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THE EUCHARIST:
A COVENANTAL ANALYSIS OF
I CORINTHIANS 11:17-32

BY
DAVID C. LINTON

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT OF
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By David C. Linton

The recent study of Ancient Near Eastern treaties has provided significant insight into the study of biblical covenants. More specifically, the study of the Suzerain-Vassal treaties has revealed a consistency between such treaties and certain early Scripture covenants, particularly the book of Deuteronomy and Joshua 24. The Suzerain-Vassal treaty forms, as presently described, may be presented in a five-fold structure, as follows:

1. Preamble, 2. Historical Prologue, 3. Stipulations, 4. Blessings and Curses (Sanctions), and 5. Succession.

If we focus on the relationship between sanctions and succession in biblical covenants, we find that relationship is typically bound up in a covenantal sign. The primary Old Testament signs are the rainbow, circumcision and the Sabbath. Each of these covenantal signs consists of at least five components:

1. a physical element constituting the sign, 2. a “remembrance,” 3. repetition, 4. an expression of blessings and curses, and 5. an expression of succession.

With each successive sign of the covenant, the expression of the sanctions and succession become increasingly rich in its complexity.

The Book of Exodus especially highlights the institution and development of the Sabbath Day in the context of worship as a legal transaction constituting a new people for Yahweh. Exodus highlights the place of the Sabbath in the cycle of work and rest, the covenantal commitment to “remember,” as well as a legal testing within the covenantal relationship.

The apostle Paul brings all of these legal components of covenant relationship out in his writing of I Corinthians, particularly in chapters 10 and 11. This thesis utilizes discourse analysis, focusing on the substance of the covenant in Paul’s exegesis of the book of Exodus. A discourse analysis of I Corinthians reveals that, in his goal to bring unity to the Corinthians, Paul points the Corinthians to the unity found in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Paul utilizes Exodus 32 in chapter 10 as the paradigm rebellion of the people of Israel against Yahweh’s established covenantal signs of unity, baptism in the sea and in the cloud and the spiritual food of manna and the spiritual water from the rock. The rebellion against the covenantal signs carried on through the generations via the succession of the covenant. In I Corinthians 11, Paul describes the Lord’s Supper as the covenantal sign of “the new covenant in my blood,” including the requisite components of sanctions and succession.

Thought of in this way, the Supper becomes an expression of a relationship, a legal transaction, not cold and austere, but blessed. In approaching the Supper, the Church anticipates that, as it “remembers” Jesus in the Supper, He will remember His covenantal commitments and act to bring transformation to the world through His sanctions and a blessed succession of the covenant. Recognizing the expression of an intimate relationship between Jesus and His church, we shift our eyes from an

introspection of what worthy participation means to a joyous anticipation of how Jesus will bless His church in the enjoyment of the Eucharist.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

What is the Lord's Supper? Beverly Roberts Gaventa has observed that Paul's description of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 in nearly two thousand years of Christian discussion can be roughly divided into two approaches: (1) an analysis of Paul's theological understanding of the Supper and the relationship between Paul's tradition and traditions about the Last Supper that are found in the Gospels and (2) an analysis of the Corinthian context.¹ The approach that I propose to undertake is different in that it attempts to look at the Supper within the concept of a covenant. After setting forth a covenantal understanding of the Old Testament and the covenantal signs of the rainbow, circumcision and the Sabbath, I will attempt to analyze Paul's tradition expressed in Corinthians 11:17-32 as seen within the context of the Old Testament sign, and more particularly the Sabbath.

God is a relational being. God, Yahweh, relates to his people by means of covenant. Yahweh established His covenant with Noah, giving him a war bow to symbolize His faithfulness to all the earth.² He established His covenant with Abraham, giving circumcision to symbolize His faithfulness to Abraham's descendants to make them many, to be their God and to give them a land.³ He made a covenant with the

¹ Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "You Proclaim the Lord's Death: 1 Corinthians 11:26 and Paul's Understanding of Worship," *Review and Expositor* 80 (Summer 1983): 377.

² One could go further back to describe Yahweh's covenant with Adam. I will not undertake to enter into that debate at this time.

