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Ministering in the Tabernacle: Spatiality and the Christology of Hebrews[1]

by

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Abstract

Two of the perplexing features of Hebrews, its Christological comparisons and the spatial emphases are intertwined. Application of appropriate sociological and literary theories in Spatiality to examine the expositions in the epistle will demonstrate that the author used the spaces of the Pentateuchal wilderness camp and tabernacle as his heuristic and typological tool for the Christological expositions. This served as the primary vehicle for channelling his pastoral teaching aimed at addressing the problems of social liminality and spiritual malaise of the congregation. The author's approach should serve as template for our understanding and applications of the theology of the tabernacle.

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[1] This article emanates from a Dr Asumang's MTh Thesis completed through the South African Theological Seminary under the supervision of Dr Domeris. The title was *The Tabernacle as a Heuristic Device in the Interpretation of the Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*.

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1. Introduction

Two of the dominant phenomena in the epistle to the Hebrews whose authorial purposes have eluded scholars are the Christological comparisons and the spatial emphases of the expositions. Scholars agree that the expositions focus on the superiority of Jesus the Son of God and our Eternal High Priest by employing an elaborate comparison and contrast of Jesus with the Angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron and the Levitical priests. What remain disputed however are the author's reasons for the comparisons, his criteria for choosing these persons and how the contrasts fit with the exhortations and harsh warnings in the other parts of the epistle. The commonest and oldest assumption that the comparisons constituted an anti-Judaist polemic now appears flawed (Williamson 2003:266 & Isaacs 1996:145). Recent advances in the application of Rhetorical Criticism to Hebrews have brought helpful insights to understanding the rhetorical nature of the comparisons, but have not adequately explained the authorial purpose(s). DeSilva's (2000) application of ancient social anthropological insights such as honour and shame and patron-client paradigm to the epistle, though offers an interesting explanation, has been rightly criticized for being "strained" (Nongbri 2003:269). C Koester's (2002:103-123) suggestion that the comparisons are part of a rhetorical device to encourage perseverance in suffering, though useful, does not completely address all the issues at stake.

Similarly, the spatial pre-occupations of the author have attracted various explanations, from Spicq's (1977) Mid-Platonic dualistic cosmology, Isaacs' "vehicle of eschatology" (2002:12) to MacRae's suggestion that the spatial ideas are a mixture of "Alexandrian imagery with their [the community's Jewish] apocalyptic presuppositions" (1978:179). In addition, spatial imageries dominate the metaphors employed by the author throughout this epistle. Yet there is lack of consensus regarding their relevance and whether the author's thoughts are primarily along spatial or temporal categories (Koester 2001:97). The paradoxical movement of the theological argument into the inner sanctum of the tabernacle (Heb 8-10) against an opposite movement in the exhortations of Heb 13, "Outside of the Camp," has been noted (Koester 2001:576, Isaacs 2002:159), but its relationship with the rest of the epistle has not been sufficiently clarified. The author's emphatic summary

in Heb 8:1-2 has equally baffled interpreters, since the tabernacle is only explicitly mentioned for the first time as part of the summary of what he has already said. Commentators have therefore tended to limit the meaning of κεφάλαιον (sum) in Heb 8:1-2 (Ellingworth 1993:400, Koester 2001:375).

These two phenomena, the spatial emphases and the Christological comparisons, are closely intertwined in the epistle and should not be extricated from each other. In Heb 1, Jesus the Son is compared with the angels in heaven. In Heb 2, He is compared with the Angels, in relation to humankind and the devil, in what the author calls, οἰκουμένην, "the inhabited world." In Hebrews 3-4 the comparison with Moses is framed in the spatial context of the "house of God." The comparisons and contrasts with the Aaronic High Priesthood in Hebrews 5-7 are framed in the spatial setting of the Holy of holies. Remaining in the Holy of Holies, the author in Heb 8-10, examines the various Day of Atonement rituals associated with this space and compares them with the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, before proceeding to make his practical applications in Hebrews 11-13. Clearly, the author conducts the Christological comparisons based on an *a priori* spatial framework and this spatiality preconditions and constrains his choices. An examination of these two phenomena in the epistle through the lens of appropriate spatial theories may therefore yield some helpful answers.

Immanuel Kant (1929), described space as an *a priori* concept, or subtext that allows us to structure, systematize and understand our experiences. In Toulmin's words, space is the "intellectual scaffolding" (1990:116-117) on which societies frame their understanding of the world. Perhaps this is what is happening in the epistle's spatiality. Ideological arguments and narratives are sometimes structured according to spatiality[4] and that in these spaces; human relations are represented as hierarchical and are infused with elements of power and territoriality. As Harvey posits, "Places are constructed and experienced as material ecological artefacts and intricate networks of social relations. They are the focus of the imaginary, of beliefs, longings, and desire…" (1996:316). Hebrews, we recommend, is an illustration of the truism

[4] The Garden of Eden narratives in Gen 2-3 (Levenson 1985) and Luke-Acts (Filson 1970) are two well-known examples of spatially framed narratives.

in this statement and Spatiality is therefore particular suited as an investigative tool for the epistle.

In what follows, we will demonstrate that appropriate spatial theories adequately explain the spatiality and Christological comparisons in the epistle to the Hebrews. We will show that the author conceptually begun with an *a priori* spatial typology of the tabernacle and wilderness camp as depicted in the Book of Numbers and that this constrains his choices and theological interpretations. He interprets these in the light of the death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation of Jesus and uses the lessons to apply to the pastoral situation of his congregation. The comparisons of Jesus with the angels, Moses and Aaron, we postulate, are a reflection of the contested nature of spaces.

2. Spatiality and Biblical Studies

A "space" may be defined as an aspect of reality which incorporates ideas of distances, directions, time and orientation and which is intimately affected by and reflected in human perceptions and conceptions of it, and their relationship with each other. When space is discussed in terms of human interaction with parts of it, it is called "place," which when referenced in relation to other places is termed "location." Spatiality is the paradigmatic framework that studies the conditions, perceptions, conceptions and practices of persons and their social life in relation to their spaces.

The inter-disciplinary paradigm of spatiality has of late seen a renewed interest across the academic disciplines. It is now recognised that the various spatial theories reflect a predictable pattern of human-place relations that may be employed as heuristic tool for study. Until recently, the commonest spatial theory that was employed in Religious and Biblical Studies was Eliade's (1959) categorization of spaces as being either Profane or Sacred, characterized by the heirophany, the *axis mundi* and the chaos-cosmos dichotomy. Isaacs (1992) applied this theory to Hebrews and suggested that the author's theology of pilgrimage to heaven was designed to help the congregation to refocus their *axis mundi* from the recently destroyed Jerusalem temple to the indestructible heavenly tabernacle. The anachronisms

in Eliade's theory and its strict binarism have however limited its usefulness (Smith 1987). Other theories and models have demonstrated that human conceptions of space are derived from its basic social utility as "home" (Johnson and others 2000) and these have been fruitfully applied in Biblical Studies (Matthews 2003, Balch 2004). Three important theories in Spatiality[5] will find valuable application as investigative tools in Hebrews, those of Michel Foucault, Robert Sack and Yuri Lotman's concept of Spatial Forms.

2.1. Spatiality in Michel Foucault

It was Foucault who astutely observed the change in modernity's obsession with temporality to a new sense of awareness in spatiality. "The nineteenth century found its essential mythological resources in the second principle of thermodynamics. The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space… Our epoch is one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites" (1986:22). Thus Foucault proposed that spatiality essentially involves studying the interactions and relations between persons and objects in a space. This concept is not new but coincides with some of the earliest Greek and Ancient Near Eastern philosophical ideas about space, from Anaximander to Zeno, Aristotle etc. (Casey 1997 & Hugget 1999). Pointing out the inadequacies in the binaric categorization of spaces, and the fact that they have dialectical relationships with each other, Foucault (1986b) classified spaces into three types: (i) Real Places, which he qualified as "simultaneously represented, contested and inverted" (1986b:24), (ii) Utopias and (iii) Heterotopias, which he defined as "counter sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopias in which the real sites, all the real sites can be found within the culture…" (1986b:24). He proposed the concept of the "hybridization" of spaces, where, for example, the person standing before a mirror acquires a

[5] There is the question of how methodologically correct it is to apply twenty first century sociological and post-modern theories to a first century ancient Mediterranean situation The view however that spatiality in the post-modern era mimics more the spatiality of the Biblical times than those of the modern period is perhaps one major support for the application of spatial theories to the Biblical data (Flanagan 1999). Sociological exegesis will always have its reductionistic faults but as Domeris (1991:225) and Cook & Simkins (1999) have shown, its comparativist epistemology actually enhances its utility in Biblical Studies.

hybrid spatial image made up of him/herself standing in a real place and a virtual, utopian image on the other side of the mirror.

Foucault regarded space as "fundamental in any exercise of power" (Rainbow 1984:252) and in his major work, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), he suggested that spatial positioning and arrangement leads to empowerment of certain individuals and groups to the disadvantage of others. Foucault's understanding of power is an area of dispute among sociologists but generally, his characterization of power as an aggressive and coercive relational dynamic in his earliest works gave way to a more positive and less belligerent sociological view of power as the dynamics of influence between persons (Janicaud 1992, Strenski 1998). It is this later understanding of power as inter-human influence that is particularly pertinent to Hebrews. The power, which operates within spatial dimensions, according to Foucault, is embedded in a hierarchical system, which involves proximity, distance, inclusion and exclusion and is often expressed in terms of contests between the persons in the space. This contest may be overt or subliminal, expressed in behaviour, attitude, discourses and cultural codes and signals. In *Panopticon* (1979), for example, he observes that the convicts of a prison are arranged in a certain spatial relationship "to induce in the inmates a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (1979:201).

Foucault also links the power relations in spaces to knowledge by coining the hybrid word, "power-knowledge." By knowledge, Foucault refers to the knowledge of the techniques of transforming people's behaviour, the effects of ideological information, which works through people in a place to influence their behaviour. The author of Hebrews would disagree with Foucault and define "knowledge" as "Revelation Knowledge," that is, the revelation that God has given or spoken through the prophets, in the Scriptures, through the Holy Spirit, and "in these last days … by His Son" (Heb 1:1). It is this view of knowledge that informs our approach to the epistle.

2.2. Territoriality in Robert Sack

Sack (1986:19) defines territoriality as "the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area …." This involves a system of social classification and ordering, with the use of cultural rules, boundary setting and social organization (See Neyrey 2002, 2003 for some applications). Sack's model has three foci: firstly, the way space is classified has territorial undertones. Binary classifications such as private against public, mine against yours, sacred against profane, male against female are all systems that enable persons to claim control of the power dynamics in places. Secondly, the way these classifications are communicated, mostly by discourses, signals, symbolic gestures, and other such behaviour and attitude. These are, thirdly, meant to control access to the places and maintain the delimitation of the space as expression of the power and territorial claims of the persons.

2.3. Semiospheres in Yuri Lotman

Yuri Lotman's (1977) literary theory of Spatial Form Devices has helpful utility in the examination of the spatial phenomenon in Hebrews. These devices are spatial techniques used by an author to delay, suspend or even disrupt the chronological sequence of the narrative, in order to enable him/her develop the characters and spatial settings more fully. Lotman asserts that spatial forms have important semantic and semiotic significance; "these language of spatial relations (within narrative) turns out to be one of the basic means of comprehending reality…the structure of the space of a text becomes a model of the structure of the space of the universe of possible meanings of signs in the narrative*"* (1977:217-218). He called this semiotic spatial framework, Semiosphere and asserted that they provide a typology of the deeper message of the narrative. Dozeman has for example employed this concept to examine Exodus 19 and concluded that the spatial forms here direct the reader's attention to God's cosmic mountain. He described the effects of spatial forms as comparable to an orange; "like an orange, such a narrative is structured into individual pieces—similar segments of equal value—in which the movement is circular, focused on the single subject, the core" (1989:88).

The spatial analysis of a biblical text then, should initially foreground the spatiality of that text, and then apply a non-binaric structural analysis to examine the text's superficial and deeper semantic and semiological components, investigate the topographical aspects of the spaces, their boundaries and relatedness and the nature of the social relationships within the spaces. In addition, the impact of the text's spatiality on its theological argument should be assessed. We now proceed to apply these to the expositions of Hebrews.

3. The Spatiality of the Christology of Hebrews

The Christological arguments of Hebrews are concentrated in its expositions, which may be correctly isolated for spatial analysis (Levensohn 2001:184). The prologue (Heb 1:1-4) interweaves themes of high Christology, spatiality, temporality and territoriality in both the created order and the heavenly realm. Hebrews 1:1-2 is concerned with the relationship between revelation knowledge, time, spaces, prophetic discourse, hierarchy and creative power. Hebrews 1:3-4 introduces us to the comparison with angels, based on the Son's exalted and unique spatial relationship in the Godhead, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High." He has a more excellent name and an inheritance, denoting a hierarchical order and territorial claims in the heavenly realm. The step-by-step thematic expositions of Hebrews 1-7[6] act as spatial forms, linked together "like an orange … structured into individual pieces… focused on the single subject, the core" (Dozeman 1989:88). They are particularly amenable for examination using the lens of spatiality as we now demonstrate.

[6] Based on Guthrie's (1998) proposed structure of the epistle which combines the strengths of the linguistic, literary, thematic and rhetorical-critical methodology, the expositions of the epistle are found in: 1:1-4, 1:5-14, 2:5-18, 3:1-6, 4:14-16, 5:1-10, 7:1-10:18.

3.1. The Son is Greater than the Angels in Heaven (Heb 1:5-14)

There are several indications that the spatial focus of the author of Hebrews in the catena is heaven. Firstly, the heavenly realm is depicted as having territorial boundaries, since the Son's entrance into "the world" is marked by angelic worship (1:6).[7] This is one of the typical portrayals of the breech of the heavenly barrier in the Scriptures[8]. As Schmidt (1992) has shown, the penetration of the heavenly barrier was invariably associated with divine disclosure, often in the form of God's voice, and angelic worship. The catena also refers to another breech of the boundary of heaven, by the angels (Heb 1:14). Unlike that of the Son however, there is no razzmatazz accompanying the angelic breech. Secondly the prevalence of the kingship and royal themes and the use of some of the major royal Psalms (Psa 2, 45, and 110, and 2 Sam 7:14) depict heaven as an imperial palace.[9] In Hebrews 4:16, the author exhorts the audience to approach the "throne of grace" to "obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Thus the heavenly space is not an ordinary palace, but a form of imperial temple. The reference to "footstool" in Hebrews 1:13 is not just in the kingship motif but is also to serve as a hint about the author's semiological intentions (cf. Heb 10:12-13).

The relationships among the persons in this space are shown to be hierarchical and expressed in territorial terms. The heavenly space, like all spaces is contested, and God through the catena provides the reasons why the Son is better than the angels in this space. He is better because He is divine, everlasting king, (Heb 1:8) and creator of all things (Heb 1:10) whereas the angels are created servants (Heb 1:7). He is better because He is immutable, unchanging and unchangeable (Heb 1:11-12) whereas the angels are mutable.

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[7] There are differences of opinion on the interpretation of this verse, whether it refers to Jesus' ascension to the heavenly world or His incarnation (Ellingworth 1993:117, Koester 2001:192-193). For our purposes, it is the crossing of the boundary that is significant.

[8] Gen 5:24, 28:12, Ps 24:7-10, John 1:51, 3:13, 20:17, Eph 4:8, Rev 7:2

[9] A common biblical depiction e.g. Ex 17:16, 1 Kings 22:19, Job 26:9, Ps 9:4,7, 11:4, 47:8,103:19, Is 6:1, 66:1, Ezek 1:26, Dan 7:9 Mat 5:34, 19:28, 23:22, 25:31, Rev 1:4, 3:21, and 4

In declaring that Jesus is first-born (Heb 1:5), heir, king and creator of the universe, God, in Sack's definition of territoriality, "is delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area" (1986:19) and at the same time communicating, "the social ordering" in this space. The Angels are on the other hand depicted as "ministering spirits" (Heb 1:7, 14), servants and messengers who worship the Son (Heb 1:6) and are sent out from His presence (Heb 1:14). The heavenly space is thus depicted as a regal temple, with God and His Son Jesus as occupiers of the throne of grace and the angels as the senate or *familia* and royal servants of the throne[10]. The function of the catena in the epistle, it appears, was to provide a summary of the state of knowledge of the congregation and to intimate the author's intention to explore the cultic implications in what followed.

The nature of the discourse in the catena also portrays a relationship of power in the heavenly realm. The manner of the divine discourse has been described as a "colloquy…" in which "The seven quotations are presented as a succession of words spoken by God to the Son" (Lane1991:32). The Father does not speak to any angel in this catena, hence the author's two rhetorical questions in Hebrews 1:5, 14. When the Father speaks about the angels, it is as a command (Heb 1:6), a description of their nature (Heb 1:7) and functions (Heb 1:14). In other words, the angels are talked about but never spoken to. They are referred to with the third person pronoun, "they," and never with the Son's "my" and "you." This is one of the characteristic features of discourse portraying power relations in Greco-Roman society. As Seneca points out for example, slaves in this society and especially in public functions "were normally required to curb their tongue" (Seneca, *Epictetus* 47.3). This is in sharp contrast to the free citizen's fundamental freedom of speech "for which Greek had a special word, παρρησία" as Fitzgerald has observed (2000:75). The author's notable restraint in exegesis is another indication of his intention

[10] The depiction of a heavenly court with God and His angels occurs frequently in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New Testament, and is a common motif in the Jewish inter-testamental Literature. See Gen 1:26, 1 Kg 22:19-23, Ps 89:5-7, Ex 24:9-10, Is 6:1-8, Jer 23:18-22, Job 1:6-12, Ps 103:19-22, Job 15:8, Ezek 1, Zech 3:1-5, Ex 15:11, Deut 32:8, 33:2, Ps 29:1, Neh 9:6, Dan 7:9-14, Job 38:1-7 Jubilees 30:18, 1 Enoch 71, Ascension of Is 6-11, Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice.

of depicting the heavenly assembly and its power relations. As Zech 2:13 and Rev 8:1 among other passages show, and as Wick (1998) has noted, silence and often, restricted speech typify important occasions of a sometimes, "noisy" heaven.

The spatial representation of the supreme authority of Jesus, as He sits on the right hand of God on the throne is a powerful symbol of His divinity and power. Power is being expressed here in terms of proximity, distance and orientation. Thus whereas the Son is "brought" (Heb 1:6) into the world, the angels are on the other hand "sent" (Heb 1:14) from the presence of God. Jesus' exalted position should induce in the angels, in Foucault's words, "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (1979:201). The exposition moves on to the inhabited world in Heb 2.

3.2. The Son was made lower than the Angels in the World (Heb 2:5-18)

It is clear from Hebrews 2:5 that the author's attention in his argument shifts from the heavenly realm to the world. Unlike the heavenly realm in Hebrews 1, Hebrews 2:5-18 describes the territorial boundary of the world and its crossing in a different way. The author had already alluded to the Son crossing the boundary in the Hebrews 1:6a. The other boundary to the world is death, and the devil exploited the power inherent in the nature of this boundary to keep humanity in bondage to its fear. Gray (2003) has discussed the possible apologetic intentions of the author in highlighting the fear of death in Hebrews 2, but death in this passage should not be seen only as a way of dealing with superstitions. Being the ultimate nemesis of humanity and the boundary out of this world the devil finds the fear of death such a powerful tool of subjugation.

