the covenant of grace and the implications derived thereof.

The Hermeneutical Inconsistency of Traditional Paedobaptism

It is important to note how arguments for paedocommunion and paedobaptism closely parallel each other. The same principles are applied: the appeal to the incorporation of children across the covenants (genealogical

principle) ensured their covenant membership, the implications based on household texts,[92] Jesus' reception of children in the kingdom (e.g. Matt 19:13-14), the sanctity or consecrated position of believer's children (1 Cor 7:14),[93] the continuity of covenant signs, and the continuity of the people of God. At the end of the day, only two significant factors prevent traditional paedobaptists from practicing infant communion: their interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11 and their disassociation of the Lord's Supper from the Passover, either by denying children ate the Passover or by rightly understanding the typological correspondences.[94]

In the case of 1 Corinthians 11, paedocommunion advocates (and Baptists) wonder how paedobaptists can counter Baptists in arguing that passages such as Acts 2:38 and Mark 16:16 do indeed refer only to adults but such verses do not necessitate application to infants. Yet, at the same time, they fail to make a similar case when reading 1 Corinthians 11 and interpreting these verses to unequivocally apply stipulations upon all covenant members.[95] Furthermore, since there is no clear passage that excludes children from the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11 does not explicitly concern infants), how is it that paedobaptists can "appeal to texts that *imply* a continuation of the Old Testament practice of including the children of believers within the covenant community"[96] for the case of infant baptism but not for infant communion? Given the "paedobaptist principle that whatever is in the Old Testament continues unless it is specifically abrogated in the New Testament,"[97] one questions the inconsistency when baptism texts are not viewed as a restriction to infant participation but now covenant children are brought under the restrictions of 1 Corinthians 11 and not permitted to the Lord's Supper.[98]

Closely related but equally demonstrative of the paedobaptist hermeneutical inconsistency is how they distinguish between passive and active subjects in regard to the sacraments. Infants are passive recipients of baptism, but participants in the Lord's Supper must be active. However, Jewett has succinctly noted the problem with the paedobaptist reasoning:

> The truth remains that each experience of "receiving the word" or "putting on Christ" or "believing" or "repenting" – terms that are invariably associated with baptism in the New Testament – involves just as high a degree of activity by those baptized as does "showing forth the Lord's death," "discerning the Lord's body," or eating "in remembrance of him" by those who partake of the Lord's Supper.[99]

The paedocommunion view, then, is consistent in having infant subjects passive for both baptism and the Lord's Supper. Therefore, the paedobaptist distinction makes them vulnerable to the charge that their reasoning is asymmetrical, holding to paedobaptism and credo-communion.

Problems of inconsistency arise also for the Passover. Traditional paedobaptists hold that the spiritual substance or aspects of circumcision under the Abrahamic covenant comes directly over to the new covenant, having essential unity with infant baptism. Nevertheless, they argue that the essential substance of the Passover does not come across into the Lord's Supper. Venema appeals to discontinuity on the subject of the Passover:

> The paedocommunionist appeal to the Passover tends to minimize the important differences between the administration of the old and new covenants. Though the Lord's Supper was instituted on the occasion of a Passover celebration, the administration of the Supper belongs to the new covenant economy, so it must be governed primarily by the stipulations of the New Testament Scriptures. Advocates of paedocommunion often overstate the similarities between the Passover and the Lord's Supper, and fail to reckon with the implications of the New Testament's teaching determining who should be admitted to the sacrament.[100]

Venema's words are legitimate (as we shall see below), however, at no point in his book does he work out these assertions for the case of infant baptism. Would he be willing to acknowledge the differences between the Abrahamic covenant and the new covenant and allow the NT's teaching to determine who should be baptized? Venema's comments seem difficult to square with his other statements when arguing for paedobaptism: "However much greater and richer the new covenant administration in Christ may be, it *does not abrogate or displace* the old covenant."[101] But if the Lord's Supper is governed by the new covenant administration, and thus different from the Passover, then certainly some features of the old covenant have been displaced. What is the criterion for determining which features of the covenant of grace carry over and which ones do not carry over into the new covenant? This raises the issue of the continuity of the covenant signs.[102]

Moreover, Venema appeals to Acts 2:39, finding that Peter reaffirms the OT covenant promise which includes the children of believing parents, with the effect that God's grace extends "from generation to generation, incorporating

[believers and their children] into His household and numbering them among His beloved children."[103] If so, in the context of Acts 2:39, one would presume that the children of these new converts were eventually baptized and so would expect their inclusion in fellowship, including the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42, a possible reference to the Lord's Supper).[104] Even if not a reference to the Lord's Supper, Acts 2:42 and 46 contain household formulas which again could be applied for the case of infant communion. For, on the one hand, the household texts (e.g. Acts 16:14-15, 30-34; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:14-16) are applied by paedobaptists in favor of the practice of infant baptism,[105] but on the other hand, the household formulas involving fellowship and communion–paralleling the involvement of covenant children in the OT covenantal meals and the Passover–are not applied for the case of infant communion.[106] Once again, a hermeneutical inconsistency is observed.

In summary, the paedobaptist position is roundly criticized, for different reasons, by both Baptists and paedocommunion advocates. The hermeneutical principles employed for infant baptism are not applied to infant communion. As Jewett rightly observes, "Having embraced their children in the covenant by giving them baptism, Paedobaptists exclude them from that same covenant by refusing them participation in the covenant meal. Having reasoned from inclusive circumcision to inclusive baptism, they turn about and go from an inclusive Passover to an exclusive Eucharist."[107] Even Murray, when considering these issues associated with baptism and the Lord's Supper, was willing to concede and go in the paedocommunion direction.[108]

A Baptist Critique of Paedocommunion

Paedobaptists are having difficulty restraining the paedocommunion tendencies in their ranks. While rightly arguing that the Lord's Supper is for believers only, they are unable, given their theological commitments, to challenge the heart of the issue: the theological framework of the covenant of grace that is worked out in favor of infant communion. Baptists, on the other hand, can offer a more robust and debilitating critique of paedocommunion because they can consistently address the covenant argument.[109] Let us develop this point in three steps by unpacking: (1) the nature of the new covenant community; (2) the new covenant and the genealogical principle; and (3) some typological problems with the paedocommunion view.

1. The Nature of the New Covenant Community.

While rightly recognizing the unity of God's salvific plan in Christ, covenantalists do not fully do justice to how the unfolding of God's redemptive plan reveals that the nature of the new covenant community and the covenant signs change across the epochal horizons.[110] Space does not permit a detailed analysis of the relationships between the biblical covenants, but a survey of the nature and newness of the new covenant will suffice in challenging the notions of the church as a mixed assembly and the genealogical principle which is applied for incorporating infants to covenant membership.

Jeremiah 31:29-34 contains the significant prophecy of the new covenant inaugurated by Jesus at the Last Supper (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25) and which is applied to the church (Heb 8, 10). A careful reading of this passage reveals that the tribal structure of the past covenants would change in the new covenant era.[111] Unlike the previous eras, this new covenant envisions a day where everyone will die for their own sin (Jer 31:30) instead of experiencing divine wrath when the tribal leaders (prophets, priests, kings) sinned in their failure to represent and speak for God (cf. Exod 20:19). Also, the people are characterized as having the law in their hearts (Jer 31:33) and possessing personal knowledge of God in conjunction to receiving the forgiveness of sins (Jer 31:34; cf. 32:39-40). Carson rightly observes that "the *nature* of the new covenant [is] not to be overlooked: as foreseen in the prophecy of Jeremiah, it is the abrogation of an essentially tribalistic covenant structure in favor of one that focuses on immediate knowledge of God by all people under the new covenant, a knowledge of God that turns on the forgiveness of sin and the transformation of the heart and mind."[112] The knowledge of God is a salvific one; the mediated knowledge of God is displaced in the new covenant. Unlike the mixed community wherein all were physically circumcised while only some were spiritually circumcised, this new covenant prophecy envisions a covenant people who are all circumcised in the heart as they have the law in their hearts and know God intimately (Jer 9:25-26; cf. Deut 10:16; 30:6).[113]

While Jeremiah 31:31-34 does not explicitly refer to the Holy Spirit (see Ezek 36:25-27; cf. Num 11:27-29), since the law was housed in the temple, Jeremiah now presents the law residing in the hearts of individuals and thus points to the indwelling Spirit that constitutes the people of God as his temple.[114] Moreover, the tribal structure in the old covenant community

meant that only the leaders were imbued with the Spirit, but the new covenant era will be significantly different in that the Spirit will be distributed to all covenant members. The messianic age is one characterized by the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2) as all those within the new covenant community enjoy the promise of the Spirit (Eph 1:13-14) who enables them to have union with Christ (Rom 8:9-11) and to be faithful covenant keepers.

The structural changes and nature of the new covenant are not indicative of a renewed covenant but of a qualitatively better covenant ushered in through a covenantal head—Christ Jesus—who is far superior to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and David. As Wellum rightly highlights:

> [The new covenant] has better promises and better sacrifices and therefore is a *better* covenant. What is the *better* nature of the covenant? It is this: because of who the Redeemer is and what he offers as a sacrifice we now have a *more effective* sacrifice and thus a *more effective* covenant. ... Due to his work, he has brought a full, effective, and complete salvation unlike the types and shadows of the old (see Heb 7-10).[115]

Therefore, the dramatic changes involving this new covenant features a far superior mediator– the divine Messiah–and a people who are collectively the eschatological "new man" in Christ (Eph 2:11-22). The members of this community have been born of and indwelt by the Spirit. The church is characterized as a people who have all been regenerated (Eph 2:5-6; Col 2:12-13; 3:3), recipients of forgiveness, and who have immediate knowledge of the Lord. Therefore, the church is not a mixed community[116]; there is no remnant in the NT administration as there was in the nation of Israel during OT times.[117]

Furthermore, the initiatory rite of entrance into the new covenant, baptism, does not replace circumcision but is a new rite in conjunction to the nature of the new covenant. Baptism does not anticipate gospel realities then and neither is it for children who cannot profess faith in Christ. Rather baptism signifies the believer's union with Christ by faith and that he or she has experienced the benefits of the new covenant such as the gift of the Spirit and forgiveness of sins (Gal 3:26-27; Rom 6:1-4).[118] Both paedobaptists and paedocommunion advocates go in the wrong direction from the outset because they do not properly account for the nature and structure of the new

covenant and the NT presentation of a regenerate community in contrast to the mixed spiritual condition of national Israel.

2. The New Covenant and the Genealogical Principle.

The new covenant realities also show that the genealogical principle and the continuity of covenantal signs are invalid and do not apply for the ordinances in the new covenant era. Before addressing the continuity of covenantal signs with respect to the Passover below, some comments on the genealogical principle are necessary.

Strawbridge is correct in tracing out the family or generational inclusion throughout the covenants of the OT era. However, his use of the genealogical principle fails when applied in the NT because of the nature of the new covenant. As noted above, the new covenant church demonstrates that covenant membership is only permitted to those who come to faith in Christ, being regenerated (Tit 3:4-7). Passages such as Acts 2:39 do not actually teach a genealogical principle such that the children of believers are to be incorporated as covenant members and given the ordinances. The promise of Acts 2:39 is a reference to the promised Spirit (cf. Acts 2:33; Joel 2:28-29; Ezek 36:26-27).[119] Even if Peter's audience would have associated the promise to Abraham and his seed (Gen 13:15; 17:7-9), the promise of the Spirit is fulfilled through Jesus as the crucified (Acts 2:23), resurrected (Acts 2:24-31), and ascended Christ (Acts 2:32-33) pours out the Holy Spirit. It is Christ's work on the cross (Gal 3:14), and Christ as the true seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16) who secures the pouring out of the Spirit on those (both Jews and Gentiles) who are of faith (Gal 3:22). Most convincing, moreover, is the last phrase of Acts 2:39 which qualifies the members that Peter has identified. The promise of the Spirit is to all whom God shall call (cf. Joel 2:32); "the passage is concerned with the call of God, that inner work of the Spirit who enlightens the mind and renews the hearts ('they were pricked in the heart,' v. 37), and with the response to that call ('what shall we do?' v. 37) on the part of those who receive it."[120] A similar analysis could be made for the other passages that refer to children and that, on the surface, favor the genealogical principle.

The Paedocommunion views offers consistency with respect to those who enter the covenant community and experience the ongoing privileges of covenant membership in participating in the Lord's Supper. However,

instead of having passive subjects for both baptism and communion, the nature of the new covenant and the NT evidence dictates that baptism and the Lord's Supper be granted to only active, believing subjects. Only those who have come to faith in Christ, having their heart circumcised through regeneration in receiving the gift of the Spirit, are proper candidates for both ordinances. Also, only those marked by such faith can strive for maintaining unity in the church. Lastly, even church discipline can only be adequately applied if the Lord's Supper is limited to those professing faith.[121]

3. Typological Problems with the Paedocommunion View.
Paedocommunion proponents misinterpret the nature and structure of the new covenant *and* also draw incorrect typological relationships based off their *totus Christus* paradigm. In conjunction with the newness of the new covenant, Wellum has demonstrated that the paedobaptist appeal to the continuity of covenant signs does not hold; circumcision and baptism are not directly related typologically, they do not have the same essential spiritual meaning.[122] Baptism does not replace circumcision. Similar problems exist for the paedocommunion case for the Lord's Supper conveying the same essential meaning as the Passover and serving as its replacement.

The structural changes and discontinuity associated with the new covenant era and its covenant signs means that the substance of the previous old covenant signs do not carry over into the new with the same essential meaning. In other words, drawing correspondences between those who participated in the Passover meals as directive for who participates in the new covenant Lord's Supper is illegitimate because not only has the nature of the covenant community changed (a mixed versus regenerate community) but also because the two covenant meals, though having many parallels, are not identical in substance, they do not share the exact same spiritual realities.[123] Furthermore, the national aspects of the Passover are wrongly collapsed into the spiritual realities of the Passover by paedocommunion supporters.

The Passover meal, placed within the setting of the exodus from Egypt (and the subsequent Passover feasts which served as memorials of God's act of sparing the Israelite firstborn sons), had both national aspects and anticipated spiritual realities. The spiritual aspects of the Passover, rightly noted for the most part by the paedocommunion camp, consisted of atonement as the sacrificed lamb served as the substitute for the Israelite firstborn sons.[124] The

physical lives of the sons were spared as the wrath of God did not enter the Israelite homes because of the blood on the doors. The Passover sacrifices were typological and forward looking in anticipation of the great Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world (John 1:29; 19:31-36).[125]

Nonetheless, even with these spiritual aspects, the Passover meal and the Lord's Supper, given the nature of the meals and the escalation or intensification characteristic of the typological pattern, could not have the same essential meaning.[126] They are qualitatively different as the Passover sacrificial meal commemorates God's sparing the lives of the firstborn while the Lord's Supper, which obviously lacks the sacrifice of an animal, looks back to Christ's effective and one time sacrifice on the cross. Like the other OT sacrifices, especially the guilt and sin offerings, the Passover sacrifice could not finally remove sin as the author of Hebrews presents, for the blood of animals was ultimately ineffective and offered repeatedly, but Jesus provides a better and greater sacrifice as priest in offering his own blood once and for all (Heb 8:1-6; 10:1-14).[127] Not only is there discontinuity in terms of the actual elements (only bread and wine used in the Lord's Supper), the spiritual realities are also different. The sign of the new covenant in Jesus' blood—the Lord's Supper—is a benefit to only those in faith union with him. The new covenant believers are the only ones allowed to the Lord's Supper because greater spiritual realities—forgiveness, justification, the removal of sins, etc.—associated with Christ's death are theirs through faith. Only those who have experienced these spiritual realities can participate in the new covenant meal, for only they can remember and proclaim what Christ has done for them (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24-26).

In addition, while the Passover meal anticipated spiritual realities, there was also a national context. The Passover meal was a memorial (Exod 12:24-28), for God delivered Israel, liberating them from the hand of Egypt, and established them as his people at Mt. Sinai. In other words, the exodus from Egypt was a *physical* redemption as the nation of Israel became a theocracy established under the Mosaic covenant. However, the Lord's Supper does not have a theocratic nation in purview. Instead the new covenant-making event that Jesus inaugurates at the Last Supper is really a new Passover and a new exodus that involves the forgiveness of sins tied to *spiritual* redemption. The reconstituted people of God participate in the Lord's Supper since they have experienced a spiritual deliverance not from Pharaoh or from Egypt, but from

slavery to sin. They now have "liberation from the sinfulness and powerlessness experienced under the old covenant."[128] This coincides with what was discussed above, but it is important to highlight that the Passover had a national context that looked back at God's deliverance from Egypt and forward to the salvation to come.[129] The Lord's Supper is not oriented around a socio-political nation, but is for believers from all tribes, tongues, and nations.

In sum, the typological differences between the Passover meal and the Lord's Supper are apparent: "There it was the blood of animals sacrificed according to God's command; here the self-sacrifice of the Son of God. There it was an earthly people; here the eternal 'saints of the Most High.' The Passover re-presents an event in redemptive history; in the Lord's Supper one is present who is himself 'a covenant for the people.'"[130] The Passover meal is fulfilled through Christ's work on the cross. The Lord's Supper is not a one to one replacement of the Passover meal, for it does not have the same essential meaning. The Passover meal anticipated the Lamb of God and the new exodus. It is now obsolete. When the true lamb—Jesus Christ—came, he transformed the Passover meal at the Last Supper so that his disciples have fellowship in the Lord's Supper by looking back to his atoning work and also proleptically participate in the messianic banquet that is yet to come (Rev 19:9; Luke 22:16-18).[131] Overall, paedocommunion advocates wrongly reduce the national (physical) and typological aspects of the Passover meal to just the spiritual realities. This in turn becomes a grid to interpret who participates in the Lord's Supper and leads them to allow "covenant" children to partake. However, maintaining the national and typological aspects of the Passover and focusing on the new covenant spiritual realities connected to the Lord's Supper demonstrates that the paedocommunion proposal is completely wrong. Only followers of Jesus, those redeemed and so true members of the church, may enjoy fellowship and communion at the Lord's Table.

Conclusion

Baptists have often argued that "paedocommunion is the logical outworking of a Reformed ecclesiology. It is nonetheless ruled out by the New Testament's tying of the Lord's Table to discipline, but could it be that this is only because the NT restricts membership in the new covenant community to those who

have been regenerated and have expressed faith in Christ?"[132] My analysis affirms this conclusion. Paedocommunion is the consistent outworking of covenant theology, as the covenant of grace framework entails the genealogical principle, the mixed assembly of the church, and the continuity of covenant signs. Paedocommunion supporters, unlike paedobaptists, apply their hermeneutics in a straightforward manner having infant "covenant" members receive the privileges of the new covenant meal. The same arguments used for infant baptism are applied to infant communion. Yet, both paedo-advocates miss the newness of the new covenant and fail to account for the associated structural changes. The presence of the Spirit, immediate knowledge of God, and the realization of circumcised hearts all demonstrate that the new covenant community is a regenerate one. Only those who are of faith may be granted the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Finally, just as all paedobaptists reduce circumcision to only spiritual realities and so neglect the national and typological features of circumcision, so paedocommunion supporters do the same with the Passover meal. The Passover and the Lord's Supper do not have the same essential meaning. The superiority of Christ and his supper point us to far greater spiritual realities that the Passover meal could only foreshadow. Since the Lord's Supper does commemorate Christ's unique atoning work, churches must be diligent in obeying the clear NT teaching that participation is for believers alone.

---

1 For general discussions of these two ordinances see Mark Dever, "The Doctrine of the Church," in *A Theology of the Church* (ed. Daniel A. Akin; Nashville, TN: B&H, 2007), 766-856, esp. 783-91; Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 321-409.

2 For debate among Anglicans and for those against the practice of paedocommunion, see Roger T. Beckwith, "The Age of Admission to the Lord's Supper," *WTJ* 38 (1976): 123-51; Donald Allister, "Admitting Children to Holy Communion," *Churchman* 113 (1999): 295-306. For those in favor of the practice, see Matthew W. Mason, "Covenant Children and Covenant Meals: Biblical Evidence for Infant Communion," *Churchman* 121 (2007): 127-38; Glenn N. Davies, "The Lord's Supper for the Lord's Children," *RTR* 50 (1991): 12-20; Alan Ward, "Communion Before Confirmation: A Response to 'Admitting Children to Holy Communion,' in *Churchman* 113/4 (1999)," *Churchman* 114 (2000): 295-99; David R. Holeton, "Communion of All the Baptized and Anglican Tradition," *Anglican Theological Review* 69 (1987): 13-28.

3 That the issue of paedocommunion has become a significant issue in recent years among Reformed and Presbyterian churches is seen in the publication of a collection of essays in favor of the practice in Gregg Strawbridge, ed., *The Case of Covenant Communion* (Monroe, LA: Athanasius Press, 2006), and defenses against the practice by Cornelis P. Venema, *Children at the Lord's Table?* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2009) and Guy Waters and Ligon Duncan, eds., *Children and the Lord's Supper* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2011).