³ Genesis 9:12-17.

people of Israel through Moses, giving Moses the law to represent that He would be their God and they would be His people.⁴ Finally, He gave His Son to His people, and the Son gave His people a “new covenant” in His blood. Yahweh anchored all of his future dealings with His people on covenant.⁵ The history of redemption is founded upon covenant.⁶

So all encompassing are Yahweh’s covenantal designs, that all of creation is subject to covenant. All knowledge is covenantal.⁷ All governments and all politics are undergirded by covenant.⁸ This is true because Yahweh, by his very nature, is covenantal in his being. The God of Scripture is triune. He is three in one and one in three in an eternal community.⁹ By His very nature He lives in a community of love, each person with the others, giving love and honor to the other two persons.¹⁰

After the discovery of the libraries at Qumran, many have undertaken studies to show that there is a relationship between Old Testament canon and the certain ancient Near Eastern treaties. These studies have been helpful in giving scope and meaning to various Old Testament texts. While there has been significant progress in Old Testament studies in showing the Old Testament as a covenantal corpus, there has been less of an impact on New Testament studies.¹¹ Meredith Kline expressed “a bare statement of our thesis” that all Scripture, including the New Testament, is covenantal, with the hopeful

⁴ Genesis 17:7.

⁵ Jeremiah 31:31.

⁶ Michael Williams, *As Far as the Curse is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), xii.

⁷ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1987), 40.

⁸ Romans 13.

⁹ Ralph Smith, *Eternal Covenant* (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2003).

¹⁰ John 17.

¹¹ Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1977), 68; A. R. Millard, “Covenant and Communion in First Corinthians,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. W. W. Gasque and P. R. Martin (Exeter, England: Paternoster, 1970), 243.

expectation that others will flesh out the details.¹² Elaborating on his thesis, he stated in

Kingdom Prologue:

Repeatedly we read of a *berith* being “made.” The *berith*-making is accomplished through a solemn process of ratification. Characteristically this transaction centers in the swearing of an oath, with its sanctioning curse. Clearly a *berith* is a legal kind of arrangement, a formal disposition of a binding nature. At the heart of a *berith* is an act of commitment and the customary oath-form of this commitment reveals the religious nature of the transaction. The *berith* arrangement is no mere secular contract but rather belongs to the sacred sphere of divine witness and enforcement.¹³

In a sense, this thesis will do double duty. First, while assuming Kline’s view of the basic nature of covenant as legal, it will flesh out one such detail, the Lord’s Supper as a sign of the new covenant. Second, if it is successful in this effort, it will support Kline’s original thesis. As N. T. Wright suggests,

How does a hypothesis like this work in practice, and gain its own vindication? As we have said, by showing how its essentially simple line works out in detail, and by showing, conversely, how the manifold details fit within it. . . . Its vindication will come, like that of all hypotheses, in its inclusion of the data without distortion; in its essential simplicity of line; and in its ability to shed light elsewhere.”¹⁴

In order to accomplish this task, it will be necessary to explore the development of Old Testament covenant signs and extrapolate those covenant forms into the New Testament. Doing so reveals a connection and a progression in the rainbow, circumcision, Sabbath Day and Lord’s Supper. As a new covenant symbol, the Lord’s Supper contains all of the attributes of the old covenant signs and symbols glorified.

Certainly, a prime facie case can be made regarding the covenantal nature of the Supper quickly. Jesus Himself declared that the wine of the Supper was the “new

¹² Kline, 75.

¹³ Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundation for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park, KS: Two Ages Press), 1.

¹⁴ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress), 133.

covenant in my blood.” The language of 1 Corinthians 11:17-32 is highly legal in nature, causing the Westminster divines to refer to sacraments as holy “ordinances.” Paul’s use of the words “divisions” and “factions” highlights legal distinctions. His use of the words “received” and “passed on” expresses cultural liturgical traditions. Certainly, the frequent use of the terms “judge,” “judgment,” and “guilty” raise an ominous legal tone. A “proclamation” also indicates a legal action. However, the most significant legal concept in the entire discourse is the command to “do this in remembrance of me.”