The depiction of Jesus in this passage goes through a number of stages. He is firstly made a little lower than the angels in camaraderie with humankind. His lowering was both in terms of the shortness of the time and His hierarchical position in relation to the angels. It enabled him to share in the total nature of humanity by partaking in their "flesh and blood" (Heb 2:14). It was also "for the suffering of death" (Heb 2:9). The sacrificial death of Christ is the most

significant event in this space and the author explored several dimensions of it. He noted for example, that Jesus' death was for his "perfection." The use of the word τελειῶσαι to describe the suffering of Christ has several semantic undertones ranging from telic to cultic relevance. Lindars has pointed out that the idea of perfection is more related to the completion of God's plan rather than ethical perfection (1991:44). Perfection means that Jesus' death makes Him completely suitable as the sacrifice for our sins. His death is, thirdly, described in ritual terms. By His death, Jesus sanctifies humanity and makes us one with Him. As noted by Nelson, "Hebrews reflects the complexity of Israelite sacrifice by describing the sacrificial act of Jesus as a ritual script that entailed three episodes: the death of the victim, passage by the priest into the realm of the holy, and the use of blood to effect purification and to create a covenantal relationship" (2003:252). The author thus discussed the significance of the death of Jesus in such a way that it conformed to the three episodes: His death as victim identifying with the sacrificer occurs in this space, His movement as High Priest into the Holy of Holies is noted in the transitional Hebrews 2:17-18, and Hebrews 4:14-16, and His presentation of His own blood to God as High Priest in the heavenly Holy of Holies in Hebrews 5-10.

A complex network of relationships is depicted by the author in the space of the inhabited world, characterized by the dynamics of power, hierarchy and contests. The relationship between the angels and humanity may be seen as comparable to the situation of temporary governors sent out to an unruly state to administer and take charge until order is restored. It is a relationship characterized by territoriality. Humankind has lost the territorial claim to be the persons "set over the works of your hands" (Heb 2:7). It is the angels who administer on God's behalf until the world, "which is to come." The relationship between humankind and God's creation was intended to be hierarchical but is rather disrupted and unfulfilled (Heb 2:6-8, cf. Ps 8:4-6). That between humanity and the devil is even worse, characterized by the worse coercive use of power. The devil is depicted in Hebrews 2:15 as "executioner in chief" (Bruce 1990:86, n. 80) and unredeemed humanity is like a slave bound to his/her master, gripped with the fear of the full effects of death. The relationship between Jesus and humanity is depicted as one of solidarity and camaraderie. He is their senior brother, ἀρχηγός, Captain, Path-

breaker or Pioneer of their salvation; He delivers (Heb 2:15), rescues (Heb 2:18), sanctifies (Heb 2:11) and leads them into glory (Heb 2:10). He is therefore their Kinsman-Redeemer (Lev 25). Thus the reason for Jesus' identification with humanity was to make him a suitable sacrifice, to "taste death for all" (Heb 2:9). The relationship between Jesus and the angels is depicted as an ironic contest with a hint of subversion to it. In taking on the nature of humankind, Jesus achieved for humanity, what the angels, though higher up in the hierarchical order, could not achieve i.e. humankind's redemption. The relationship between Jesus and the devil is depicted, as more than a contest, it is actually a combat. This portrayal of the relationship as a cosmic battle has connotations of the classic myth in Plutarch's *Theseus*, in which Pollux and Castor team up to invade Attica in order to rescue their sister Helen from Theseus; or that of Hercules in *Iliad* (Koester 2001:239).

There are several pointers in the deeper semantic and semiotic levels of the passage, which suggest that the author of Hebrews saw a typological correspondence between this space and the parts of the wilderness camp in which the sacrificial animal was ritually identified with the sacrificer and killed. This space extended from the camp itself to the worshippers' square in the eastern front gate of the tabernacle, near the altar for burnt offerings (Exod 27:13-16). The author's interpretation of the sacrificial death of Jesus into separate stages, or better put, spaces, so that its significance in the space of Hebrews 2:5-18 matched the first component in the three episodes of the sacrificial ritual is one reason for this conclusion. In this first episode, the animal victim must be identified with the one on whose behalf the sacrifice was being made. Likewise, Jesus' death in this space (i.e. in the inhabited world) is depicted as a means of identifying with humanity. The division of the significance of Jesus' death into spaces by Hebrews has perplexed some commentators. E F Scott has for example unfairly criticized the author for engaging "in pouring new wine into old bottles, which are burst under the strain" (1922:124). The author of Hebrews was however following a literary approach typical of spatial form devices, which allowed him to decouple "time" from "space," freeze "time" and focus on "space" as he discussed the atoning death of Jesus in typological terms. Commentators do not frequently appreciate this Bakhtinian phenomenon of the intermittent dissociation of

space from time in Hebrews but as Reed has demonstrated, the epistle at certain points assumes a "static view of time" (1993:161).[11]

Moreover, just as the animals for the Day of Atonement and the Red heifer rituals were sacrificed elsewhere outside the tabernacle enclosure, the author was to emphasize in Heb 13:12 that Jesus' death was "outside the gate." Thus the camp symbolized to the author the inhabited world where Jesus was killed. Furthermore, the fact that death is the boundary to this space is significant, since apart from the Levitical priests, no other member of the public was allowed to cross the boundary of this space into the holy realm. Any trespasser was to be put to death (Exod 19:20-24, 20:19-20, Num 3:38). From the inhabited world, the author moves the exposition into the "house" in Hebrews 3.

3.3. The Son is Greater than Moses in the House of God (Heb 3:1-6).

The contrast between Jesus and Moses in Hebrews 3:1-6 has been pivotal to the school of thought which interprets the theology of Hebrews as a polemic against Judaism, and yet when we closely examine the passage, we realize that the emphasis is on continuity of the people of God more than discontinuity. Both Moses and Jesus are members of the same household of God, together with the first hearers of this sermon. Jesus is the Son and heir, Moses is a servant in the house, and both are faithful to God. Thus a strong ecclesiological theme may be found here. The author's frequent use of the metaphors, "house" (six times) and "built" (three times) in a seemingly awkward fashion in this short passage is for an important semiotic figuration that contributes to the overall spatial picture of the epistle. Three different forms of the Greek word for "house" are used, each of which is repeated twice, οἴκῳ (Heb 3:2, 5), οἴκου (Heb 3:3, 6a) and οἰκός (Heb 3:4, 6b). Hebrews does not use the other two Greeks word for "house," namely, οἰκία

[11] As J Meier (1985:168-189) and D Via (1999:230) have shown in various ways, Hebrews handling of temporality is not straightforward. This in itself points to a spatial emphasis by the author that makes the epistle open to spatial analysis.

and οἰκεῖος (household). In addition, the formation of the house is described with the use of κατασευάζεται that has a transitional sense that the house is built and being prepared for use. Our author has played on words to keep all three senses of "house" together in this passage, that of a people (or nation) of God, a family of God and a cultic building. On several occasions in the homily for example (Heb 3:1-2, 6, 4:14, 10:21-23) he links the "house of God" with the High Priestly functions of Jesus. The strict distinction between house as a structure and house as a community is more of a modern pre-occupation of exegetes and not necessarily that of the author of Hebrews. In first century Mediterranean societies, communities were defined, more by the social network among the people than the structural spaces they occupied. This worked in both ways so that a group of people was equivalent to the space they occupied. As Malina puts it, in first century societies, "people moved through other people, not through space" (1993:370).

The concept of the people of God as a transitional house also gives it a flavour of intermediary security and protection since members of God's house have left the world behind them and "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb 6:18). It is therefore a secure holding house but not the final resting place, a notion that has strong echoes with the wilderness tabernacle. The hope that is ahead is "an anchor of the soul…which enters into that within the veil" (Heb 6:19). Thus the veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies marks out the "exit boundary" of the house. This boundary opens the way to the eventual goal, i.e. "the end" (Heb 3:6, 14). Entering this "end" is also described as entering into God's "rest" (Heb 3:18, 4:1), or "the heavens" (Heb 4:14), where "the throne of grace" (Heb 4:16) is. As MacRae observes, in the author's peculiar use of "hope" and "faith" in his pilgrimage interpretation of the tabernacle; "hope is the goal and faith is a means toward its full realization" (1978:192). The veil separates the two.

Hebrews calls the members of God's household, "holy brothers." They are holy because they have now been separated from the world and crossed the line into the purity zone. The house then takes on Foucault's characterization of a Heterotopia, an enacted utopia in real places. The members of the house, like Jesus (Heb 5:4, 10), Aaron (Heb 5:4) and Abraham (Heb 11:8), are called by God into His very presence. In a sense therefore, all the members of the household are called to be servants and priests of God.

Hebrews also explores God's evaluation of Moses within the confines of the tabernacle "as a servant" (Num 12:1-8). θεράπων in Num 12:7 and Hebrews 3 has connotations of a temple servant. Though Ellingworth has suggested that it was Moses' "prophetic rather than a cultic role" (1993:207) that is being referred to in Hebrews 3, the prophetic role is fused with priestly functions in Hebrews, as is seen for example in the dual titles of Jesus as Apostle and High Priest in this passage. Consequently, the cultic connotations of the description of Moses as a servant in the house should not be discounted. In Hebrews 9 the author equates the Mosaic Covenant to the Holy Place and describes the cultic functions of Moses that he performed in the priestly courtyard and the Holy Place with its vessels and furniture. He also notes the dominant role of Moses here in sprinkling the tabernacle and vessels with blood (Heb 9:21). He however does not describe any major functions performed by Moses in the Holy of Holies. Clearly, he took a serious view of the priestly functions and leadership of Moses and yet restricted those functions to the Holy Place and the priestly courtyard. The writer interpreted the symbolic representation(s) of the priestly courtyard and Holy Place as of temporary and transitional nature, as something that is about to change, disappear or be withdrawn (Heb 9:8-10, 26).

As Son over God's house, Jesus is the heir, and like His Father, is builder of all things (Heb 3:4, 6). Once again Christology is being expressed in terms of territoriality. The writer is unambiguous that in this space Jesus has absolute claim of ownership, for He is the Son, the heir; he built it; it is his own house. He is thus worthy of more glory than Moses. This house, like all other spaces is contested and the relationship between Jesus and Moses is hence presented as a contest. They were both appointed and sent by God. They were both faithful in the house. Jesus however "was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, because he who has built the house has more honour than the house." Jesus is greater than Moses because, He has territorial claim to God's house. The superiority of Jesus is also expressed in spatial terms, so that whereas Jesus is Son "over" God's house, Moses is servant "in" the house. Jesus' relationship with the members of the house is that of leadership, as Apostle and High Priest.

There are indications in the passage that the author of Hebrews saw a typological correspondence between the "house" and the parts of the

tabernacle that were accessible only to the Levitical priests; i.e. the priestly courtyard and the Holy Place (Exod 29:42-43, 30:6-8, Num 18:1-8, Heb 9:6). The priests entered this area daily for ritual washings, sacrifices, dedications and fellowship, in "accomplishing the service of God" (Heb 9:6). In this sphere, Moses exercised considerable authority and leadership as he established and consecrated Aaron and his sons for the ministry (Lev 8). The transitional or liminal nature of the "house" as a temporary secure holding "house," the characterizations of the members of the house as "holy brothers," the exit boundary as the veil, the tabernacle connotations of "faith" and "hope," Moses as a temple servant and the general cultic functions of Moses as restricted to this space all indicate the author's spatial interpretations here. Another indication may be found in Hebrews 13:9-14. The statement that believers "have an altar of which they have no right to eat, those who serve the tabernacle" (Heb 13:10) indicates that our author metaphorically represented the people of God as the priestly community occupying the priestly courtyard and Holy Place, ministering at its altar and eating from its sacrifices.

3.4. Jesus the High Priest Greater than Aaron in the Holy of Holies (Heb 5-7)

From Hebrews 4:14 onwards, we encounter the major thesis of the author that Jesus is our eternal high priest who ministers in the heavenly holy of holies in the very presence of God enthroned at His right hand of Majesty. Having gone through the other spaces, the author unveils to them what he had hinted regarding the cultic functions of Jesus in the heavenly space in the catena. By drawing Aaron into the discussion, he used the Holy of Holies as a metaphor for heaven. This heaven where Jesus, the "Forerunner has entered for us" (Heb 6:20), is "within the veil" (Heb 6:19). The veil hence constitutes the entry boundary of this space. It is not necessary to regard the veil solely as corresponding to the sky, since believers may, even now, draw near, approach and enter through the veil (Heb 10:19-22). What the author is referring to here is not so much the ascension of Jesus but rather the fact that Jesus' ministry as our High Priest is effectual because He, in cultic terms, has crossed the line into the very presence of God.

Aaron ministered in a different space from that which Jesus has entered; the two are however compared in the same hybrid spatiality. This hybrid space is also contested; Aaron's space was earthly, fleshy, temporary and clearly ineffectual. Jesus' space is utopian, heavenly, eternal, spiritual and there, He saves to "the uttermost those who come unto God by Him" (Heb 7:25). Whereas Aaron *stood* in the Holy of Holies while ministering, Jesus *sits* on God's right hand as He ministers (Heb 10:11-12). Their spatiality is hence inverted; Jesus performs an inverted and perfect function to Aaron's ineffective ministry. Jesus' space is utopian and His functions more powerful, for He provides access into the very presence of God. The discussion of the priestly order of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7 is in the service of the depiction of this contest.

Whether the tabernacle imagery in Hebrews is primarily one of a whole tabernacle in heaven or just the Holy of Holies is debated by commentators (Isaacs 2002:107-108 and Koester 1989). Since Hebrews does not give any attention to a Holy Place in heaven, the author's emphasis that Moses was instructed by God to "make all things according to the pattern shown to you" (Heb 8:5) should not be understood in Platonic terms but rather as a statement of his typological style of exegesis. Beyond the veil Jesus has entered as our Purifier (Heb 1:3), Propitiation and Rescuer in temptations (Heb 2:17-18), Forerunner (Heb 6:20), Great High Priest ((Heb 6:20), our "hope" (Heb 6:19) and intercessor (Heb 7:25).

4. The Significance of Hebrews' Use of the Tabernacle as a Semiosphere in its Expositions

It is thus demonstrated that the wilderness camp and tabernacle[12] lies in the deeper semantic levels of the expositions of Hebrews. The camp and tabernacle was the semiosphere in the epistle's expositions; that is, it provided

[12] It is assumed that the wilderness tabernacle is the same as the tent of meeting or tent of testimony. See Lewis, (1977:537-548) who suggests that two different traditions of the "prophetic" and earlier Tent of meeting and the "priestly" and later Tabernacle containing the ark are combined in the Pentateuchal narratives.

"the possible universe of meanings" (Lotman 1977:218) to the expositions and the author used its spatiality as a vehicle to address the social and pastoral problems of the congregation. This finding has important implications of textual, theological, sociological and pastoral nature.

Textually, it explains the sudden and baffling summary of Hebrews 8:1-2. Various commentators of the epistle have limited the interpretation of κεφάλαιον (sum) in Hebrews 8:1, ranging from Manson's "crowning affirmation" of the argument that follows (1951:123) to Koester's "main or principal point" of the exposition (2001:375), or Isaacs' summary of "the author's argument in the previous chapter" (2002:105). Appreciating the presence of the spatiality of the tabernacle as a semiosphere in the expositions of Hebrews 1-7 explains the rhetorical force and meaning of the statement in Hebrews 8:1-2. The author uses the tabernacle-camp complex as a heuristic device[13] for his exposition, and Hebrews 8:1-2 is the climatic announcement typical of such pedagogical devices. The author in Hebrews 8:1-2 is basically summarizing in explicit terms what he had been saying implicitly throughout the expositions from the beginning of the homily.

Theologically, it explains the nature of the author's theology of the tabernacle. He asserts that the wilderness tabernacle and ministry was a "sign" (Heb 9:8) from the Holy Spirit and a "figure" (Heb 9:9) of what Jesus was going to do. His use of "copy," "pattern," "example"(Heb 8:5), "shadow" and "very image" (Heb 10:1), was not so much in Platonic logic as has been assumed, but a reflection of his analogical style of exegesis (Bruce 1990:235). He

[13] A heuristic device is a provisional conceptual model that fruitfully directs a search for answers to more complex questions and they play important pedagogical and rhetorical functions in aiding the communication of complex ideas. In their simplest forms, symbols, metaphors and simple narratives such as parables constitute heuristic devices. In their more complex forms, typological and allegorical presentations are sometimes used for heuristic purposes to direct one to discover and grasp more complex ideas. The tentative manner in which the author approaches the whole concept of the High Priestly functions of Jesus in the heavenly tabernacle, suggests that this was a major novelty on the part of his audience. It was a theological proposition that the author regarded as "solid food" (Heb 5:12) and which was "hard to be explained" (Heb 5:11) to the congregation. This accounts for the allusory manner of the author's references to the tabernacle in Heb 1-7.

follows a typological exegesis that allowed him multiple interpretations of the tabernacle. His flexible language was, as Koester rightly points out, "similar to the way the LXX uses terms in relation to the tabernacle" (1989:156). In Hebrews, the tabernacle is interpreted in at least five ways; the Holy of Holies is interpreted as heaven, the Eschaton, "the conscience," the presence of God and the new covenant.[14] Hope and Faith also have a parallel relationship with the two chambers of the tabernacle. The veil is equally interpreted as the Body or Flesh of Christ (Heb 10:20). This phenomenon of multiple interpretations of the tabernacle/temple theological complex was not peculiar to our author, but is also reflected in Luke-Acts and John's gospel (Hutcheon 2000:3-33; Sylvia 1986:239-250; Hickling 1983:112-116).

In addition, the use of the tabernacle as the heuristic tool for the homily explains the constraining factors in the author's selection of theological themes. Virtually all the predominant themes in Hebrews are related to the theology of the tabernacle. Pilgrimage, worship, faith and hope, sanctification, sacrifice and atonement, Sabbath Rest, Apostasy, ecclesiology, eschatology, heavenly session, covenant, perseverance in suffering and divine revelation are all related directly or indirectly to the theology of the wilderness tabernacle. Understanding these themes is greatly aided by appreciating the theology of the tabernacle.

Furthermore, it demonstrates an interesting relationship between Hebrews and the Book of Numbers that helps explain the epistle's structure and style. The tabernacle played crucial cultic (Num 1:53, 4:15), military (Num 10:35-36, 31:6), social (Num 7:8-9) and judicial (Num 11) roles in the Book of Numbers. It acted as both a symbol of God's mercy (Num 1:53, 18:5) and also of the burning fire of God's wrath (Num 16). Numbers places the tabernacle at the centre of the life and activities of the people of God and reference is made to it on more than a hundred occasions. The whole camp was arranged in a concentric manner around the tabernacle; in Wenham's words, "Both at rest

[14] Given that the author's theology of Rest consists of the dual aspects of an already fulfilled enjoyment of God's covenantal blessings and a future eschatological life of believers in the very presence of God (Gleason 2000:296), "Rest" in Heb 4:1-11 also has some correspondence with the Holy of Holies.

and on the move the camp is organized to express symbolically the presence and kingship of the Lord" (1981:56). Thus we get a multi-dimensional picture of the role of the tabernacle among the people of God, a lesson which the author of Hebrews draws on, perceiving that his congregation were in a similar Liminal state as the wilderness generation.

Several parallels exist between the two books that suggest that Numbers may have influenced the author of Hebrews in significant ways. The two books share similar reputations as being among the most difficult books of the Bible to survey and Numbers 1:1 begins with God speaking to Moses in the tabernacle just as Hebrews 1:1 begins by referring to the final speech of God through His Son. The phrase, "the LORD spoke to Moses" occurs more than 50 times in Numbers, and is paralleled by the generous nature of Hebrews' references to God's speech. Direct quotations of, and allusions to Numbers are also found in Hebrews 3:5 (cf. Num 12:7), 3:17 (cf. Num 14:29), 8:5, 9:4 (cf. Num 17:8-10), 9:19, 10:26-29 (cf. Num 15:22-31) and 12:21. The wilderness theme, which in Numbers, tells the story of the guiding presence of God through the tabernacle and the overshadowing cloud (Num 9:15–23; 10:11–12, 33–36; 11:25; 12:5, 10; 14:10, 14; 16:42) is also explicitly treated in Hebrews. In addition, many of the cultic imageries in Hebrews are drawn from Numbers. These parallels would suggest a high degree of influence of Numbers on Hebrews.

The narratives in Numbers are not arranged chronologically but in a thematic fashion; the exposition of the Laws alternate with narratives of rebellion, disobedience, strife and faithlessness; in a similar fashion to Hebrews' alternation of erudite expositions with harsh exhortations. Mary Douglas (2001) has for example demonstrated a regular concentric ring structure[15] to the way the laws and narratives are arranged into twelve pairs in Numbers. It appears therefore that the author of Hebrews used the picture of the encamped Exodus generation around the tabernacle as depicted in Numbers; to generate the homily that addresses the social and pastoral problems of the congregation.