4 Christian L. Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?" *WTJ* 37 (1975): 305. Venema, *Children*, 3 makes

a distinction between "soft" and "strict" views of paedocommunion where the former permits covenant children who have made a simple confession of faith while the latter view favors the admission of any covenant child so long as they are physically able to eat. The focus of paedocommunion in this study will concentrate on those who follow the "strict" paedocommunion position.

5 Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?," 305 n. 24, admits his acceptance of paedocommunion was stimulated by the works of Baptist apologist Paul Jewett. See also Beckwith, "The Age of Admission," 123-24, for a discussion on the Baptist assumptions and claims in arguing that infant baptism and infant communion stand or fall together. Note also Gregg Strawbridge, "The Polemics of Infant Communion," in *The Case of Covenant Communion*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge, 148-50 on the matter of theological consistency and his observation that the argument against including children in the Lord's Supper is of the same substance and form as the Baptist case against infant baptism. For Baptist discussions of paedobaptist inconsistencies with reference to the issue of the Lord's Supper, see Paul K. Jewett, *Infant Baptism & the Covenant of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 193-207 and David Kingdon, *Children of Abraham: A Reformed Baptist View of Baptism, the Covenant, and Children* (Worthing, UK: Henry E. Walter, 1973).

6 Venema, *Children*, 5-6.

7 According to paedocommunion advocates, by around AD 250 the practice of including infants was commonplace in the church, see Robert S. Rayburn, "A Presbyterian Defense of Paedocommunion," in *The Case of Covenant Communion*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge, 12. The earliest reference to paedocommunion in the early church seems to be attributed to Cyprian in 250. The history of infant communion has been compared to that of infant baptism. According to Rayburn, "A Presbyterian Defense," 13, the presence of paedocommunion occurs very early in the church and, like infant baptism, while the practice does not receive discussion in the earliest materials, neither is it spoken against. Another point is with respect to the references to paedocommunion as there seems to be no sense of its practice as an innovation or in terms of controversy; it is taken for granted. For further assessment of church history from a pro-paedocommunion standpoint, see Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?," 301-305; Blake Purcell, "The Testimony of the Ancient Church," in *The Case of Covenant Communion*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge, 131-45; and David L. Pearcy, "Infant Communion Part I: The Historical Practice," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 7 (1980): 43-47. For traditional paedobaptist refutation and for the conclusion that Cyprian's comments were not indicative of general church practice, see Matthew Winzer, "The True History of Paedo-Communion," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007): 27-36; and Venema, *Children*, 12-26. For further historical assessment from padeobaptist perspectives, see Roger T. Beckwith and Andrew Daunton-Fear, *The Water and the Wine: A Contribution to the Debate on Children and Holy Communion* (London: Latimer Trust, 2005), 40-56 and Nick Needham, "Children at the Lord's Table in the Patristic Era," in *Children and the Lord's Supper,* ed. Guy Waters and Ligon Duncan, 145-61.

8 Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 202.

9 Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?" 306. In the preface of his work, Venema, *Children*, i, notes that the covenant of grace argument is so important to the issue of paedocommunion that he included his previously published chapter – Cornelius P. Venema, "Covenant Theology and Baptism," in *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism* (ed. Gregg Strawbridge; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003), 201-29 – as an appendix. Although not published by P&R, the *Case for Covenant Communion* appears to be a companion to *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism* and thus highlights the symmetrical aspects involving paedobaptism and paedocommunion.

10 For the emphasis on the role of the continuity of the covenant of grace for the defense of paedobaptism, see Robert R. Booth, *Children of Promise: The Biblical Case for Infant Baptism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1995), 10, 16-28; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (ed. John Bolt, vol. 4, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, trans. John Vriend; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 525; Rayburn, "A Presbyterian Defense," 8, n. 5.

11 Richard L. Pratt Jr., "Reformed View: Baptism as a Sacrament of the Covenant," in *Understanding Four Views on Baptism* (ed. John H. Armstrong; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 64-65.

12 For a summary of covenant theology with emphasis upon the covenant of grace in relation to infant baptism, see Stephen J. Wellum, "Baptism and the Relationship Between the Covenants," in *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* (ed. Thomas Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright; Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2006), 97-161. Presentations of the covenant of grace through redemptive history may also be found in Booth, *Children of Promise*, 8; Venema, "Covenant Theology and Baptism," 204-206; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (rev. ed; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 272-283, and see 632-34 for how Berkhof ties the Abrahamic covenant to the new covenant and to infant baptism within an understanding of the covenant of grace. Also see John Murray, *Christian Baptism* (Philadelphia: Maurice Jacoby Press, 1952), 48-61.

13 Venema, "Covenant Theology and Baptism," 215-17; see also Randy Booth, "Covenant Transition," in *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge, 175-200.

14 Michael D. Williams, *As Far as the Curse is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 71 notes that there has been debate revolving around the "covenant of works" and "covenant of grace" distinction within Reformed and Presbyterian groups. For concerns with the "covenant of works," see W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 1997), 44-46; for concerns with both the concept of a "covenant of grace" and a "covenant of works" see Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose* (NSBT 23; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 30-32, 52-54.

15 See Gen 9:9-10, 17:1-14; Exod 2:24, 6:1-8; Ps 89:3-4 with 2 Sam 22:51, 23:5; and Acts 2:39.

16 Wellum, "Relationship Between the Covenants," 111-24. See also Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 82-89; Sinclair Ferguson, "Infant Baptism View," in *Baptism: Three Views* (ed. David F. Wright; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 96-105; Pratt, "Reformed View," 64-71.

17 Ibid., 119-124; Booth, *Children of Promise*, 96-119, esp. 105-12; Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity), 276-84.

18 Peter J. Leithart, "Sacramental Hermeneutics and the Ceremonies of Israel," in *The Case for Covenant Communion*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge, 111.

19 Ibid., 111-129. By "paedo-arguments" Leithart is bundling together the arguments for paedobaptism and paedocommunion, 112, n. 2. For a discussion of the principles of interpretation in regard to Reformed hermeneutics and how the issue of paedocommunion caused the author to re-evaluate and ultimately reject paedobaptism, see Fred Malone, *The Baptism of Disciples Alone: A Covenantal Argument for Credobaptism Versus Paedobaptism* (2nd ed; Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2003), 23-45.

20 Ibid., 113.

21 Ibid., 112 and observe endnote 3.

22 Ibid., 113. Obviously this is a contested point among paedobaptists. For example, Venema, *Children*, 60, writes: "Any consideration of the practice of the old covenant community, particularly its significance for the question of a new covenant community practice such as the Lord's Supper, must reckon with this principle [i.e. that the ultimate norm for the practice of the church must be the NT description of the administration of the new covenant]. Since the old covenant administration has been replaced by the new covenant administration, one may not argue for a practice solely on the basis of Old Testament precedents. The general application of this principle is illustrated by the abrogation of the entirety of the 'ceremonial legislation' of the old covenant, which finds its fulfillment in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since the ceremonial legislation of the old covenant is fulfilled in Christ, the substance and reality to which this legislation pointed forward still remains. However, the ceremonies and types of the old administration ended with the introduction of the new. Since the Lord's Supper marks the 'new testament in [Jesus'] blood' (Luke 22:20), it must be governed by the New Testament's teaching regarding the Lord's Supper." Venema makes an important point but unfortunately, he nowhere discusses how this line of reasoning applies to infant baptism. If the OT ceremonial legislation of circumcision is not allowed to determine the NT's teaching regarding baptism, how could infant baptism be affirmed? Elsewhere Venema says that paedobaptists "argue that the silence of the New Testament confirms the continuation of the Old Testament practice" and that such an argument from silence points to the importance of grounding paedobaptism on the basis of the doctrine of the covenant of grace ("Covenant Theology and Baptism," 202-203). For consistency, Venema needs to argue that circumcision is not a ceremonial legislation or that the NT teaching is sufficient to affirm infant baptism.

23 Ibid., 112, 117.

24 Ibid., 112. Not all covenant theologians affirm Leithart's appeal to *totus Christus* in their understanding of typology. For example, see Bryan D. Estelle, "Passover and the Lord's Supper: Continuity or Discontinuity?" in *Children and the Lord's Supper*, ed. Guy Waters and Ligon Duncan, 37-41. Leithart has also presented some aspects of typological interpretation in his *Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 35-74, 173-80. For other works specifically addressing typology, see Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical ΤΥΠΟΣ Structures*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, Vol. 2 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981) and Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (trans. Donald H. Madvig; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982). For further discussion of how *totus Christus* functions in ecclesiology, see Michael S. Horton, *People and Place: A Covenant Ecclesiology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 6, 155-89.

25 Ibid., 117-18. This is not to the neglect what Leithart calls the "rich Christological allegory" whereby Paul

identifies Jesus with the rock of Israel who is Yahweh (Deut 32:4, 15, 18).

26 Ibid., 119. Leithart favorably appeals to Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1989), 98, on 1 Corinthians 10:6-11.

27 Ibid., 113, 117.

28 Strawbridge, "The Polemics of Infant Communion," 148: "Both baptism and communion are covenantal sacraments. Those in the covenant have a right to the rite."

29 Wellum, "Relationship Between the Covenants," 136, asserts that that paedobaptist argument "takes the genealogical principle operative in the Abrahamic covenant—'you and your seed' (Gen 17:7)—as applicable in exactly the same way across the canon without suspension, abrogation, and especially reinterpretation in the new covenant era. So the paedobaptist contends that baptism replaces circumcision and that the covenant sign, regardless of our location in redemptive-history, is for 'you and your seed' (i.e., physical children)."

30 Strawbridge, "The Polemics of Infant Communion," 159.

31 Ibid.

32 The NT household texts, commonly appealed to for the practice of infant baptism, is reapplied for infant communion. On this point, see Strawbridge, "The Polemics of Infant Communion," 157.

33 Ibid., 160.

34 Ibid., 161.

35 Ibid., 161-62.

36 Ibid., 162.

37 Ibid., 163. Also see, Rayburn, "A Presbyterian Defense of Paedocommunion," 14.

38 Rayburn, "A Presbyterian Defense of Paedocommunion," 8, 9 n. 6.

39 Strawbridge, "The Polemics of Infant Communion," 155.

40 Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?," 337. Keidel cites chapter 27, section 1 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

41 Ibid., 341. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 179-201, shows that the fourth step in the church discipline process includes severing the unrepentant from participation in the Lord's Supper (cf. 1 Cor 5:1-11). On this point, see also Russell D. Moore, "Baptist View: Christ's Presence as Memorial," in *Understanding Four Views on the Lord's Supper*, ed. John H. Armstrong (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 40.

42 Rayburn, "A Presbyterian Defense of Paedocommunion," 13.

43 Ibid. Davies, "The Lord's Supper for the Lord's Children," 14 also makes appeal to this section of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* while noting that the statement was adduced solely by 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, see endnote 62 below for a discussion on 1 Corinthians 10:1-4.

44 Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?," 337. On the issue of the unity of Church in regard to the Eucharist, see David Pearcy, "Infant Communion. Part III: Reasons for its Restoration," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 8 (1981): 162-65.

45 Rayburn, "A Presbyterian Defense of Paedocommunion," 5-7.

46 Mason, "Covenant Children and Covenant Meals," 127.

47 Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?," 307.

48 Ibid., 325.

49 Ibid., 306; see also Rayburn, "A Presbyterian Defense of Paedocommunion," 5-7; Mason, "Covenant Children and Covenant Meals," 127-31; James B. Jordan, "Children and Religious Meals," in *The Case for Covenant Communion*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge, 54-57.

50 Mason, "Covenant Children and Covenant Meals," 127. For debate about whether the Last Supper was a Passover meal; see Joachim Jeremias' important study, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (trans. Norman Perrin; New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1966), 15-88, and studies such as Paul H. Jones, "The Meaning of the Eucharist: Its Origins in the New Testament Texts," *Encounter* 54 (1993): 169-86; Mark A. Throntveit, "The Lord's Supper as New Testament, Not New Passover," *Lutheran Quarterly* 11 (1997): 271-289, esp. 275-80; Robin Routledge, "Passover and Last Supper," *Tyn Bul* 53 (2002): 203-21. Much of the debate surrounds the issue of harmonization, as the chronological timing of the Passover in the Synoptics appears to be in tension with John's Gospel. On this point, see I. Howard Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper* (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 1997), 57-75; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 981-85; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel of John* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 455-57, 588-90, 603-604; Andreas J. Köstenberger, "Was the Last Supper a Passover Meal?" in *The Lord's Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming Christ until He Comes* (NACSBT 10, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Matthew R. Crawford; Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010), 6-30. Regarding the relation of the Lord's Supper in the

church to the Passover, see R. H. Stein, "The Last Supper," in *Dictionary of the Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 444-50, esp. 445-47.

51 Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?" 316-17. Mason, "Covenant Children and Covenant Meals," 131-32, identifies the Passover as a particular type of peace offering (cf. Lev 7:15-17) which was commonly described as a sacrifice. Note also Jordan, "Children and the Religious Meals," 57-61.

52 Ibid., 316-17, 320. Keidel, 318, states: "The sacrifice of lambs was meant to provide redemption from sin as well as temporal redemption from the death of the first-born and from the land of Egypt." See also pp. 335-36 where Keidel extends this, arguing that all the sacrificial meals in the OT were replaced by the Lord's Supper (appealing to Heb 10:1ff), and had the same atoning significance while also recognizing that all the sacrifices foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice. Therefore, he reasons, since circumcised infants and children had the right to eat sacrificial meals (specifically Feast of Weeks and Tabernacles, Deut 12:6-7, 12, 18; 16:11), baptized infants should have access to the Lord's Supper as well. Mason, "Covenant Children and Covenant Meals, 131-32 discusses the connection of the peace offerings to the Lord's Supper concluding that the "regulations for participation in the peace offering should also govern participation in the Lord's Supper" (131).

53 Ibid., 317.

54 Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?," 306. Venema summarizes this position in *Children*, 56-59.

55 Ibid., 320-22.

56 Ibid., 321.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., 322.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Presentation cannot be provided here for how infant communion supporters appeal to the kingdom of God and children. On this point, see Tim Gallant, "The Kingdom of God and Children at the Table," in *The Case for Covenant Communion*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge, 35-47. On how paedobaptists think of the similarity between 1 Cor 7:14 and Jesus' reception of children in Matt 19:13-14, see Murray, *Christian Baptism*, 62-66, 67-68; Booth, *Children of Promise*, 135; and Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 633-34.

63 Some paedocommunion supporters assert that Paul implicitly provides sacramental parallelism in 1 Cor 10:1-5, since baptism into Christ (1 Cor 12:12ff) corresponds to baptism into Moses; and further, participation in the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor 10:16)—the Lord's Supper—typologically corresponds to Israel's eating spiritual food and drinking water which came from Christ as Paul identifies him as the rock (1 Cor 10:4) (Mason, "Covenant Children and Covenant Meals," 133; Davies, "The Lord's Supper for the Lord's Children," 13). A full response is not possible here, yet Drane argues that Paul "was not intending here to give an exposition either of the exodus narrative, or of the Christian sacraments. Indeed, the parallel between the two situations was not all that close in details, for the Israelites were not really 'baptized ... in the sea': they never got wet at all. What Paul was obviously referring to here was simply the broad similarities of the two situations, and he was certainly not intending to expound the O.T.: he was hoping to correct a practical aberration in the church at Corinth" (John W. Drane, "Typology," *EQ* 50 [1978]: 200-201). Cf. T. R. Schreiner and A. B. Caneday, *The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 224.

64 Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?," 323. See also Rayburn, "A Presbyterian Defense of Paedocommunion," 11-12.

65 Ibid., 323-24.

66 Davies, "The Lord's Supper for the Lord's Children," 18, 20.

67 Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?" 323-34. See texts such as Romans 10:13 ("whoever"), Romans 3:28 ("man"), John 3:36 ("he who"), and 2 Thessalonians 3:10 ("anyone").

68 Ibid., 325.

69 Ibid.

70 Davies, "The Lord's Supper for the Lord's Children," 19; Jeffrey J. Meyers, "Presbyterian, Examine Thyself," in *The Case for Covenant Communion*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge, 19-34.

71 David L. Pearcy, "Infant Communion Part II: Present Barriers to the Practice," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 7 (1980): 167-68.

72 Jeffrey J. Meyers, "Presbyterian, Examine Thyself," 21.

73 Ibid., 32-34.

74 Ibid., 28, 31.

75 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. Neil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 4.16.30; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 656-57. See also Robert Letham, *The Lord's Supper* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), 56 and Guy Prentiss Waters and J. Ligon Duncan III, "Introduction," in *Children and the Lord's Supper*, ed. Guy Waters and Ligon Duncan, 18-21.

76 Ibid., 1353. See also Murray, *Christian Baptism*, 78.

77 Venema, *Children*, 117, 123. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:584, also notes that 1 Corinthians 11:26-29 is a general demand addressed to all participants in the Lord's Supper and therefore excludes children. See also George W. Knight III, "1 Corinthians 11:17-34: The Lord's Supper: Abuses, Words of Instruction and Warnings and the Inferences and Deductions with respect to Paedocommunion," in *Children and the Lord's Supper*, ed. Guy Waters and Ligon Duncan, 75-95.

78 Ibid., 118-24. For Venema, 121, the third reference to the "body of Christ," (v. 29) is not ecclesiological, but refers to Christ's body in terms of his physical body given as a sacrifice. Therefore, discerning the Lord's body means that "[m]inimally, the recipient of the sacrament is obliged to 'evaluate' or 'recognize' that the bread and wine represent the body and blood of Christ." The first stipulation of believers examining themselves (v. 28), which is often "freighted with the excess baggage of a protracted, introspective process of spiritual inventory-taking . . . requires only a responsible testing on the part of the believer to see whether his faith is genunine" (119).

79 Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 656.

80 Calvin *Institutes* 4.16.30; Murray, *Christian Baptism*, 77. See Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?," 311, who seeks to counter the Exod 12:26 argument applied by Murray and Calvin.

81 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:583; Beckwith, "Age of Admission," 132-33, 136-37.

82 Venema, *Children*, 67-73; see also 132-33. Cf. Waters and Duncan, "Introduction," 15-18; Estelle, "Passover and the Lord's Supper," 31-57.

83 Ibid., 85-89.

84 Ibid., 87 (emphasis original), cf. 64-65.

85 Ibid., 88.

86 Ibid., 139-40.

87 Ibid., 144-45.

88 Ibid., 146-47. On the difference between the practices of the sacraments, see Murray, *Christian Baptism*, 77-79, who argues that "the diversity of the ordinances warrants the discrimination in practice" because of the nature and characteristics of each ordinance (79). Given the *differences* between the sacraments, Murray argues for paedobaptism and the exclusion of infants from the Lord's Supper. See also, Derek W. H. Thomas, "'Not a Particle of Sound Brain' – a Theological Response to Paedocommunion," in *Children and the Lord's Supper*, ed. Guy Waters and Ligon Duncan, 108-15.

89 Ibid., 147; see also Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:584 who notes the manner of the Lord's Supper differs from baptism, but the child is still ensured a share in the benefits of the covenant of grace.

90 Obviously, pointing to children eating the Passover only has significance if one already assumes the continuity between the Passover and the Lord's Supper and is operating with a covenant of grace framework.

91 Wellum, "Relationship Between the Covenants," 125-53 shows this to be case for paedobaptists. See also idem, "Beyond Mere Ecclesiology: The Church as God's New Covenant Community," in *The Community of Jesus* (ed. Kendell H. Easley and Christopher W. Morgan; Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2013), 183-212.

92 If the covenant of grace involved believers and their children, paedobaptists argue that the NT examples of the baptism of households certainly involved children. Similarly, the household texts involving communion and fellowship are also appealed to by paedocommunion advocates in demonstrating that children should be included in the Lord's Supper.

93 Booth, *Children of Promise*, 133 makes this argument for paedobaptism; Meyers, "Presbyterian, Examine Thyself," 24-25 draws attention to 1 Cor 7:14 for the case of paedocommunion by linking it to the common baptism of all members (1 Cor 12:12) and the unity of church (1 Cor 12:25; 1 Cor 10:16-17). See also Gallant, "The Kingdom of God and Children," 43-44. Thomas, "'Not a Particle of Sound Brain,'" 105, counters, arguing that "1 Cor 7:14 establishes the principle of familial solidarity but it does not establish the basis for paedocommunion any more than it establishes (by itself) the basis for paedobaptism. All it establishes is a pattern of consistency with regard to circumcision and baptism on the basis of familial solidarity. But familial solidarity is not sufficient as a basis for participation in either the Passover or the Lord's Supper."

94 On these two summary points, see Rayburn, "A Presbyterian Defense of Paedocommunion," 14-15.

95 Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?," 327.

96 Venema, "Covenant Theology and Baptism," 202 (emphasis original).

97 Malone, *The Baptism of Disciples Alone*, 34. Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 105 also observes that covenant theologians read the Old Testament "as though it were the New, but the New Testament is read as though it were the Old."

98 For a critique of Calvin's theological inconsistency with regard to the Eucharist, and for the general problem of how paedobaptists could exclude infants based from 1 Corinthians 11, see Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 199-200.