Others have seen the connection between the Supper and other Old Testament rituals. The gospel writers clearly equate the Supper to the Passover. John Calvin, for one, has characterized the Sabbath as a sacrament for the Old Testament saints.¹⁵ Professor John C. Collins and Reverend Jeffrey Meyers have proposed that the Supper is the successor to the peace offering in the Old Testament.¹⁶

As a matter of fact, Collins poses the question whether looking at the Eucharist as the peace offering can help us to determine who does the remembering, God or man.¹⁷ In other words, what is actually going on in the remembrance? He points to Millard’s study of the Eucharist against the background of ancient Near Eastern covenants as a possible starting point for the analysis.¹⁸ According to Millard, “Each time the Corinthian Christians shared the Lord’s Supper they purported to show their allegiance to the covenant it symbolized.”¹⁹ In the end, Collins finds Millard’s proposition both attractive

¹⁵ John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 12: 302.

¹⁶ C. John Collins, “The Eucharist as Christian Sacrifice: How Patristic Authors Can Help Us Read the Bible,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 66 (2004): 1; Jeffrey J. Meyers, *The Lord’s Service: The Grace of Covenant Renewal Worship* (Moscow, ID: Cannon, 2003), 81.

¹⁷ While the discussion of who does the remembering is worthwhile, it is not significant in this context. As the following discussion will show, both parties in a covenant must remember the covenant as an act of covenant faithfulness.

¹⁸ Collins, “The Eucharist as Christian Sacrifice,” 13.

¹⁹ Millard, 245.

and plausible, but not decisive. “Our difficulty lies in the fact that we have only a handful of LXX uses of ἀνάμνησις (“reminder, memorial”), and none is strictly parallel to what we have in the NT. If we expand our search to include the verb μνησκω (“to remember”), we get a few extra possibilities.”²⁰

Collins’ difficulty is significant, but it can be overcome. Rather than read the passage against the background of the peace offering, which I believe is helpful, if we read the passage against the background of the Sabbath and the structure of the covenant memorial, the structure of the covenant memorial reinforces the conclusion that “remembering” is part of a legal transaction. “Remembering” is a legal action fulfilling one’s commitment to a legal requirement. The starting point is to understand the concept of “remembering” in the context of covenantal parlance.

The primary focus of the theological discussion of the sacraments in our Protestant tradition has been a dialogue on what happens to the bread and the wine and what a person must do to be a worthy participant in the Supper. While this discussion has its place, it should be secondary to a more basic discussion of how the Supper acts within the history of Yahweh’s covenant, His relationship with His people.

The goal of this thesis is to show from 1 Corinthians 10 and 11, and particularly 11:17-32, that the judicial language of the Lord’s Supper acts within the covenantal heritage of the Sabbath day. In order to accomplish this task, first, I will provide a quick overview of the form of covenant in the Old Testament and the more critical aspects of covenantal signs. Second, since all of Scripture, including 1 Corinthians 10 and 11, portrays the Exodus as the foundational event of the covenant, I will survey the covenantal legal themes of worship in Exodus as they tie together in the Sabbath. Third,

²⁰ Collins, “The Eucharist as Christian Sacrifice,” 14.

I will tie the judicial expressions of 1 Corinthians 11:17-32 into the framework of the covenantal language used in the prior covenantal signs, particularly the Sabbath. Finally, I hope to provide some theological insights into our use of the Lord's Supper in weekly worship.

Some may object that such a "legal" approach to covenant makes God's grace cold and sterile. Well, no and yes. It cannot be denied that the legal foundation of this understanding of the covenant is formal, i.e. legal. However, law facilitates and is an integral part of relationship. Law in its most basic function is not a means by which something is achieved. Law in its most basic function is the definition of proper relationship. All of our most intimate relationships are expressed in law. Husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister are legal relationships. Law establishes relationship. Law maintains relationship. While the goal of biblical, covenantal relationship is love of Yahweh and love of neighbor, covenant or law establishes and sets forth the manner of living out that goal. Sir William Blackstone aptly observed:

If man were to live in a state of nature, unconnected with other individuals, there would be no occasion for any other laws, than the law of nature, and the law of God.²¹

Here Blackstone recognizes that relationship, even our relationship with God, is based on law.