[15] The similarities between the concentric ring structure of Numbers and Vanhoye's (1963) symmetrically concentric structure of Hebrews is striking, and may not just be coincidence.

Finally, the presence of the spatiality of the tabernacle as the semiosphere in the expositions of Hebrews explains the link between the expositions and the social and pastoral circumstances of the community that is reflected in the exhortations of the epistle. Examination of the exhortations of Hebrews suggests that the author saw a typological relationship between that community and the exodus generation. Based on this he used the theology of the tabernacle as a heuristic device in his expositions. Sociologically, the Hebrews congregation was in a state of Liminality that parallels the Exodus and Wilderness generations (Dunnill 1992). Just as the ritual laws of the Pentateuch were designed to preserve the cultic separation of God's people from the other nations, to maintain their continued relationship with God and to prepare them for their final inheritance in the land of promise, Hebrews interprets them in the light of the Christ event to address the major pastoral problems of spiritual malaise and inadequate understanding of the continuing work of Christ in providing access to God's presence. The common connection between the two communities—Exodus generation and the Hebrews congregation, was the theology of the tabernacle. Our author has produced a very imaginative sermon that on all levels, address a dangerously looming spiritual disaster and thus provided us with a template on how we may understand and apply the theology of the tabernacle.

5. Conclusion

Two of the difficult phenomena in Hebrews, the Christological comparisons and the spatial emphasis are intertwined in the author's spatiality of the wilderness camp and tabernacle and can be adequately explained using sociological and literary spatial theories. Judging that his congregation's problems typologically corresponded to those of the Exodus and Wilderness generations in Numbers and employing the lens of the Christ event, the author constructed a sermon that utilizes the spatiality of the camp and tabernacle as a heuristic device. Considering the epistle's continuing influence, one is certain, that the first readers would never have forgotten this sermon, especially with the picture of the encamped people of God around the tabernacle as its semiosphere. We may also find the epistle easier to understand when approached this way.

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Family Requirements for Eldership

by

Dr Kevin Smith[1]

Abstract

The New Testament contains two lists of requirements for elders. While is it well-known that the lists focus on character issues, this article demonstrates that the candidate's family life holds pride of place amongst the character requirements for eldership. Then it analyses interpretations of the family requirements in the two lists, drawing conclusions as to what it means to be a blameless husband and a blameless father.

1. Introduction

What is the most important criterion for appointing an elder in a local church? The three areas that are usually considered are calling, charisma and character. Although in practice character is often relegated to third place,[2] both the

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[2] The character requirements laid down in the 1 Timothy and Titus are used as a final checklist at the end of the selection process rather than as a guiding light for the entire process. After

biblical lists of requirements for eldership give it pride of place (see 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Tit 1:5-9). In fact, they deal almost exclusively with character matters. Although it may not always be consistently applied, the fact that the lists prioritise godliness over giftedness is never questioned. The question that is seldom asked is whether some aspects of candidates' character should be given priority when evaluating them for eldership.

The first part of this article will demonstrate that the two lists of requirements for eldership not only emphasise character, but also give pride of place to the character of a candidate's family life. Within the construction of the two lists, the family requirements hold centre stage. The candidate's family life is the most important area to be evaluated when assessing his eligibility for eldership.

If the family requirements are most emphasised, what exactly are those requirements? Scholars have proposed varied interpretations of the family requirements. The second part of the article will review those proposals, analyse the interpretive difficulties and conclude with some proposals as to what is a required of elders with respect to their character as husbands and fathers.[3]

2. The Family First

The literary structure of each list of eldership requirements indicates that the family requirements for elders hold pride of place. If this claim is true, then they should hold pride of place in the thinking of local churches when appointing elders. On what grounds, then, is the claim made? A careful

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candidates with evidence of the desired calling and charisma have been identified, their character is quickly checked to see if it disqualifies them from the office of eldership.

[3] In the two texts that are the object of discussion in this article, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, the qualifications for eldership are stated in masculine terms. Opinions are divided over whether this was intended to imply that elders had to be men (male). Since my intent is to analyse the lists of qualifications for eldership found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, I shall consistently refer to elders in masculine terms, in keeping with the language of the Biblical texts. I do not hereby intend to imply that the texts exclude women from serving as elders.

analysis of the manner in which Paul[4] constructed the two lists suggests that he wished to emphasise the statements about the potential elder's family conduct.

2.1. The Structure of 1 Timothy 3:1-7

The list opens with a generic requirement that *an elder must be above reproach* (δεῖ οὖν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνεπίλημπτον εἶναι).[5] The adjective ἀνεπίλημπτος refers to being *above reproach* or *beyond criticism,* referring to "one who nothing which an adversary could seize upon with which to base a charge" (Zodhiates 2000).

A string of nouns, adjectives and participial phrases in the accusative case follow, all standing in apposition to ἀνεπίλημπτος. The semantic relationship is GENERIC-specific; each accusative names one specific area in which an elder must be *above reproach*.

Three things immediately stand out about this list.

1. The list appears to be an impromptu catalogue of requirements for eldership. Unlike the parallel passage in Titus, the 16 specifics are in a quite random order, as if Paul was simply listing them as they came to mind.[6] Further evidence that the list was dictated impromptu lies in the fact that all the early requirements—except for μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα—are single words (vv. 2-3), while all the lengthier requirements come towards the end. In general, impromptu lists start with the one-word items and put lengthier characteristics later, as the author can no longer think of short expressions for them. These characteristics of impromptu lists mark as prominent (a) items at the beginning, the first ones the author thought of, (b) items at the end, which

[4] Although Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is assumed throughout this article, the view of authorship taken has no significant bearing on the argument. For a detailed defence of Pauline authorship, see Guthrie (1996) or Knight (1992).

[5] All Scriptures are the author's own translation of UBS4 unless otherwise indicated.

[6] The only obvious evidence of semantic arrangement is the placement of two pairs of synonyms side-by-side (νηφάλιον σώφρονα and ἐπιεικῆ ἄμαχον).

are included even though they are not as neat as the earlier ones and (c) items in the beginning or middle that are abnormally long.

2. Therefore, the placement of μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα at the head of the list is significant, firstly because it implies this is the first thing to come to mind and secondly because it is the only item in the first 11 specifics that is not a single word.

3. Similarly, the length of the discussion about how an elder manages his family (vv. 4-5) marks it out as prominent. It is the first of three lengthy requirements in which Paul takes time to discuss the reason why it is imperative.

These three factors indicate that the family requirements hold a prominent place in the requirements for eldership as laid down in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. They are not just two amongst a long list; they are two of the most important ones.

2.2. The Structure of Titus 1:5-9

The Titus list is much more structured than the Timothy list. Titus, which was written after 1 Timothy, covers similar subject matter but does so in a much more succinct and patterned manner (see Fee 1988). There is clear evidence of Titus' literary dependence on Timothy, leading one to conclude that Paul used the first letter as a guide for writing the second, but took the opportunity to revise and refine his earlier draft. Nowhere in the letter is this editing more evident than in the eldership lists. The list in Titus is a highly structured, rhetorically effective presentation of the requirements for elders.

The following outline illustrates the organisation of the list.

A. An elder must be blameless (v. 6)
   1. As a husband
   2. As a father

B. An overseer[7] must be blameless (vv. 7-8)
   1. Five prohibitions (v. 7)
   2. Six commands (v. 8)

Note how Paul has rearranged the requirements so that the family requirements are grouped at the start of the list. The generic command, *an elder must be blameless* (δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι), is repeated before the family requirements and after them, the latter introducing the non-family requirements separately. This 'framing' appears to be a deliberate attempt to single out the family requirements so as to highlight them as the most important criteria for eldership.

2.3. The Significance of the Structure

The structure of both lists of eldership requirements suggests that the family requirements were foremost in Paul's thinking. In Timothy, the positioning of μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ, a phrase rather than a single word, at the head of the list, coupled with the lengthy discussion about the importance of *managing his own family well* (τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενον), serve to emphasise the family requirements. In Titus, Paul rearranged the list, grouping the family requirements together at the head of the list and framing them with *an elder must be blameless*. The point is clear—the family requirements hold pride of place when evaluating a candidate for eldership.

If the family requirements hold pride of place, then it is crucial that we understand what they require with respect to an elder's family life. Although the specific commands may seem straightforward, there are significant

[7] For a defence of the dominant view that "elder" (πρεσβύτερος) and "overseer" (ἐπίσκοπος) are used interchangeably, see Mappes (1997).

difficulties in pinpointing their exact meaning. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the family requirements in an attempt to understand what they require of a potential elder.

3. The Blameless Husband

The requirement of a husband is identical in both lists—he must be μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ. The literal rendering would be *a man of one woman* or *a husband of one wife*. The only linguistic ambiguity arises from the fact that ἀνήρ can refer to a man or a husband and γυνή a woman or a wife. Yet the phrase has been the object of a bewildering variety of interpretations, as a brief survey of four prominent English translations render reveals:

NIV	a husband of but one wife
NKJV	the husband of one wife
NLT	faithful to his wife
NRSV	married only once

These four translations hint at the major suggestions concerning the force of the Greek phrase. The proposals concerning its meaning fall into five categories:

1. Prohibiting divorce
2. Prohibiting remarriage: *married only once*
3. Prohibiting polygamy: *a husband of only one wife*
4. Requiring marriage: *a husband of one wife*
5. Requiring fidelity: *a faithful husband*

Let us analyse the options and try to figure out what Paul required of an elder with respect to his married life.

1. Prohibiting divorce. Glasscock (1983) suggests this is the most common view, namely, that Paul is prohibiting any divorced person from serving as an elder. However, although the view may be popular, it is not easily derived from the text because there is nothing in the phrase μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ to suggest divorce is the topic of discussion. If Paul wished to

prohibit *all* divorced men from serving as elders, surely he would have done so explicitly, saying *not divorced* (μὴ ἀπολυθέντα).

The crucial question is whether a divorced man could be deemed blameless in the fulfilment of his family responsibilities. This is not the place to discuss the doctrine of divorce, but I would suggest that there are three situations in which a divorced man *may* qualify for eldership: (a) if his wife was unfaithful, (b) if his wife deserted him and, arguably, (c) if his divorce preceded his conversion and he has demonstrated blameless character since his conversion. In general, a divorced man would not be blameless in his marital conduct, but rare exceptions are possible.

2. Prohibiting remarriage. Does μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ exclude remarried men from eldership? This is possible, since the most natural translation would be *a husband of <u>one</u> wife*. The forefronted position of μιᾶς emphasises *one,* which could mean Paul is highlighting the fact that an elder must have had only one wife, not two or more.

Some suggest this would exclude a man who remarried after his spouse had died, but "since the Scriptures do not prohibit remarriage after the death of one's spouse, and actually encourage it in some cases (cf. 1 Tim 5:14), it is unlikely that such a remarried man should be disqualified" (Lea and Griffin 2001:280).

More pertinent is the suggestion that it excludes a man who is divorced and remarried. In general, a divorced and remarried man would not be blameless in terms of his family life. However, the same possible exceptions exist as with a divorced man who is not remarried: (a) adultery—if his first wife was unfaithful, (b) abandonment—if his wife deserted him and, arguably, (c) if he was converted after his divorce.

3. Prohibiting polygamy. The logic behind this view is similar to that behind the previous one, namely, that the emphasis is on *one* wife. However, whereas the previous view takes it to mean he has not had more than one wife in total, this view understands it to mean he does not have more than one wife *at present*.

Although linguistically plausible, this view is unlikely to have been relevant to the original readers. "The prevailing type of marriage in Jewish, Greek and Roman society was monogamous" (Ferguson 1992:69). Keener (1993:612) claims that "polygamy was not practiced in the Roman world outside Palestine." Therefore, it seems unlikely that a prohibition against polygamy would head the list of qualifications for eldership. Furthermore, if this was the point, Paul could and should have made it explicit by using a negative command *(not having two wives),* because he could not expect his readers to interpret μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ as a prohibition against polygamy.

So, while μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ certainly excludes a polygamist, excluding polygamists is certainly not its primary intention.

4. Requiring marriage. A popular, as opposed to academic, interpretation of *a husband of one wife* is that it requires marriage. The point would be that a single man may not serve as an elder. Advocates often draw attention to Paul's requirement that an elder must *manage his own family well* (1 Tim 3:4), arguing that unless a man has demonstrated good family management, he may not pastor a church.

However, this view does not bear up under scrutiny. First, it neglects Paul's emphasis, stressing ἀνήρ (*a husband of one wife*) whereas the Greek phrase emphasises μιᾶς (*a husband of one wife*). Second, to the best of our knowledge, Paul, Timothy and Titus were all unmarried, yet all three had served as leaders of local churches, and Timothy and Titus were acting elders at the time of writing. Third, it runs counter to Paul's teaching about singleness and marriage in 1 Corinthians 7. Fourth, if *a husband of one wife* (1 Tim 3:2) requires marriage, then *his children obey him* (1 Tim 3:4) requires that he also have at least two children. This would exclude barren couples and families with only one child.

Since marriage was the normal state and the vast majority of candidates for eldership would have been married, the requirement that an elder be μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ simply assumes the candidate will probably be married, but does not require that he be married.

5. Requiring faithfulness. This view holds that μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ points to *a one-woman man* (literally, *a man of one woman*). The focus is not on his marital status, but on his marital and sexual conduct and character. When understood in the light of the generic requirement that an elder be blameless, the phrase μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ describes a man "who cannot be taken hold of on the score of sexual promiscuity or laxity" (Lenski 1946:580). Glasscock (1983:249) explains the implications of this interpretation:

> This understanding emphasises the character of the man rather than his marital status. Thus even a single man or a man who has been married only once must demonstrate that he is not a 'playboy' or flirtatious, but that he is stable and mature in character toward his wife and other females. A man who demonstrates a character of loyalty and trustworthiness in such personal relationships is qualified in this area. He, being a one-woman type of man, can be placed in this high position and trusted to deal in maturity and with discretion in a situation involving female members.

This is by far the best interpretation of μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ in context. Paul's chief concern is that an elder be blameless in character and conduct. The point of this particular requirement is that his conduct in relation to women must be above reproach. If he is married, it means he is loyal to his wife, not only sexually but also emotionally and spiritually. Whether he is single or married, his relationships with women must be faultless; there must not even be a hint of impropriety (see 1 Tim 5:2).

If this is what Paul meant, why did he not phrase it unambiguously, such as ἀνδρὰ πιστά *(a faithful husband)* or μὴ ἐπιθυμοῦντα *(not lustful)?* Neither of these expressions is adequate. ἀνδρὰ πιστά is too vague and μὴ ἐπιθυμοῦντα is too restrictive. The chosen phrase, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ, is vivid, visual and concrete, conjuring up a strong image of a one-woman kind of man, a faithful and committed husband who does not have wondering eyes or a jealous heart.

This interpretation best captures the spirit of Paul's requirements. First, it sets a high standard for eldership. Not only must a man's external conduct be

blameless, but even his internal character must be flawless. Simply not being divorced, for example, is not enough; he must be positively devoted to his wife with a loyalty that comes from the heart. Second, it is balanced and sensible, allowing some room for grace and restoration after past failures. Bigamists and polygamists are certainly excluded, but some divorced or remarried men—those whose failed marriages were not the result of their impropriety—may be considered if their present character is blameless.

4. The Blameless Father

Although they have attracted less attention and sparked less controversy, the parenting requirements for eldership are just as difficult to interpret as μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ. Here is a graphic display of the two texts:

1 Timothy 3:4	**1 Timothy 3:4**
τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενον, τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ, μετὰ πάσης σεμνότητος.	leading his own household well keeping children in submission with all seriousness

Titus 1:6	**Titus 1:6**
τέκνα ἔχων πιστά, μὴ ἐν κατηγορίᾳ ἀσωτίας ἢ ἀνυπότακτα.	having faithful children not wild or rebellious

There are two difficulties, one in 1 Timothy 3:4 and the other in Titus 1:6. I shall examine them in chronological order.

4.1. Loving Leadership

The problem in 1 Timothy 3:4 concerns whether the two supporting phrases are describing the conduct of the father or the conduct of the children. Paul starts with a generic requirement that an elder must lead his household well. The supporting phrases, however, allow for two interpretations (see Knight 1992; Lea and Griffin 2001). The two semantic displays illustrate the two options.

Interpretation A: Children-focused

He must lead his own family well	HEAD
so that his children are submissive	Result
with complete respect.	Manner

The two supporting phrases are understood as describing the conduct and attitude of the children—they are submissive and respectful. The subordinate participial clause, τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ (literally, *having children in submission*), states the result of the head clause. The point is that the father's family leadership is of such a nature that it inspires respect and commands obedience (as opposed to demanding it).

Interpretation B: Father-focused

He must lead his own family well	HEAD
keeping his children in submission	Specific
with all seriousness.	Manner

The two supporting phrases are understood as describing the conduct and attitude of the father—he takes seriously his duty to keep his children under control. The subordinate participial clause, τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ (literally, *having children in submission*), stands in apposition to the head clause and serves to clarify exactly what a father who leads his family well does—he keeps his children under control. σεμνότης must here carry a connotation of 'seriousness' or 'soberness', indicating that the father takes seriously or soberly his duty to keep his children in order.

So which interpretation is correct? The first option has the better of it because the evidence indicates that *the picture is of a parent whose caring leadership inspires submission and respect rather than of an authoritarian parent who enforces legalistic discipline in the home*. Four pieces of evidence support this conclusion. First, the verb translated lead (προΐστημι) has two primary meanings, (a) 'rule, direct' and (b) 'care for' (BAGD). Knight (1992) shows that these two meanings sometimes merge to portray *caring leadership*. The parallel placement of προΐστημι *(lead)* and ἐπιμελέομαι *(care for)* in verse 5 makes this sense explicit here. Second, all other occurrences of ὑποταγή

(submission) in the New Testament portray voluntary submission rather than enforced obedience (see 2 Cor 9:13, Gal 2:5 and 1 Tim 2:11).[8] Third, the most natural and common sense of σεμνότης indicates "behaviour which is fitting, implying a measure of dignity leading to respect" (Louw and Nida 1989:§88.46). The father's dignified leadership of his family inspires respect from his children. Fourth, the parallel passage in Titus (Tit 1:6), which appears to be a refined version of this passage, focuses on the godly character of the children rather than on what the father does to control them.

In conclusion, a potential elder must exemplify strong but loving leadership in his family. Just as a teacher is judged by the performance of his students and a coach by the success of his team, so the parent is evaluated by the attitude of his children. If they are voluntarily submissive because they deeply respect him, he may be assumed to be a loving leader of his family.

4.2. Faithful Children

The difficulty in Titus 1:6 concerns the meaning of πιστός in the clause τέκνα ἔχων πιστά. It could mean *having believing children* or *having faithful children* depending on whether an active or passive meaning is ascribed to πιστά. Although all major English translations prefer *having believing children,* the choice is not an easy one. Commentators are divided. Barrett (1963), Dibelius and Conzelmann (1972), Hanson (1966), Hendricksen (1957), Kelly (1963), Lea and Griffin (2001) and Quinn (1990) all favour *having believing children,* but Guthrie (1957), Knight (1992), Lock (1924) and Towner (1994) prefer *having faithful children.*

The evidence weighs slightly in favour of *having faithful children* on three grounds. First, in the Greco-Roman social system, church elders were "drawn from the functioning heads of households" (Wright 1996); these heads probably determined the religion of the entire household (Tidball 1983). Therefore, the most relevant meaning of πιστά is *faithful* because *believing* is

[8] The cognate verb ὑποτάσσω, when referring to husband-wife or parent-child relationships, is always used in the middle voice, indicating that voluntary submission is in view.

taken for granted. Telling those who are already believers that they must be believers is redundant, but telling them they must be faithful as believers is meaningful.