99 Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 198-99

100 Venema, *Children*, 133, and also see 59-66 for fuller discussion.

101 Venema, "Covenant Theology and Baptism," 223 (emphasis mine) or Venema, *Children*, 172.

102 See the issues raised above derived from the language of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

103 Ibid., 224-225 or Venema, *Children*, 173-74.

104 For the interpretation of "breaking bread" as a reference to the Lord's Supper in Acts 2:42, see Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 365-66, 402; for the notion that the expression covers both a common meal and the Lord's Supper, see C. K. Barrett, *Acts 1-14* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 164-65.

105 See Booth, *Children of Promise*, 141-51, for how the household baptisms point to the practice of infant baptism.

106 Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 53-54.

107 Ibid., 205.

108 See Murray, *Christian Baptism*, 77.

109 Reformed Baptists do operate within a framework involving the covenant of works and covenant of grace. However, the differences are significant in that covenantal Baptists do not see the Abrahamic covenant as identical to the new covenant and they reject the genealogical principle as an essential feature of the covenant idea. For these and other differences, see Malone, *The Baptism of Disciples Alone*, 50-76. Note also the study by Pascal Denault, *The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant Theology: A Comparison Between Seventeenth-Century Particular Baptist and Paedobaptist Federalism* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013).

110 See Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 293-310, for a discussion of the three horizons of biblical interpretation (textual, epochal, and canonical).

111 D. A. Carson, "Evangelicals, Ecumenism, and the Church," in *Evangelical Affirmations* (ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer and Carl F. H. Henry; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 359-63; idem, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 151-54; Wellum, "Relationship Between the Covenants," 141-43; and Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheation, IL: Crossway, 2012), 492-513.

112 Ibid., 361. On this point, see P. T. O'Brien, "The New Covenant and its Perfect Mediator," in *The Perfect Saviour: Key Themes in Hebrews* (ed. Jonathan Griffiths; Nottingham, UK: Inter-Varsity, 2012), 19. Scott J. Hafemann, "The Covenant Relationship," in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity* (ed. Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 54, notes that the heart is not just the seat of volition and desire, but associated with understanding and intellectual knowledge. Thus, "all those who belong to the new covenant community will do so by virtue of their transformed heart." Also see, David G. Peterson, *Transformed by God: New Covenant Life and Ministry* (Nottingham, UK: InterVarsity, 2012).

113 See John D. Meade, "Circumcision of Flesh to Circumcision of Heart: The Typology of the Sign of the Abrahamic Covenant," in *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies* (ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker; Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 127-58.

114 James M. Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2006), 44. See also, Wellum, "Relationship between the Covenants," 143; Carson, "Evangelicals, Ecumenism, and the Church," 362-63.

115 Wellum, "Relationship between the Covenants," 145 (emphasis original). Another promise of the new covenant was that all in the covenant community would be taught by God (Isa 54:13; cf. Jer 31:34). That this promise is fulfilled in the NT is clear from John 6:45; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; and 1 John 2:20, 27.

116 Rejecting the notion of a mixed community does not mean that there is no continuity between Israel and the church. There is one people of God throughout redemptive history, but the church is a spiritual and eschatological community through the work of Christ and is not to be confused with Israel which was a national entity, containing a faithful and spiritual remnant. See Brent E. Parker, "The Israel-Christ-Church Relationship," in *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies*, ed.

Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker, 39-68.

117 On this point, see Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 154-55.

118 Wellum, "Relationship between the Covenants," 159. On this point, see Meade, "Circumcision of Flesh to Circumcision of Heart," 145-56 and Martin Salter, "Does Baptism Replace Circumcision? An Examination of the Relationship between Circumcision and Baptism in Colossians 2:11-12," *Themelios* 35 (2010): 15-29.

119 Malone, *The Baptism of Disciples Alone*, 128. See also Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 120, who also notes that the promise of the Spirit in Joel 2:28-32 bestows visions and prophecies (Acts 2:17) which do not apply to infants.

120 Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 121.

121 Keidel appeals to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* in observing the problematic situation where covenant children are denied the Lord's Supper and marked out as those who belong to the world and thus, in a sense, disciplined. However, the new covenant meal is to be reserved for believers only as they are the only ones who can commemorate and celebrate the new covenant through Christ's blood (Matt 26:26-29; cf. Exod 24:8; Jer 31:31-34) and who have benefitted from his incarnation as his body represents the bread. Furthermore, church discipline serves to identify a once professing believer as an unbeliever and so an unworthy participant in the Lord's Supper. This situation would be confounded if unbelieving "covenant" children were allowed to the Lord's Supper because at some point they would have to refrain from partaking given a lack of confession at a mature age, and in a sense be disciplined when in fact they never had faith to begin with. This confusion emerges because the initiatory covenant rite of baptism is given to infants, but at least paedobaptists correctly argue that in 1 Cor 11 the Lord's Supper assumes participants who can examine themselves appropriately.

122 Wellum, "Relationship between the Covenants," 153-60; cf. Meade, "Circumcision of Flesh to Circumcision of Heart," 152-57. Specifically, circumcision cannot be reduced to spiritual realities for it also had a national reality (identifying the sons with a national entity—Israel) and served typologically in pointing to Christ (the true seed of Abraham) and to circumcision of the heart (Rom 2:25-29; Phil 3:3).

123 See Stein, "Last Supper," 447, who provides a helpful list of correspondences between the Last Supper and the Passover, yet also demonstrating that the new covenant realities are accentuated in the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper, then, does not have the same essential meaning as the Passover, for it is tied to far greater spiritual realities through the person and work of Christ.

124 T. D. Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: Exploring God's Plan for Life on Earth* (Nottingham, UK: Inter-Varsity, 2008), 128-30.

125 For an excellent treatment of the Passover typology in John, see Paul M. Hoskins, "Deliverance from Death by the True Passover Lamb: A Significant Aspect of the Fulfillment of the Passover in the Gospel of John," *JETS* 52 (2009): 285-99. See also idem., *That Scripture Might Be Fulfilled: Typology and the Death of Christ* (LaVergne, TN: Xulon Press, 2009), 85-115.

126 Goppelt, *Typos*, 17-18; Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 94 and many others point out that that there is an escalation or qualitative progression from type to antitype. The antitype is far greater while the type foreshadows what is to come. In this sense, the Passover meal points to something that is not essentially the same, but to something greater–Jesus Christ and the new covenant meal he brings. This is not to deny that paedocommunion advocates make typological connections. The key is whether or not the typological relationship corresponds to essentially equal persons, events, or institutions. Typology properly understood involves escalation and prospective fulfillment such that the antitype far surpasses the type. For a discussion of the similarities between the Passover and the Last Supper, but with the Passover finding its antitypical fulfillment in the death of Christ which eclipses the Passover and exodus in significance of salvation, see Hoskins, *That Scripture Might Be Fulfilled*, 73-83, esp. 82.

127 A helpful treatment on the new covenant in Heb 8 and 10 with a view towards how it is better, and far superior than the old, see James R. White, "The Newness of the New Covenant (Part I)," in *RBTR* 1 (2004): 144-68; idem, "The Newness of the New Covenant (Part II)," in *RBTR* 2 (2005): 83-104.

128 David Wenham, "How Jesus Understood the Last Supper: A Parable in Action," *Themelios* 20 (1995): 14. See also Brian J. Vickers, "The Lord's Supper: Celebrating the Past and the Future in the Present," in *The Lord's Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming Christ until He Comes*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Matthew R. Crawford, 313-40.

129 For helpful treatments of how the exodus anticipated the new exodus, see Rikki E. Watts, "Exodus," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al.; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 478-87; David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002).

[130] Goppelt, *Typos*, 114.

[131] Marshall, *The Last Supper*, 80 makes the distinction that the Passover is a type of the heavenly banquet while the Lord's Supper is the anticipation of the heavenly meal. While the main purpose of the Passover was to look back at God's passing over and deliverance from Egypt, a case can be made that the Passover meal anticipated the messianic age when placed within the new Exodus eschatological motif that is found in the prophets (e.g. Isa 25:6-9). The Lord's Supper does anticipate the marriage supper of the lamb, but since the kingdom has already broken in, followers of Christ proleptically participate in that future feast now through the Lord's Supper.

[132] R. D. Moore, "A Baptist Response," in *Understanding Four Views on the Lord's Supper*, ed. J. H. Armstrong, 74.

The Sabbath and Its Relation to Christ and the Church in the New Covenant

Tony Costa

Tony Costa teaches apologetics at the Toronto Baptist Seminary, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and also serves as adjunct professor with Heritage College and Seminary, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada, and Providence Theological Seminary in Franklin, Tennessee. He earned his Ph.D. in theology and New Testament studies from Radboud University in the Netherlands. He also holds a B.A. and M.A. in religious, biblical, and philosophical studies from the University of Toronto.

Introduction

In this article I will examine the subject of the abbath or Sabbath day and its relation to Christ and the Church in the new covenant. There has been much debate about Sabbatarianism in the history of the Church. Is the Sabbath still relevant for today? Should the Sabbath be observed by Christians? Which day is the Sabbath? Is it Saturday, the seventh day of the week, or Sunday, the first day of the week, or is it one day in seven that one arbitrarily chooses to rest on? Has the Sabbath been changed from Saturday (the seventh day), to Sunday (the first day of the week) in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus? The subject of the Sabbath has also been a dividing line between Covenant Theology and Dispensational Theology.[1] There has been some misunderstanding on this subject in both camps and it is the intent of this paper to offer up a solution to this question by examining the Sabbath from a Christocentric, as well as a Christotelic perspective. I will do so in three

steps: (1) describe my hermeneutical approach to the subject; (2) discuss the Sabbath in the OT; and (3) discuss how the Sabbath is fulfilled in Christ by specifically focusing on four key biblical texts which are important to the discussion, namely, Matthew 11:28-30; 12:1-14; John 5:1-18, and Hebrews 3:7-4:11, before I draw my observations to an overall conclusion.

Hermeneutical and Exegetical Approach

We are constrained by the NT texts to observe that all things contained in the OT including the Sabbath, have their focal point and ultimate fulfillment in Christ. Jesus, the Master Exegete of Scripture (John 1:18),[2] after his resurrection, on the walk to Emmaus with the two disciples declared: "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that *everything written about me* in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:44-45, italics mine).

It should be noted in this text, that Jesus presents the structure of the OT according to tripartite division found in the Hebrew Bible, known by the acronym 'Tanak," the *Torah* (the Law of Moses), the *Nevi'im* (the Prophets), and the *Ketuv'im* (the Writings).[3] Jesus made the profound statement that *everything* written about him was contained in *all* of the OT, not just part of it. In order to understand this truth, Jesus had to "open their minds."[4] This indicates that it was Jesus himself who was the first to teach early Christians to read and examine the OT via Christological lenses.[5] The OT was to be interpreted by the NT with Christ at the forefront, as the ideal reference point of all Scripture. This has been the hermeneutical and exegetical tool when it comes to the interpretation of the OT in the history of the Church as enunciated by Augustine, "In the Old Testament the New Testament is concealed; in the New Testament the Old Testament is revealed."[6] Both Testaments are of course, "revelation," but Augustine saw and understood the OT as progressive revelation which reaches is revelatory apex in the NT revelation particularly in the Incarnation (John 1:14) which is the revelation of God *par excellence* (cf. John 1:18). This revelation would also be further extrapolated with the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2). Jesus himself understood that his own words and actions would progressively be understood at a later time.[7]

When this hermeneutical methodology of interpreting the OT by the NT paradigm is neglected, and one does the opposite, this will inevitably result in confusion, particularly in the areas of the supremacy of the new covenant over the old, the nature of election as seen in the national election of national Israel where one could be part of the elect nation, but not necessarily be one of the spiritually elect. By contrast, *all* members of the new covenant are elected by the triune God and shall never perish (John 10:28). This confusion has also led to the debate between paedobaptism (infant baptism) and credobaptism (baptism for believers only). This would also include the confusion of baptism with circumcision as corresponding "signs" of the new and old covenant. The question of the Sabbath also falls into this category.

Many in the Reformed community argue that the Sabbath laws of the OT, or the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, commands the keeping and observing of the Sabbath, as the paradigm for the new covenant church to observe the Christian "Sabbath," i.e., Sunday.[8] There is an inconsistency here. The Sabbath is the particular name for the seventh day of the week, and never the first day of the week. Benjamin Warfield for instance speaks of the Sabbath as Sunday, "You naturally dwell on the joy of the Sabbath. *This is the day* of gladness and triumph, on which the Lord broke the bonds of the grave, abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light."[9] Warfield also collapses the terms "Sabbath" and "Lord's day" together, "the Lord's day" was also known "from the creation of the world [as] God's day,"[10] an allusion to Genesis 2:2-3, which is actually referring to the seventh day, not the first day of the week. He also equates the two terms by stating, "the Sabbath is the Lord's day."[11] There is no biblical justification for these assertions. Another problem with interpreting the NT by the OT, rather than vice versa, leads to the common but unbiblical assertion that the day of worship was changed from Saturday to Sunday, or from the Sabbath to the Lord's day.[12] This tension is a result of trying to maintain the validity of the Decalogue on the one hand, while on the other hand, trying to avoid the literal reading of the fourth commandment regarding the seventh day Sabbath. The resolution to this tension is to argue what I have chosen to call the "transference theory," i.e., the fourth commandment has been amended, so that the Sabbath now becomes the first day of the week. Such a claim is baseless and should be rejected. The driving force to this interpretation is not the Bible, but ecclesiastical tradition.[13]

In John 5:38-40 Jesus also speaks of the relationship of the Scriptures to him: "and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." Jesus charges his hearers with not having the word of God abiding in them, for if they did, they would have recognized him as the one who was sent by the Father. Jesus thus forges a link between the Scriptures and himself. That the "word" that Jesus has in mind here is the Scriptures is evident from the following verse (v. 39) where Jesus mentions that even though they search the Scriptures and they assume that they have eternal life in them, the Scriptures instead point away from themselves and bear witness rather, to Jesus who is the true life giver, the one who can actually give eternal life to his own (John 1:4; 6:40; 10:28). The indictment against his hearers is that the Life-Giving One is in their midst, and yet they refuse to come to him to have life which they presuppose is in the Scriptures. Thus, as in Luke 24:44-45, Jesus asserts that he is indeed the subject and focal point of all the Scriptures. To focus on the Scriptures without seeing the One to whom they collectively point to is to miss eternal life. Jesus also demonstrates that the biblical writers pointed away from themselves and directed the attention to the Messiah.

After dealing with the overall testimony of "the Scriptures" concerning himself (John 5:39), he then speaks of the one biblical writer who was perhaps considered the most important and revered biblical prophet of the Jews, namely Moses. In John 5:45-47 Jesus states: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

Just as in the case of the written Scriptures, Jesus accuses his hearers of placing their hope on Moses rather than the one he wrote about. Like the Scriptures, Moses pointed away from himself to the one who was to come. Thus Moses, and by extension his writings, will stand as a witness in judgment against the Jewish unbelievers who have rejected the Messiah the focal point that Moses pointed to. Jesus states that to believe in Moses should logically lead one to believe in him on the basis that Moses wrote about him. Moreover, to believe in the writings of Moses, is to believe in the words of Jesus the Messiah, whom Moses wrote about.[14] Conversely,

not to believe the writings of Moses is to disbelieve in the words of Jesus. The thrust of this passage is clear. The focus is not Moses or his writings, but rather the referent to whom Moses and his writings point to. What Jesus says of himself in relation to the Scriptures is what Paul will later describe as the contrast between the shadow and the reality (cf. Col 2:16-17). The words of Jesus regarding his relationship to the Scriptures, and Moses appears to be an expansion and description on the earlier confession of the apostle Philip to Nathaniel regarding Jesus, that, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1:45).

Following in the footsteps of Jesus and taking their cue from him, the NT writers understood that the OT and everything in it cumulatively pointed to Christ. Paul thus writes, "For Christ is the end (or goal) of the law for righteousness for all who believe" (Rom 10:4). The word *telos* has as its primary meaning "end," but it also can mean "purpose" and goal."[15] Moreover, Paul also calls the dietary and calendrical aspects of the law a *skia* ("shadow") of what is to come, but the reality or substance is Christ (Col 2:16-17). Paul writes: "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col 2:16-17). The use of the word *skia* is also employed by the writer of Hebrews to refer to the Levitical priesthood (Heb 8:5), and also to "the law" (Heb 10:1). The Sabbath is part of the law, and as such is also part of the shadow as we see in Col 2:16-17. It is interesting that the only place where the word "Sabbath" appears in the Pauline letters is in Col 2:16, and hence this word is a Pauline *hapax legomenon*. The mere absence of the word "Sabbath" in Paul's letters is intriguing. The Jews were identified by three main signs or markers: 1) circumcision, 2) dietary restrictions, and 3) the Sabbath. Paul deals extensively with circumcision in his letters, and dietary restrictions to some extent, but he only mentions the Sabbath by name only once in Colossians 2:16. Paul appears to be arguing as the writer of Hebrews does, that the law which in context appears to be referring to the Mosaic law, has reached its end and goal in Christ, and this would necessarily have to include the Sabbath. This militates against the view of some Reformed writers such as Warfield who argues that all of the Decalogue, which includes the Sabbath commandment, is "authoritative for all time."[16]

The text of Colossians 2:16-17 posed some difficulty for Warfield's Sabbatarianism. Warfield does not see the setting aside of the Sabbath in this text, but attempts rather to interpret it as simply Paul "emancipating his readers from the shadow-ordinances of the Old Dispensation."[17] Yet, according to Warfield, Paul still expects the Colossian Christians to keep the Sabbath which Warfield interprets as the Lord's day. Warfield again comments, "It is simply unimaginable that he [Paul] could have allowed that any precept of this fundamental proclamation of essential morality [the Decalogue] could pass into desuetude."[18]

The text clearly points out that the weekly Sabbath is part of the shadow whose substance is Christ, the one to whom it points to. The Sabbath is placed alongside of the new moons, and annual feast days. In Colossians 2:16 Paul goes in a descending order from annual celebrations (feast/festival days), to monthly celebrations (new moons), to weekly celebrations (the Sabbath). This is wholly in keeping with the calendar of the Mosaic law. The weekly Sabbath is mentioned along with the feast days (Lev 23), sacrifices were to be offered on the weekly Sabbath, the new moons, and the feast days (Num 28-29; 1 Chron 23:31; 2 Chron 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; Neh 10:33; Isa 1:13-14; Ezek 45:17; Hos 2:11). Thus, the weekly Sabbath, with the new moons, and annual feast days are part of the shadow, and the reality, which is Christ has come. One hardly embraces the shadow when the reality is present before us. Paul expresses similar concerns in Galatians, a very strong letter aimed at the Judaizers who seek to bring Gentiles under the mantle of the Mosaic law and Judaism as a means of salvation. In Galatians 4:10-11 Paul states, "You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain." Here it will be noted that Paul reverses the order, going from days, to months, and seasons and years. Considering that the major theme of Galatians is countenancing the Judaizers, the best view is that Paul is addressing Jewish calendrical observances.[19] [20]

It has also been observed that in the NT, we find nine of the ten commandments repeated and even cited, except for the fourth commandment. Warfield openly acknowledged that, "We have no such formal commentary from our Lord's lips on the Fourth Commandment."[21] The conspicuous absence of the fourth commandment presents it seems, an indicator, that in the new covenant the Sabbath is no longer in force, because with the setting aside

of the Mosaic law, the sign of the Mosaic law, the Sabbath, has also been set aside. This view seems to be buttressed by a number of indicators in the NT:

- At the Council of Jerusalem, Gentile believers were to abide by a number of rules laid down by the apostles, but the Sabbath command is not one of them (Acts 15:28-29).
- Jesus mentions thirteen moral sins that arise from the sinful heart, and Sabbath breaking is not one of them (Mark 7:21-22).
- Paul lists twenty sins in Romans 1:29-32 and Sabbath breaking is not included among them.
- Paul lists ten sins that bar one's entrance into the Kingdom of God and Sabbath breaking is absent from the list (1 Cor 6:9-10).
- Paul lists fifteen sins that also bars one's entrance into the Kingdom of God and Sabbath breaking is not among them (Gal 5:19-21).
- Paul lists eighteen sins and Sabbath breaking is not one of them (2 Tim 3:1-4).
- A total of thirteen sins are mentioned that bar one's entrance into the holy city, New Jerusalem, and Sabbath breaking is not one of them (Rev 21:8; 22:15).