Relationships may become cold and sterile, but they are not intended to be so. The marriage bed is a covenantal and, therefore, a legal act. A marriage, which starts within the community as a formal ceremony in which a man and a woman exchange legal vows, culminates in a consummation in the most intimate

²¹ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England: A Facsimile of the First Edition of 1765-1769* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 1: 43.

act known to man. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and might and love your neighbor as yourself” defines a relationship and not something to be achieved. This is the purpose of covenant law, to bring Yahweh’s people into intimate relationship with Him. And yet we have to understand the ceremony; we must build the legal foundation to understand the relationship.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STRUCTURE OF COVENANT

1. Background

If we are to look at the Lord's Supper as a covenantal meal, we must first understand the concept of covenant. We must think covenantally. At its very foundation, a covenant is a formal expression of relationship. Frame refers to a covenant as “a contract or agreement among equals or to a type of relation between a lord and his servants. Divine-human covenants in Scripture, of course, are of the latter type.”²² Frame also helpfully points out that, “In a broad sense, all of God's dealings with creation are covenantal in character.”²³ God deals with His creation and particularly man in consistently covenantal ways.

A central theme of Scripture, as expressed in Exodus 6:7, is

וְלָקַחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם וְהָיִיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים

“I will take you to me to be a people and I shall be to you a God.”²⁴

This theme of relationship weaves throughout the Old Testament and is the basis for God's dealing with his people even down to the coming of Christ. Yahweh expresses His intent to make His new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31. The purpose of this new covenant is

²² Frame, 12. See also, O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1980), 4-6.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ For a detailed discussion of this covenant formulary, see Klaus Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary: in Old Testament, Jewish, and Early Christian Writings*, trans. David E. Green (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971).

so that *וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים וְהָמָּה יְהִי־לִי לְעָם* “I will be to them a God and they will be to me a people.”²⁵

Yahweh’s relationship with His people takes consistent and predictable forms. Yahweh promised His consistency in His covenant dealings with man when He declared to Noah, “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”²⁶

George E. Mendenhall was one of the first to attempt to reach some tentative conclusions concerning the form of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people Israel based on his study of the suzerainty treaty by which a great king bound his vassals to faithfulness and obedience to him (commonly referred to as a “Suzerain-Vassal treaty”).²⁷ Utilizing ancient near east Hittite treaty texts, he identified the following consistent six elements in such treaties:

1. Preamble, emphasizing the majesty and authority of the king.
2. The historical prologue, describing the previous relationship of the parties.
3. The stipulations, stating the detailed obligations of the parties.
4. Provision for deposit in a temple and public reading.
5. The list of gods as witnesses.
6. The curses and blessings of the covenant.²⁸

Mendenhall identified two traditions that fell into this form: the Decalogue and Joshua 24.²⁹

Mendenhall’s proposal initiated a wave of subsequent studies. Some of these studies questioned the source and vintage of the relevant Old Testament covenant

²⁵ Jeremiah 31:33.

²⁶ Genesis 8:22.

²⁷ George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: The Presbyterian Board of Colportage of Western Pennsylvania, 1955).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 32-34.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

document connections.³⁰ However, K. A. Kitchen, more recently, through meticulous analysis, has connected the formats of Exodus-Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Joshua 24 to the fourteenth/thirteenth century B.C. Hittite Corpus.³¹ His format is virtually identical to the format originally proposed by Mendenhall.³²

Many have applied these forms to the study of relevant portions of Scripture, producing very helpful insights. Most helpful have been the works of many showing that the book of Deuteronomy is in the form of an ancient Near Eastern treaty. Indeed, the Book of Deuteronomy records a covenant renewal event. P. C. Craigie helpfully expresses the development of the book of Deuteronomy as follows:

Being liberated from bondage to an earthly power, [the Hebrews] then submitted themselves in the Sinai Covenant to become vassals of God, the one who had liberated them from Egypt. The nature of this new submission, expressed in the covenant, finds its dramatic expression through the utilization and adaptation of the treaty form . . . This treaty form, in which their covenant was set, finds striking expression in the book of Deuteronomy as a whole; in broad outline, the treaty form of the book may be described as follows:

1. *Preamble* (1:1-5); “These are the words which Moses addressed to all Israel. . . .”
2. *Historical Prologue* (1:6-4:49).
3. *General Stipulations* (chs. 5-11).
4. *Specific Stipulations* (chs. 12-26).
5. *Blessings and Curses* (chs. 27-28).
6. *Witnesses* (see 30:19; 31:19; 32:1-43).