Second, the entire ethical concern of the letter is with observable behaviour that affects the church's reputation with outsiders. Three statements in Titus focus on external behaviour: *an elder must be blameless* (1:6, 7); *so that no one will malign the Word of God* (2:5); and *so that in every way they may make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive* (2:10). All these statements occur in lists of ethical instructions and indicate that Paul's focus is on conduct that commends rather than condemns the gospel.

Third, the list of qualifications for elders in Titus is a revised and refined form of the ones in 1 Timothy. Therefore, the parallel passages shed light on each other. In 1 Timothy 3:4, the requirement is phrased τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ *(having children in submission)* instead of τέκνα ἔχων πιστά. The earlier passage clearly focuses not on the spiritual condition but on the ethical conduct of a potential elder's children. The refined version surely bears the same intent.

Fourth, the qualifying clauses that modify τέκνα ἔχων πιστά in Titus 1:6—*not wild or rebellious*—strongly support the view that Paul is alluding to the blameless conduct of the children, not to their confession of faith. Semantically, they function as practical examples of the requirement laid down in the head clause.

τέκνα ἔχων πιστά, μὴ ἐν κατηγορίᾳ ἀσωτίας ἢ ἀνυπότακτα.	HEAD Specific 1 Specific 2

These two propositions qualify, by way of contrast, what it means to be τέκνον πιστόν (*a faithful child*). ἐν κατηγορίᾳ refers to being subject to an accusation, thus alluding to vices that are observable to onlookers. ἀσωτία refers to *wild, reckless living,* often with the connotation of wasting money on selfish pleasures, especially drunkenness (Rienecker 1980). ἀνυπότακτα means *undisciplined, disobedient, rebellious* (BAGD). Together, these two qualifiers paint a picture of young adults who are out of control, being

undisciplined and insubordinate, living wild and lavish lives. If a potential elder's children are known to be wild and rebellious, they bring shame on him and discredit his ability to lead his family well (1 Tim 3:4). These qualifiers are the most powerful case for τέκνα πιστά meaning *faithful children*.

Thus, τέκνα ἔχων πιστά is best translated as *having faithful children,* implying that the candidate's children should not only be believers, but also be faithful believers whose conduct brings credit to the gospel. If the children are faithful to their father's values, in this case Christian values, rather than being wild and rebellious, their conduct testifies to the level of his leadership and integrity in the home.

5. The Blameless Church

If a church wishes to take seriously the biblical requirements for eldership when appointing leaders, it should take the following guidelines into account.

1. *The candidate's character is more important than his charisma*. Rather than choosing a leader on the basis of his gifting and then using 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 as a final checklist to ensure there are no gaping holes in his character, those responsible for appointing leaders should give character issues pride of place throughout the selection process.

2. *The candidate's family life is more important than his church life*. Paul placed priority on the quality of the potential elder's family life, singling it out as the most important criterion by which to evaluate his eligibility for leadership in the church. Although a man's ecclesiastical conduct is vital, his conduct at home are a far better measure of his real character. He may be able to conceal serious character flaws in public, but he will never be able to hide them in the privacy of his home. Therefore, before appointing a man to eldership, a serious attempt should be made to confirm that his home life is blameless. This is best done by observing the conduct of his children, since their behaviour, for better or for worse, reveals whether he commands their respect.

3. *The candidate's present conduct is more important than his past misconduct*. The spirit of Paul's command that an elder must be *a faithful*

husband has to do with the blameless character of his present Christian witness within his family and community. While it may often be the case that man is disqualified by a failed marriage, it is not necessarily the case that a failed marriage automatically disqualifies him. A candidate who has been divorced (and remarried) may still be eligible for eldership if it can be established that (a) he was not to blame for marriage's failure and (b) he is blameless in his present relationships with women.

4. *The nature of the candidate's relationships with women is more important than his marital status*. An elder must be *blameless* in his relationships with women; there must be no hint of impropriety about his relationships with them. Paul's chief concern was not whether a man was married or single, or even whether he was married once or twice (though the latter would usually be unacceptable); his real focus was on the fact that the candidate be a one-woman kind of man—not a womaniser, not having roaming eyes. Both an unmarried man with a reputation for being a ladies' man and a married man who does not give evidence of total loyalty to his wife should be considered ineligible for eldership.

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Justification as it relates to Adam and Christ within the New Covenant[1]

By

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Abstract

How does one grasp the ramifications of sin without first understanding its source and how it was transmitted to all mankind? How does one understand the depth of Christ's redemptive act without first understanding the depth of sin within man? The significance of this concept in explaining the work of Christ should not be underestimated in any way. Therefore Paul teaches that all people stand in relationship to one of two men, whose actions determine the eternal destiny of all who belong to them. By the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, and by the obedience of the other, many shall be made righteous.

God's plan for man's redemption can be seen through the eyes of two covenants. The one, made with Adam and broken by him, resulted in man's death. The second covenant, through Jesus Christ, resulted in man's redemption.

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[1] This article emanates from an MA Degree completed through the University of Johannessburg. The title was *The Holy Spirit in the Theological Context of Romans 1-8*. This was done under the leadership of Professor JA du Randt.

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1. Introduction

One of the most prominent doctrines in systematic theology, according to Grudem (1994:494), is the doctrine of inherited sin. Furthermore, Rapinchuk (1999:427) states that a great deal of speculation has also taken place regarding the cause, transmission/imputation and consequences of inherited sin. The purpose of this paper is to address these issues through a better understanding of the federal headship of Adam and Christ.

The significance of this concept in explaining the work of Christ should not be underestimated in any way. It is virtually impossible to grasp with the mind the ramifications of sin, without understanding its source and its transmission. The source, found in the disobedience of Adam in Genesis 3:6-7, is the reason all mankind stands guilty before God. How man stands guilty before God is the question that needs to be dealt with. God ordained that Adam should act not only on his own behalf, according to Erickson (1999:652), but also on behalf of all mankind, so that the consequences of his actions have been passed on to his descendants as well.

Adam was on probation for all mankind as it were; and because Adam sinned, all mankind are treated as guilty and corrupted. Bound by the covenant between God and Adam, all of mankind are treated as if they had actually and personally committed what Adam as their representative had done.

This approach sees Adam's connection with mankind in terms of federal headship, examples of this reading are vast; (cf. Grudem (1994:494-496); Erickson (1999:631-632); Punt (1980:9-16); Moo (1996:321-329); Stott (1994:148-162). It is at this point that a number of arguments are presented. The German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg puts it bluntly: "It is impossible for me to be held jointly responsible as though I were a joint cause for an act that another did many generations ago and in a situation radically different from mine" (1985:124; see also Carter 1983:1, 267).

The question now posed is what is one to make of the provocative words of Paul found in Romans 5: "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all

sinned …" (v. 12).[3] This thought is repeated in several different ways in the succeeding verses: "for if the many died by the trespass of one man" (v. 15); "the judgement followed one sin and brought condemnation" (v. 16); for if by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man" (v. 17); "consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men" (v. 18)—"for just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners" (v. 19). It seems as if Paul sees some sort of casual connection between what Adam did and the sinfulness of all people throughout all time.

To make this a bit clearer, Paul's claim that *"sin came into the world through one man"* would have been nothing new to anyone, argues Moo (1996:319), who knew his or her Old Testament or Jewish tradition. He further contends (1996:320), "nor would his (Paul's) second assertion in this verse be anything new, and death through sin (came into the world)." His reason for saying this is that the unbreakable connection between sin and death, made clear in Gen 2-3, was a staple of Jewish theology (see particularly Wedderburn 1972-73:339-342).

In response to this, Rapinchuk (1999:427) argues that although it is easily demonstrated that such speculation is present in Jewish literature contemporary to Paul, this does little to prove that Paul was so engaged. See also Dunn (1988:272); Porter (1990:3-13); Käsemann (1981:147-148). One could argue that the point could be lost if one narrowly focuses on what this passage has to say about sin and fails to do justice to the theme. Moo states it thus; "the universal consequence of Adam's sin are the *assumptions* of Paul's argument; the power of Christ's act to cancel those consequences is its goal" (1996:315). In saying this, one needs to understand the relationship between Adam and Christ, and how it affects mankind.

[3] All scriptural quotations are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

2. The Two Adams

All people, Paul teaches, stand in relationship to one of two men, whose actions determine the eternal destiny of all who belong to them. Either one "belongs to" Adam and is under sentence of death because of his sin, or disobedience, or one belongs to Christ and is assured of eternal life because of His "righteous" act, or obedience (Moo, 1996:315). The action of Adam and Christ, then, are similar in having "epochal" significance but they are not equal in power, for Christ's act is able to completely overcome the affects of Adam's sin. Anyone who "receives the gift" that God offers in Christ finds security and joy in knowing that the reign of death has been completely and finally overcome by the reign of grace, righteousness, and eternal life (cf. vv. 17, 21).

The great theme of this paragraph is therefore the power of Christ's act of obedience to overcome Adam's act of disobedience. Thus, the emphasis is on the justification secured by Christ, in contrast to the condemnation introduced by Adam (vv.18-19), particularly to the critical tenet that justification is available "*for all who believe"* (Rom 3:22).

It must be stated at this point, that Paul says nothing explicitly (although inherited sin is implied through 5:12-21) about *how* the sin of one man, Adam, has resulted in death for everyone; nor has he made clear the connection—if any—between Adam's sin (v. 12a) and the sin of all people (v.12d). What he *has* made clear is that the casual nexus between sin and death, exhibited in the case of Adam, has repeated itself in the case of every human being. No one, Paul makes clear, escapes the reign of death because no one escapes the power of sin.

One can sum it up by saying *both Adam and Jesus Christ passed on to others the affects of their disobedience or obedience*. The effect of Adam's disobedience was sin, condemnation, and death. The effect of Jesus' obedience was righteousness, justification, and eternal life.

Lloyd-Jones (1972:224) who has an excellent summary of these important similarities says, "Adam's sin and its consequences was passed on to us all without exception: Christ's obedience and righteousness is passed on to all

who believe in Him." Haldene (1958:213) also makes the point nicely: "the two Adams are the heads of two covenants. The one, the representative of all who are under the covenant of works, communicating his image unto them: the other the representative of all who are under the covenant of grace, and communicating His image to them. By the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, and by the obedience of the other, many shall be made righteous."

The following section will now concentrate on the federal headship of Adam and Christ, culminating in *the New Covenant in Christ*. A few themes will be repeated, more for clarity and focus than anything else.

3. The Covenant with Adam

Although the word covenant is not used in the Bible specifically of Adam, Boice (1992:581) argues that there can be little doubt that God established a covenant with him. The pertinent words are to be found in Genesis 2:16-17, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." The word is also used in a later passage in Hosea where, regarding the transgression of Ephraim and Judah, the prophet says, "Like Adam, they have broken the covenant—they were unfaithful to me there" (Hos 6:7). An interesting passage is also found in the apocryphal Book of Sirach, where the creation of man is described: He bestowed knowledge upon them, and allotted to them the law of life. He established with them an eternal covenant, and showed them his judgments (Sirach 17:11-12). Thus it seems clear from both canonical and non-canonical texts that the primary covenant of God was with original man—Adam.

That this is a *divine* covenant is shown both in the fact that God Himself sets all the terms or clauses—man in no way participates in what God establishes—and that it is *His* covenant with Adam. One translation of Hosea 6:7 reads: "… they have broken my covenant." The covenant of course includes Adam, but it is not Adam or man's covenant: it is God's covenant with man. Furthermore, Boice (1992:581) contends that in the same way, a covenant was made by God with Jesus Christ, it would have gone as follows,

"If you will become the federal head or representative of a new humanity, taking upon yourself the task of fulfilling My divine law and then dying to make satisfaction for the sins of a people I will give to you, then that people shall be freed from sins bondage, be given eternal life, and be raised to life to reign with You in heaven throughout eternity."

4. The Terms of the Covenant

Firstly, there are two parties: God and man; second, there is a promise; third, there is an obligation or demand. Concerning the first of these, it may now be further observed that this is a *universal* covenant. Although it is made with a particular man, Adam, it is universal in that Adam is man and the progenitor of the human race. Thus, the covenant affects all mankind. In reference to the second, the covenant promises *continuing life*: the "tree of life" is included among the trees of which man may eat. If he does eat of it, he will "live forever" (Gen 3:22). Hence, there is the promise of eternal life. True life is to be found outside man in God. As man partakes of this life, physically represented or sealed in the tree of life, he will never die. This then is the law of life. Regarding the third, the covenant calls for *obedience* on man's part: he is commanded not to eat of the "*tree of knowledge of good and evil*." Disobedience to God's will, here represented in the partaking of another tree, is thus to cut oneself off from God with the inevitable result: eternal death.

One could then say that throughout the entire history of God's dealings with man, there is one theme that is of major importance, God was moving towards Calvary, and that His final provision and work of redemption would be accomplished there. Everything God was doing was preparing men for the coming Redeemer and His work on the cross. The significance and depth of what Christ did can only be realised when one studies what has previously been referred to and discussed as the federal headship of Adam and Christ.

5. The Old Covenant

As one looks back in a brief overview of the history of God's dealing with man, there are certain things that stand out which form the background for one's present relationship with God. It is very clear that God Himself does not

change, but that His dealing with man does change. God has been moving with purpose since the beginning of time, and His purpose is to bring many sons to glory and to include them in everlasting fellowship with Himself. The very nature of God is love ἀγάπη, and God's love reaches out to include all who will respond to Him.

There are many things that are difficult to understand, but it is evident from history that the working of God's purpose takes time. Christ was the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev 5:12) yet He died thousands of years later at the very hour appointed by God. In the Old Testament, the history of God's dealing with man up until the time of Christ, one can find that God's dealings were with certain men (such as Noah and Abraham), and then with the nation of Israel. His purpose in dealing with each is clearly stated, and the history that is available, gives evidence of what God wanted people to have, in order to form the basis of one's understanding of His present dealings. In reading the Old Testament, people not only learn history, but also see clearly the character of God and how He views things.

6. The Federal Headship of Adam and Christ

In Romans, Paul speaks much about the work Christ did on the cross. In chapter 5, he compares Adam and Christ, saying that Adam is a type of Christ. The whole human race descended from Adam, but it descended in death.

> So also it is written, the first man, Adam, became a living soul.
> The last Adam became a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45).

With the incarnation of God the Son in the person of Jesus Christ came greater revelation regarding the mystery of sin and man's redemption through divine grace. One of the most extraordinary revelations found in the Bible is in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans. Precisely, the fifth chapter verses twelve through twenty-one. Within these passages God has revealed two men, two acts with two results. The two men are two Federal Headships and their two representative acts, which directly affects all those connected to them. Verse twelve lays the doctrinal foundation, which the following verses build upon:

> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (Rom 5:12).

Adam, and his rebellious act of disobedience in the Garden, is the "one man" through whom sin entered into the world. When he disregarded the specific commandment of God and freely ate of the fruit from the forbidden tree (Gen 2:17), the divine penalty of death was immediately enacted and death spread to all men "because all sinned" (with Adam). The divine view presented in scripture is that Adam, as previously stated, is the *federal head* of mankind. All men born of Adam are in Adam, and "in Adam all die" (1 Cor 15:22).

The divine penalty of death referenced in Romans 5:12-14, is primarily referring to physical death. This is unlike spiritual death which reaches every individual immediately, that is, inherited or transmitted from parent to child through birth due to Adam's corrupt nature. Scripture reveals that mankind's physical death is immediate, that is, a shared penalty because of guilt with Adam, "And death spread to all men because all sinned" (v. 12). No one dies physically because of personal sins (due to an inherited corrupt nature) but because of the actual, imputed sin of Adam to all mankind. Adam's transgression involved his whole race and therefore it is under a sentence of death, which it did not bring upon itself. Only Adam died because of the result of a personal sin, which was a transgression of a specific commandment, all others die as a result of Adam's federal representative act.

But God, infinitely wise and rich in mercy and grace, did not intend to leave humanity under the first Adam, divine judgement and condemnation of death. In verse 14, Adam is called a *type* of him who was to come. Another Federal Head was anticipated and 2000 years ago. He came into the world in the person of Jesus Christ, the "second man" whose origin was from heaven, called the "last Adam, a life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor 15:47). And according to the Scriptures, God now sees but two men, that is, two Adams, and their representative acts and each member of the human race in either one or the other. The unregenerate are in Adam; the regenerate, are in Christ and eternally benefit from the "free gift" which comes through Him. Verses fifteen through nineteen compare the two Adams, their representative acts and the direct result towards those connected to them:

> But the free gift is not like the offence, for if by the one man's offence many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgement, which came from one offence, resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offences resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offence death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as through one man's offence judgement came through all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous (Rom 5:15-19).

It must be clearly understood that the great truth of Romans 5:12-21 is that a representative acted, directly involving those connected with him. God sees humanity either in Adam, under divine judgement and condemnation of death, or in Christ (the Last Adam), under the abundance of divine grace, eternally justified and in Him made righteous (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9).

Those who receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, are no longer in Adam, but in Christ, the Last Adam, His new Federal Representative.

7. Justification

In addition to the Federal Headship hypothesis found in Romans 5:18, one is immediately confronted with what seems like a contradiction:

> Therefore as through one man's offence judgement came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life (Rom 5:18).

This verse simply makes explicit what seems to be the logic of the paragraph as a whole; Adam's act has brought condemnation to all, without exception, must one not then conclude that Christ's act has brought justification and life for all? A growing number of scholars, according to Moo (1996:342), argue that this is exactly what Paul intends to say here. For instance, Hultgren (1987:54-55) states that the universal statements in this passage must be taken seriously, as descriptive of a "justification of humanity" that will be revealed at the judgement. He further contends that some people are justified by faith in this life, but those who do not accept the offer of God in this life, are nevertheless assured of being justified at the judgement. This universalistic thinking, although quite radical in the light of what has previously been said, is naturally very appealing—who likes, according to Moo (1996:342), the idea that many people will be consigned to the eternal punishment of hell? But if, as seems clear, many texts plainly teach the reality of such punishment for those who do not embrace Christ by faith in this life (cf. 2 Thes 1:8-9; Rom 2:12 and the argument of 1:18-3:20), those who advocate such a viewpoint are guilty of picking and choosing their evidence. But can one reconcile the plain universalistic statements of this verse with these texts mentioned, that speak of the reality of hell? Some deny that one can, suggesting that one faces a paradox on this point that God will resolve someday (cf. Boring 1986:269-92). Others argue that what is universal in v.18b is not the actual justification accomplished in the lives of individuals, but the *basis* for this justification is in the work of Christ. Christ has won for all "the sentence of justification" and this is now offered freely to all who will "receive the gift" (cf. Beasley-Murray 1962:136-137; Hughes 1989:174-75).

How then is one to come to any reasonable conclusion concerning this seeming contradiction? Moo's response to this is that Paul always uses "justification" language when talking of the status actually conferred on the individual, never of the atonement won on the cross itself (cf. particularly the careful distinction in Rom 3:21-26). Secondly, it is doubtful whether Paul is describing simply an "offer" made to people through the work of Christ; certainly in the parallel in the first part of the verse, the condemnation actually embraces all people (1996:343), but perhaps the biggest objection to this view is that it misses the point for which Paul is arguing in this passage. This point is that there can be an assurance of justification and life on one side that is just

as strong and certain as the assurance of condemnation on the other. Throughout the passage, Paul's concern to maintain parallelism between Adam and Christ has led him to choose terms that will clearly express this. In verses 15 and 19, he uses "the many"; here he uses "all people" but in each case, Paul's point is not so much that the groups affected by Christ and respectively, are co-extensive, but that Christ affects those who are His just as certainly as Adam does those who are his. When one asks who is "in Adam" and "in Christ" respectively, Paul makes his answer clear: every person without exception is "in Adam" (cf. vv. 12d-14), but only those who "receive the gift" (v. 17; i.e., "those who believe," according to Rom 1:16-5:11) are "in Christ." That "all" does not always mean "every single human being" is clear from many passages. According to Moo (1996:344), it is often clearly limited in context (e.g., Rom 8:32; 12:17, 18; 14:2; 16:19), so this suggestion has no linguistic barrier. In Romans 5:18, the scope of "all people" in the two parts of the verse is distinguished in the context. Paul makes it clear, both by his silence and by the logic of verses 12-14, that there is no limitation whatsoever on the number of those who are involved in Adam's sin, while the deliberately worded verse 17, along with the persistent stress on faith as the means of achieving righteousness in 1:16-4:25, makes it equally clear that only certain people derive the benefits from Christ's act of righteousness.