The nine commandments which are repeated and reiterated in the NT become part of the "law of Christ" (1 Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2; cf. Rom 8:2, "the law of the Spirit of life;" "the law of liberty" [Jam 1:25; 2:12;][22] "the royal law" [Jam 2:8], all of which can be subsumed under the "law of Christ") which is the new covenant law that believers are to adhere to.[23]

The Sabbath in the OT

The Sabbath is the proper biblical name for the seventh day of the week, which in the English speaking world is our Saturday. The Scriptures identify the Sabbath as "the seventh day" which is "a Sabbath to Yahweh your God" (Exod 20:10), and it is patterned after the creation week of six days of labor, and the seventh day of rest (Exod 20:9). The seventh day is thus marked out as the day when Yahweh ceased from his creative work (Gen 2:2-3; cf. Exod 20:11). The Sabbath begins on Friday at sunset, and ends on Saturday at sunset. This reckoning of time is modeled after the creation week which was temporally marked by the sequence of evening and morning (Gen 1:5). The biblical day therefore begins at sunset. For all intents and purposes, the

only day of the week that is given the name "Sabbath" is the seventh day of the week (Exod 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:3). The only exception to this rule was the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:31; 23:32) which was the *only day* outside the seventh day that was called a "Sabbath," and specifically "a Sabbath of solemn rest" (Lev 16:31). The Sabbatical year also shared the same language (Lev 25:4).[24] The Sabbath and the Day of the Atonement are the only two days in which any and all work are prohibited.[25]

The first time the word "Sabbath" is used as a noun in the Bible is in Exodus 16:23.[26] The people of Israel have been recently redeemed from Egypt, they have crossed the Red Sea and are in the wilderness of Sinai. What is instructive in the first use of the word "Sabbath" in Exodus 16:23, is that God has to teach the people of Israel which day is the Sabbath, and this is done principally by the giving of the manna from heaven. On the sixth day a double potion of manna will fall so that there will be enough manna for the Sabbath, where no collection of the manna is to be made. This would seem to indicate that the Sabbath was not observed prior to Israel's post-exodus experience.[27] The Sabbath later becomes part of the Decalogue where it is formally and officially commanded. The fact that the Sabbath was enjoined on Israel in a post-exodus context is also evident from Nehemiah 9:13-14: "You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments, and you made *known* to them your holy Sabbath and commanded them commandments and statutes and a law by Moses your servant" (italics mine).[28]

One of the important features of the Sabbath is that it is given to a redeemed people, and thus the Sabbath has a redemptive aspect to it. Those who enter the true rest of the Sabbath are the truly redeemed, the elect of God as we shall see below. The uniqueness of the Sabbath being revealed only to post-exodus Israel is also evident in the language of Deuteronomy 5:2-3, "The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb [or Sinai]. Not with our fathers did the LORD make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today." This would imply that prior to post-exodus Israel, the Sabbath was not observed. The reference to "our fathers" may suggest the patriarchs, or the forefathers who were in bondage in Egypt. From Genesis 1:1 to Exodus 16:22 there is no mention of the Sabbath by name. There is no evidence at all in Genesis that Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Seth, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or any of the sons of Jacob or even the tribes

in Egypt observed the Sabbath.[29] This notable absence was disturbing to some Jews. In the collection of the Pseudepigrapha, the book of Jubilees, also called "the Little Genesis," recounts how the patriarchs including Noah, Abraham, and Jacob observed the annual feast days such as Pentecost before the law was given at Sinai.[30]

The Sabbath also becomes a "sign" between God and Israel (Exod 31:13, 17), and it would seem to follow from this that the Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic covenant.[31] The Sabbath was a unique sign between God and Israel, and not between God and the nations. The Sabbath was a covenant sign to Israel alone. For this reason, while the nations are condemned in Scripture for all types of moral transgressions, they are never condemned for Sabbath breaking as Israel is (Jer 17:19-27; Ezek 20:13, 16, 21, 24; 22:8, 26; 23:38). The Sabbath was uniquely given to Israel as a covenant sign.[32] One of the notable distinctives about the Sabbath was the severe penalty for violating it. The breaking of the Sabbath by working on it was punishable by death (Exod 31:14-15; 35:2).[33] This injunction is put into practice in the narrative of the man picking up sticks on the Sabbath.[34] The verdict of Yahweh is swift, the man is to be immediately put to death (Num 15:32-36). Why is the violation of the Sabbath punishable by death? In the OT, the Sabbath is the only day which if profaned, can bring the death penalty. While the Day of Atonement as noted was the only other day called a "Sabbath," its profanation did not bring about the death penalty as the seventh day does. To violate the Sabbath was to breach the covenant relation between Israel and Yahweh. Is it possible that the death penalty for breaching the Sabbath is so severe because the Sabbath represented Christ? I propose this as a speculation.

The Sabbath and its Fulfillment in Christ

We have noted above that the Sabbath is part of the law that pointed to Christ (Col 2:16-17) who is its ultimate end and goal (Rom 10:4). The gospel accounts relate a number of events and sayings of Jesus that were related to the Sabbath. Whenever the Sabbath is mentioned in relation to Jesus in the gospels there is invariably tension, especially between Jesus and the religious leaders. The Sabbath narratives as I will refer to them, usually involve didactic lessons whereby Jesus is teaching a profound truth about the Sabbath, but in almost all cases, the Sabbath narratives involve opportunities for Jesus to

heal the sick, in fact Jesus seems to deliberately heal on the Sabbath.[35] Jesus teaches and heals on the Sabbath. The healings of Jesus on the Sabbath, and in general seem to indicate a foretaste of the coming Kingdom. In the person of Jesus the King, the Kingdom of God is present and active ("the kingdom of God is in your midst;" Luke 17:20-21 NASB). In his healing of the blind, deaf, crippled, and raising of the dead, Jesus was demonstrating what the Kingdom of God will look like when it is fully manifested. There will be no blindness, deafness, disabilities, no death (cf. Rev 21:4; 22:3). The healings on the Sabbath resulted in rejoicing, liberation, and praising God. The One who walked in the Garden of Eden with Adam and fellowshipped with him is walking once more in the midst of sinful humanity, and he is in the process of working, restoring that broken fellowship and in so doing restores what the Sabbath was meant to be, a time of refreshing fellowship with the Creator. The coming Kingdom is the entrance into the eternal Sabbath rest realized through the King. A clear connection is thus being made between Jesus and the Sabbath.

The way Jesus conducted himself on the Sabbath was perceived as controversial and was one of the reasons the religious sought to kill him on charges of Sabbath breaking (John 5:18). Jesus himself recognized that he was the object to which the Sabbath pointed. In the two versions of the Decalogue (Exod 20; Deut 5), two things are said about why the Sabbath is to be kept. In Exodus 20:8-11 the Sabbath is to be *remembered* in imitation of God's creative work of heaven and earth in six days, and resting on the seventh day.[36] In Deuteronomy 5:12-15, the Sabbath is to be *observed* in celebration of Israel's release and emancipation from slavery and bondage. The commands "remember" and "observe" are covenantal terms. In inaugurating the sign of the New Covenant, Jesus commanded that we keep the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in "remembrance" of him (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:24-25), and that we are to disciple and teach the nations who receive baptism in the name of the triune God to "observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:20). These two aspects of the Sabbath, rest and release are fulfilled in Christ. In Christ we find rest (Matt 11:28-30; Heb 3:7-4:11). We are also released and emancipated from the bondage of sin. Jesus taught that everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin (John 8:34). One can be physically free, but spiritually remain in bondage. Jesus asserts that he alone has the power to set us free from the bondage of sin, "if the Son sets you free, you will be

free indeed" (John 8:36). This theme is repeated in the NT, "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood" (Rev 1:5).

The gospel of Matthew, considered the most Jewish of the gospels with an intended Jewish audience, addresses the issue of the Sabbath and its relation to Jesus in only one section, Matthew 12 where we find the narrative of Jesus with his disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath.[37] This narrative is followed by another one where Jesus heals a person on the same Sabbath. However, an extremely important preface to Matthew 12 lies in Matthew 11:28-30 which sets the stage for what follows.

Matthew 11:28-30

After declaring that all things have been given to him by the Father, and that no one knows the Son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the Son, and that the Son reserves the sovereign right to reveal the Father to whoever he chooses (Matt 11:27; cf. Luke 10:22), Jesus proceeds to make the following statement in Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Jesus makes mention of a contrast between labor and rest. He commands people to come to him and he promises to give them rest, even rest to their souls. Jesus is declaring himself to be the Sabbath, the one who ideally and truly gives eternal rest, not a twenty-four hour rest once in a seven day week. The weekly Sabbath had a transiency in that it came and went, it did not endure or remain permanently. Jesus idealizes what the Sabbath points to. It is instructive to realize that in the creation account in Genesis 1, the recurring phrase of "evening and morning" is used for the six days of creation (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). The only day that does not have an "evening and morning" reference is the seventh day. The reason the seventh day has no mention of "evening and morning" may be suggestive that the seventh day was intended to be on-going, where the first human couple would enjoy non-ending fellowship with God in a state of eternal rest. This rest was based on an unfettered fellowship with God. God walked in the garden and communed with Adam and Eve, and this presence seems to have been a physical one (cf. Gen 3:8).[38] Another important aspect of this rest that the first human couple had with God is that it also involved work. God

placed the man in Eden to "work it and keep it" (Gen 2:15). In the pre-Fall state, work was blessed, it was enjoyable. Yet in the midst of this work, Adam and Eve enjoyed rest in their fellowship with God. However, with the Fall a number of things changed. Direct fellowship with God was broken and severed, and man was separated from God (Gen 3:8-10). Work which was intended to be enjoyable coupled with rest in fellowship with God, now became cumbersome, hard, and would involve working the ground with sweat and becoming tired. The divine rest which they enjoyed with God was lost.

We see in the words of Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30 a return and recapitulation of this pre-Fall state. He calls those to himself who are tired, those who labor due to the effects of a fallen world and promises them rest. Another echo is seen in the statement where Jesus speaks of taking his yoke upon us. The yoke was an instrument of labor which was intended to keep two beasts of labor in unison to till the ground. The yoke is also identified by Jesus as his teaching, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me" (Matt 11:29). He is gentle and lowly of heart, not as a slave master who abuses and cares nothing for his slave. The yoke Jesus places on us is "easy and light." Elsewhere in Scripture, the "yoke" is usually spoken of negatively ("yoke of slavery;" Gal 5:1; Mosaic law is also called a "yoke" which is difficult to bear; Acts 15:10). The yoke of Jesus is not heavy and burdensome (like that of the Pharisees; Matt 23:4), but manageable and enjoyable.[39] In speaking of the yoke, Jesus not only promises rest, but also offers us work, to work for him. In this text, we hear an echo of the pattern of Genesis 2:15, to work in Eden and enjoy rest in fellowship with God. In fellowship with Jesus, one enters God's rest, for Jesus the Messiah is the Sabbath of God.

Matthew 12:1-14

Immediately after proclaiming himself to be the true Sabbath of God, Matthew 12:1-14 leads the reader into a Sabbath narrative where Jesus goes through the grain fields and his disciples pluck grain on the Sabbath. This is no mere coincidence. Matthew is clearly tying the Sabbath narrative to what Jesus had just said about himself in Matthew 11:28-30. A number of points should be noted. Jesus responds to the charge that his disciples are breaking the Sabbath by recounting the story of David and his men who when they were hungry and ate the bread of the Presence which was forbidden to all save the priests (Matt 12:3-4; cf. 1 Sam 21:1-6). David as the messianic king

is of such importance that the law of the consecrated bread of the presence is overruled. Jesus demonstrates by comparison an *a fortiori* argument, from the principle of the lesser to the greater, that as the Son of David, he is on a greater mission with his disciples than David and his men were. The mission of Jesus and his disciples overrules the Sabbath for the object of the Sabbath, the true Sabbath is present among them.

Another important point Jesus alludes to is the principle that divine work or service does not violate the Sabbath but rather overrules it. For this reason Jesus calls attention to the fact that the priests profane (or "desecrate;" NET, NIV; "break;" NRSV; NASB; NJB) the Sabbath[40] and yet are not guilty (Matt 12:5). In the same manner, and much more so, Jesus and his disciples are on divine duty or service even on the Sabbath without incurring any guilt. Jesus further demonstrates his supremacy over the shadow of the Sabbath by declaring "something greater than the temple is here" (Matt 12:6). If he is greater than the temple, then he is greater than the priests, and as the priests are not subject to the Sabbath while in the temple service, much more is the Messiah in his divine service exempt from the Sabbath which is his shadow. In Matthew 12 Jesus declares himself to be greater in three areas: (1) "something greater than the temple is here" (Matt 12:6); (2) "something greater than Jonah is here" (Matt 12:41); (3) "something greater than Solomon is here" (Matt 12:42).

In these three statements, Jesus declares himself as the Messiah to be greater than the temple (priests), greater than Jonah (prophets), and greater than Solomon (kings). In summary, Jesus not only declares himself to be the Sabbath as we saw in Matthew 11:28-30, but as Messiah, he is the true Priest, Prophet, and King *par excellence*. It is clear that Jesus understood himself to be the climax and pinnacle of the law and the prophets. [41] Jesus also declares himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:8). He is not subject to the Sabbath, but as the one to whom it points, he is Lord over it and therefore supreme over it.[42] By calling himself "Lord of the Sabbath" Jesus is also making an extraordinary claim to deity. R. T. France notes that in ascribing this title to himself, Jesus makes "the most extraordinary claim to an authority on a par with that of God himself."[43] That Jesus makes a claim to deity as "Lord of the Sabbath" is reinforced when we consider the fact that God refers to the Sabbath as "*my* Sabbaths" (Exod 31:13; Lev 19:3, 30; 26:2; Isa 56:4), and by extension, its Lord.

John 5:1-18

The idea of rest and divine work as complimentary aspects that we have first seen in Genesis is also seen in the ministry of Jesus in John 5:1-18. In this narrative, Jesus heals a crippled man on the Sabbath and commands him to take up his bed and walk (John 5:8). Jesus knows full well that this will elicit a negative response from the religious leaders. Carrying a bed or mat would constitute work and thus a violation of the Sabbath.[44] This act of Jesus prompted him to be persecuted and opposed by the religious leaders (John 5:16).[45] Jesus then makes the following statement on that Sabbath, "My Father is *working* until now, and I am *working*" (John 5:17; italics mine). This echoes again the theme in Genesis 2:15 that in the pre-Fall state, work was to be done while at the same time enjoying God's rest (Gen 2:2-3). Here Jesus speaks of the Father and the Son working on the Sabbath. We see again here an echo of the 'Lord of the Sabbath' statement which Jesus made in Matthew 12:8 that he is not subject to the Sabbath, but rather, the Sabbath is subject to him and his Father. Divine providence remains active even on the Sabbath, which would also include divine healing. The idea of God working on the Sabbath would sound blasphemous to some Jews. The writer of *Jubilees* maintained that God and the angels rested on the Sabbath day (*Jub*. 2:17-18, 21, 30).[46] The claim of Jesus that God works on the Sabbath would have been offensive to those who held such a view. If divine providence were to cease, all life including the universe would cease to exist. Christ holds the cosmos together (Col 1:17), and "he upholds ["sustains"; NET] the universe by the word of his power" (Heb 1:3).

It is interesting that Jesus indicates that the Father has been working "until now." This indicates that even though God ceased from his creative work in terms of the physical universe (Gen 2:2-3), he did not cease from his work of providence, and following the Fall, he did not cease from his work of redemption which continues to this very day. His sovereignty includes his sustaining and ordering of all things in creation even on the Sabbath itself. Raymond Brown makes the inquisitive observation that, "The fact that people are born and die on the Sabbath shows that God is at work, giving life, rewarding good, and punishing evil."[47] This explains why various Scripture passages speak of God as presently active and still working, especially in the redemption of his people, "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6),

and "for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil 2:13). God's work of redemption is ultimately centered on Christ. Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (John 6:29).

In John 5:18 the basis for wanting to do away with Jesus is twofold: 1) he broke the Sabbath, and 2) he claimed God was his Father, thereby making himself equal with God. The claim to deity as we have seen was also made in Matthew 12:8 in Jesus' claim to being "Lord of the Sabbath." The charge was also made in Matthew 12 that the disciples and Jesus by association were also guilty of Sabbath breaking. But, did Jesus break the Sabbath? If so, would this constitute a sin as a breach of the Decalogue? If Jesus did in fact sin, then this would disqualify him from being the perfect sinless atoning sacrifice for the people of God. Jesus did not sin by healing on the Sabbath or for allowing his disciples to pluck grain on the Sabbath. We have seen that to be in divine service is to overrule the Sabbath law. Another approach to this question is to consider the word for "breaking" which is *eluen*, the third person imperfect indicative verb from the root word *luō*. The verb *luō* can have a wide range of meanings such as to loose or "unite," "set free," "destroy," "dismiss," "transgress," "permit," "do away with," "put an end to"[48] even "abolish."[49] Is it possible that what John is saying is that Jesus was "loosing" the Sabbath, rather than "breaking" it? All the translations seem to favor the meaning of "breaking" in John 5:18. While this translation ("loosing" the Sabbath) may be possible on grammatical grounds, it is better to understand the text as Jesus overruling the Sabbath as the Son who does what the Father does (John 5:19) in working together to bring about the purpose of the divine counsel (cf. Eph 1:11).

Just as the priests who work in the temple break or profane the Sabbath are "guiltless," (Matt 12:5) because of their divine service, so Jesus and his Father are also about their work in the divine service. Thus as the Father works, so the Son works (John 5:17), as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son raises the dead and gives them life (John 5:21), so that ultimately all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. To dishonor the Son is to dishonor the Father (John 5:23).

Hebrews 3:7-4:11

In the entire NT, Hebrews 3:7-4:11 is the only passage that addresses the Sabbath rest that believers enter into in Christ. The fact that this letter was

written to a Jewish audience, in which there both believers and unbelievers (those who were tempted to fall back into Judaism; Heb 5:11-6:12), the issue of Sabbath rest becomes even more important as it would have been a Jewish identity marker. As we saw in Matthew 12:1-12 and John 5:1-18, so in Hebrews there is also an emphasis on the supremacy of Christ over all things. Christ is the "heir of all things" and also the divine agent of creation through whom God created the world or cosmos (Heb 1:2). The deity of Christ is also a central feature in Hebrews (1:2-3, 8-12). He is "better" than the angels (Heb 1), he has a better name than the angels. Christ is superior to the prophets of the OT, because as God's Son he is the one that God speaks through in these last days (Heb 1:1-2). Christ as the Son is greater than Moses, who was a faithful servant (Heb 3:1-6). The priesthood of Christ, after the order of Melchizedek is greater than the priesthood of Aaron (Heb 7:11). Christ holds his priesthood permanently and without transfer, whereas the Levitical priesthood continued through succession (Heb 7:23-24). Christ the High Priest possesses indestructible life (Heb 7:16), whereas the Levitical priests were subject to death (Heb 7:23). Christ is a guarantor of a "better covenant" (Heb 7:22), the Aaronic priests were imperfect, Christ is perfect (Heb 7:26-28), Christ is a better and greater high priest, and is the mediator of a "better covenant" based on "better promises" (Heb 8:6). He is also "the mediator of a new covenant" (Heb 9:15; 12:24), which in context is the better covenant just mentioned. Christ's sacrifice is better and greater than the Levitical sacrifices, Christ's sacrifice is "once for all," and thus denotes finality, whereas the Levitical sacrifices were repetitive and daily (Heb 9:23-26). The very idea of the inauguration of a new covenant is nested within the OT itself in Jeremiah 31:31-34 which is also quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12. In Jeremiah 31:31 the promise is made of a new covenant God will make with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. This new covenant is "not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (Jer 31:32), clearly a reference to the Mosaic covenant at Sinai. The new covenant will be far different, it involves God writing his laws in his people's minds and hearts and they will all know him from the least to the greatest (Jer 31:33-34). All in the new covenant know the Lord and are his elect.

The two references to Christ having sat down at the right hand of God communicate his finished work (Heb 1:3; 10:12), whereas the references

to the standing of the priests in offering up of sacrifices communicate their on-going work (Heb 10:11) Christ's sacrifice was perfect, while the Levitical sacrifices were imperfect (Heb 10:1-10). It is clear that the writer of Hebrews has a Christocentric theme that dominates the majority of his letter. For this reason, the Jewish audience in this letter is exhorted to look not to Moses (cf. John 5:45-47), but to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:2).

Returning to Heb 3:7-4:11 we see here another area in which Christ is supreme and better. As we saw in Matthew 11:28-30; 12:1-12 and John 5:1-18, there is an emphasis in this section on "rest" and "works." That Christ is the reference point is made clear in Hebrews 3:14, "For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end." The text begins by quoting from Psalm 95:7-11 which recounts the wilderness rebellion of Israel against God as recounted in Numbers 14. The writer of Hebrews takes this text and applies it to the present situation in the church, thus showing that Scripture is God speaking in the present.[50] Just as the Israelites of old in the wilderness wanderings went through a period of testing, and many fell away in unbelief, so the Jewish audience of Hebrews is also going through a period of testing, and some are experiencing unbelief, and are in danger of falling away. The writer of Hebrews focuses on the word "today" as well as "rest" and "works." The word "today" is in the emphatic position as it appears first in the citation.[51] It should be noted that this "rest" is called "my rest," i.e., God's rest (Heb 4:3). Hebrews 3:16-19 indicates that many of the Israelites who had been physically redeemed from Egypt nevertheless were spiritually lost as they rebelled against God in the wilderness. They no doubt also observed the seventh day Sabbath during the wilderness wanderings and experienced physical rest, but the point the writer of Hebrews attempts to show is that such rebels never experienced true rest, spiritual rest in Christ, and as such, they did not enter into God's rest. The reason they did not enter God's rest was due to unbelief (Heb 3:19). This shows that one can keep the Sabbath all one's life, but not experience the true Sabbath rest in salvation in Christ. One can keep the Sabbath, but not have the Sabbath.