The last two points can be expressed more broadly to encompass the whole work: (5) chs. 27-30, curses and blessings, with exhortation; (6) provisions for the continuity of covenant and a successor for Moses.³³

³⁰ K. A. Kitchen, “The Fall and Rise of Covenant Law and Treaty,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 40 (1989): 120.

³¹ K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003): 288-289.

³² Ibid.

³³ P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 23-24.

For purposes of this thesis, I will adopt Craigie's restructuring of the last two points and merge the general and specific stipulations, providing a structure as follows:

1. Preamble
2. Historical Prologue
3. Stipulations
4. Blessings and Curses (Sanctions)
5. Succession³⁴

This structure will allow me to more directly speak to the relationship between the sanctions and the succession of the covenant, all of which has a dramatic impact on the discussion of the Supper. Indeed, as the following discussion will reveal, the sanctions and succession are inextricably connected in another component of covenant – the sign.

While the structure is legal, the substance is relationship. The Preamble expresses the authority of the party establishing the covenantal relationship. The Historical Prologue expresses the historical events that brought the parties to their present relationship, giving an historical context for the relationship. The Stipulations provide the parameters for the relationship. The sanctions declare the blessings and the curses for the faithful and unfaithful observance of the covenant. Finally, succession expresses how the relationship will continue from one generation to the next.

The modern mindset tends to distinguish blessings from curses, desiring to separate those who will be blessed and those who will be cursed. After all, Jesus separated the sheep from the goats in his parable. He blessed the sheep, and He cursed the goats.³⁵ However, blessings and curses are not always distinguishable in Scripture. As a matter of fact, in the historical execution of the covenant, blessings and curses

³⁴ See also Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1997), 16-17; James B. Jordan, *Covenant Sequence in Leviticus & Deuteronomy* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989); James B. Jordan, *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999), 131; Kline, 133.

³⁵ Matthew 25: 31-46.

typically worked together. In order to think covenantally, we must embrace the complementary workings of the blessings and curses.

The first revelation of the symbiotic relationship between blessing and curse was God's giving man work. God had put the man in the garden to tend the garden as a blessing. At the fall, God cursed the ground and declared that only through painful toil would man eat the produce of his work. Work, at the fall, became both blessing and curse. It is for this reason that Solomon declared simultaneously that work is vapor and that there is nothing better than to find enjoyment in one's toil.³⁶

In the book of Deuteronomy, the blessings and the curses are given together. Indeed, in chapters 27-29, the blessings and curses are given in great and devastating detail. In Deuteronomy 30:1, Moses observed that the blessings and curses together would come upon Israel. However, the curses laid upon Israel would cease and be put instead on Israel's foes.

And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you,² and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul,³ then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.⁴ If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will take you.⁵ And the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.⁶ And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.⁷ And the LORD your God will put all these curses on your foes and enemies who persecuted you.⁸ And you shall again obey the voice of the LORD and keep all his commandments that I command you today.⁹ The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your

³⁶ Ecclesiastes 2:18-26.

cattle and in the fruit of your ground. For the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers,¹⁰ when you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.³⁷

Often times in the Prophets, likely based on Deuteronomy, curses are portrayed as precursors to blessing. A blessing on one people can be a curse on another. Paul recognized this principle when, in Romans 11:11-12, he characterized the stumbling of the Jews as a precursor to the blessing of the Gentiles. Therefore, covenantal sanctions, blessings and curses, should not be arbitrarily separated from each other.

As one studies covenant in Scripture, it becomes apparent that the covenantal sanctions and covenantal succession are bound together in a covenantal sign, constituting a covenantal memorial. For the Noahic covenant, the sign was the bow in the sky. For the Abrahamic covenant, the sign was circumcision. For the Mosaic covenant, the sign was the Sabbath. For the new covenant, the sign is bread and wine. Indeed, there is a structure to these covenant memorials, consisting of at least five components:

1. a physical element constituting the sign,
2. a “remembrance,”
3. repetition,
4. an expression of blessings and curses, and
5. an expression of succession.

2. Noahic Covenant

In the case of the Noahic covenant, Genesis 9:12-17 describes the five components of the covenant symbolized in the rainbow. Verses 12 and 17 establish an inclusio in which God speaks to Noah and declares His covenant. Within the inclusio, God declares,

³⁷ Deuteronomy 30:1-10.