One could summarise it as God beginning another race in Christ, but this time it is in life, that is, his life. Paul refers to these two races as the "old man" (all who are in Adam) and the "new man" (all who are in Christ). The difference between the two is life. The question now is how is this new life manifested?

8. Identifying with Christ

When Christ came to earth, He took on Himself the form of man. In so doing, He became permanently identified with mankind. He was not born in death like others, for God was His Father. When He died on the cross, Paul says that, "our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with" (Rom 6:6). Thus the whole human race (our "old man" or "body of sin") was crucified with Christ. This was God's doing, and since believers were all in the "old man," all died with Christ. This has tremendous implications. If the old man has been crucified or put away, then God is no

longer dealing "in Adam." God no longer considers what believers are according to the flesh in any way. This truth can be found throughout the entire New Testament. Paul refers to this same truth in Galatians 2:20 when he says, "I have been crucified with Christ" (past tense). It is a historic fact. In Christ, God judged the entire human race, and put away the body of sin from His sight. All God's dealings now are in Christ (the new man), and every promise is to those who are in Christ by the Spirit. This is God's beginning place, a place of life.

9. There is No Condemnation

The reason, according to Lowe (1999:231), why many evangelicals believe that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ, is because Christ died in their place and for their sins (Rom 8:1). His reason for saying this is that justification through the substitutionary atonement of Christ is one of the first precepts drummed into new believers, and Rom 8:1 is often the proof text employed to establish the point (cf. Berkhof 1958:514; Erickson 1999:953).

Further to this in 8:1-2, Christians escape condemnation because the Spirit has transformed them. That is, because they now live in such a way that condemnation is no longer warranted. The question is; does "condemnation" refer to the eschatological judgement due sin or to the enslavement in sin experienced in this age? Is it averted, asks Lowe (1999:233) by the alien righteousness of Christ, or by transformational righteousness in union with Christ as previously discussed?

The obvious place to begin the search for answers is with the term κατάκριμα ("condemnation") and its cognate κατακρίνω ("condemn").

The verb κατακρίνω ("condemn") first appears in the lengthy discussion of sin and judgement from Rom 1:18-3:20. Specifically, Paul warns those who criticise the sins of others while overlooking their own: "For in what you judge another, you condemn yourself, for you who stand in judgement do the same things" (Rom 2:1).

The κατάκριμα ("condemnation") in view here, argues Lowe (1999:233) relates to the eschatological judgement of God: "the day of wrath and the revelation of the just judgement of God."

God will judge sin without favouritism (2:2-6). Those who have done good will receive eternal life, as well as glory, honour and peace; those who did evil will face death, as well as wrath and anger, affliction and distress (1:32; 2:6-11). This applies equally to all, whether Jew or Gentile (2:12-16).

Yet a problem soon becomes apparent. No one fulfils the requisite condition: no one is righteous (3:9-20). There is only one way for the deserved judgement to be averted, through the redemptive and substitutionary death of Christ as a propitiation for sin, for all who believe (3:21-26).

While some ambiguities remain (cf. Davies, 1990; Schreiner 1993), they do not affect the overall thrust of these texts. It is enough to note that the condemnation in view is clearly the eschatological judgement of sin, which is escaped only through the alien righteousness of Christ. In saying this and before anything can change on the deepest level in a life, a person has to lose the identity they have in Adam. As long as that identity remains the same, their outer actions may change to some extent, but such change does not amount to much in the ultimate sense. Losing one's identity in Adam is different to losing one's sin nature. It must be understood that God will not set about renovating the Adamic person for use in the Kingdom. The verdict of death has already been decreed over humanity. Romans 5:15 states it plainly: "… by the transgression of the one the many died." Earlier in Romans this message is repeatedly emphasised, "The wages of sin is death." Yet, he is able to say, "… the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23b). God's verdict on the Adamic nature is final. Mankind will never experience freedom from the fallen nature until they die and are resurrected in a new body. What is God to do in the meantime? One solution might be to strike dead all who receive Christ immediately and take them to heaven right there and then. This solution has some obvious drawbacks. If everyone who believed in Christ immediately fell dead, Christian evangelism might become harder than it already is! Besides, who would do the witnessing?

Whether for these reasons or others, this is not the direction God has decided to go. Instead of striking all believers dead, He has judicially declared them dead by identifying them with Christ. This means God elects to view believers as though they were in Christ. That is, He views them the same way He views His Son. This is certainly good news. Their standing before God couldn't be higher! But is it real? Or is this just double talk? How can it be true that a believer having died in Christ is seated in heaven, yet at the same time they are clearly sitting right here on earth, seemingly the same as ever? There are a few points that should help clarify this concept.

First, who views believers as being "the righteousness of God? It is God Himself, who, in the first place, views them this way. Yet this should not be taken to mean that identification with Christ is just some dream in the mind of God. Actually, the status is quite real. Consider the fact that one day fallen existence will end, either in death or when the Lord returns. However, a believer's standing in Christ will never end. When one thinks of it this way, a persons' standing in Christ is even more "real" than a life in Adam.

Second, the fact that those who believe have been identified with Christ is an item of faith for Christians. 1 Corinthians 1:30 says, "by God's doing you are in Christ." This is a plain proposition which might not be fully understood, but which needs to be accepted as a direct declaration by God. A person does not need to be able to confirm this statement with some kind of experience or feeling. It is a fact of scripture, which deserves willing belief from those who view scripture as the ultimate standard of truth. The genuine thing about believers is what God says about them. As previously stated, mankind did not sense or feel anything of Adam's fall, yet all received a fallen nature because he was the Federal Head. Although there certainly could be other explanations for mankind's selfish nature, the reason Christians believe their problems came from Adam, is because God has declared this in His Word.

God also declares that those who have trusted Christ, have died and risen with Him, though this truth cannot be felt either. Therefore, believers have the same reason for believing in their identification with Christ as in identification with Adam—God says so in His Word.

In summing up this section, one could say that the parallelism that Paul draws in Rom 5, between Adam and Christ in their relationship to believers, is impressive. He asserts that in some parallel way what each of them did has its influence on mankind (as Adam's sin leads to death, so Christ's act of righteousness leads to life). What is this parallel? If, as one might be inclined to think, the condemnation and guilt of Adam are imputed to all without there being any sort of conscious choice of his act, the same would necessarily hold true of the imputation of Christ's righteousness and redeeming work. But does His death justify all who believe by simple virtue of His identification with humanity through the incarnation and independently of whether one makes a conscious and personal acceptance of His work? And do all humans have the grace of Christ imputed to them, just as all have Adam's sin imputed to them? The usual answer of evangelicals is no; there is abundant evidence that there are two classes of persons', the lost and the saved, and that only a decision to accept the work of Christ makes it effective in ones life. But if this is the case, then would not the imputation of guilt based upon the action of Adam, albeit Adam as including all, requires some sort of volitional choice as well? If there is no "unconscious faith," can there be "unconscious sin"? And what is one to say of infants who die? Despite having participated in that first sin, they are somehow accepted and saved. Although they have made no conscious choice of Christ's work (or of Adam's sin for that matter), the spiritual effects of the curse are negated in their case. While some theologies preserve the parallelism by allowing either unconscious or unconditional imputation of Adam's guilt and Christ's righteousness, another available alternative seems preferable.

The current form of understanding could be laid out as follows: all were involved in Adam's sin, and thus receive both the corrupted nature that was his after the fall, and the guilt and condemnation that are attached to his sin. With this matter of guilt, however, just as with the imputation of Christ's righteousness, there must be some conscious and voluntary decision on ones part. Until this is the case, there is only a conditional imputation of guilt. Thus, there is no condemnation until one reaches the age of responsibility. If a child dies before becoming capable of making genuine moral decisions, the contingent imputation of Adamic sin does not become actual, and the child will experience the same type of future existence with the Lord, as will those who have reached the age of moral responsibility and had their sins forgiven

as a result of accepting the offer of salvation, based upon Christ's atoning death. The problem of the corrupted nature of such persons' is presumably dealt with in the way that the imperfectly sanctified nature of believers will be glorified.

Finally, it was said earlier that the purpose of God might be expressed as bringing many sons to glory (Heb 2:10). In the Old Covenant, however, one finds almost no mention of sonship, and what is mentioned is a very distant relationship. Israel is spoken of as God's son (Exod 4:22), but the thought of a nation being a son is very far from the intimate sonship one finds in the New Covenant. This close relationship was not possible before Calvary, but now that the matter of sin has been dealt with, the purpose God had in His heart all along can be fulfilled.

In the following section an explanation of the theme related to the topic of adoption and sonship will be discussed, and analysed.

10. The Spirit of Adoption and Sonship

> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together (Rom 8:14-17).

Two significant thoughts seem to dominate this passage. On the one hand, being sons of God explains why those who are placed under the dominion of the Spirit experience eschatological life (v.14, in relation to v.13). On the other hand according to Moo (1996:496), being children of God also places believers squarely in the "already—not yet" tension, created by their belonging to the new realm of righteousness, at the same time as they continue to live in the midst of the old realm of sin and death. In a word, being a "child" of God means to be an "heir" of God also, and thereby in Moo's view one must look to the future for the full enjoyment of "sonship" (v. 17, in relation to

vv. 18-30). In agreement with this view is Osten-Sacken (1975:143-44). He is among those who think that vv.14-30 is one large unit of thought, focused on the eschatological existence of the "sons of God." These points carry the basic thrust of the paragraph, with vv. 15-16 a somewhat parenthetical elaboration and justification, in Moo's thought (1996:496), of the assertion that those led by the Spirit are sons of God (cf. Lagrange; Ridderbos 1950:201). This paragraph then, carries forward Paul's theme of assurance in three ways:

- It gives further reason for the triumphant proclamation that believers who have God's Spirit will "live."
- It adds to the growing list another important description—"sons of God"—of believers as God's people, the heirs of God's promises, and, according to Lloyd-Jones (1970-88);
- It provides yet further justification for Paul's categorical assertion that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1).

The movement of thought in this paragraph, and the similarities found in Galatians 4:1-7, are clearly brought out by Moo (1996:497). He states that in both texts Paul affirms that believers are transformed from slaves to sons of God through the redeeming sacrifice of Christ, "sent" as one like us. In both, this new status is called "adoption" and is tied to the indwelling Spirit, the Spirit who makes believers deeply aware that they now belong to God as His dearly beloved children.

11. Adopted by God

> For you did not receive the spirit of bondage (slavery) again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out "Abba, Father" (Rom 8:15).

Paul could hardly have chosen a better term than "adoption." The word denotes the Greek, and particularly Roman legal rights and privileges that would ordinarily accrue to a natural child, Moo (1996:501) (cf. Lyall 1969:458-466; 1984:67-99). The Greeks normally used this word to describe a relationship brought about by the legal act of adoption. Paul's use of this word seems to be placed within this context (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5-7), although

scholar's debate (cf. Cranfield 1979; Byrne 1979) whether the term υἱοθεσία ("adoption") as Paul uses it, denotes the act of adoption or the status of sonship. The argument against this view is found in Rom 8:23, where the stress seems to be on the *act* of adopting rather than status, Moo (1996:501). Since the word almost invariably has this meaning outside the New Testament according to Scott (1992:227-36), this is probably Paul's main focus (Paul also uses the word in Eph 1:5, but it cannot be certain whether *"act"* or *"status"* is primary). However, while the institution is a Greco-Roman one, the underlying concept is rooted in the Old Testament and Judaism. "Adoption" is one of the privileges of Israel (Rom 9:4), and Israel, as one can see in many passages, is regularly characterised as God's "son or sons" in the Old Testament and Judaism (cf. Exod 4:22; Jer 3:19; 31:9; Hos 11:1; and, e.g., Sir 36:12; 4 Ezra 6:58). Based on the above one could confidently state that Paul's concern right along has had to do with Gentile believers as true "sons" of Abraham that came about through the redemptive work of Abraham's one "seed," Christ, who made it possible for all who trust in Him to share in His inheritance as fellow "sons," Fee (1994:406). But beyond that, such "sons of Abraham" are "sons of God" made so through Christ (Gal 4:5).

The evidence of such shared "sonship" is the presence of the Spirit of the Son, who by crying out "Abba" from within the believer, bears witness to the presence of the Son who made believers "sons," since that is His own distinctive term of address to God his Father.

That these, according to Fee (1994:46), are Paul's concerns is reinforced by a comparison with the passages from Rom 8:16-17 and Gal 4:4-7. He states that four matters are noteworthy:

1. Even though the language "adoption as sons" recurs in Romans 8:15, when the application is picked up in verses 16-17, Paul shifts from the term υἱοί ("sons") to the broader term τέκνα ("children"); thus the word play on υἱοί is unique to Galatians 4:5.

2. Rather than "the Spirit of His Son" in Galatians 4:6, the Spirit is designated "the Spirit of God" Romans 8:14; he is also "the Spirit of Sonship."

3. Rather than the Spirit crying out "Abba" as in Romans 8:15, "believers cry out by means of the Spirit" in Galatians 4:6 (which for Paul means the same thing, but this passage ties the cry more directly to the Spirit *of the* Son).

4. Although "becoming heirs is the net result in both passages, in the immediate passage, Galatians 4:7, the connection of being a "son" with being an "heir" is the main thrust, as verse 7 makes clear, whereas in Romans 8:17 the main thrust has become eschatological and focuses on believers' shared "heirship" with Christ.

12. "Abba Father"

Therefore, in crying out "Abba Father," the believer, as Moo rightly says (1994:502), not only gives voice to his or her consciousness of belonging to God as His child, but also to having a status comparable to that of Jesus himself. The fact that the Aramaic term "Abba" was used by Jesus himself in addressing His Father, and its preservation in the Greek Gospel of Mark (14:36) and in the Greek-speaking Pauline churches, attests to the fact that it was remembered and treasured as distinctive and meaningful. In ascribing to Christians indwelt by the Spirit the use of this same term in addressing God, Paul shows that Christians have a relationship to God that is like (though, of course, not exactly like) Christ's own relationship to the Father. In adopting believers, God has taken no half measures; believers have been made full members of the family and partakers of all the privileges belonging to members of that family (cf. Haenchen 1966:492-94; Barr 1988:173-79). Further to this Boice (1992:842) states that this word is of great significance for believers' prayers. Jesus was the Son of God in a unique sense, and God was uniquely His Father. He came to God in prayer as God's unique Son. As previously stated, believers are not like Him. Nevertheless, Jesus revealed that this same relationship could be enjoyed by all who believe on Him, all whose sins are removed by His sufferings.

13. Conclusion

Romans 5:12-21 is very clear that through one man (Adam) sin entered the world and death came to all men. Through this one act, judgement followed;

and God considered all men to be sinful. The good news is that God did not leave it at that. Romans 5:1 is clear, "for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience many will be made righteous." Scripture states that mankind stands in relationship to one of two men, whose actions determine the eternal destiny of all who belong to them. Either one belongs to Adam and is under sentence of death because of his sin, or one belongs to Christ and is assured of eternal life because of His righteous act of obedience.

God's plan for man's redemption can be seen through the eyes of *two covenants*. The one, made with Adam and broken by him, resulted in man's death. The second covenant, through Jesus Christ, resulted in man's redemption. God now sees humanity either in Adam, under divine judgement and condemnation of death, or in Christ (the last Adam), under the abundance of divine grace, eternally justified and in Him made righteous (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9).

The important thing to see is that what Christ did as Saviour, was to open up the way to intimate fellowship with God by the Spirit; and to bring believers into sonship through the infilling of the Holy Spirit. This receiving of the Spirit places one into sonship through adoption (Rom 8:15). The ultimate evidence of this "sonship" is the believer's use of the Son's own address to the Father in prayer, *Abba*. Through this crying out, the believer not only gives voice to his or her consciousness of belonging to God as His child, but also to having a status comparable to that of Jesus himself. In ascribing to Christians indwelt by the Spirit the use of this same term in addressing God, Paul shows that Christians have a relationship to God that is like Christ's own relationship to the Father.

The key to the Christian experience in Pauline theology is without doubt to be found in the work of the Holy Spirit within the believer's life. In every aspect of his theology—at least what is basic to his theology—the Spirit plays a leading role. To be sure, the Spirit is not *the* centre for Paul—Christ is, ever and always—but the Spirit stands close to the centre, making Christ known and empowering all genuine Christian life and experience.

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The Exegetical Method Employed in 1 Peter 2:4-10

by

Bradley Cooper[1]

Abstract

The New Testament writers employed conventional Jewish exegetical techniques of the New Testament era to interpret the Old Testament, but contemporary New Testament interpreters often fail to identify correctly the exegetical methods being employed. Using 1 Peter 2:4-10 as a test case, this article demonstrates the process of identifying the exegetical method New Testament authors used to interpret the Old Testament. One key is for interpreters to rely less on formulaic introductions and phrases as keys to identifying exegetical methods and to take all facets of the methodologies into account.

1. Introduction

One of the greatest aids in studying and interpreting the New Testament's use of the Old has been the examination of the Jewish exegetical practices of that era.

> Biblical interpretation in the New Testament church shows in a remarkable way the Jewishness of earliest Christianity. It

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> followed exegetical methods common to Judaism and drew its perspective and presuppositions from Jewish backgrounds (Ellis1992:121).

Since the authors of the New Testament have left behind only the results of their hermeneutics, and not a detailed explanation of their processes, modern readers must often compare the Scriptures with contemporary Jewish writings in the attempt to gain a better understanding of their methods. Consequently, the discoveries at Qumran have been particularly valuable, as the exegetical methods employed there were both explained and demonstrated.

Unfortunately, the existence of such supplementary material does not always guaranty a clear picture of the exegetical method employed by the New Testament authors. In 1 Peter 2:4-10, for example, modern scholars have variously argued that the method employed by Peter is *midrash*, typology or *pesher*.[2] These differing opinions may partially result from the uncertainty of the terms themselves.

> Much confusion exists with regard to the use of the terms "pesher" and "midrash." The definitions of these terms are not fixed even in the technical literature. Often when these terms are used, they are not clearly defined (Bock 1985:311).

Additionally, the occasional lack of textual keys, such as formulaic introductions or phrasing, serves to increase the difficulty of distinguishing between the similarities of certain methods.

This paper, in seeking to explain the exegetical method behind 1 Peter 2:4-10, will:

- briefly describe the various Jewish exegetical practices of Peter's day.

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[2] Michaels (1988:95) argues that "The heart of vv 4-10 is a midrash based primarily on Isa 28:16 and secondarily on several other biblical texts." Oss (1989:195) counters that in this passage "we find the most distinct Petrine use of the midrash-pesher genre available to us." Marshall (1991:71), on the other hand, views the passage as "a case of typology: What God was doing in the time of Isaiah is seen as the pattern for what he is now doing…."

- provide a clear description of pesher and typology, along with a description of their development and employment at Qumran.
- demonstrate Peter's employment of both typology and pesher in his sermons as recorded in Acts.
- analyze 1 Peter in general, and 2:4-10 in particular, for further clues as to Peter's hermeneutical attitude and methods.

2. Jewish Exegesis

According to Longenecker (1975:28), "Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher, and allegorical." Literalists took the Word of God at face value: what they read was what it meant, "with the result that the natural meaning of the text is applied to the lives of the people" (Longenecker 1987:6). In this manner, literal interpretation most closely resembles modern exegesis in that the text is examined for what it says, and then the results of those studies are applied to a current situation.

Midrashic exegetes however, believed in the *sensus plenior*, or "hidden meaning," inherent to all Scripture, whether that meaning lay in a passage, phrase, or individual word.

> Midrashic exegesis ostensibly takes its point of departure from the biblical text itself … and seeks to explicate the hidden meanings contained therein by means of agreed upon hermeneutical rules…. The purpose of midrashic exegesis is to contemporize the revelation of God given earlier for the people of God living later in a different situation (Longenecker 1987:6).