The promise of entering into this rest is still available, and this rest is not dependent on observing a literal day (Heb 4:1). There is however a sense of urgency, that while it is still "today" one should endeavor to enter that rest.[52] This rest is entered into, not by ceasing from physical labor, but by

believing, "For we who have believed enter that rest" (Heb 4:3). The writer quotes from Genesis 2:2[53] in Hebrews 4:4 which speaks of God's rest from his creative work of the physical universe (cf. Heb 4:3c), and then quotes from Psalm 95:11which speaks of God's spiritual rest. The thrust of the comparison between Genesis 2:2 and Psalm 95:11 is on the word "rest." If God rested on the seventh day, why does he still speak of his rest millennia later through David in Psalm 95:11?[54] The writer of Hebrews also comments that even following the wilderness wanderings, Joshua who led the Israelites into the promised land did not give them or guarantee this spiritual rest (Heb 4:8), because there was still disobedience, unbelief, and rebellion across the Jordan (e.g., Achan's sin; Josh 7). If Joshua did give them rest, God would not have spoken about entering his rest long after Joshua as testified in Psalm 95:11. It should be noted that just as Jesus is greater than Moses, so here, he is greater than Joshua. Joshua did not give Israel rest, but Jesus does give rest to those who believe on him.

There is clearly a distinction made in the rest spoken of in Genesis 2:2 and Psalm 95:11 (written long after the Sabbath was given to Israel in the Torah). The writer then focuses on the word "today" to indicate that the rest of God is still available and can be entered in the immediate present through faith. It is also noteworthy that the reference to "today" is not specific to any particular day of the week, it is not called the Sabbath day[55] nor the Lord's day, but refers rather to the very moment where one turns in faith to Christ which can be any day of the week. The fact that we can be certain that the writer of Hebrews is not referring to a particular day of the week is that an unbeliever can in fact keep the Sabbath which would dismantle the whole argument of this text. That unbelievers cannot enter into God's rest is the main argument of the text. That rest can only be entered through faith. The emphasis is to act now in the present. There remains according to the writer of Hebrews a sabbatismos ("a rest") (KJV, NKJV), "sabbatic rest" (YLT), "Sabbath rest" (ESV, NASB, NET, NIV).[56] Louw and Nida note that sabbatismos refers to "a period of rest"[57] for the people of God (Heb 4:9). This word is a hapax legomenon in the NT as it only appears here. It should be noted that the word "Sabbath" itself is not used in Hebrews 3:7-4:11. Believers are not being commanded to observe the Sabbath day, rather they are told to enter by faith in Christ into a period of rest, to go on "sabbatical." That rest again is entered via faith. When believers enter into

God's rest, they also cease from their works as God did from his creative work (Heb 4:10; cf. Gen 2:2). There is a now/not yet tension here as well as we find other NT texts. We enter now into God's rest, but when we are finally in the presence of Christ we will experience that rest in its fullest expression. We see this communicated in Revelation 14:13, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!'" The implicit object of faith is Christ through whom we enter into God's rest, those who do not enter that rest are those who do not believe (Heb 4:11). The rest of the seventh day which Adam and Eve were to enjoy as an on-going reality was lost due to sin, but in Christ, that rest is restored. Believers are exhorted to strive to enter into that rest lest they fall through disobedience.

Conclusion

We have seen in this paper the importance of relating the OT to the NT especially in the area of the Sabbath and its relation to Christ and the Church in the new covenant. The exegetical method however as it has always been in the history of the Church is to interpret the OT by the NT. To neglect this method is to entertain confusion. We saw from the example of Jesus himself that the methodology he employed and taught us was to read the OT with him as the reference point, in other words, to read the OT through Christological lenses. We examined a number of passages where Jesus did this and where he emphasized the importance of the overall testimony of the Scriptures having him as their focal point.

I noted that the apostolic writers faithfully and consistently followed this method. When we looked at the Sabbath, we noted that it was seen as part of the shadow that pointed to Christ (Col 2:16-17). I noted that the Sabbath contrary to Covenant Theology was not a creation ordinance but was the sign of the Mosaic covenant given at Sinai. It was not observed or known prior to Sinai. I argued that the seventh day in Genesis communicated an on-going rest that the first humans entered into in fellowship with God which was later broken by the entrance of sin through their rebellion. The seventh day is only mentioned as "the Sabbath" through Moses and given uniquely to Israel. It was not given to the nations nor were they ever condemned for

Sabbath breaking. Even though the Sabbath was part of the Mosaic law it nevertheless like everything else in the OT, pointed to Christ. The Sabbath commandment emphasized rest and deliverance from slavery. We saw how Christ fulfills these aspects in a fuller way. Christ gives permanent rest and complete deliverance from the bondage of sin to his people.

We primarily explored four key texts, namely Matthew 11:28-30; 12:1-14; John 5:1-18, and Hebrews 3:7-4:11. We saw how the gospel writers focused on Jesus' words and ministry in the Sabbath narratives. Jesus clearly identifies himself as the Sabbath in Matthew 11:28-30 who gives rest. In Matthew 12:1-14 Jesus demonstrates that he is "Lord of the Sabbath," thus making a divine claim over the Sabbath. Jesus pointed to his supremacy over the Sabbath, the temple, the prophets, and the kings thus presenting himself as Priest, Prophet, and King. In John 5:1-18 Jesus performs the divine service of healing on the Sabbath and claiming that just as the Father works until now, so he too as the Son is working. Divine service and providence overrules the Sabbath. Jesus shows a recapitulation to the original creation before the Fall where rest and work were complimentary. Adam and Eve worked and kept the garden, but they rested in God's presence. The coming of Jesus and his miraculous works on the Sabbath were a foretaste of the coming Kingdom where God's people will enter into the eternal Sabbath where there is no pain or suffering, no death, because they are in Christ, the true Sabbath.

Finally, we examined Hebrews 3:7-4:11 where the writer speaks of God's rest which is not a day, but a period of rest which God has promised to those who believe, not to those who disbelieve. Israel in the OT is used an example to warn against unbelief and testing. Unbelievers can keep the Sabbath (as many ancient Israelites did), but that does not mean they have entered into God's rest. Only in Christ can this rest be realized. It is realized in tension, as a now-not yet reality. We enter into God's rest now through faith in Christ, but then in its fullest expression when we either enter into the presence of Christ at death (Rev 14:13), or when Christ returns. While the Sabbath has reached its ultimate fulfillment in Christ, its place in God's purposes must not be forgotten. It served the purpose of functioning as a covenant sign for Israel, but as a shadow, it pointed to something far greater. While the Sabbath could bring physical rest, it was only temporary, it came and went, and the reminder of the Fall, of labor and hard work would return when it ended. The Sabbath however was a pointer, a sign that pointed away from

itself to the One who can give eternal rest, and those who experience that rest become members of the new covenant, the body of Christ, the Church. The ultimate question is not whether we keep the Sabbath, but whether the Sabbath keeps us. Those who are in Christ are kept by him, and have already entered into his Sabbath rest.

---

1 For a fuller treatment on the question of the Sabbath in Christian history see D. A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1982); Christopher John Donato, ed., *Perspectives on the Sabbath: Four Views* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2011).

2 John 1:18 says, "No one has seen God at any time. The unique God, who is in the bosom of the Father, that one has exegeted [him]" (author's translation). Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture citations will generally be taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

3 The tripartite division of the Hebrew Bible is also implied in other NT passages such as Matt 23:35; Luke 11:51 where Jesus scans the OT Scriptures from the "blood of Abel," the first martyr (Gen 4:8), to the last martyr Zechariah (2 Chron 24:21). Genesis was the first book of the Hebrew Bible and 2 Chronicles was the last book. This would seem to suggest contrary to some liberal critics, that the OT canon was already established and intact in the first century A.D. The OT therefore serves as a *complete* witness to the Messiah Jesus.

4 It is interesting that it was the "minds" of the disciples that had to be opened, not their eyes. Paul says something similar but in the negative when he states that the god of this age has blinded the "minds" of those who do not believe the gospel (2 Cor 4:4).

5 This point was made decades ago by C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (Welwyn, Hertfordshire: James Nisbet, 1952), 110. See also Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX.: Baylor University Press, 2014).

6 Augustine, *Anti-Pelagian Writings* 27 [XV].

7 John 13:7, "Jesus answered him, 'What I am doing you do not understand *now*, but *afterward* you will understand'" (italics mine); John 16:12, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them *now*" (italics mine).

8 See for instance B. B. Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield. Volume 1* (John E. Meeter, ed.; Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian Reformed Publishing Company, 1970), 310-311. Warfield even goes to the extent of arguing that the Decalogue was not for Israel only, but is "equally incumbent upon all men, everywhere." Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings*, 312. Charles Spurgeon also used the word "Sabbath" to refer to Sunday and believed the Sabbath commandment was still in force as part of the "moral law".

9 Ibid., 308 (italics mine).

10 Ibid., 309.

11 Ibid., 318. Warfield then argues, "Christ took the Sabbath into the grave with him and brought the Lord's Day out of the grave with him on the resurrection morn" (319). Warfield seems to confuse matters by now distinguishing the Sabbath from the Lord's day after he had just equated them.

12 While there is no biblical evidence for these assertions, the early Church Fathers did later argue that Christians should not worship on the Sabbath, but rather on the Lord's day (Sunday). They saw a transition from the seventh day to the eighth day (Sunday) as a sign of the New Covenant, a new beginning in God's salvific plan. The Patristic evidence indicates a move away from the Sabbath to Sunday as the Lord's day. The Church Fathers contrary to many Reformed theologians, were at least consistent in distinguishing the Sabbath from the Lord's day and did not equate the two days. To worship on the Sabbath was seen by the Fathers as a form of 'Judaizing'. On the Sabbath and the Church Fathers see R. J. Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church," in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, ed. D. A. Carson, 251-298.

13 Warfield acknowledges this point when he states, "It is true enough that we have *no record* of a commandment of our Lord's requiring a *change in the day of the observance of the Sabbath*. Neither has *any of the apostles* to whom he committed the task of founding his Church *given us such a commandment*" (Warfield, *Selected*

Shorter Writings, 319) (italics mine).

14 Deut 18:18-19 is a passage where Moses "wrote" and spoke of the Prophet like Moses who was to come. This "Prophet" is taken to be the Messiah. The NT takes it for granted that Jesus is the fulfillment of Deut 18:18-19 (see John 7:40; Acts 3:19-26; 7:37, 52). That Deut 18:18-19 was viewed as a Messianic text among some Jews seems to be evident in the Jewish sect of Qumran. Geza Vermes argues that Deut 18:18-19 appears in the Messianic Anthology or *Testimonia* (messianic proof texts) found in Cave 4. The text 4Q175, lists Deut 18:18-19 as the first of three messianic proof texts. Some saw the "Prophet" as a precursor to the Messiah, while others saw him as a "new Moses" (a view which the gospel of Matthew seems to share). See Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 87, 495. These differences of opinion regarding "the Prophet" also seemed to be present in the first century and attested in the NT (see John 1:19-22). Notwithstanding the differences of opinion, the passage of Deut 18:18-19 was linked to a Messianic context.

15 See *telos*, *BDAG*, *BibleWorks 6.0.009i* (BibleWorks, 2003).

16 Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings*, 316.

17 Ibid., 321.

18 Ibid.

19 Some commentators see a reference here to Jewish Gnostic observances but this is not the most natural reading of the text. See Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 193; Riesenfeld, *TDNT* 8:148; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 276.

20 **Excursus**: Which day(s) did early Christians assemble for worship according to Paul's Letters? What seems certain according to Paul's letter to the Romans is that there were some in the Christian community who observed one day above another, which most probably was the Sabbath, but Paul does not specify the day as such. Most commentators seem to be in agreement on this point. For example, see Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 842; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans 8-16* (Minneapolis, MN.: Augsburg Fortress, 1945, 2008), 821. Others esteemed all days to be alike (Rom 14:5). Paul calls for every Christian believer to follow their conscience in this area and what is of utmost importance is their relationship with the Lord irrespective of which day they regard as special. These various views on the issue of days became points of friction within two of the Christian communities Paul corresponded with, namely Rome (Rom 14:5-6), and Galatia (Gal 4:10). When the subject of the observance of days do appear in the Pauline letters, they seem to appear in a context of conflict either internally as we see in Rom 14:5-6, or externally, by those outside who wish to impose a legalistic observance of days as seen in Gal 4:10 (cf. Col 2:16). Despite such conflict, Paul does not appear to be dogmatic on this issue, nor does he ever give orders that Christians ought to observe any specific day, or any days at all as a special religious observance. What Paul appears to resist is the imposition of any one day or days on Christian believers as a means of attaining one's right standing before God. Paul appears to be opposing a legalistic observance of a specific day or days. If Paul did have one particular day in mind for Christian worship, then it would seem that the situation over the observance of days in Rom 14:5-6 would have been the opportune moment for Paul to elaborate and clarify which day he believed was fit for Christian worship. It is noteworthy that Paul avoids mentioning any one specific day. Paul is silent on this issue.

When Paul does mention the observance of any day as in Rom 14:5-6, he leaves it up to the independent conscience of the Christian believer on the condition that they regard or observe the day as unto the Lord (Rom 14:6). As already noted, Paul does not specify in Rom 14:6 any particular day by name (whether Sabbath or Sunday), but seems to imply it can be any day. Paul simply refers to "the day" (Rom 14:6), without qualifying it. Paul shows that there is freedom in this area as he readily acknowledges that there are some that regard one day as more better than another, while another esteems all days alike (Rom 14:5). The observance of days is not to be a contentious issue among Christian believers according to Paul. This would seem to indicate that Paul was not a Sabbatarian in the strictest sense of the term, although from his words in Rom 14:5-6 he would not necessarily be opposed to one who observed or regarded the Sabbath as long as it was to the Lord, and without passing judgment on others to do the same. The same could be said of any other day including Sunday or the Lord's day. As Moo, *Romans*, 842 notes, Paul "does not commend, or command, one practice or the other." Some may appeal to 1 Cor 16:1-2 that Paul commands observance on the first day of the week for Christian worship. However, while the text certainly shows that there was a habitual gathering of believers on every first day of the week, the focus is on the collection of funds to help the Christian believers in Judea (1 Cor 16:3). Is this gathering on the first day of the week to worship, or

to raise funds for the Jerusalem saints? The idea of assembled worship is implied, but it is not explicit. It is implied in that giving is part of Christian worship (2 Cor 9). To interpret Paul's words in 1 Cor 16:2 as indicating a rigid observance of the first day of the week seems to run counter to Paul's overall position on the observance of days as a point of conscientious freedom by the Christian believer. The imposition of any day on a Christian believer as a means to secure their salvation or right standing before God appears to be vehemently denounced and opposed by Paul, especially as we see in his letter to the Galatians.

21 Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings*, 317. Warfield however tries to make up for this absence by stating in this same passage that we can see the commentary of Christ's life that is just as "illuminating". However, this is confusing at best. Jesus also observed the Jewish feasts, kosher laws, and other sundry rules contained in the Law or Torah. The Jews viewed the Law/Torah as a unit, a package deal, incapable of being broken into different pieces or laws. For this reason Paul warns the Galatian Christians that if they receive circumcision they become debtors to the *whole* law (Gal 5:3), not just part of it. The Greek adjective *holos* carries the meaning of "whole," "entire," "all".

22 On the "law of liberty," see Dan G. McCartney, *James* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009), 122-123.

23 The law of Christ or Messiah seems to have been prophesied or anticipated in the messianic text of Isa 42:4, "He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for *his law*. Isaiah 42 is believed to be the first of the "Servant Songs" in Isaiah. The Servant is recognized by some to be the Messiah.

24 Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 337.

25 Ibid.

26 Reformed theologians usually point to Gen 2:2-3 to justify the Sabbath being a "creation ordinance" which is to be observed as Warfield for instance agues (Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings*, 309). The problem with this position is that 1) the noun Sabbath does not appear in Gen 2:2-3 but the verb means to "stop," "cease," "rest," see *BDB* 992, and 2) there is no command or imperative in Genesis to keep the seventh day as a day of rest or worship. To read a Sabbath command into Gen 2:2-3 as many Reformed theologians do is an exercise in eisegesis, not exegesis.

27 Brevard Childs disagrees, "The sabbath command is not given to Israel for the first time at Sinai … but at Sinai Israel is only exhorted to remember what had been an obligation from the beginning." Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1974), 416. Childs however provides no evidence for his assertion but only assumes based on Gen 2:2-3 that the Sabbath was already known and observed. The text of Genesis provides no support for Sabbath keeping of any kind and the word 'Sabbath' is completely absent in Genesis. Childs' position is purely speculative at this point. Warfield makes a similar argument, "Israel was a people to whom the Sabbath was already known, and which needed not to be informed, but only to be reminded of it: *Remember the Sabbath day…*'" Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings*, 311 (italics in original). Warfield assumes the Sabbath was known to Israel before the exodus as a creation ordinance. The command in the Decalogue for Israel to remember the Sabbath presupposes that they already did know of the Sabbath, and indeed they did, for they were already taught about the Sabbath in Exodus 16 where the word "Sabbath" appears for the first time in the Hebrew Bible.

28 Also Ezek 20:12, "Moreover, *I gave them* my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them" (Italics mine).

29 This argument was also made by Church Father, Justin Martyr to Trypho the Jew in his *Dialogue with Trypho* 19. Justin also included circumcision and argued before the covenant was made with Abraham (Gen 17) many of the faithful men of God (Abel, Enoch, Seth, Noah) were uncircumcised and yet walked with God and found favor in his sight. Gen 26:5 states, "because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." This does not mean that Abraham knew the Mosaic law which would be anachronistic, but rather that Abraham was fully and completely obedient to God. The reference to "Abraham obeyed my voice" is reminiscent of Gen 22:18 of the sacrifice of Isaac. See K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2005), 405.

30 *Jubilees* 6:17-22; 15:1-4; 16:20-31; 22:1-2; 44:1-4.

31 The word "sign" is also used of the rainbow in the covenant with Noah (Gen 9:12-13, 17) which is expressly said to be "sign of the covenant." Genesis 17:11 uses virtually the same language in dealing with circumcision as the "sign of the covenant" between God and Abraham and by extension, his physical descendants. The blood of the Passover lamb which was to be placed on the door posts is also said to be a "sign" of protection from God's judgment (Exod 12:13).

[32] That the Gentiles were exempt from observing the Sabbath is also seen in *Jub*. 2:31, "The Creator of all blessed it [the Sabbath], but he did not sanctify any people or nations to keep the sabbath thereon with the sole exception of Israel. He granted to them alone that they might … keep the sabbath thereon upon the earth."

[33] Some offences like breaking the Sabbath were punishable by death but also included the phrase being "cut off from among his people." This phrase is difficult to interpret in the OT. The *TWOT* notes concerning this phrase, "there is the metaphorical meaning to root out, eliminate, remove, excommunicate or destroy by a violent act of man or nature. It is sometimes difficult in a given context to know whether the person(s) who is "cut off" is to be killed or only excommunicated." R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1048b. Context ultimately is the determining key to interpretation.

[34] While at first glance this would appear as a harmless act or mistake, the gathering of wood it would seem was done with the intent of kindling a fire, which was also prohibited on the Sabbath (Exod 35:3). The man in this narrative would thus appear to be guilty not only in his act, buy also in his intent. It is interesting that the prohibition of kindling a fire on the Sabbath (Exod 35:3), follows immediately from the prohibition of profaning the Sabbath (Exod 35:2). Numbers 15:32-36 seems to be the narrative example or version of the Sabbatarian prohibitions in Exodus 35:2-3. On the narrative story in Numbers 15:32-36 see A. Phillips, "The Case of the Woodgatherer Reconsidered," *Vetus Testamentum* 19 (1969): 125-128; J. Weingreen, "The Case of the Woodgatherer (Numbers XV 32–36)," *Vetus Testamentum* 16 (1966): 361-364.

[35] On Jesus teaching on the Sabbath see Mark 1:21; 2:23-28; 6:2; Luke 4:16, 31; 6:1-6; 13:10. On Jesus healing on the Sabbath see Matt 12:8-12; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 6:6-9; 13:11-17; 14:1-6; John 5:1-18; 7:22-23; 9:1-34.

[36] There is an interesting parallel between the creative week of Gen 1 and the final week of Jesus, the Passion Week. God creates humans (and humanity by extension) on the sixth day (Gen 1:26-27, 31). Jesus dies on the sixth day to purchase a new humanity (Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31, 42). God rests on the seventh day from his creative work (Gen 2:2-3), Jesus rests in the tomb on the seventh day (the Sabbath) after his redemptive work (Luke 23:55-56). God creates light on the first day of the week (Gen 1:3, 5), and Jesus rises on the first day of the week (Luke 24:1; John 20:1). Jesus is the one "who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:10).