¹³ τὸ τόξον μου τίθημι ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἔσται εἰς σημεῖον διαθήκης ἀνὰ μέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς ¹⁴ καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῷ συννεφεῖν με νεφέλας ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ὀφθήσεται τὸ τόξον μου ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ ¹⁵ καὶ μνησθήσομαι τῆς διαθήκης μου ἣ ἔστιν ἀνὰ μέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ ὑμῶν καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον πάσης ψυχῆς ζώσης ἐν πάσῃ σαρκί καὶ οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι τὸ ὕδωρ εἰς κατακλυσμὸν ὥστε ἐξαλεῖψαι πᾶσαν σάρκα ¹⁶ καὶ ἔσται τὸ τόξον μου ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ὄψομαι τοῦ μνησθῆναι διαθήκην αἰώνιον ἀνὰ μέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον πάσης ψυχῆς ζώσης ἐν πάσῃ σαρκί ἣ ἔστιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς

I give my bow (“τόξον”) in the clouds and it will be a sign (“σημεῖον”) of the covenant between me and the earth. And it will be in the gathering of my clouds on the earth I will see my bow in the cloud and I will remember (“μνησθήσομαι”) my covenant which is between me and you and between all soul life in all flesh and it will not be again the water in a flood that all flesh is destroyed (“καὶ οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι τὸ ὕδωρ εἰς κατακλυσμὸν ὥστε ἐξαλεῖψαι πᾶσαν σάρκα”). And it will be my bow in the cloud and I will see the remembrance (“μνησθῆναι”), a covenant forever (“αἰώνιον”) between me and all soul life in all flesh which is on the earth.

In this declaration, all five components are present:

1. The sign of remembrance was clearly portrayed in the bow: τόξον
2. In the bow Yahweh promised to “remember” His covenant: μνησθήσομαι. Yahweh promised that He would do the remembering through the course of eternity, assuring that His promise would be accomplished.
3. Repetition can be suggested from the repeated use of ἔσται, “it will be.” Repetition may also be implied from the readers’ experience that God calls rain down to water the earth and from the promise that God would see the bow and remember.
4. The bow represented the covenantal promise of blessing. Yahweh promised not to destroy the earth by another flood. The flood curse was previously brought about by His judgment on the wickedness of man.³⁸ The bow was a covenantal sign representing a blessing flowing out of a curse on mankind for the protection of all creation.
5. Finally, the covenant promise was an eternal promise: αἰώνιον, implicating following generations.

While this covenant was a significant expression of God’s care for His creation after the flood, it is stunted in its development. Scripture makes limited references to it thereafter. Unlike Yahweh’s covenant with Abraham and His covenant with Moses at

³⁸ In verse 11, Moses uses the words לֹא יִכָּרֵת כָּל-בָּשָׂר עוֹד מִמַּי הַמַּבּוּל, “And not again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood.” The word כָּרַת, “cut off,” as discussed below carries significant covenantal weight.

Mount Sinai, Scripture almost forgets the rainbow. It remained for Yahweh to reveal Himself more clearly through circumcision and the Sabbath, and particularly through the Sabbath.

3. Abrahamic Covenant³⁹

Genesis 17:9-14 also shows this five-fold pattern of covenant in circumcision:

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Ἀβραάμ σὺ δὲ τὴν διαθήκην μου διατηρήσεις σὺ καὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου μετὰ σέ εἰς τὰς γενεὰς αὐτῶν ¹⁰ καὶ αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη ἦν διατηρήσεις ἀνὰ μέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ ὑμῶν καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σπέρματός σου μετὰ σέ εἰς τὰς γενεὰς αὐτῶν περιτμηθήσεται ὑμῶν πᾶν ἀρσενικόν ¹¹ καὶ περιτμηθήσεσθε τὴν σάρκα τῆς ἀκροβυστίας ὑμῶν καὶ ἔσται ἐν σημείῳ διαθήκης ἀνὰ μέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ ὑμῶν ¹² . . . ἔσται ἡ διαθήκη μου ἐπὶ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν εἰς διαθήκην αἰώνιον ¹⁴ καὶ ἀπερίτμητος ἄρσεν ὃς οὐ περιτμηθήσεται τὴν σάρκα τῆς ἀκροβυστίας αὐτοῦ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ὀγδόῃ ἐξολεθρευθήσεται ἡ ψυχὴ ἐκείνη ἐκ τοῦ γένους αὐτῆς ὅτι τὴν διαθήκην μου διεσκέδασεν