The purpose of this activity was to modernize and adapt Scripture so as to make the text more relevant and applicable to current situations (Ellis 1993:151).

Allegorical approaches also looked to a secondary level of understanding in an attempt to liberate the "spiritual" meaning of the text from its primary understanding.

> Allegory is an interpretive method which assumes that the writer is attempting to communicate something other than that which he is actually saying. Seeking to go behind the obvious to the real meaning, it treats the elements of the text as symbols (Scott 2001:132).

Accordingly, the "natural" sense of the text was to be disregarded in favour of the deeper meanings that the text was thought to contain. This was accomplished by treating "the Old Testament as a body of symbols given by God for man's spiritual and moral benefit, which must be understood other than in a literal and historical fashion" (Longenecker 1975:46).

Another form of Jewish exegesis is typology. It "differs from allegory in that allegory finds a secondary meaning in a text without regard to the original meaning or context" (Brewer 1992:221), whereas "typological exegesis regards the words of Scripture not as metaphors hiding a deeper meaning but as the record of historical events out of whose literal sense the meaning of the text arises" (Ellis 1993:169). "Typological exegesis is thus not a disclosure of the *sensus plenior* of the text" but "it is rather a disclosure of … divine activity in history" (Fishbane 1985:352).

> To reiterate the distinction between the two: In allegory the historical, cultural situation is inconsequential in determining the spiritual meaning; it merely provides clues through which the spiritual import may be found. In typology the historical situation and content of the passage are significant in themselves; true, they may be played down and considered of only secondary importance at best, but they are viewed as both real and valuable (Scott 2001:133)

The purpose of such an approach was to reveal a pattern of Divine activity so that "history becomes an insight into the present and the future" (Brewer 1992:221).

Pesher interpretation, though similar to the midrashic and allegorical acceptance of additional meanings, does differ in its point of departure. "With *pesher*, the starting point for understanding is not the Old Testament text, but a

historical event or person" (Snodgrass 1991:420). Midrashic and allegorical interpretations on the other hand look first to the text before seeking an application. For instance, *midrash* will approach a passage by saying "that (the Word) has relevance to this," while *pesher* looks first to the situation, saying, "this (situation) is that" (Longenecker 1975:43). Accordingly, *pesher* is often recognized through its formulaic "this is that" phrasing.

This emphasis on the current situation is what helps to differentiate *pesher* from typology as well. While "*pesher* exegesis moves…from current event to text" (Sloan and Newman 1996:31), typology looks to the historical past as "both the basis and confirmation of the secondary application" (Brewer 1992:221). In other words, while typology sees the history of the Old Testament as the key to understanding current events, a *pesher* approach sees the revelation of current events as the springboard for interpreting the Old Testament.

This interpretation however, was not restricted to the original sense of the text, but rather, was by design, an attempt to uncover a hidden meaning in the text that would apply to the present day situation. As a result, *pesher* can be further distinguished from typology in that the exegete employing this technique often modifies the text he is examining to make it more applicable to the events of his day.[3]

3. The Use of *Pesher* at Qumran

The community at Qumran was heavily influenced by the *pesher* exegetical method. It saw the Old Testament prophecies as "a 'mystery' (*raz*) in need of interpretation (*pesher*)" (Ellis 1993:160). This understanding of *pesher* is drawn primarily by the actual use of the word "*pesher*" in the Old Testament. "It is an Aramaic term used thirty times in the Book of Daniel to designate exclusively the interpretation of dreams or visions" (Patte 1975:301). The purpose of Daniel's predictions was that "the Jewish people as a whole …

[3] See Ellis EE 1993. *Prophecy and hermeneutic in early Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker. Ellis first briefly reviews Stendahl's analysis comparing textual variants at Qumran with those in Matthew, then goes on to do the same with Pauline examples (pp. 175-181).

might understand their own day as a part of the divine plan for history which was fast approaching its consummation" (Brownlee 1979:35). Therefore, his words are seen as an explanation of his community's current situation that is based upon supernatural revelation.

Likewise, the *pesher* employed at Qumran is eschatological in nature, identifying its own place in time as the last days of the present age (Ellis 1993:160). "This eschatological exegesis views the Old Testament as promises and prophecies that have their fulfilment within the writer's own time and community" (Ellis 1993:160). It is therefore a small step for the Qumran community to transpose "the use of the term '*pesher*' … from the revealed interpretation of a dream to the revealed interpretation of … the prophetic texts" (Patte 1975:301). The Qumran exegete's revealed interpretation is then, like Daniel's, "for the benefit of all who would hear and believe and identify themselves with his Community" (Brownlee 1979:35).

In addition, it was believed that this *sensus plenior* "could be ascertained only from a revelational standpoint" and that "the true message of Scripture was heard only when prophecy and interpretation were brought together" (Longenecker 1975:44). "The presupposition is that the text contains a mystery communicated by God that is not understood until the solution is made known by an inspired interpreter" (Snodgrass 1991:420). Thus at Qumran, the task of interpretation was considered a charismatic exercise that was left to the inspired teachers of the community (Ellis 1993:161). "Like prophets, they are mediators of the divine word and delivers of divine messages of contemporary significance" (Kugel and Greer 1986:62). Their role was not simply to interpret the Scriptures, but was instead to seek out the hidden meanings inherent to Scripture that could provide insight and guidance to the community.

Though *pesher* and typology differ as methods of interpretation, they share a similar hermeneutical flavour, as in both cases revelation occurs between the tension of Scripture and history (Patte 1975:312). At Qumran, both of these methods were used in complementary fashion so that "the community could discover its identity as the eschatological community of the New Covenant" (Patte 1975:312).

"For the covenanters' interpretation of Scripture there was only one *Sitz im Leben*: the community" (Patte 1975:213). "They had an eschatological focus in their reading of the Hebrew Scriptures" because they "believed they were an end-time community" (Snodgrass 1991:417). Thus, "the prophetic text" is interpreted "as referring to the community and its history (Patte 1975:304) while "biblical sacred history was seen as the *type* of contemporary and future sacred history" (Patte 1975:312).

Patte (1975:309) goes on to argue that though the process of "uncovering the community's revealed identity" was continual, "a further use of Scripture was needed in order that it might discover how to carry out its vocation." He notes that this second application of Scripture is more dynamic as "Scripture was used in tension with cultural changes" as "how to carry out the community's revealed identity (i.e., how to be God's Chosen People) was to be discovered in each new cultural situation" (1975:310-311).

4. Peter's Attitude toward the Old Testament

Understanding the prevailing methods of exegesis in first century Judaism provides a framework within which we can analyse the evidence we have of Peter's attitude towards the Old Testament. In the second chapter of Acts, Peter stands up to address the crowds on the day of Pentecost. In explaining the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he introduces a quote from Joel by saying "*this is that* which was spoken by the prophet" (Acts 2:16, NKJV, italics added). The introductory statement itself is undeniably *pesher* in flavour with its "this is that" formulation. The message too is of a *pesher* nature, for when Peter declares that "a prophecy which in Joel was addressed to the nation Israel now had its fulfilment in the Christian church" (Harrison 1969:1127), he, like the exegetes at Qumran, has applied by inspiration a past prophetic word to his community's current situation.

> Under the Spirit's guidance, Peter, like the pesher commentaries of Qumran, was moving from current event (the outpouring of God's Spirit) to text (Joel 2). What was hidden from previous generations—the true significance of Joel 2—was now revealed" (Sloan and Newman 1991:34).

The fact that Peter's is indeed applying a *pesher* technique here is given further evidence by his alteration of "afterward" in the original of Joel to "in the last day."[4] This change served to heighten the aspect of fulfilment (Longenecker 1975:100), thereby making it more applicable to his current audience.

Another "surprising piece of Biblical *pesher*-exegesis" (Bruce 1973:232) comes in Acts 4:11. In citing Psalm 118:22, Peter again presents a new fulfilment to an Old Testament prophecy by claiming: "*this is the* '*stone* which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone'" (Acts 4:11, NKJV, emphasis mine). Once more Peter uses the "this is that" formula ("that" being "the stone"), to introduce the Old Testament text. And, as we noted in Acts 2:16, Peter again alters the text he is quoting to make it more applicable to his audience. In this instance, his alteration of "the builders" from Psalm 118:22 to "you builders" clearly reveals his *pesher* understanding and application of the passage.

However, Peter did not limit himself to only a *pesher* approach to the Old Testament. An example of typology and fulfilment is seen in Peter's words in the first chapter of Acts, as he discusses both the fate of Judas and the necessity of replacing him. Peter, in the midst of a particular situation, looks back to general statements made in the Old Testament and finds a suitable application for them. Psalm 69:25 addresses the enemies of the godly man, and is therefore a natural "type of the betrayer of Jesus" (Marshall 1994:65), the God-Man. Psalm 109:8 is likewise a curse directed towards the enemy of a man of God (David), and therefore the curse can easily be redirected to the enemy of the Son of David.

It is clear from these passages that Peter, from a Jewish perspective, saw the solidarity of his people's history, and its typological correspondence with the present age. It is also obvious that as a Christian he saw the entirety of the Old Testament as pointing to Jesus and the new age that he would usher in. These attitudes allowed him to use both the history and prophecies of the Old

[4] While both Marshall (1994:73) and Longenecker (1975:100) note this alteration, only Longenecker discusses the *pesher* connection.

Testament to address the situations of his day with both typology and *pesher* exegesis.

5. Analysing 1 Peter 2:4-10

Having examined the exegetical methods of the day, as well as Peter's own personal exegetical tendencies, this paper now focuses on an attempt to discern which method Peter employed for the passage in question. To begin with, Michaels (1988:95) conclusion that this passage is a *midrash* is unconvincing. As Best (1969) has detailed, Peter's use of the Old Testament in this passage served to build and strengthen an argument. No commentary is given for the texts used, as "the material is of interest to him only as it supports and illuminates his own rhetorical purposes" (Moyise and van Rensburg 2002:27). As the purpose of *midrash* is to offer practical commentary for the text, the absence of such commentary indicates that another method was employed.

Typology, however, is much more difficult to dismiss as the method with which Peter drew upon these Old Testament sources. In fact, Bruce (1977:67) explains Peter's use of Hosea in verse 10 in a manner that suggests typological influence.

> In 1 Peter 2:10 (as in Romans 9:25 f.) this promise, which originally referred to a situation within the national frontiers of Israel, is seen to embody a principle which in apostolic days was being worked out on a world-wide scale.

If Bruce is correct in this assessment, then Peter, while not denying the reality of the original promise, may in fact be interpreting it as a type of God's reaching out again to people who were not originally His people.

Without a *pesher* introduction, the task of differentiating between clear-cut *pesher* and typological correspondence is a difficult one. While *pesher* deals first with the present and typology focuses on the past, both seek to understand the correlation between the two. Perhaps it is this common ground, formed in the dynamic tension between past and present, which at times makes it difficult to distinguish between them. Though it could be maintained that

pesher deals with quotations while typology deals with images, even that distinction becomes blurred in 1 Peter. Passages such as 1 Peter 2:9 could either 1) in a *pesher* fashion be saying that Moses' words, as recorded in Deuteronomy, actually refer to Christians, or 2) through typology be saying "you are now what Israel was."

The difficult task of identifying Peter's method of exegesis in 1 Peter 2:4-10 is, however, aided by his own testimony back in the first chapter of his letter, where he claims that the Old Testament prophets did not have the full interpretation of their own revelations, but that their prophecies where intended for Peter and his audience. Thus, the Old Testament prophecies are at once recognised as being both previously hidden and now open for interpretation.

> 1 Peter 1:10-12 enunciates a clear-cut pesher attitude toward the nature of biblical prophecy…though the terms 'mystery' and 'interpretation' are not employed, the thought here is strikingly parallel to the *raz-pesher* motif found in the Qumran commentaries (Longenecker 1975:201).

In his explanation that even the Old Testament prophets failed to find the fullness of the gospel that we now know, Peter was not, as Grudem suggests (1995:67), trying "to increase his reader's appreciation for their great salvation in Christ." Rather, his design was to communicate the foundation for his understanding of Scripture: a *pesher* attitude, which "is similar to the approach of the Qumran covenanters in dealing with prophecy" (Oss 1989:196).

Further evidence of this *pesher* approach is seen in 1 Peter 1:24-25, where Peter quotes from Isaiah and then applies that quotation with the "this is that" formulation. "'But the word of the LORD endures forever.' Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you" (1:24-25, NKJV). As Ellis (1993:160-11) points out, the "this is that" or "this is" formulation often appears at the end of the quote, and must not be understood as only an introductory formula. Thus, in this passage we again find a *pesher* formulation and a *pesher* application, as Isaiah's prophecy about God's word is now *understood* to be regarding the gospel message.

Therefore, if Peter's previous exegetical examples are to be a guide, then one must lean toward viewing 1 Peter 2:4-10 as *pesher* in nature. Though his use of the stone imagery in these verses comes without the "this is that" formula, it must be recognised that "the author is giving us the results of his use of Scripture without emphasizing the process itself" (Patte 1975:303). That process, however, has already been shown in 1 Peter 1:10-12, where the author has clearly stated his understanding of the Old Testament prophecies as former mysteries that are now being opened for understanding. This exegetical foundation provides the basis for any future prophetic applications that Peter may make. It is therefore the assertion of this paper that Peter's *pesher* attitude toward the Old Testament is the primary exegetical force behind 2:4-10.

Additionally, as shown earlier, Peter has already introduced the same quotation from Psalm 118:22 in Acts 4:11 with "this is the stone" formula. It must therefore be recognised that Peter does not employ the *pesher* introductory formula in every instance in which that has been his exegetical method.[5]

In the same manner, the purpose of the passage should give some indication as to the method used to develop it. The two main points of the passage seem to be to help his readers understand their new identity (Grudem 1995:97), and the obligations of that new life (Moyise and van Rensburg 2002:17-20).

> "He reminds them of their new identity in three ways: (1) indirectly, and independently of the three quotations (v. 5); (2) directly, on the basis of Isa 28:16 (vv. 7-8); (3) directly, in terms drawn loosely from a number of other biblical texts (vv. 9-10)" (Michaels 1988:94).

In citing these passages together, Peter was trying "to assign to the Gentile communities … an essentially Jewish identity" (Michaels 1988:95).

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[5] Sloan and Newman (1991:34) note that the absence of a formulaic pesher introduction is not unique to Peter's writings: "Although the New Testament rarely employs the formula "this it that," its bold, Spirit-inspired, eschatological treatment of the Old Testament is often pesher-like."

Like the exegetes at Qumran, Peter wanted his people to see themselves as a religious community with a corporate identity. To this end, he describes his readers as "living stones (1 Pet 2:5)," as at Qumran where "the image of the stone…was applied to the community…and the members of the community are even described as stones" (Oss 1989:195).

Peter's understanding of this new community, like that at Qumran, also went beyond mere identity. In his eyes "to be the people of God is not only a privilege but a responsibility" (Michaels 1988:96). While the above texts serve to give identity to Peter's readers, this is not his only goal. "Peter's ultimate theological use of the … texts may have been to establish a compelling foundation for his ethical exhortation" (Oss 1989:193). This duty aspect of identity, once established, is illustrated throughout the rest of 1 Peter 2.

This stress upon community identity and responsibility seems to tip the balance further away from a typological understanding of the passage. While typology is primarily used to disclose the historical pattern of divine activity (Fishbane 1985:352), the focus of *pesher* is to explain the current situation via the interpretation of Old Testament prophecy. In this way, the exegetes at Qumran apprehended the Old Testament and gave their community a sense of identity and purpose. It appears that in this passage, Peter was doing the very same.

Finally, while the passages from Isaiah and Psalms were clearly prophecies in need of interpretation, Hosea's words (quoted in 4:10) might have been viewed as typological by Peter, given the recent inclusion of the Gentiles as the people of God.[6] However, looking back to Acts 10, one is reminded that the inclusion of the Gentiles was first revealed to Peter in a vision. This supernatural revelation could itself be considered as a likely foundation for a *pesher* interpretation of Hosea. As with his quotation from Joel on the day of Pentecost, Peter again seems to be moving from current event (the inclusion of the Gentiles) to the text (Hosea's prophecy) with a *pesher* orientation.

[6] Despite arguing against a typological approach by Peter in this passage, the author does view Hosea's words as a typological precedent for God's ongoing and future saving activities.

6. Conclusion

After examining the definitions of Jewish exegetical methods, it is easy to understand the daunting nature of the task of deciding which one was employed in writing a specific New Testament passage. The main difficulty seems to arise from the fact that each method overlaps with one or more methods in at least one area of its description (see Appendix A). For instance, (1) several methods look for a "hidden" or "spiritual" meaning, (2) several rely on the original meaning of the text, (3) several seek to provide a contemporary interpretation of the Old Testament and (4) and several look to the text first to begin their exegetical process.

Because of this overlapping, scholars have alternately pointed to *midrash,* typology and *pesher* as the exegetical method employed in 1 Peter 2:1-10. However, the following evidence supports the conclusion that Peter was employing *pesher* exegesis as he wrote the passage in question.

- his use of *pesher* in Acts
- his *pesher* attitude in 1 Peter 1:10-12
- his re-use of the previously *peshered* Psalm 118 in the passage in question
- the intent of the passage to reveal a community identity and responsibility to his Gentile audience (which is how *pesher* was employed at Qumran)
- his supernatural revelation in Acts 10 that Gentiles were to be included establishes a foundation for a *pesher* interpretation of Hosea
- the lack of textual commentary, which seems to indicate that the current situation was Peter's point of departure

This analysis of Peter's use of the Old Testament in 1 Peter 2:1-10 suggests that relying exclusively on formulaic introductions and phrasings to identify the exegetical method used to interpret the Old Testament is inadequate. Though the presence of such formulas is a great aid in understanding the author's methods, the absence of these formulas can too easily be used to dismiss a particular method. Instead, each identifier, be it method, point of departure or purpose, should be included in the examination process so that all facets of the methodology in question are brought into a sharper focus.

Appendix A

Methods of Jewish Exegesis

Method	**Description**	**Point of Departure**	**Purpose**
Literal	Searches for the natural meaning of the text	Text	To provide current application
Midrash	Searches for the "hidden meaning" of the text	Text	To provide current application
Allegorical	Treats Old Testament as a collection of symbols, and ignores the original meaning	Text	To illuminate the "spiritual meaning" of the text
Typological	Treats the history of the Old Testament as a precedent for God's current and future actions	Text	Demonstrates a continuity that underlies Divine activity
Pesher	Points to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy in current situation	Current events	Give community a sense of identity and a sense of purpose

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Progressive Covenantalism as an Integrating Motif of Scripture[1]

by Dan Lioy[2]

Abstract

Progressive covenantalism is a new working model for comprehending the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. The goal is to articulate a consistent understanding of how to put together seemingly heterogeneous portions of Scripture. This integrating motif asserts that God's progressive revelation of His covenants is an extension of the kingdom blessings He first introduced in creation. Affiliated claims are that the various covenants revealed in Scripture are interrelated and build on one another, that the people of God throughout the history of salvation are united, and that they equally share in His eschatological promises.

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1. Introduction

The present interest in the subject began after watching the webcast, "What Is Progressive Covenantalism," hosted by Michael Patton and Rhome Dyck of *The Theology Program* (Patton and Dyck 2005). In fact, this was the first time I heard the concept introduced and explained. Admittedly, the notion of "progressive dispensationalism" has been around for a number of years, as reflected in the publication *Continuity and Discontinuity* (Feinberg 1988a; cf. Blaising and Bock 1993; Willis and Master 1994), but the idea of "progressive covenantalism" was different, especially as presented by individuals who did their graduate studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, an academic institution long known for its dispensational leanings.

Patton and Dyck's intent was to come up with a consistent understanding of how to put together seemingly heterogeneous portions of Scripture. Concededly, they do not give an elaborate explanation of what they mean by progressive covenantalism. Nonetheless, the comments they make in their lecture provide a useful starting point for proposing a new working model of how to understand the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. (As a disclaimer, my elaboration of what Patton and Dyck have proposed concerning progressive covenantalism reflects my own views, not necessarily theirs.) This endeavor mirrors the ongoing task of theology. As König explains, "theology is not merely *repeating* what is written in the Bible but rather *rethinking* the biblical material" so as to foster greater understanding (1994:182; italics are his).