[37] Plucking grain on the Sabbath would constitute 'reaping' and 'threshing,' and thus according to *Tractate Shabbath*, a rabbinic treatise, would constitute work and thus result in a desecrating of the Sabbath.

[38] The physical presence of God is implied in the fact that Adam and Eve hid themselves from God among the trees of the garden. They would not need to hide from a spiritual invisible presence as there would be no place to hide. The first fellowship between God and humans was by means of a physical manifestation, which will be fully realized again when the God-man Jesus Christ gathers his elect to himself in his eternal kingdom.

[39] Note the words in 1 John 5:3, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome."

[40] The word used for "profane," "desecrate," and "break" is the Greek word *bebēloō* which carries a negative connotation. See J. P. Louw and E.A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2nd ed.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 53.33.

[41] This is reinforced in the Transfiguration narrative accounts where the Son is to be listened to, and to whom Moses (law) and Elijah (the prophets) bear witness (Matt 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36).

[42] The word "lord" (*kurios*) in Matt 12:8 is in the emphatic position as it comes first in the sentence. In other words, the emphasis is not on the Sabbath, but on Christ's Lordship over the Sabbath.

[43] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 463.

[44] This would be based on rabbinic law *Mishnah Shabbat* 7:2; 10:5 and probably Jer 17:21-27 which forbids carrying a burden on the Sabbath day and was later interpreted to include any type of burden. Rabbinic regulations such as the Mishnah as a text is later than the NT but its rules may come from NT times.

[45] What is startling in this narrative is the extent to which legalism blinds a person. A man who was crippled for 38 years is healed by Jesus on the Sabbath, and all the religious leaders could think of was the Sabbath was violated instead of praising and giving thanks to God that a crippled was healed. When legalism pervades one's life, there is little room to see and experience the grace of God.

[46] According to *Jub*. 15:25-27 the angels at the time of their creation were created already circumcised!

[47] Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 345 n28.

[48] See Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 18.18; 37.127; 20.53; 15.139; 36.30; 37.47; 13.38 and 13.100.

[49] *BDAG* s.v. *luō* goes so far as to say that the meaning of this *luō* in John 5:18 is that "in John, Jesus is accused not of breaking the Sabbath, but of doing away [with] it as an ordinance".

[50] We encounter a similar case in Matt 22:31-32 citing Exod 3:5.

[51] David L. Allen, *Hebrews* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2010), 257.

[52] Ibid., 264.

[53] This is the only place in NT where this text is quoted.

[54] While this Psalm (95) is attributed to David, this psalm was probably not written by David. It was common to attribute the book of Psalms to "David". See Allen, *Hebrews*, 278.

[55] If the writer of Hebrews was a strict Sabbatarian, this would have been the opportune moment to identify which day of the week Christians should observe, but he is silent on this subject simply because this is not his point at all.

[56] The NJB reading "a seventh-day rest" seems to be overly strained and in my opinion, not a proper translation of *sabbatismos*.

[57] Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 67.185 (italics mine). Also *BDAG* s.v. *sabbatismos* refers to this word as "a special period of rest for God's people modeled after the traditional sabbath" and that it is being used figuratively in Heb

"The Glory of God"—The Character of God's Being and Way in the World: Some Reflections on a Key Biblical Theology Theme

Peter J. Gentry

Peter J. Gentry is Professor of Old Testament Interpretation and Director of the Hexapla Institute at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served on the faculty of Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College and also taught at the University of Toronto, Heritage Theological Seminary, and Tyndale Seminary. Dr. Gentry is the author of many articles and book reviews, the co-author of *Kingdom through Covenant* (Crossway, 2012), and is currently preparing a critical text of Proverbs and Ecclesiates for the Göttingen Septuagint.

Exodus 34 is a key passage in biblical theology, but the meaning of the glory of God as revealed to Moses is not understood very well by the Christian church, at least the church in North America.[1] I plan on developing this reflection on a key biblical theme in four steps. First, I will briefly expound how the glory of Yahweh is revealed to Moses at Sinai (Exodus 33–34). Second, I will relate the exposition of Exodus 33-34 to David's supplication in Psalm 86. Third, I will turn to two NT texts which confirm the exegesis of Exodus 34, namely John 1:14, 17-18 and 2 Corinthians 4:4-6. Fourth, I will offer one theological reflection from the exposition of the theme from the Old and New Testament texts.

The Glory of God in Exodus 34

The Context of Exodus 34

Before turning to Exodus 34, we must briefly review the narrative sequence that leads up to the revelation of the divine glory in Exodus 34. Exodus 1–18 describes how an enslaved Israel is released from Egypt and travels through the desert towards Canaan, the Promised Land. At Mount Sinai, Yahweh and Israel are bound together by a covenant specified in Exodus 19–23 and then ratified in Exodus 24. Afterwards, Moses ascends the mountain to receive further instructions concerning the building of a place of worship. When Moses is gone for a long time, the people urge Aaron to make alternative arrangements which leads to the Calf of Gold and idolatrous orgiastic worship. God urges Moses to hurry down the mountain and deal with the problem. This is described in Exodus 32.

Moses descends the mountain and in anger breaks the covenant documents. He burns them and grinds them up and scatters the powder in the drinking water. He remonstrates with the people and calls for discipline. The tribe of Levi answers the call and many offenders are put to death.

Next Moses meets with Yahweh and seeks to atone for the people by offering to exchange his place in the Book of Life for theirs. God asks him to lead Israel to Canaan and promises a divinely sent messenger as well as disciplining actions, but he himself will not journey to Canaan in the midst of his people or accompany them. The people are not at all happy with this result and mourn (32:31-33:6).

An interlude (33:7-11) is provided by a description of the Tent of Meeting. This, we are told, was a tent outside the camp where Yahweh and Moses conversed on a regular basis just as humans speak "face to face." It seems to have been a kind of precursor to the Tabernacle in some ways. The experience at the Tent of Meeting provides both a stark contrast to the absence of God promised for the rest of the trip in the previous section as well as the grand request of Moses to experience and see God's glorious presence in the following section.

After the interlude, Moses again (in Exod 33:12-23) goes to intercede on behalf of Israel for the problem situation: he does not want to lead the people to Canaan without Yahweh himself personally going with them and leading them. The divine presence is absolutely essential.

Exodus 33:12-23

12 Moses said to Yahweh, "Look You have been telling me, 'Bring these people
up,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said,
'I know you by name and you have found favour before me.' 13 Now if I have
found favour before you, teach me your way so I may know you and continue to
find favour before you. Remember that this nation is your people."
14 The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."
15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send
us up from here. 16 And how will it be known, then, that I and your people have
found favour before you? If you do not go with us, will we, I and your people,
be distinct from every other people on the face of the earth?"
17 And the Lord said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because
you have found favour before me and I know you by name."
18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."
19 And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and
I will proclaim my name, Yahweh, before you. I will have mercy on whom I will
have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 20 But,
he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."
21 Then the Lord said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock.
22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a crack in the rock and cover you
with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will remove my hand and you
will see my back; but my face will not be seen" (NIV, 1984).[2]

Exegetical Reflections on Exodus 34

The first round of conversation between Yahweh and Moses has left Moses entirely *uneasy*. Yahweh has called him to lead the people from Egypt to Canaan and has indicated that he will dispatch a messenger to accompany them, but he will not go with them in person. Moses addresses his concern for this arrangement in the second round of conversation here in Exodus 33:12-23.

Moses notes that Yahweh has called him to lead the people to Canaan and has not specified whom he will send as a messenger. He argues that he has found favor in the eyes of Yahweh and Yahweh has known him by name. On this basis he would like to know the *way* of Yahweh. If Yahweh will reveal

his approach to these matters, he can know Yahweh in return and find favor in his eyes. He reminds Yahweh that the nation of Israel belongs to him by covenant and therefore is Yahweh's responsibility.

There is a problem in the textual transmission here: the vocalization of MT has "show me your ways" (plural) but the consonantal text has "show me your way" (singular). The latter reading is supported by Jerome, the Syriac Peshitta, and the Aramaic Targums, while only the Samaritan Version and some mediaeval MSS support MT. I take the singular here as the original text.[3]

Noteworthy in this text is the phase "find favor in someone's eyes." Of sixty-nine instances of "favor" (חֵן) in the Old Testament, forty, almost 60%, occur in the phrase "to find favor in someone's eyes." Furthermore, of these forty, twenty-six have to do with favor in the eyes of humans and fourteen with favor in the eyes of God. Again, of all the instances having to do with favor in the eyes of God, six, almost half, are found in this text in Exodus while another two occur in Numbers 11, another passage dealing with the favor of Moses before God. Normally, the person who is given favor is making a request to someone socially superior or who has in the particular circumstance complete power over them in the matter they seek. A majority of all instances, then, deal with Moses' relationship to Yahweh.

In a recent work entitled *Covenant and Grace in the Old Testament*, Robert D. Miller notes parallels between the phrase "find favour in the eyes of a person" and an almost identical phrase in Old Aramaic in the 8th Century B.C. Barrakab Inscription from Zenjirli.[4] This inscription was written by the King of Sam'al, a small kingdom in the area around the city we know as Antioch in later times. In the inscription he indicates that he has become a servant, i.e., a client-king or vassal of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser. The document is a piece of propaganda from the time of the Syro-Ephraimite Coalition against Judah when Ahaz also became a vassal of Tiglath-Pileser and gave him handsome tribute to remove the military pressure upon him from Syria and Israel. The inscription was placed in a prominent spot at the entrance to the palace of the King of Sam'al. Thus, those in the court of this king, i.e., all those who mattered in his kingdom, could be given the message that the move to become a client or vassal of Assyria was an astute political decision that would guarantee prosperity and security for this small country, surrounded by greater peoples and turbulent times. Perhaps in a similar manner, Moses is instructing Israel that to be a vassal of Yahweh

has allowed him to strike a very good deal for the remainder of the difficult journey from Sinai to Canaan.

As Moses bargains with Yahweh, Yahweh accedes to his request and states, "My face will go with you and I will give you rest." Here the word "face" (פָּנִים) is a synecdoche of the part for the whole person, as may be observed in the parallel in 2 Samuel 17:11.[5] Yahweh himself will go with Israel in person. The promise of rest for Moses shows that a great burden has been lifted from his shoulders in terms of the task of leading the people amidst enemies and the difficulties of the desert to Canaan. He need be uneasy no longer.

Then in verse 16 Moses asks for a sign to assure him and the people of the guarantee and promise just given him by Yahweh: "how will it be known, then, that I and your people have found favor before you?" Yahweh also accedes to the demand for a sign and so we come to the bold request: "Show me your glory." In a chiastic structure A B A' we have the word glory in verses 18 and 22 on either side of the explanation in verse 19: "I will cause my goodness to pass before you and proclaim my name." This explanation reveals that the glory of Yahweh can be described or discussed under two categories: the name of Yahweh and the goodness of Yahweh. If we consider the initial request in v. 13, where Moses says "show me your way," it would seem that the goodness of Yahweh in v. 19 is synonymous with the way of Yahweh in v. 13.

- Exod 33:13 show me your way
- Exod 33:18 show me your glory
- Exod 33:19 I will cause my goodness to pass before you and proclaim my name
- Exod 33:22 when my glory passes by

We may conclude then that the glory of Yahweh can be described under two categories: the *name* of Yahweh and the *way* of Yahweh. Our analysis will be tested by the interpretation of David in Psalm 86.

In the revelation of the divine glory, Yahweh says in v. 20, "you cannot see my face" and reiterates in v. 23, "you will see my back, but not my face." The term 'face' (פָּנִים) here entails a different figure of speech from that used in v. 14. By means of anthropomorphism, an analogy is drawn between the knowledge one may have of a human by a frontal view in which one can behold the face and a view of the backside which does not reveal the person in the same way. Needless to say, identifications in police stations

require a frontal view for full knowledge of a person. Thus Yahweh is using this figure of speech to instruct Moses that as a human, he cannot have full knowledge of God, but he can nonetheless have a true knowledge, albeit a partial knowledge.

- Exod 33:20 you cannot see my face
- Exod 33:23 you will see my back but not my face

In the book *Kingdom through Covenant*, I briefly expound the revelation of the glory of Yahweh in Exodus 34:6-7. I will cite this brief exposition:[6]

TABLE 4.4a Yahweh Yahweh

ʾēl raḥûm wĕḥannûn	Ontology
ʾerek appayim wĕrab ḥesed wĕʾĕmet	
nōṣer ḥesed lāʾălāpîm	Function +
nōśēʾ ʿāwôn wāpešaʿ wĕhaṭṭāʾâ	
wĕnaqqēh lōʾ yĕnaqqeh	Function –
pōqēd ʿāwôn ʾābôt ʿal bānîm wĕʿal bĕnē bānîm ʿal šillēšîm wĕʿal ribbēʿîm	

TABLE 4.4b Yahweh Yahweh

a God merciful and gracious	Ontology
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness	
keeping steadfast love for thousands	Function +
forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin	
but who will by no means clear the guilty	Function –
visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation	

This revelation begins by repeating the name Yahweh. This is the only instance in the Old Testament where the name is repeated twice. The repetition means, "Pay attention!" The number two is also the key to the literary structure. There are three pairs of qualities of the divine nature, and the first pair makes a chiasm with the last revelation of that nature, in Exodus 33:19b, which was a preview for Moses:

וְחַנֹּתִי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אָחֹן וְרִחַמְתִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲרַחֵם׃

"And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (ESV). Thus in Exodus 33:19b we have "gracious"

and "merciful," whereas in Exodus 34:6 we have "merciful" and "gracious" (A-B::B-A). These two qualities stress the incredible grace and compassion—unmerited—in Yahweh. The next two stress his qualities of forbearance (slowness to anger) as well as his overflowing faithful loving-kindness.

These ontological qualities then flow into incredible positive functions that form a chiasm with the negative functions: he guards *ḥesed*. The word *nōṣer* ("guard") is chosen because of its assonance with *nōśē'* (forgive) and also because it is more active than "do." The usual expression in the Hebrew Bible is "do *ḥesed*." To guard *ḥesed* is stronger—God earnestly maintains and preserves *ḥesed*. As we can see from Exodus 20:5–6, "thousands" does not mean thousands of people, but specifically stands in contrast to "visiting iniquity to the third and fourth generation" and hence means thousands of generations. This is something that is an outflow of the divine nature. Second, this *ḥesed* issues in a comprehensive forgiveness, but a forgiveness which nonetheless still takes sin very seriously (he does not acquit the guilty)—in other words this is a costly forgiveness. There is a tension here within the divine nature, caused by human sin, but that will be resolved someday although it is not resolved in Exodus 34.

And this incredible and matchless revelation is what it means to see Yahweh's back! Imagine looking him full in the face!

Although my exposition in *Kingdom through Covenant* is not as explicit as it might have been, I indicated there that the first pair of qualities refers to the divine ontology and the last two pairs of qualities delineate the positive and negative functions. We can be more explicit now: the first pair unveils the *name of Yahweh* while the last two pairs shows the *way of Yahweh*. These are the Bible's own categories. The first pair describes God as he is in himself, in character and nature, while the last two pairs describe God in his relation to the creation. Systematic theologians would employ the terms "immanent trinity" for the former and "economic trinity" for the latter.

The Glory of God in Psalm 86

Jim Hamilton is quite right to believe that this is a central text and he helpfully notes all of the texts in the Old Testament which refer back to it.[7] One of these is Psalm 86 and to this text we now turn. Crucial for our understanding is a brief description of the literary and poetic structure. The following analysis

of the literary structure is based upon my own study of the text using the method of O'Connor, but is also heavily influenced by that of J. P. Fokkelman.[8]

Poetic Analysis of Psalm 86

Stanza One	01a-07b
Strophe 1	01a-02b
Strophe 2 (Exod 34:5-7)	03a-05b
Strophe 3	06a-07b
Stanza Two (שֵׁם, דֶּרֶךְ, שֵׁם, שֵׁם)	08a-13b
Strophe 4	08a-10b
Strophe 5	11a-13b
Stanza Three	14a-17c
Strophe 6 (Exod 34:5-7)	14a-15b
Strophe 7	16a-17c

Psalm 86 is an ardent prayer of supplication resting solidly on an expression of faith that is very well-sustained. Both elements—supplication and trust—can be traced through the structure.

The poem consists of seven strophes clustered into three stanzas. The ardent prayer is easily recognised in the openings (and occasionally the middle) of strophes 1-3 and 5 + 7. Fokkelman also includes strophe 6 here—and rightly so—because the content of verse 14 spells out the cause of the prayer for the reader: enemies are on the point of overwhelming the speaker.

Stanza 1 begins and ends with a call to Yahweh to 'attend' // 'answer' or 'listen' // 'pay attention'. In between, the psalmist asks God to 'preserve' (his life), 'save', 'show him favour' and 'gladden his heart'. An inclusio is formed by the cry 'to answer' in 1a and the confidant hope that God will answer in 7b. The last strophe of Stanza 1 also employs the roots אזן and חנן as well as קרא and יום to form inclusions with both strophes 1 and 2.

Strophe 1 uses four 2 masculine singular imperatives and two verbless *ki*-clauses with אני as subject. Strophe 2 reverses the proportions with two second masculine singular imperatives addressed to God and four *ki*-clauses, two of which are verbal (from me to you) and two are verbless about 'you'. Parallelism here is vertical rather than horizontal, so that the pairs are 3a + 4a and 3b +4b. In both 3b and 4b an adverbial modifier is clause initial (אליך), with discourse pragmatic significance. Several tropes, that is to say,

figures of speech with a text-structuring function, largely repetition, bind strophes 1 – 3 together as a stanza.

Strophe 4 is hymnic, containing only praise and no requests. This is the centre and heart of the poem. This strophe encloses a double אדני within a double אלהים ('gods' in 8a and God in 10b). Opening with "no one like you" and closing with "you alone" is also a semantic inclusio. Along with the choice of words that yields a hymnic style, Fokkelman notes that this central strophe is the only one to lack a first person morpheme of any sort. Here the root עשה is found three times—the focus is solely upon God and his works.

Strophe 5 has a hymnic centre, v. 12, which employs the only double vocative in the poem. Around the hymnic center, in 11b and 13a we have the halves of the common word-pair *ḥesed wĕ'ĕmet* broken up by the poet. The lines on the outside of the strophe (11a and 13b) both open with commands in the *hiphil*. After so many positive words the ending is a shock: the speaker wants to be plucked from death.

Strophe 6 addresses the issue raised at the end of the previous strophe. The opening verse, v. 14, parallels v. 13 by way of נפשי .../... עלי, but the correspondence only serves to highlight the contrast: the "I" is under serious threat from insolent and ruthless enemies. In v. 14, the vocative "God" is clause initial for the first and only time of ten vocatives addressing God in the poem (1a, 3a, 4b, 5a, 6a, 8a, 9b, 11a, 14a, 15a). The phrases of 14b chiastically mirror the phrases of 13b (deliver my life / deepest grave // assembly of ruthless / seek my life). The citation from Exodus 34, also a verbless clause with אתה as subject, makes v. 15 to match v. 5 and strophe 6 to match strophe 2.

Strophe 7 matches strophe 1 since three key words, "have mercy on me," "your servant," and "save" (ABC) begin the last strophe and also end the first one in chiastic order (CBA). Following the pattern of clauses with התא (2b, 5a, 10a, 10b, and 15a), the clause in 17c is probably also to be construed as a verbless clause and not as a vocative. As Fokkelman notes, "this is the unit which bluntly states the predicament, and in which both the prayer and the nominal proclamation of the deity and his excellent qualities have been brought to their climax."[9]

The expression "to honor the name of Yahweh" in 9b and 12b forms an inclusio that binds strophes 4 and 5 together as a single stanza.[10] In between these bookends, the poet asks that he may be instructed in the *way of Yahweh* and his heart united to fear the *name of Yahweh*. We may note the allusions to Exodus 34:5-7 in 5ab and 13a and the direct citation of it in 15ab. This corresponds to the use of

'name' (שֵׁם) in 9c, 11c, 12b and 'way' (דרך) in 11a. In addition, the doubling of "name" at the end of the strophe imitates the double Yahweh in Exodus 34. The citation of Exodus 34 in strophes 2 and 6 help to form a concentric circle around the middle stanza: the way of Yahweh and name of Yahweh are in fact a summary of the revelation of Yahweh in Exodus 34:5-7. Moreover, in the very centre, 11a, the way of Yahweh is mentioned first and the name of Yahweh second. This corresponds to the order in the text in Exodus 34. The first instance in Scripture of the phrase דרך יהוה is in Genesis 18:14 where it is characterized by doing צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט (social justice as expressed later in the Torah).

We see, then, in Psalm 86 that the credo of David is the credo of Moses: Exodus 34:5-7. The next psalm, Psalm 87, is much like Jonah 4:2—which has to do with the nations. The intention of the credo—God's name and way—cannot be constrained to nationalistic boundaries!

Psalm 86 is clearly a prayer based upon Exodus 34 and is a reflection *derek* and *shem*. Note that David calls himself a *hāsîd* (godly, ESV) at the beginning. He knows that he is a covenant partner and that his character is consonant with God's. Perhaps also the sign for good for which he asks in 17a is in imitation of Moses and connected to the end of Exodus 33 as well.

Thus exegetical study of Exodus 34 is confirmed by later interpretation of this text Psalm 86 and shows that the glory of God consists in his *name* and his *way*. The former describes the character and nature of his being and the latter describes his relations with us—indeed with all creation.

The proclamation of the divine glory in Exodus 34 defines for us the *name* and the *way* of Yahweh. The explanations given to Moses and to us through the revelation to him create significant tensions in the larger story or metanarrative of scripture. Before considering these, let us briefly note that the witness of the NT confirms the exegesis of Exodus 34.

NT Confirmation of God's Glory in Exodus 34

John 1:14, 17-18, and 2 Corinthians 4:4-6 are particularly significant:

John 1:14, 17-18

> 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John bore

> witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") 16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known (ESV).

Note that Jesus, as the Word, revealed the glory of God, described as being full of grace and truth. This statement of the apostle John, corresponds to the definition of divine glory as characterised by grace and truth = *ḥesed* and *ḥĕmet*. Moses gave the Law or Torah on this topic, i.e., *tôrâ* as instruction. But the instruction was not realized until the coming of Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:4-6

> 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The good news is about the glory of Christ. Looking at the face and life of Jesus Christ gives us knowledge of the glory of God. As demonstrated elsewhere, Ephesians 4–6 summarizes this good news in terms of *ḥesed* and *ḥĕmet*, i.e., speaking the truth in love.

A Concluding Theological Reflection on the Glory of God

The revelation of the glory of Yahweh in Exodus 33–34 leaves the reader engulfed in mystery and creates a major tension in the storyline of Scripture. How can *ḥesed* and *'ĕmet* describe the name or very being of God, since this Hebrew word-pair normally describes covenant relationships? Here we encounter a mystery that is only resolved by the revelation of the teaching of the Trinity in the NT. In passages such as Colossians 1, Philippians 2, and 1 Corinthians 8–10 Paul grounds his discourse in texts from the OT that insist most emphatically on the existence of only one God, yet within the

being of this God he can speak about a Father and a Son.[11] The Gospel of John speaks of the love of the Father for the Son (e.g., John 3:35, 5:20). The Son displays the faithfulness and loyalty of an obedient son (John 5:19). These texts explain how we can say that the name of God is *ḥesed* and *'ĕmet*, or as the apostle John says simply, God is love (1 John 4:8). While I am not affirming that at such and such a point (in eternity or in space or time), the persons of the Trinity entered into a covenant relationship; nonetheless, terms that describe covenant relationships are used to describe what is characteristic about their inter-personal relationships.

For a long time in the western world, there has been a tendency to treat the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as a problem rather than as encapsulating the heart of the Christian Gospel. A recent writer put it this way: "It is as if one had to establish one's Christian orthodoxy by facing a series of mathematical and logical difficulties rather than by glorying in the being of a God whose reality as a communion of persons is the basis of a rational universe in which personal life may take shape."[12] Do you see the situation? Our problems arise because we come to this teaching with our ideas of god, human life and personality. And then we say this teaching is illogical or puzzling. What we need to do is to start the other way round. It is only if and when we *begin* with this teaching that we can understand God and ourselves and the world in which we live. Let me illustrate. Only the Christian God explains communication, love and personality. Let us illustrate by considering love in a human family. How can a child understand love if the definition of love is based entirely and totally upon the relationship of the child to the parent and the parent to the child? This is a very insecure and unstable basis for love, because the child knows that he or she may disappoint or fail father or mother. And when that happens, this love is imperfect. If, however, love is defined in a relationship outside the child-parent relationship, in the love of husband and wife, then the child knows that world of love will not fall apart when they disobey dad or mom. There is a secure foundation for love because love is defined in a relationship outside of the child-parent relationship. The same is true of our relation to God. If love depends on our relationship to God and his to us, then this love is not perfect. But love is found within the being of God. Because there are personal distinctions within God himself, the eternal love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father, we have a basis for love. The Muslim has ninety-nine names for God, but love is not one

of them. Only the Christian faith has a basis for love in human relationships because love is based in God himself independently of our relation to him.

An old Puritan writer said this, "Theology is the art of living blessedly forever." This is what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 8. The teaching of the Trinity is not just dry and dusty theory for the theologians. You will not know how to relate to the pagan culture unless you know the Christian God. You will not know how to relate to one another in the people of God unless you know the crucified and risen Messiah who stands within the description and definition of God himself.

---

1 While no exhaustive research of literature on this text has been attempted, a brief survey of recent commentaries revealed nothing like the exposition here: Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974); John I. Durham, *Exodus* (Word Biblical Commentary 3; Waco: Word Books, 1987); Peter Enns, *Exodus: From Biblical Text to Contemporary Life* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus* (Kregel Exegetical Library; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014); Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus* (trans. Johan Rebel and Sierd Woudstra; Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Kampen: Kok, 1993); Philip G. Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory* (Preaching the Word; Wheaton: Crossway, 2005); Nahum Sarna, *Exodus: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation / Commentary* (The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991); Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus* (New American Commentary, 2; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006). Even a monograph on this topic, although useful, does not overlap with this treatment: Michael P. Knowles, *The Unfolding Mystery of the Divine Name: The God of Sinai in Our Midst* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012). See the central role this text has in the following two works on biblical theology: Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012) and James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010). Nonetheless, the exegesis of Exodus 34 is developed further here.

2 I have changed "ways" in v. 12 to "way." See below.

3 The Septuagint does not translate the word in question and so has no role in this problem in the text.

4 Robert D. Miller, *Covenant and Grace in the Old Testament: Assyrian Propaganda and Israelite Faith* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012), 68-75, 99-103, 167-169. For the text, see John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions. Volume 2: Aramaic Inscriptions Including Inscriptions in the Dialect of Zenjirli* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 87-93.

5 See Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), 434.

6 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 143-145.

7 Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 56-59, 101-106, 133-137.

8 J. P. Fokkelman, *Major Poems of the Hebrew Bible (at the Interface of Prosody and Structural Analysis)*, Volume II: *85 Psalms and Job 4-14* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2000), 241-245, 444.

9 Ibid., 244.

10 This leaves strophes 6 and 7 to form the last stanza.

11 See esp. N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992),

12 Colin Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 31-32.

Book Reviews

William M. Schweitzer, ed. *Jonathan Edwards for the Church: The Ministry and the Means of Grace*. Watchmead, Welwyn Garden City, UK: Evangelical Press, 2015. pp. 312. $19.99.

With every passing year, publishers present us with a fresh torrent of books dedicated to Jonathan Edwards's life and thought. Most of these works fall into one of two categories. Some are scholarly monographs or collections of essays that are often expensive. Others are popularly written works intended for the lay audiences, but these sorts of books are often marred by overly simplistic and pietistic interpretations, evidencing a lack of serious research. Relatively few works about Edwards bear the marks of serious scholarly acumen, yet are written primarily for lay audiences. This is one reason why *Jonathan Edwards for the Church* is such a needed book.

The volume compiles the proceedings of a conference of the same name that was convened in Durham, England in 2014. The contributors are all ordained ministers, mostly in Reformed ecclesial traditions, though a smattering of Anglicans and a Lutheran are also included. Unfortunately, no Baptists contributed to the book, despite significant Baptist interest in Edwards's thought both historically and today. Most of the contributors have previously published serious scholarship related to Edwards. In fact, several of the chapters are summaries of arguments previously advanced in monographs and scholarly articles, herein coupled with practical pastoral application. Each author is committed to using his scholarly gifts in service to the church.

Part one focuses on Edwards's ministry, though this section is erroneously titled "Means of Grace." Gerald McDermott, one of the two seasoned Edwards scholars among the contributors, offers eight lessons that contemporary pastors can learn from Edwards. Editor William Schweitzer discusses Edwards's view of pastoral ministry as a means of grace. Roy Mellor addresses Edwards's termination from his Northampton pastorate, focusing upon ways that Edwards models pastoral integrity in the midst of controversy. Jeffrey Waddington examines Edwards's ministry as a pastor-apologist, especially known for his defenses of

revival and Reformed theology. Jon Payne revisits Edwards's missionary work to the Mahican Indians of western Massachusetts, arguing (contra some interpreters) that Edwards was strongly committed to missionary work both before and during his years in Stockbridge. John Murray offers a historical account of Edwards's interpretation among (mostly) evangelicals in the British Isles. This latter chapter reflects the book's British provenance.

Part two is dedicated to Edwards's views of the means of grace. Doug Sweeney, another veteran Edwards scholar, and pastor Stephen Nichols each dedicate their respective chapters to aspects of Edwards's bibliology. Each essay offers a more explicitly edifying account of some of the same material the authors cover in recent monographs on Edwards and Scripture. Nicholas Batzig examines Edwards's Christ-centered, spiritual interpretation of the Song of Solomon, arguing Edwards is a model for faithful theological interpretation that augments the grammatical-historical method prevalent among evangelicals. Michael Bräutigam focuses his chapter on a key theme in Edwardsean thought: the excellency of the Triune God as communicated in his acts of creation and redemption. In an appendix, William Maclead wraps up the volume with a revival sermon that echoes Edwardsean themes about spiritual awakening.

Scholars will not find much, if anything in *Jonathan Edwards for the Church* that advances Edwards Studies. However, rather than being a shortcoming, this characteristic is in keeping with the purpose of the book. As Schweitzer notes in his introduction, the primary audience is ministers and the book "is intended to inform and to prompt change in the contemporary church" (18). This book is not directed to scholars, though believing historians, theologians, and philosophers will find much to appreciate, even if as reminders rather than fresh insights.

Though not a groundbreaking work in Edwardsean scholarship, this volume excels in three areas. First, several of the chapters distill some key themes in current Edwards scholarship and applies it overtly to pastoral ministry. Second, for pastors who are interested in Jonathan Edwards and wish to dip into scholarship that goes deeper than the widely available popular works, this book can provide an entryway into further studies. Finally, this book demonstrates how the reverent study and application of church history and biography can contribute to spiritual formation and pastoral theology.

Above all, Jonathan Edwards was a pastor-theologian. With the revived interest in the pastor-theologian model among English-speaking evangelicals,

Jonathan Edwards for the Church makes two helpful contributions. It shows how Edwards himself was a model for how to combine robust theological convictions, a devoted piety, and a commitment to practical pastoral ministry. Also, many of the chapters demonstrates how to engage in thoughtful pastoral scholarship as these Reformed and Anglican ministers use their academic training to promote theological and methodological renewal among contemporary evangelicals. There will be a follow-up conference on the theme Jonathan Edwards and the Church in Durham in 2018. One hopes that the fruit of that meeting will include another volume similar to this one.

Nathan A. Finn
Union University
Jackson, TN

Robert D. Holmstedt and John Screnock. *Esther: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*. Baylor Handbook on the Hebrew Bible. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015, 295 pp., $39.95 paper.

Those who study the Bible have no trouble finding a commentary that examines the theology, historical setting, etc. of any given book of the Old Testament. While many commentaries investigate the Hebrew text on some level, the number of commentaries that are solely devoted to the analysis of the biblical Hebrew text are few. Robert Holmstedt and John Screnock seek to fill a void in biblical Hebrew studies with their grammatical commentary on the Hebrew text of Esther (1).

In their commentary on Esther, Holmstedt and Screnock employ a linguistic framework that is primarily based on Holmstedt's linguistic research (2; see also page 3 of Holmstedt's commentary on Ruth in the same series). In addition, the authors also avail themselves of the linguistic works of John A. Cook—especially his work on the biblical Hebrew verbal system—and Cynthia Miller-Naudé. References to the standard grammars of Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley, Joüon-Muraoka, and Waltke-O'Connor are primarily limited to issues of morphology, comparative Semitic issues, and usages of prepositions and particles. Furthermore, the authors also make references to commentaries on Esther—commentaries by Frederic Bush, Lewis Bayles Paton and C. F. Keil, for example—when matters of historical background,

meanings of words, or other such matters are pertinent to their argument.

Holmstedt and Screnock begin their commentary with a chapter outlining the "background and terminology necessary for understanding" their particular linguistic framework used to analyze biblical Hebrew grammar (1). First they define the basic component of syntax: the 'constituent.' Constituents may combine with other constituents to create larger units, such as 'noun phrases,' or 'adjective phrases' (2). The authors forgo traditional grammatical categories like 'accusative' or 'genitive,' etc., replacing them with 'complement' and 'adjunct' (3). A 'complement' is a constituent that is required by the head of that particular phrase; the phrase would be "semantically incomplete" without its complement (3). In more traditional terminology, some verbs require a direct object; according to the authors, the required direct object is a 'complement' (3). An 'adjunct,' on the other hand, is a constituent that is not required, and provides information—manner, time, location, instrument—about its phrasal head (3). For example, an adverbial phrase is an 'adjunct.' Holmstedt and Screnock then discuss verbal 'valency': "the number of arguments the verb requires in order to be semantically 'complete'" (4). They then move onto verbal semantics. Holmstedt and Screnock adopt Cook's description of the biblical Hebrew verbal system (5). According to Cook, the biblical Hebrew verbal system is "aspect-prominent"; the *qatal* is 'perfective'—"the temporal unfolding of a situation as an undifferentiated whole"—and the *yiqtol* is 'imperfective'—"the temporal unfolding of a situation as in progress" (5). The participle in Cook's system is an "adjective that encodes an activity or event rather than a quality" and it has a progressive aspect, indicating "durative, habitual, and gnomic statements" (5-6).

Holmstedt's and Screnock's description of their grammatical system continues with a discussion on word order. The authors maintain that basic word order in biblical Hebrew is Subject-Verb. The verb is often "raised" above the subject by various 'triggers': negation; particles like אִם, כִּי, אֲשֶׁר ; jussives; cohortatives; "Topic or Focus-fronting of a nonsubject constituent" (7). The discussion on verbal semantics leads into the explanation of 'pragmatics': the movement of a constituent out of its "default position" to communicate 'Topic' or 'Focus' information (8). 'Topic' indicates a change in what "the following assertions are 'about,'" or to set a scene; 'Focus' often sets something from the context over and against related items, often indicating a contrast (9). A change in word order from Subject-Verb to Verb-Subject is often due

to Focus or Topic information. Holmstedt and Screnock conclude their first chapter with a discussion on subordinate clauses, numeral syntax in Esther, and dating the book of Esther according to linguistic data. In regards to dating Esther, Holmstedt and Screnock primarily interact with Ronald Bergey's 1983 dissertation on the language of Esther and recent "discussions of Hebrew diachrony" by scholars such as Cynthia Miller-Naudé and Ziony Zevit (17).

In the remaining 225 pages, Holmstedt and Screnock cover all ten chapters of Esther, an amazing amount of material especially considering the small dimensions of the book (5 1/4 in. x 8 in.). The authors divide the commentary into four parts according to the plot of the narrative. Part I—"Esther Becomes Queen of Persia"—covers chapters 1-2, and is divided into two episodes: "Vashti's Downfall" (ch. 1); "Esther is Chosen as Queen" (ch. 2). Part II—'Haman and Mordechai in Conflict'—includes chapters 3-7, and is divided into five episodes: 'The Rise of Haman' (ch. 3); 'Mordecai's Response' (ch. 4); "Esther's Plan" (ch. 5:1-8); "Haman's Plan Implodes" (ch. 5:9-6:14); "The End of Haman" (ch. 7). Part III—"The Jews and the Peoples in Conflict"—consists of chapters 8 and 9, and is divided into three episodes: "A Plan to Save the Jews" (ch. 8); "The Jews Prevail" (ch. 9:1-19); "The Jews Victory Commemorated and Reprised" (ch. 9:20-32). Lastly, Part IV is the epilogue, including chapter 10 of Esther.

Holmstedt and Screnock begin each episode with their own translation of the text and a brief explanation of the plot in that particular passage; they then analyze the text verse-by-verse. With the start of a new verse the authors give the entire verse from the Masoretic Text, including the accent marks, and a brief synopsis of what the verse states. The authors then analyze the verse according to its various grammatical components. For example, they devote the first paragraph for Esther 1:1 to the first word of the verse: וַיְהִי. After the heading יַוְיְהִ, the authors give the parsing of the verb form, and the proceed to discuss the grammatical function of וַיְהִי in biblical Hebrew in general and specifically in Esther 1:1. Holmstedt and Screnock then move on to the prepositional phrase that follows הַיָּמִ, adhering to the same pattern discussed above (35). Throughout the commentary the authors head each paragraph with the portion of the Hebrew verse in question, followed by any necessary parsings and a discussion of the grammatical issue at hand. Most lengthy grammatical discussions are located in the analysis of the first chapters of Esther. As the commentary progresses, and as Holmstedt and

Screnock revisit material already introduced, the grammatical discussions become shorter.

As noted previously, Holmstedt and Screnock include a few discussions on the meaning and origin of loan-words, such as דָּת in 1:13 (59), and words that are difficult to define, such as סַחֲרֶת in 1:6 (47). The authors also interact with other commentators on Esther regarding the analysis of certain clauses (e.g., 41, 44, 89, 127). The authors also defend their reading of the Hebrew text when other scholars or commentators argue for emending the text (e.g., 119-20, 160), and in instances of *ketiv qere* (e.g., 60-61, 117, 147).

Holmstedt and Screnock conclude their commentary with three appendices. The first appendix supplements the authors' discussion on the syntax of numerals and consists of a chart detailing all the occurrences of numerals in Esther. The second appendix is comprised of charts of 'features for diachronic analysis' in Esther—grammatical and lexical features that indicate Esther belongs to the "latter part of the postexilic literary spectrum"—adapted from Bergey's dissertation (265). Holmstedt and Screnock convey their analysis of Bergey's conclusions by graying out in the chart those features they argue are not sufficient to demonstrate change in the language. Those features that are not grayed out "exhibit more potential for statistically significant diachronic variation (265). The third appendix includes a very helpful glossary of linguistic terms.

Holmstedt's and Screnock's commentary is well-structured. Their division of Esther into parts and episodes keeps the flow of the narrative in the forefront of the reader's mind as the reader is immersed in Hebrew grammar. The authors' translation of the text is a welcomed feature of the commentary, giving the reader another avenue—in addition to the grammatical analysis—to see how Holmstedt and Screnock understand the Hebrew text. Furthermore, having each verse printed as it is found in the Masoretic Text allows the reader to reference each verse with greater ease.

The potential benefit of Holmstedt's and Screnock's commentary is greatly limited because it requires the reader to be familiar with the authors' particular linguistic framework (1). While the authors do introduce their linguistic framework in the first chapter, the introduction is brief, necessitating further study by the reader (2, 5, 13). Their analysis is full of terms that may be unfamiliar to readers not trained in linguistics: 'valency,' 'proclitic left edge phrase marker,' 'scalar adverb,' 'stacked appositives,' etc. While the glossary is a helpful tool, the need to constantly refer to it can be discouraging for the reader.

Holmstedt's and Screnock's analysis can result in sentences that are difficult to wade through. For example, the authors write, "Hiphil עבר ('to remove, take away') is also trivalent, with a null subject (contextually clear as המלך) a null pronominal complement, which is the null resumption for the relative head טבעתו, and PP complement, מהמן, including the locative source" (210). Elsewhere they write, "Whereas the ו between the fronted constituents and the main clause in 2:8 is necessitated by the *wayyiqtol* form, here the ו serves the simple processing function, to demarcate the front edge of the clause and so make the adjunct fronting clear" (103). While the authors' statements just quoted may be clear to readers familiar with Holmstedt's and Screnock's linguistic framework, the uninitiated reader may have need to take time to process statements such as these. Other instances in which the authors' wording is difficult to sort out is due to their use of abbreviations, such as: NP (noun phrase); VP (verb phrase); AdvP (adverbial phrase). The use of such abbreviations certainly help to cut down on the word count, and saves space on the page; however, the abbreviations certainly contribute to a slower reading pace.

Furthermore, some aspects of Holmstedt's and Screnock's linguistic framework are not convincing. For example, they contend that a particle pointed like the definite article on a participle may function as a relative marker (43, 187). In their analysis of הַבִּירָה בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַנִּמְצָאִים לְכָל־הָעָם ("for all the people who were found in Susa, the citadel") in Esther 1:5, the authors contend that the particle ה on the Niphal participle הַנִּמְצָאִים ("who were found")—traditionally understood as an attributive participle—marks an "ה relative clause" modifying הָעָם (the people) (34, 43; authors' translation). However, while biblical Hebrew has examples of a relative particle הַ, it is almost exclusively found on the perfect verb form. The participle in Esther 1:5 is best understood as an attributive participle.

In addition, Holmstedt's and Screnock's contention that the basic word order for Hebrew is Subject-Verb is unsatisfactory (7-10). The authors contend that any change in word order—for example, Verb-Subject—is due to a 'trigger' (see above). However, they maintain that some clauses exhibiting a Subject-Verb word order may itself *not* exhibit the basic word order; rather, it may exhibit the fronting of a Subject for Topic or Focus information (78). Holmstedt's and Screnock's analysis of word order unnecessarily complicates the distinction between verbal and nominal clauses in biblical Hebrew. Lastly,

there are a few issues with the Hebrew font (7, 47, 138, 185, 216) and English wording (54, 125, 143, 156, 164) that the reader should be made aware.