What is the reason for introducing another approach to explain the intertextuality between the testaments?[3] It is centered in the shortcomings associated with the concept of "dispensations." Patton and Dyck note that over the past century, dispensationalism has focused on the discontinuity in the master plan of God (cf. Blaising 1992:23-39; Saucy 1993:26-27; for an

[3] For differing views on various aspects of the intertextuality between the testaments, see Balentine 1981:41-57; Black 1971:1-14; Bock 1985a:209-220; Bock 1985b:306-316; Evans 1986:25-32; Fensham 1971:82-94; Holbrook 1974:127-141; Nakarai 1978:81-89; Roehrs 1984:204-216; Simian-Yofre 1998:267-298; Wehemeier 1971:30-42; and Weir 1982:65-76.

examination of dispensational positions of discontinuity, cf. Feinberg 1988b:63-86). Indeed, the spotlight is on the separate ways in which the Lord has worked among His people in different periods of time (for a summary of classic dispensational teachings regarding Israel and church, cf. Yip 2001:2-19). The lecturers observe that this emphasis is misplaced. Rather than accent distinctions within different portions of Scripture, it is more helpful to talk about the unity of the divine plan for the faith community throughout history. In this case, God's covenant with His people is the basis for seeing more continuity than discontinuity between the testaments (regarding the fundamental homogeneity and continuity between the testaments, cf. Lioy 2005:15-16).

An investigation into this topic surfaced one instance in which progressive covenantalism was associated with theonomy or Christian reconstructionism (see www.gospelpedlar.com/cov_dis.html). In another instance, Moore (2000:23), a professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, used the phrase "progressive covenantalism" in reference to the views of Hoekema (a longtime professor at Calvin Theological Seminary) concerning the way in which the kingdom promises of the Old Testament will be fulfilled (cf. Hoekema 1979:274). These references, however, seem to be more incidental and not representative of a broader, well-established view concerning progressive covenantalism.

In light of the preceding observations, there is merit in developing further the theological construct put forward by Patton and Dyck. As a disclaimer, the goal of this essay is not to present a wide-ranging summary of contemporary thought regarding the covenant (for an overview of the development of the doctrine of the covenant in post-Reformation theology, as well as twentieth-century trends of the interpretations of the doctrine of the covenant, cf. Kil Ho Lee 1993:4-21). This essay reflects the conviction that while there is "great variety in the Bible," the Word of God is also characterized by "meaningful coherence" in which thematic trajectories can be discerned (König 1994:182). Concerning the integrating motif proposed in this treatise, the major premise is that God's progressive revelation of His covenants is an extension of the kingdom blessings He first introduces in creation. Affiliated claims are that the various covenants revealed in Scripture are interrelated and build on one

another, that the people of God throughout the history of salvation are united, and that they equally share in His eschatological promises.

2. God's Progressive Revelation of His Covenants

2.1. Theological Covenants

This essay affirms the view that the covenant concept is used as an organizing and controlling principle of Scripture. Through the Messiah, the covenant also links God's various affirmations of His creative and salvific purposes toward humanity (Akins 1995:249-250; Beckwith 1987:98-99; Jocz 1968:68, 225; König 1994:183; Shelton 2004:21, 34).[4] Matthews (2000:vii) regards the covenant as one of four overarching themes that "comprise the literary and theological glue of the ancient Israelite writers." The other three themes identified by the author are remnant, universalism, and wisdom (cf. Jacob 1958:136). Indeed, Matthews (2000:7) considers the covenant concept as "the single most overriding theme in the Old Testament" (cf. Freedman 1964:419; Nicholson 1986:209-210, 216; Payne 1962:73-74; Van Groningen 1990:59). As well, Williamson (2003:139) observes that the "divine-human covenants" are not only pivotal within the Hebrew sacred writings, but also are "foundational for the revelation that unfolds in the rest of the Bible" (cf. Kent 1985:289; Walton 1994:24-46). McKenzie (2000:8) adds that covenant is the

[4] For a summary of recent biblical scholarship on the definition and taxonomy of covenant, cf. Hahn 2005:263-292. For a detailed study of how the covenant concept is defined and deployed in the Old Testament, cf. Jocz 1968:17-82; Lane 2000. For an examination of the relationship between covenant and promise in the Old Testament, especially in connection with the history of redemption, cf. McComiskey 1985:59-93. For an in-depth look at the meaning of covenant in both testaments, cf. McKenzie 2000. For an examination of the covenantal structure of the Bible, cf. Harless 2004:49-65. For an overview of the divine program of redemption within a covenant paradigm, cf. Most 1967:1-19. For an analysis of various proposals concerning the theological center of the Old Testament, cf. Hasel 1991:139-171.

foremost biblical image "to express the relationship between God and humans."[5]

By acknowledgment, no consensus exists "over the precise number of divine covenants in Scripture." Some affirm "only those divine-human relationships to which covenantal terminology is expressly applied." In contrast, this essay identifies "several additional covenants" (Williamson 2000:420; cf. the discussion presented by Walton 1994:47-62). Even when the word "covenant" does not appear, the motif remains present throughout Scripture, whether explicitly or implicitly (Bratcher 1987:24; Shelton 2004:24). To be specific, the history of salvation is understood within the framework of three central or dominant theological covenants: the covenant of redemption, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace (cf. Osterhaven 2001:301-303; Vos 2000:23). These three are called "theological covenants" because, while not explicit, they are implicit in the Bible (for an examination of the covenant concept in reformed theology, cf. Murray 1953:3-32; VanGemeren 1988:37-62).

The *covenant of redemption* is understood as being made in eternity past among the members of the Godhead (Grudem 1994:518-519). An examination of the broad sweep of Scripture as well as the history of salvation indicates that it was the intent of the Father to appoint the Son to live a morally perfect life (Heb 4:15; 7:26-27). In turn, He became an acceptable substitutionary sacrifice by dying an undeserved death at Calvary (Rom 3:25-26). He did this on behalf of those who would trust in Him for salvation. In essence, the Messiah became the covenantal representative for the elect (1 Pet 1:17-21; cf. the extensive discussion offered by McComiskey 1985:179-192).

The outworking of the covenant of redemption is seen in the covenant of works and the covenant of grace (Robertson 1980:55). In the garden of Eden, the *covenant of works* (sometimes referred to as the covenant of creation; cf. Hos 6:7) was made between God and Adam as the head of humanity (Gen

[5] Cf. Dyrness 1977:113; Eichrodt 1961:1:36, 502-511; Fensham 1971: 94; Freedman 1964:419; Jacob 1958:211; Jocz 1968:9, 227; Mendenhall and Herion 1992:1:1179, 1201; Shelton 2004:24, 34-35; Shelton 2005:36, 43; Thompson 1979:1:791.

1:28-30; 2:15-17; cf. the detailed analysis put forward by McComiskey 1985:213-221). Admittedly, this portion of Scripture does not specifically mention the Hebrew word for "covenant" (cf. Dumbrell 1984:43-46); yet as Matthews (2000:7-8) notes, it contains "elements of covenantal or treaty language" (cf. Grudem, 1994:516-517; Shelton, 2005:45). Also, as Rendtorff (1989:386, 388, 393) argues, God's covenant with His creation forms the macro-structure around which the primeval narrative of Genesis 1-11 is organized. Likewise, Brown (1996:289) notes that creation itself "provides a defining framework" and the "cosmic bedrock that supports the covenant" (cf. Robertson 1980:27, 44-45, 62; VanGemeren, 1990:86, 280). Additionally, McKenzie (2000:47) observes that chapters 1:1-2:3 "prepare the reader for the series of covenants to come." This is done in two ways. First, the Genesis narrative verbalizes the divine blessing for humans to be fruitful and multiply, a notion that subsequent covenants reaffirm. Second, the passage explains "the origin of Sabbath, which will serve as the sign of the [Mosaic] covenant" (cf. Lioy 2004:40-46, 65-70; Lioy 2005:53-55; Ross 1988:95).[6]

The Lord created Adam in His image and gave Adam the covenantal responsibility of expanding the vice-regency of the human race from Eden to the entire earth (Van Groningen 1996:125). This was to occur by the increase in numbers of the human race and their dominion over the planet.[7] In this special arrangement, Adam was required to pass the test of the forbidden fruit. If he succeeded, the human race would have completed its earthly history without sin and death. Because Adam failed the test, he brought the judgment of death to the entire human race (Rom 5:18).

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[6] For a discussion of how the Genesis account of the garden of Eden is pivotal to making sense of what Scripture teaches regarding the people of Israel, cf. Och 1988:143-156. For an explanation of how Genesis 1—2 can be understood covenantally, cf. Dumbrell 1984:33-39; Harless 2004:69-81; Nwachukwu 2002:43-69; Robertson 1980:67-92. For an argument against the notion of an all-embracing covenant between God and His creation in the period before the biblical Flood, cf. Williamson 2000:420-421; Williamson 2003:141-143.

[7] With respect to the immediate context of Genesis 1:26-28 as it pertains to the mandate of human beings to serve as God's vice-regents over the earth, cf. Lioy 2005:51-52.

In light of the fact that Adam disobeyed God and broke the covenant of works, God established the *covenant of grace* (also known as the Edenic covenant) between Himself and humankind (Gen 3:15; Isa 42:6; cf. Grudem 1994:519; Payne 1962:96; Payne 1973:157-158).[8] The Messiah, as the head of redeemed humanity, is pivotal to this special arrangement (Rom 5:15-21). The Son received from the Father the promise of an elect people, whom Christ redeemed from the curse of the Fall through His atoning sacrifice at Calvary. Moreover, the second Adam fulfilled the obligations of human loyalty that the first Adam failed to heed. The Messiah alone is able to give eternal life to all who put their faith in Him.

The basis for the covenant of grace is the promise of God to humankind in the garden of Eden, as recorded in Genesis 3:15 (cf. Dyrness 1977:116; Kaiser 1978:35-37, 78-79). Traditionally, this verse has been called the "protoevangelium," "first gospel," or "first account of the gospel of redemption" (Van Groningen 1990:110; cf. Kidner 1967:70-72; Hamilton 1990:199-200; Kaiser 1995:37-38; Klooster 1988:140-144; Leupold 1942:163-170; Peacock 1995:35-36). The Lord declared that He would put continuous enmity between the serpent and the woman. There would also be ongoing hostility between the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman. Moreover, the offspring of Eve would crush the head of the serpent, while the serpent would strike her offspring's heel.

This summary reflects an historical-exegetical reading of the text. Because later biblical writers also interpreted the text in a theological-canonical manner, they came to see the serpent in the garden as an incarnate archetype of Satan (cf. v. 1), the supreme adversary of God (cf. Rev 12:9; 20:2). Likewise, the devil's offspring are those among humankind who follow him and his ways (cf. John 8:44; 1 John 3:8). In contrast, the woman's offspring are those who are born of God and remain faithful to Him (John 1:12-13; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; 1 John 3:1-2). As the example of Cain and Abel shows (Gen 4), there is constant strife between these two divisions of humanity (John 15:18-

[8] For a discussion of how Genesis 3:15 can be understood covenantally, cf. Harless 2004:83-91; Nwachukwu 2002:69-73; Robertson 1980:93-107. For an examination of the centrality of the covenant of grace to Calvin's teaching, cf. Hoekema 1967:133-161.

25). Scripture reveals that Satan is the "god of this age" (2 Cor 4:4, TNIV) and that he has spiritually blinded those who choose to be his followers. Indeed, the entire world lies under the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19) and follow his debased ways (Eph 2:2). They are at odds with the redeemed and persecute them for their identity with the Messiah (2 Cor 1:5-7; Col 1:24; 2 Tim 3:12). This is part of the divine plan for overcoming the evil one.

As Genesis 3:15 promises, the victory of the redeemed is assured by the Saviour. Jesus' followers triumph over the devil "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Rev 12:11). Scripture reveals that Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross overcame the forces of darkness (Isa 53:12; Luke 24:26, 46; 1 Pet 1:10-11). Moreover, at Calvary, the Son disarmed Satan by taking away his power to accuse believers (cf. Rom 8:1-4, 31-39; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14-15). Furthermore, Paul noted that the "God of peace" will "soon crush Satan" under the feet of the saints (Rom 16:20). Indeed, Jesus is the divine warrior who will triumph on behalf of His people at His return (2 Thes 1:5-10; Rev 19:11-21). From a human standpoint, the delay seems long; but from the divine standpoint it is imminent, being one of the next series of events on the eschatological calendar (cf. 2 Pet 3:8).

The research done by Peacock (1995:2-3) indicates that the Eden narrative of Genesis 2:4b-3:24 depicts "three realms of relationship" that were "broken as a direct consequence of sin": 1) between God and humanity; 2) between individuals; and 3) betweens humanity and the creation. God works through the covenant to "restore the broken relationships." In this paradigm, all the covenants recorded in the Old Testament are intertwined with the Eden narrative. Moreover, each covenant discloses how God used it to partially restore the "realms of relational existence broken by sin." This ongoing redemptive process is consummated in the new covenant inaugurated by the Messiah. Specifically, He establishes fellowship between God and His covenant people, enables the Church to experience community in all its fullness, and ensures that at the end of the age all creation will join the redeemed in glorious freedom from death and decay (cf. Peacock 1995:6-7, 12, 51-64, 236-239; Shelton 2004:7-8, 21).

Patton and Dyck liken God's covenantal promise to Adam and Eve as a first installment on a long-term plan to fix what was broken when sin entered the

human race (Rom 5:12). Thereafter, each covenant in Scripture builds on the one made in the garden of Eden. Similarly, each covenant increases the recipients of the divine plan of redemption. Together, these covenants are analogous to an ascending staircase that shows the direction in which God is leading His people. The inherent unity of the covenants is reinforced by the observation made by Smith (1993:149) that in the Hebrew sacred writings, "covenant … never occurs in the plural." The idea is that "there is only one 'covenant' with many manifestations."

2.2. Biblical Covenants

The *Edenic covenant* is the basis for all the subsequent covenants in the Bible. Because these special arrangements are explicitly described in Scripture, they are called "biblical covenants." Though they are distinct from one another, they are tightly interrelated. Indeed, all these covenants operate under the premise that the redeemed are to submit to God's rule and live in accordance with His moral law (for example, as expressed in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount; for a detailed analysis of the interrelationship between these two portions of Scripture, cf. Lioy 2004). Such a faith-stance is in response to God's grace. It is never regarded as a way to earn God's acceptance or merit His favor.

As was previously mentioned, the Lord established the Edenic covenant with Adam and Eve, the progenitors of the entire human race (Gen 3:15). This is followed by the *Noahic covenant*, which pertains to Noah and his descendants (6:18-22; 9:8-17). In 8:21, the Lord declared that He would never again send a flood to destroy all life. Then in 9:8-17, He solemnly confirmed that decision with a covenant, the sign of which was the rainbow. In Bible times, covenants often had a sign or seal to commemorate them.

Some scholars think that until this period in history, there had never been a rainbow. Others maintain that rainbows had always been appearing near rain clouds, but that after the Flood, God invested this beautiful arch of color in the sky with a new and special meaning. According to the Genesis account, the rainbow would function as a reminder to God that He should limit the damage any rainstorm could do. He would not allow the water to continue to rise on

the earth until all living things had perished. Because of the Lord's grace, Noah and his descendants were released from the ark to repopulate a stable creation. As they increased in number, they had the God-given opportunity to extend the vice-regency of humankind throughout the globe and exercise dominion over the planet. They also were required to heed God's ethical requirements. Those who transgressed His moral law faced the judgment of death.

Next in line is the *Abrahamic covenant*, which the Lord made with the patriarchs and their offspring (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-20; 17:1-14; 22:15-18; 24:6-8; 26:23-24; 28:13-15; 35:11-12). The Lord established this special agreement with Abraham, as the head of Israel. Through the patriarch and his descendants, the vice-regency of the human race would be extended further. Initially, this would take place through the Israelites in the land of Canaan. From there the blessing of redemption through the Messiah would be extended throughout the entire earth (Matt 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

According to Genesis 17, when Abraham was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him to reaffirm the covenant and confirm it with name changes and the sign of circumcision. As on previous occasions, the patriarch learned that he would have many descendants, who would possess Canaan. He was also told that he and all the males in his household were to be circumcised. Moreover, this practice was to be repeated on all Abraham's male descendants as well as others in the covenant community. Circumcision represented an oath affirming the covenant. It was similar to saying, "If I am untrue to the covenant, may I be cut off like my foreskin." This reflected the literal meaning of the phrase for "to make a covenant," which is "to cut a covenant." The idea is that Abraham and his descendants were to live righteously. Those who violated God's moral requirements would experience His judgment. Later in biblical history, some Jewish rabbis put too much emphasis on circumcision, and some early Jewish Christians disrupted the church because of the practice (Acts 15:1-2; Rom 2:25-29; Gal 5:2-6; Phil 3:1-3).

Paul argued in Romans 4 that Abraham is the father of all who believe, whether circumcised or uncircumcised. The apostle also maintained that a "person is a Jew who is one inwardly" (3:29). These observations are not meant to deny the existence of ethnic, national Israel. Such is affirmed,

including God's eschatological program for the converted, physical descendants of Abraham (Zech 10:8-12; Rom 11:25-27);[9] nonetheless, it is important to stress that natural descent from Abraham did not automatically guarantee inheritance of the divine promises. Embracing the covenant with saving faith was imperative (Barker 1982:5).

Galatians 6:16 makes reference to "the Israel of God." Some understand the preceding connective ("and," which renders the Greek word καί) as pointing to two distinct groups, that is, "all who follow this rule" as well as "the Israel of God" (cf. Saucy 1993:198-202). The alternate view is that in this verse, the connective is more properly rendered "even." This means that "all who follow this rule" are also "the Israel of God." Expressed differently, the latter are the newly constituted covenant community of believing Jews and Gentiles (cf. Pss 125:5; 128:6; Boice 1976:507; Bruce 1982:274-275; Guthrie 1981:152; Hays 2000:11:345-346; Hendriksen 1995:246-247; Holwerda 1995:169; Lightfoot 1982:224-225; Ridderbos 1984:227; Silva 1996:184).

The seal of the Holy Spirit, rather than circumcision, is now the faith community's identifying mark (Eph 1:13-14). On the one hand, there is individuality and uniqueness among the members of Christ's body (1 Cor 12:4-6). On the other hand, there is also a mystical unity. Indeed, "all its many parts form one body" (v. 12) through faith in the Messiah. The believers' union with Him is made possible through the baptizing work of the Spirit (v. 13). Together, saved Jews and Gentiles form one body, partake of the same Spirit, and share one hope (Eph. 4:4). There is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (vv. 5-6; cf. Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12).

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[9] Cf. Compton 1986:161-180; Cranfield 1983:2:576-577; Edgar 1997:15-17; Harrison 1976:10:123-123; Holwerda 1995:168-170; Morris 1988:420-421; Murray 1968:2:96-100; Nwachukwu 2002:241-243, 248; Payne 1973:541; Pierce 1994:35-36; Poythress 1994:134-135; Schreiner 1998:614-623; for a discussion of the distinctive future of ethnic Israel in God's eschatological plan, cf. Blaising 2001:435-450; Burns 1992:188-229; Feinberg 1988b:81-83; Kaiser 1988:301-303; Master 1994:103; Saucy 1993:297-323; Ware 1992:92-96.

After the Abrahamic covenant comes the *Mosaic covenant* (also known as the Sinaitic or old covenant). This special agreement was established through the mediation of Moses and has ethnic Israel as its immediate focus (Exod 19-24). The nation's redemption from slavery in Egypt forms the historical context for the issuance of God's law, which Paul said was "holy" (Rom 7:12), and the divine commandments, which the apostle noted were "holy, righteous, and good." The people of the covenant were required to observe its stipulations. Obedience would lead to blessing, while disobedience would result in defeat and exile from the promised land (Lev 26; Deut 28). The Israelites—particularly those who had the faith of Abraham (4:16)—served as God's agents to extend the vice-regency of redeemed humanity (Williamson 2003:154). Initially, this occurred through their increase in numbers and conquest of the land of Canaan. Ultimately, through the advent of the Messiah and the evangelistic efforts of His followers, the light of the gospel began spreading to all regions of the earth (9:18). Guinan (1992:4.908) pointed out that "for Christians, the promise of the Mosaic covenant has become a reality in Christ."