In conclusion, Holmstedt's and Screnock's *Esther* is hindered by the authors' linguistic framework. Aspects of their framework are not convincing and do not necessitate a change from conventional analysis. Readers not familiar with the authors' framework may have a difficult time with this commentary.

Richard McDonald
Adjunct Professor of OT
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Perspectives on Israel and the Church: 4 Views*. Edited by Chad O. Brand. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015, vii + 317 pp., $29.99 paper.**

The topic of the relationship between Israel and the church is not just important for ecclesiology and eschatology. Resolving this question requires an exercise in biblical theology leading to systematic formulation and reveals how one understands the biblical storyline and the covenants. Chad Brand, former professor of theology and current pastor, put together a team of contributors to capture the spectrum of opinion on this crucial debate. The late Robert Reymond presented the traditional covenantal view or Reformed perspective which emerged from Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and many others. Advocating a traditional or sometimes called "revised" dispensational position is Robert Thomas, New Testament emeritus professor of Master's Seminary. The progressive dispensational position, which views the church as participating in the promises and covenants to Israel but not fulfilling the same in place of ethnic Israel, was articulated by the late Robert Saucy. Rounding out the views is the progressive covenantalism position argued by Chad Brand and Tom Pratt Jr. This last view shares aspects of the covenant and dispensational approaches with emphasis on Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament (OT) expectations. For the purposes of this review, I will seek to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective.

Reymond presents the relationship between Israel and the church as being one of essential unity: "the church of Jesus Christ ... *not* ethnic Israel, is the present-day expression of the one people of God whose roots go back to

Abraham" (40). In presenting his perspective, Reymond provides a helpful overview of the Westminster Confession of Faith, particularly in describing the covenant of grace and the unity of the God's elect people through all ages (21-22). Perhaps Reymond is at his best when he demonstrates that the promised land is a typological pattern of the new heavens and earth (41-49, 60). Although using unfortunate terminology of the promise being "spiritualized" (44), Reymond rightly connects the promised land back to the garden of Eden and traverses important New Testament (NT) texts which confirm the antitypical fulfillment of the land.

On the other hand, Reymond's essay is hampered by some glaring weaknesses. He spends an inordinate and unnecessary amount of ink on the question of the salvation of OT saints in dispensationalism (23-33). While two ways of salvation may be more evident in classical dispensationalism, it would have been more profitable if Reymond would have engaged the modern mainstream evangelical dispensational views. Secondly, Brand and Pratt (83-84) rightly respond to Reymond's assertions regarding the connection between circumcision and baptism (27-28). Reymond presents the land promise as typological in the Abrahamic covenant, but he misses the typological aspect of circumcision and how the new covenant anticipates a faithful and regenerate Abrahamic offspring.

The next position presented in the book is the traditional dispensational approach offered by Robert Thomas. For Thomas, the NT does not cancel the promises to Israel and as such, they await fulfillment to ethnic, national Israel during the millennial period and even into the eternal state (135). Also, key aspects of the Abrahamic, Davidic, and new covenant still await fulfillment for national Israel in the future. Thomas' essay is by far the weakest viewpoint of the book. Probably the most glaring problem is that Thomas does not have an inaugurated eschatology (e.g., 99), that is, Thomas misses how the kingdom is already present and has broken into this present evil age even as the consummation of the kingdom is not yet. Although popularized by George Eldon Ladd, inaugurated eschatology is presented throughout the gospels and the epistles. Both Reymond and Saucy highlight this problem in Thomas' kingdom theology (140-42, 144-46, 149).

Secondly, Thomas' heremeneutic is problematic. Although a traditional grammatical-historical hermeneutic is helpful as all interpreters should read the text literally, there is also the canonical horizon that reminds us

of progressive revelation as later OT texts build upon earlier texts, and the NT authors further develop in light of the revelation of Jesus Christ. For Thomas, historical-grammatical principles must be follwed even though the NT writers did not always follow these principles (219). But as readers of the Scripture, should we not follow the NT writers' hermeneutic? Thomas' understanding of this issue breeds not a little of do as I say (we must follow the NT writer's authoritative writings), but not as I do (the apostles can go beyond a grammatical-historical interpretation of the OT only because they have such authority). Lastly, the research during the past few decades that has been poured into the topic of the NT use and of the OT with respect to citations, allusions, and echoes strongly suggest that Thomas' claim that the Abrahamic, Davidic, and new covenant await future fulfillment to be incorrect. The Abrahamic promises come to fruition through the "true seed," Jesus (Gal 3:16), and Jesus is currently reigning as the Davidic king (e.g. Matt 1:1; Acts 13:22-23) as he has fully established the new covenant in his blood (Luke 22:20; Heb 8-10).

The third perspective, written by Robert Saucy, is a progressive dispensational view. Saucy is to be commended for incorporating inaugurated eschatology and for recognizing the fuller meaning of earlier texts in consideration of the whole canon. Further, it was beneficial to observe how Saucy related his view to other areas of systematic theology such as politics and church practice (202-208). Saucy argues that the church is the new eschatological humanity that comprises of Jews and Gentiles as the prophesied messanic salvation is now being initially fulfilled (156, 181-88). Nevertheless, since partial fulfillment does not negate the original promises, and with the church never equated with Israel, the nation of Israel awaits the return of Christ when full restoration will occur with Israel in the promised land resulting in the "salvation of Israel bringing even greater blessing to the world than that occurring presently through the church's evangelization" (201).

Saucy covers a significant amount of Scripture and argues his position well, but his view is unconvincing. Saucy redefines typology to that of mere analogy in considering Israel as a type (161). But if the traditional understanding of typology is accepted such that a type is divinely designed to prefigure a future antitype, then Israel is not a type because Scripture does not explicitly identify Israel as such. But Scripture does identify Israel as a type in the traditional sense through the "sonship" and "seed" themes whereby Jesus

fulfills Israel's identity and role in ushering in the prophesied new exodus and the Abrahamic promises (Matthew 2-4; Gal 3:16). Another dilemma is Saucy's argument that the church is not depicted as the eschatological Israel. Even if Saucy is correct that the church is never called "Israel" (193-97), there are a host of images and descriptions of OT Israel that are applied to the church. More importantly, however, why would the NT authors equate the church – those with faith in union with Jesus Christ, those who share in the faith of Abraham, possessing the Holy Spirit–with OT Israel, a nationalistic entity that throughout history is marked by disobedience and rebellion? The church is the renewed, eschatological Israel, for the church is comprised of those who are spiritually reborn in Christ. As the new covenant people of God, these are the ones who inherit the promises since their covenant head, Christ, is the true Israel and faithful Son. In this sense, the NT authors can easily apply descriptions, labels, and titles of Israel to the church, but in a heightened and spiritual sense.

The final view is the progressive covenantal view defended by Chad Brand and Tom Pratt Jr. A thorough description of what they mean by "progressive covenantal" is not provided, though in the introduction they associate their position with Ladd, new covenant theology, and with Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum's *Kingdom through Covenant*, published in 2012. They do present their view as sharing some aspects of dispensationalism and covenant theology (15). Nevertheless, their position is amorphous and the appeal to Ladd is diminished by the fact that covenantalists and dispensationalists also incorporate inaugurated eschatology, Ladd's key insight. Strangely, with this book being published in 2015, Brand and Pratt's chapter did not interact with *Kingdom through Covenant* (see 12 n. 54) and so their view is developed independently of Gentry and Wellum's definitive work. Two significant differences from the progressive covenantalism perspective offered by Gentry and Wellum include the lack of focused attention to the outworking of and relationships between the covenants and second, the role and importance of typology is completely absent.

Brand and Pratt's view is the one this reviewer finds the most convincing. Nevertheless, there were several problems which indicate that this is not the best presentation of progressive covenantalism. First, without sustained treatment of the covenants (particularly the Abrahamic covenant) and their relationship to Christ and the church, the covenant and dispensational

paradigms were largely left unchallenged. Second, while the relationship between Israel and Jesus is present (vine imagery, 242), much more discussion of how Jesus fulfills Israel's identity and role would have helped establish Jesus as the "true Israel" with the church as the eschatological Israel through faith union in Israel's messiah. More emphasis on the theme of sonship/seed (which was briefly mentioned, 238) and how Jesus fulfills restoration prophecies made to Israel needed to be developed especially given the importance of such OT prophecies for dispensationalists. Third, the last section which merely surveys the rapture and offers some rationale for a historic premillennial view (268-79) offered very little to the discussion overall. The truth is that one can be in the progressive covenantalism camp and comfortably be historic premillennial or amillennial.

Perspectives on Israel and the Church offers much for students of the Bible to think through. The doing of biblical theology leading to proper systematic formulations is no easy task. While this multi-view work presents helpful interaction on the relationship between Israel and the church, more studies are required to address this important area of ecclesiology and eschatology.

Brent E. Parker
Assistant Editor, *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*
Ph.D. Candidate in Systematic Theology
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Baptism and Cognition in Romans 6–8: Paul's Ethic beyond 'Indicative' and 'Imperative'*. By Samuli Siikavirta. WUNT 2.407. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015. 214 pp., $78.95 Paperback.**

For over a century, the study of Pauline ethics has stayed on the international scholarly agenda, with many of today's foremost biblical scholars showcasing some of their best and most heated dialogues concerning it. Within these discussions, scholars have focused on the interaction between what Paul commands in one verse (often termed the "imperative") and what he speaks of as an already existing state of reality (often termed the "indicative") in another. Take Gal. 3:27 and Rom. 13:14.

Now comes Samuli Siikavirta. He argues in this slender volume, a slightly revised version of his PhD dissertation, that the popular terminology used to

conceptualize the relationship between Pauline theology and ethics (i.e., the indicative-imperative schema) is misleading, inadequate, and inappropriate.

How did this problematic description, as the author calls it, get started? Blame Paul Wernle. In 1897, Wernle used the terms "indicative" and "imperative" to describe the two modes of Pauline language, which threw out the Lutheran idea of being simultaneously a sinner and righteous.

The chief question for Siikavirta is: can the core relationship between Paul's theology and ethics be most clearly reached in Rom 6–8 by analyzing the substance of Paul's theological-ethical argument about the relationship between Paul's baptismal teaching and his cognitive reminders arising from it. He writes that, "[F]ocusing on Paul's teaching about being in Christ through baptism and his emphatically cognitive instruction 'in the elements of Christian living that follow from baptism' gives us a clearer and more text-based picture of the relationship than what is attainable through the vague and potentially misleading indicative-imperative terminology" (3). Siikavirta immediately acknowledges that his proposal does not mean that Paul teaches freedom from moral obligation. He simply declares that such cognitive renewal of such a concrete and identity-defining event should also lead believers to the correct use of the body.

Siikavirta spends an early chapter of the book surveying the solutions that have been offered thus far by other scholars, such as Bultmann, Schnackenburg, Barclay, and Schnelle. The author does not find their solutions ultimately satisfying, even though he identifies some positive aspects that can be gleaned from most of them. Instead, the author contends that there is ample warrant for abandoning the old terminology and focusing on the content and substance of Rom 6–8, where, according to Siikavirta, Paul's theological and moral teaching interacts most clearly. This important nuance, he says, can help us understand Paul's complex and concrete language better than the other proposals. "In doing so," he writes, "the divide that has often been forced between Paul's theology and ethics disappears" (177).

The primary issue, then, is not the descriptors themselves but the fact that we are left with the impression that the strengthening of the Christian identity by way of reminder regarding God's salvific act in Christ through baptism is of secondary importance. Adding to the problem, or at least the potential confusion, is that nowadays grammatical debates about verbal aspect abound. Yet the author only spends about three pages discussing it,

and never incorporates some of the leading voices in the discussion. There is, alas, no dialogue with (or even mention of) Buist Fanning, Constantine Campbell, Rodney Decker, or Francis Pang. The study would have benefited from their voices too.

In any case, examples of Paul's cognitive vocabulary abound in Siikavirta's analysis. To cite a few: γινώσκω, οἶδα, συνίημι, φρόνημα, νοῦς, and λογίζομαι. Such examples are even more obvious once they are explained (which the author does well), but it is also at this point that intuitions often lead us to overemphasize design, direction, and trajectory. Nevertheless, Siikavirta argues that the baptismal state in Christ and its behavior-shaping cognition in Rom 6–8 is the most central theme in the most central text for the topic of Paul's theological teaching and his ethical instruction. "This represents my distinctive," he states, "and (as I would hope) more nuanced approach in this study" (173).

My minor quibbles should not deter readers from this volume. My advice would be to read it. Siikavirta is a lucid writer and indeed, when talking about baptism and cognition, a rather eloquent one. In fact, I will let him have the last word by quoting a portion of his final paragraph: "Overall, then, it needs to be seen that the relationship between Paul's theology and ethics goes well beyond the relatively recent and question-begging terminology of 'indicative' and 'imperative' . . . [Rather, we must] focus on baptism, and the understanding of baptism, in as concrete a way as Paul himself does" (178).

Brian J. Wright
Ph.D. Candidate in NT and Christian Origins (ABD)
Ridley College, Melbourne, Australia

***The God of This Age: Satan in the Churches and Letters of the Apostle Paul*. By Derek R. Brown. WUNT 2.409. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015. 243 pp., $105.00 Paperback.**

It might be reasonable to assume, while reading about evil powers and figures in the Pauline letters, that Paul does not have a particular understanding of Satan. The references are all too few, and Paul does not offer a theological explanation when referring to Satan; suggesting that Satan is not important for Pauline theology. But the author of this volume proposes a different

conclusion. He cogently argues that "Paul fundamentally characterizes Satan in his letters as the apocalyptic adversary who opposes his apostolic labor" (198).

I confess that until reading this work, I had not fully considered the possibility that, in contrast to when Paul mentions evil powers and figures generically and without concrete referents, whenever Paul mentions Satan he does so with respect to Satan's specific actions against either himself or his churches. Take 2 Corinthians 4, where Satan appears as an adversary of Paul and his apostolic ministry, not just as a generic opponent of all God's people. The intriguing question that forms the main thesis of this study—how and why does the Apostle Paul refer to the figure of Satan in his letters—addresses this very notion.

In order to answer this question, the author makes clear that he is only examining ten verses (i.e., Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 4:4; 6:15; 11:14; 12:7; 1 Thess 2:18; 3:5) from the so-called "undisputed" Pauline letters (i.e., Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon). Consequently, he is not attempting to present a Pauline theology of Satan. Of the 10 passages in these letters, the author tells us that all but three explicitly use the Greek term σατανᾶς to refer to Satan. Of the rest, Satan is called "Beliar," "the god of this age," and "the tempter."

With the scope of study in mind (Chapter 1), the author spends the next three chapters surveying what he considers to be the most relevant background information for understanding Paul's references to Satan, such as the literary descriptions of Satan in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Jewish writings. The author makes the case, among other things, that Satan had become a prominent figure within Jewish writings and theology coterminous with Paul's religious milieu, and that Satan almost always functions as an opponent of God's chosen people (not an enemy of all humanity). He highlights the fact that Satan is depicted as an active opponent, who plotted against key Jewish figures, like Moses, Job, and David, at crucial points within Israel's history, such as the exodus. The author further explains Satan's role within Paul's theology by providing a detailed review of Paul's apocalyptic thought. He maintains, "Paul, according to his apocalyptic theology, perceives his apostolic labor as having apocalyptic significance since it is opposed by the great apocalyptic adversary Satan *and* because the gospel which he announced was, at its core, a proclamation of the defeat of all apocalyptic powers" (71).

Before concluding (Chapter 7), the author spends two chapters utilizing his findings from Chapters 2-4 to better evaluate Paul's references to Satan in the verses mentioned above. The author's points about Paul's depiction of Satan's responsibility for thwarting some of Paul's efforts, like returning to his church in Thessalonica (1 Thess 2:18), Satan's ultimate eschatological defeat (Rom 16:20), and Satan's schemes against Paul's apostolic labor and the Corinthian congregation as a whole, are all true and important. Moreover, the author does a good job suggesting a few rhetorical reasons why Paul references Satan in his letters: to name Satan's activity where it had gone undetected, to inform his readers of Satan's past opposition to his ministry, and to warn his churches of Satan's constant schemes to take advantage of them for his own evil purposes. Taken together, the author explains, "Paul's depiction of Satan is far more subtle and deeply rooted in his apostleship than NT scholarship typically suggests" (197).

Overall, this well-researched study—which includes an excellent orientation to the topic—provides more than just a helpful corrective to the common perception that Paul speaks of Satan only in a generic sense, without concrete referents. It is also a timely reminder of the Apostle Paul's pivotal role in spreading the gospel at a crucial point in salvation history and his call to establish and nurture communities of faith based on the gospel. As the author concludes, "[A]lthough Paul's notion of Satan is derived from his christologically-modified apocalyptic theology, his portrayal of Satan in his letters to his churches is thoroughly contingent upon his self-understanding as an apostle and church-planter as well as his actual experiences of Satan's opposition to his ministry. This may help account for why Paul mentions Satan within the combative Corinthian correspondence with relative frequency but rarely does so in a more cordial letter such as Philippians. In other words, Paul apparently speaks or warns of Satan's activity in his letters when he has already discerned Satan's work among his respective churches" (200).

"The God of this Age" is a grand addition to New Testament studies. Every theological library should own a copy.

Brian J. Wright
Ph.D. Candidate in NT and Christian Origins (ABD)
Ridley College, Melbourne, Australia

***Composite Citations in Antiquity: Jewish, Graeco-Roman, and Early Christian Uses*. Edited by Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn. LNTS 525. New York: T&T Clark, 2016. 242 pp., $120.00 Hardback.**

Citation techniques existed in antiquity. This fact is confirmed by Jewish, Christian, and Greco-Roman sources. Just a sampling of such evidence makes clear that there was a broad spectrum of citation practices. Over the years "ancient citation techniques" have been investigated and have stayed on the international scholarly agenda.

"Composite Citations in Antiquity" has not had quite the same ring or academic attention. Only a few short studies have explored them in any detail. It is, nevertheless, the title of this new volume, which specifically examines composite citations (i.e., two or more passages from the same or different authors fused together and conveyed as though they are only one) from nearly a dozen ancient authors writing roughly between 350 BCE to 150 CE, such as Plato, Plutarch, Philo, Pliny, and Justin Martyr.

The subject is certainly worthwhile. Composite citations, as one of the authors in this offering argues early on, were probably a broadly accepted literary practice, even taught in schools. "From the discussion of school texts and scholia," he concludes, "we can see that there was a sustained tradition of intricate reading practices that form associations among passages of Homer" (34).

Much of the book is taken up with rich and thoughtful analysis of composite citations. Many conclusions are common sense: "We thus see that the correct understanding of Philo's citations requires an appreciation of the distinction between the presentation of a modern text (with such devices as quotation marks and ellipsis points, as well as of course accents, breathings, punctuation, and word division) and the form of Philo's original writings" (91). As obvious as such summary statements may seem, though, they bear repeating because they are so routinely ignored.

Among the more surprising conclusions, Martin Albl's study on the so-called *testimonia* hypothesis and composite citations demonstrates that there is a close connection between the *testimonia* genre and the literary technique of composite quotations. A broader implication is also discernable. Even if the common assumption is correct that orality dominated the earliest proclamation, that does not mean it was always the case. The use of notes,

excerpts, compilations, and incipient testimonia were already happening in early Christian communities, with some use of rolls of the Jewish Scriptures and written gospels likely as well.

This volume ends with a chapter—Composite Citations: Retrospect and Prospect—written by Christopher Stanley, who published a well-known monograph almost 25 years ago on the apostle Paul's use of explicit quotations from the Jewish Scriptures in relation to the mechanics of the citation process. He highlights eight important implications from this study, such as the fact that composite citations were an established literary technique in antiquity, and offers eight categories of questions that the forthcoming, second volume ought to address, like sources, purposes, and audiences.

The authors of this volume accomplish at least two rare feats: they opened up new areas of inquiry on a neglected topic, and they have made them academically rigorous. Moreover, even though the authors do not directly attempt to address any NT examples of composite citations, as they clearly state upfront, they do anticipate this volume serving as a type of methodological base for future studies on composite citations within the NT. I can already confirm that their forward looking expectation is being met in at least one study: Brent Belford's forthcoming PhD dissertation, "Paul as Theologian, Exegete, and Writer: What Paul's Use of Composite Citations Reveals about His Jewish, Christian, and Greek Perspectives."

Anyone planning to enter the fray on ancient citation practices would be advised to keep this book handy. Other readers will come away from this volume persuaded that there is significant value in studying the literary practices of ancient Greek, Jewish, and Roman authors. But the harder questions of how composite citations are deployed in the NT remain.

Brian J. Wright
Ph.D. Candidate in NT and Christian Origins (ABD)
Ridley College, Melbourne, Australia