In this way of thinking, the Mosaic covenant is another link in God's unbroken eschatological plan. Such stands in contrast to the view of dispensationalists such as Merrill (1987:1-2), who claims that, rather than standing "within the broad stream of covenant tradition," the Mosaic covenant is "made with Israel alone." It is true that this special agreement originally had the physical descendants of Jacob as its focus. Nonetheless, as Merrill concedes, the Lord wanted to use the Israelites to introduce His redemptive message to humanity. Indeed, an undeniable element of unity and continuity with the rest of the covenants is the basis for the Mosaic covenant being the foundation upon which the Israelites were able to "mediate the soteriological purposes of God" to the world. The case for continuity, rather than discontinuity, is also evident in Merrill's statement that the Mosaic covenant "springs from" the "Genesis narratives" and is "informed by them" (1987:3). Keumyoung (1989), having evaluated the dispensational view of the Sinaitic covenant and the law, concluded that "it is foreign for the biblical writers to separate pure law from the Decalogue, to see the Sermon on the Mount as primarily applicable to the millennial kingdom, or to assume an antithetical relationship between law and grace" (abstract; cf. pp. 373-375).

The *Davidic covenant* follows the Mosaic covenant and has both Jews and Gentiles in its purview (2 Sam 7:5-16; Pss 89; 132). Second Samuel 7:11-13 records the establishment of God's covenant with David, who was the head of Israel's permanent, royal dynasty. Although the word *covenant* is not specifically stated in this passage, it is used elsewhere to describe this occasion (cf. 2 Sam 23:5; Psa 89:28, 34). Clearly, the issues of 2 Samuel 7 are of immense theological importance. They concern not only the first coming of the Messiah, but also the Saviour's eternal rule on the throne of David. The Hebrew word rendered "house" (v. 11) lies at the heart of this passage. David saw his own house (or palace) and desired to build a house (or temple) for the Lord; but God declared that He would build a house (or dynasty) for David, and the king's son would build a house (or temple) for the Lord. In His covenant with David, God promised that the king's descendants would become a dynasty and always rule over Israel. Individual kings were subject to severe punishment (Psa 89:30-32), but the Lord would never permanently reject the line of David from the throne (vv. 33-37).

The New Testament reveals that God's promises to David are fulfilled in the Messiah through the *new covenant*, which encompasses the household of faith in both testaments (Isa 54:10; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 11:19; 18:31; 34:25; 36:26; Heb 8:7-13; 11:39-40; for an extensive discussion of the messianic meaning of the Davidic covenant, cf. Akins 1995:157-228). Although various passages in the Old Testament mention God's establishment of an "everlasting covenant" (Isa 24:5; 55:3; 61:8; Jer 32:40; 50:5; Ezek 16:60; 37:26), only Jeremiah 31:31 speaks of a "new covenant" (cf. Heb 8:8). The emphasis here is on the inauguration of a covenant that is both "new in time and renewed in nature" (Kaiser 1972:17; cf. the extensive discussion on the new covenant made by Kaiser 1978:231-235). Jesus establishes the new covenant through the shedding of His blood (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 10:29; 12:24; 13:20; Malone 1989:230; McKenzie 2000:6). Jesus also keeps the conditions of the covenant perfectly (Heb 4:15), serves as the Mediator of the covenant (9:15), and promised to return as the conquering King (Matt 24:29-31). Through the Saviour's atoning sacrifice, He made redemption and forgiveness of sins possible. All are now invited to partake of what He has done. In short, those who put their faith in Christ are forgiven and receive everlasting life (cf. John 3:16).

Concerning Jeremiah 31:31-34, this arguably would have been the high point of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry. By saying that a day will come, Jeremiah also indicated that the new covenant will be part of the future messianic age (v. 31; Feinberg 1976:6:574-575). More than a century before (722 BC), the Assyrians had defeated and removed the residents of Israel (cf. 2 Kings 17:5-6); however, even though the northern kingdom no longer existed, Israel would be included along with Judah in the new covenant (Jer 31:31). This indicates that it was to be for all God's people. Indeed, "Israel" (v. 33) refers to the entire nation, which was divided into the house of Israel and Judah; also, the phrase "after that time" refers to the Jews' return from exile and their repopulation of the promised land.

As Thompson (1980:580) points out, the covenant the Lord inaugurated between Himself and the Israelites at Mount Sinai forms the backdrop to Jeremiah's announcement (Exod 19:1-24:11; cf. Keown, Scalise, and Smothers 1995:133). The limitations associated with the old covenant underscored the reason for the new covenant. In the former, which God originally made with the ancestors of the Jews, He took them by the hand (in a manner of speaking) and led them out of the land of Egypt (v. 32). Even though the Lord was like a faithful and devoted husband to Israel, the people continually broke the Mosaic covenant. The new covenant would have to address the problem inherent in the old one. In particular, it would have to compensate for the inability of the people to perform up to God's standards.

It was never God's intent that the Mosaic law be used as a means to obtain salvation; instead, forgiveness of sins has always been the Lord's gracious gift to those who have humbled themselves before Him in faith (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3). The law was God's way of pointing out the pathway that believers should walk (Rom 7:7; Gal 3:19, 24; for a detailed discussion of the biblical concept of the law, cf. Lioy 2004:13-34). Thus, the problem with the covenant at Mount Sinai was not in God's provision, but in Israel's response. Only the Lord could change the hearts and minds of His people; thus, a new covenant was needed.

In Jeremiah 31:33, the Lord pledged to do three things in the new covenant. First, He would put His law within His people; it would become a part of their innermost being. Second, God would write the law on their hearts; expressed

differently, His will and Word would affect their thoughts, emotions, and decisions. Third, the Lord would be the God of the Jews, and they would be His chosen people. Jeremiah was echoing several Old Testament promises (cf. Gen 17:7; Exod 6:7; Lev 26:12). Nonetheless, the life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah opened a new avenue for human beings to relate to their heavenly Father. Because of the salvation provided by the Redeemer, all believers can enter into God's presence. Here is seen the essential difference between the old and new covenants. The new one would be primarily internal, while the old one was principally external. The new covenant represented a relationship, while the old covenant was more of a legal document. The old was written on tablets of stone, while the new would be written on human hearts (cf. 2 Cor 3:3). Once the law of God could be implanted within people's hearts, their relationship with the Lord could be permanent (cf. Malone 1989:211-213).

Such distinctions, however, should not be overstated (Barker 1982:6), for there remains a fundamental unity between the old and new covenants. Indeed, embedded within the concept of covenant is "continuity in the divine purpose in history" (Campbell 1993:182). This observation implies that the new covenant is "not new in essence, but new in fulfillment" (Thompson 1979:1:792; cf. Dumbrell 1984:175, 184-185, 199-200). In Romans 11:11-24, Paul revealed that the Lord has grafted Gentiles into the people of God (that is, the stem of Abraham), like wild olive shoots into the main trunk of an olive plant. Similarly, the new covenant is "part of the same tree" as the old covenant, not "an altogether new stock" (McKenzie 2000:107; cf. Shelton 2005:49).

McKenzie (2000:59) explained that both the old and new covenants involve the same parties, namely, the Lord and His people. In the time of Jeremiah, the latter would have been "the descendants of the exodus generation, who were the recipients of the original covenant." Furthermore, both covenants have God's moral code as their ethical foundation, with the Mosaic law being the chief historical expression of it. As Barker (1982:6) noted, the Old and New Testaments alike "speak with a united voice on the importance—indeed, the necessity—of adhering to the spirit of the law." Moreover, the new covenant, like its predecessor, is rooted deeply in the sacred traditions, writings, and

communal life of ancient Israel (McKenzie 2000:89; cf. Kaiser 1978:233-234).

Jeremiah 31:34 declares that the people would no longer need to teach their neighbors and relatives to know the Lord in an intimate and personal way. The reason is that, under the new covenant, all of them—from the least important to the most important—would truly know the Lord. What is the basis for God establishing such a profound covenant with His people? In short, it was God's forgiveness of the people's sins. God's law could not be written on hearts tainted by sin. Thus, the people's hearts had to be cleansed (by God's grace) so they could experience all that is promised in the new covenant. Once the Lord had forgiven them, He could deliberately forget their sins. Through Jesus' sacrifice, the sins of humankind have been dealt with once for all. Indeed, God does not remember them (cf. Psa 103:8-12).

Hebrews 8 provides additional commentary on the interrelationship between the old and new covenants. An examination of this passage indicates that God's progressive revelation of His covenants is the integrating motif (or the determining, controlling concept) between the testaments. Verses 1-5 reveal that because Jesus' ministry is heavenly and unlimited, it is superior to that of the Levitical priests. The Saviour, as the mediator between God and humanity (1 Tim 2:5), has inaugurated a new and better covenant than the old one based on the Mosaic law. The new covenant is better, precisely because it is "established on better promises" (Heb 8:6). As deSilva (2001:24) noted, "Jesus is the focal point, the lens through which the light of God's favor and promises come into focus and shine out to humanity."

The writer of Hebrews argued that if the first covenant had sufficiently met the needs of people and had adequately provided for their salvation, then there would have been no need for a new covenant to replace it (v. 7). But the old covenant was insufficient and inadequate in bringing people to God, and therefore a new covenant had to be established. The nexus of the shortfall was not the covenant in and of itself, but those living under it. God had found fault with the Israelites, primarily because they did not continue in that covenant (v. 8). While God initiated the old covenant with His people, they also willingly agreed to it (cf. Josh 24). Thus, the covenant was a mutual obligation between God and the people. Nonetheless, the people often failed to live up to their part

of the obligation (cf. Neh 9; Dan 9:1-19). As a result, human failure rendered the old covenant inoperative (cf. Rom 7:7-25). The establishment of a new covenant naturally implies that the old covenant is obsolete, needs to be replaced, and will eventually disappear from the scene altogether (Heb 8:13).

In would be incorrect to conclude from the preceding remarks that the writer of Hebrews disparaged or maligned the old covenant. After all, as Newman (1997:248-249) points out, the contrast is not between an evil system (namely, the old covenant) and a good system (namely, the new covenant), but between what is good and what is better. This train of thought, which was common among the Jewish people in the first century A.D., is an "argument from the lesser to the greater." It is comparable to the rationale offered by Paul in 2 Corinthians 3 on the subject of the greater glory of the new covenant compared to the old covenant. In the case of the Mosaic covenant, it was provisional in nature. With the advent of the Messiah, "a new day in salvation history has dawned" (cf. Jocz 1968:243-245; Malone 1989:211).

3. The Unity of the Covenant People of God throughout Salvation History

Connected with the progressive unfolding of the previously discussed, interrelated covenants is the advancement of God's revelation to His people concerning His eschatological program (König 1994:183; cf. the author's lucid comments on pp. 184-189). Hebrews 1:1-2 notes that during the era of the Old Testament, God spoke to His people through His prophets on a number of occasions, and He did so in various portions and in a variety of ways (for example, through visions, dreams, and riddles). The idea is that His revelation was fragmentary, partial, and incomplete; but now with the advent of the Son, the Father's revelation to believers is ultimate, complete, and final.

Kuyper (1967:13) says the Old Testament is like a "tapestry with many loose ends." Moreover, the New Testament writers are similar to artisans who judiciously choose "many of the threads to weave them into a newly begun tapestry in which the picture of Christ appears." The portrait of the Messiah is enhanced by the "color, substance, and background" obtained from the "Old Testament strands." Furthermore, because the threads from the latter are

"thoroughly interwoven into the new fabric," it is impossible to separate the testaments. Together, they form the Word of God and give profound "beauty and meaning" to the Son.

There is both continuity and discontinuity present here, such as the distinction between a seed and a full-grown plant or a caterpillar and a butterfly. While the first gives way to the second, the necessity of the first and its tight interconnection with the second is neither denied nor minimized. Likewise, the progressive unfolding of God's covenants with His people begins in the garden of Eden with Adam and Eve and culminates in the person and work of the risen Saviour. In this construct, the present age occupies an important role in the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Likewise, the church is not an afterthought in God's eschatological program but stands in continuity with what is foretold in the Old Testament (Saucy 1993:28; Ware 1992:96-97).

The post-resurrection account recorded in Luke 24 attests to this tight integration between the biblical covenants progressively revealed in the Old and New Testaments. In verses 25-26, the risen Messiah censured two disciples (who were going to a village called Emmaus) for being slow to believe all that the prophets had declared. In fact, Jesus' reference to "Moses and all the Prophets" (v. 27) indicates that the messianic promises extend in a unifying way throughout all the Hebrew sacred writings. Later that day, Jesus enabled the rest of His followers to comprehend what these Scriptures prophetically revealed about the necessity of the Messiah's suffering on the cross and resurrection from the dead (vv. 45-46; cf. Psa 22; Isa 52:13–53:12).

The interlocking relationship between the covenants is discernible in Romans 3:21, where Paul referred to "the righteousness of God" that has been revealed "apart from the law." There is no denying an aspect of discontinuity between the old system and the new one (cf. John 1:17), specifically in the "mode of administration" (Karlberg 1987:4).[10] Yet, such notwithstanding, the apostle

[10] Karlberg (1987:4-5) states that the primary objective of his essay is to "indicate how the old and new covenants differ in 'mode of administration'." In addition to such familiar distinctions as "promise and fulfillment, shadow and reality," the author discusses the "temporal conditions and regulations" of the old covenant as well as its restriction to "one nation under the old economy" (cf. Jocz 1968:238; Kil Ho Lee 1993:40-44).

also referred to this same "righteousness of God" to which "the Law and the Prophets testify." The idea is that the doctrine of justification by faith is taught in the Old Testament (cf. Gen 15:6; Hab 2:4). Moreover, with the incarnation of the Son, this truth is unveiled with greater clarity than before (John 1:14-18).

In Ephesians 3, Paul used the phrase rendered "the mystery of Christ" (v. 4) to refer to the unity of the people of God as each covenant was successively disclosed and inaugurated. An element of discontinuity is evident by the apostle's acknowledgment that the divine secret was not disclosed to people in former generations to the same extent that it has "now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets" (v. 5). The difference to which Paul referred was relative, not absolute. This observation in turn emphasizes the fundamental connection between the covenants of the two testaments, especially when one recognizes glimpses of the divine "mystery" present in the Old Testament (Gerstner 2000:225-228; Saucy 1992:142-151; Saucy 1993:163-165; cf. Isa 19:25; 49:6; 1 Pet 1:10-12).

Historically speaking, Gentiles were once "separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise" (Eph 2:12). Through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross (John 10:15-16), He joins believing Jews and Gentiles (17:20-21). In spiritual union with Him, the Gentiles "who were once far away have been brought near" (Eph 2:13). The truth of unity and equality between Jews and non-Jews is further seen in their being "members together of one body," namely, the spiritual body of Christ (3:6).[11]

In brief, the divine secret is that through the preaching of the gospel, kingdom promises that were once the exclusive domain of ethnic Israel (Exod 19:6; Deut 7:6; Rom 9:4-5), are now enjoyed by both believing Jews and Gentiles (Eph 3:6; cf. the extensive discussion offered by Saucy 1992:127-155). As the

[11] For an affirmation of the unity of the people of God throughout salvation history, cf. Mathison 1995:38-42; Woudstra 1988:221-238. For an affirmation of clear-cut distinctions between ethnic Israel and the church throughout salvation history, cf. Fruchtenbaum 1994:113-130; Ryrie 1980:137-140; Saucy 1988:239-259.

"Israel of God" (Gal 6:16), they jointly are "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, [and] God's special possession" (1 Pet 2:9; cf. v. 10; Rev 1:6). As Campbell (1997:205, 208) notes, this is not a circumstance "in which Israel's privileges are transferred to Gentiles." The inclusion of non-Jews is not by the exclusion or displacement of Israel and the abolishment of God's promises to them; rather, it is by permitting saved Jews and Gentiles to jointly share in Christ's eternal blessings (cf. Compton 1986:258-265).

Hebrews 12:22-23 further reinforces what has been said. In making reference to the unity of the covenant community in both the Old and New Testaments, the author of the epistle stated that "Mount Zion" is the place where they reside with the Lord. This celestial abode is also called "the city of the living God" and "the heavenly Jerusalem." Incalculable numbers of angels are found there, along with "the church of the firstborn." This "church" is simply all Christians on earth. Jesus, the first to rise from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5), redeemed them from destruction and set them apart for service to God as His priests in His heavenly sanctuary (cf. Num 3:11-13; Eph 2:21-22; 1 Pet 2:4-5). The Messiah enables them to be "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:17).

According to Hebrews 12:23, those who share in this eternal, glorious inheritance include "the spirits of the righteous made perfect." Most likely, these are believers from the Old Testament era, such as the men and women mentioned in chapter 11. They have been made perfect in the sense that their souls have been cleansed of sin through faith in the Son (cf. 11:40). As "the mediator of a new covenant" (12:24; cf. 8:6), Jesus brings forgiveness, joy, and confidence to the united, heavenly assembly of Old and New Testament saints. Here we see with unmistakable clarity that believing Jews and Gentiles share the same eternal destiny. While the ethnic provenance of the former is affirmed, both entities remain ontologically joined together as the covenant people of God (Poythress 1994:123).

The testimony of Scripture is that the new covenant brings to completion God's eschatological plan for redeemed humanity and the rest of creation (cf. Rom 8:18-23). In the eternal state, "heaven and a renewed earth are joined into regained and consummated Eden" (Van Groningen 1996:131). Of particular interest is "the Holy City, the new Jerusalem" (Rev 21:2) that descends "out of

heaven from God" (for a detailed discussion of the New Jerusalem, cf. Lioy 2003:148-155). The Lord magnificently adorned the new Jerusalem (the bride) for her husband (the groom). The implication here is that the city surpassed the beauty of everything else God had made. Some think the new Jerusalem will be a literal city where God's people dwell for all eternity. Others think the holy city is symbol of the united, redeemed community in heaven. In either case, it's clear that a new world is coming, and it will be glorious beyond imagination.

A loud voice from the heavenly throne revealed that in the eternal state God will permanently dwell, or tabernacle, among the saved of all ages. They will be His people, and He will be their God. The voice also disclosed that five scourges of human existence will not exist in the eternal state—tears, death, sorrow, crying, and pain. The new order of things will eliminate all these forms of sadness (vv. 3-4). Furthermore, God promised to give water from the life-giving fountain to everyone who was thirsty. This promise is a vivid reminder of the refreshment and satisfaction believers throughout the ages will enjoy in heaven. In the eternal state, God will satisfy the yearnings of the soul. This assurance is grounded in the Lord's own nature. Those who overcome in this life will receive an eternal inheritance and an eternal relationship. They will be the eternal children of the eternal God (v. 7).

4. Conclusion

This essay has sought to elaborate on the concept of progressive covenantalism, as broached by Patton and Dyck. It is a new working model for comprehending the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. The goal is to articulate a consistent understanding of how to put together seemingly heterogeneous portions of Scripture. This integrating motif asserts that God's progressive revelation of His covenants is an extension of the kingdom blessings He first introduced in creation. Affiliated claims are that the various covenants revealed in Scripture are interrelated and build on one another, that the people of God throughout the history of salvation are united, and that they equally share in His eschatological promises.

As Patton and Dyck have noted, and as the findings of this essay affirm, there are five advantages to progressive covenantalism: 1) it seeks to synthesize the valid points of all relevant positions; 2) it understands that converted, ethnic Israel has a future; 3) it understands that the establishment of the Church is an advancement of God's kingdom program, just as the creation of the nation of Israel was an advancement of it; 4) it recognizes the historic and future unity of all the people of God; and 5) it focuses on the sovereignty and grace of God as expressed through His covenants. In this approach, the divine eschatological program is not akin to a ship with separate, watertight compartments; rather, it is like a flowing river in which there is coherence and fluidity.

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