And God said to Abraham, but you shall preserve **תְּשׁוּרָה** my covenant, you and your seed after you to your generations. And this is the covenant which you shall preserve **תְּשׁוּרָה** between me and you and between your seed after you to your generations: Every male shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised the flesh of your foreskin and it shall be a sign of covenant between me and you. And a child shall be circumcised on the eighth day. . . . It shall be my covenant on your flesh, to an eternal

³⁹ “Weinfeld, among others, has shown that the Abrahamic texts bear marked parallels to the Grant-type treaty in distinction to the Suzerain-Vassal type.” See Tim Hegg, “The Covenant of Grant and The Abrahamic Covenant” (paper, Regional Evangelical Theological Society, 1989), <http://www.torahresource.com/EnglishArticles/Grant%20Treaty.pdf> (accessed December 2, 2009). In this extensively annotated paper, Tim Hegg helpfully summarizes the parallels between Hittite, Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian (B.C. 1450 to B.C. 550) Royal grant treaties (or “kudurru”) and the Abrahamic texts and suggests some exegetical implications. He identifies three parallels. First, in the Grant, the rights of a favored individual are protected rather than the rights of the king being protected as in the case of the Suzerain-Vassal treaty. The curses are directed against the king himself and against any who would infringe upon the rights of the land owner. Second, the Grant is based upon the loyal service of the favored individual. Third, the gift of land and dynasty are the basic theme of the covenant. His analysis provides some helpful insights, particularly with regard to the covenantal expressions contained in chapters 12 and 15 of Genesis. However, chapter 17 of Genesis appears to be more characteristic of the Suzerain-Vassal treaty in the components of the curses and the covenantal sign. And the covenantal sign of circumcision fits within the pattern of the Sabbath, as is discussed in my thesis. It is paramount to read Old Testament theology out of the Old Testament instead of out of Ancient Near East Treaty forms. Therefore, I agree with Hegg when he observes that, “This is not a rigid parallel, since the Genesis passages are not themselves legal documents but are narratives. Nevertheless, the basic components are evident, and the genre of the Royal grant seems quite handy as a tool to aid in a deeper understanding and more accurate interpretation of these pivotal texts.” See p. 12.

covenant. And an uncircumcised male that is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day shall be cut off from the people because my covenant he rejected.

In this episode, the intergenerational aspect, succession, takes center stage. Like the Noachic covenant, circumcision was an eternal covenant, διαθήκη αἰώνιον. Circumcision was also a sign placed on the younger generation by the prior generation.⁴⁰ It was expressed repeatedly as a covenant with “your seed after you.” In essence, circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and that next generation administered by the older generation. The curse fell on the younger generation to the extent the prior generation failed to fulfill the covenantal sign.

This covenantal declaration also elaborated on covenantal curse, the threat of being “cut off (ἐξολεθρευθήσεται) from His people” for not being circumcised. In the sign itself, there was an emphasis on the curse in the physical representation of the cutting off of the foreskin. In addition, the Abrahamic covenant introduced the expression of the judicial punishment for failure to remember the sign. In the Hebrew, chapter 17, verse 14, reads as follows:

וְעָרְלָה זָכָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִמּוּל אֶת־בָּשָׁר עָרְלָתוֹ וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ
הַהִוא מֵעַמִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי הַפֶּרֶ:

Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin his spirit shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.

⁴⁰ A full discussion of the various reasons for circumcision within and outside of Israel, while important, is beyond the scope of this thesis. Some of the most important reasons suggested include: (1) physical, medical, or hygienic reasons, (2) social reasons, a rite of passage to manhood, (3) fertility, which would fit with the promise of the extent of Abraham’s descendants. See Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 23; and Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1995), 265.

Here, literally, the passage is “his spirit shall be cut off from his people.” The basic meaning of כרת was to “cut off.” However, it also had two specialized uses or formulaic idioms. First, it was used in the phrase to “cut a covenant.”⁴¹ This is typically rendered “make a covenant” in English translations. It meant to bind oneself to a relationship.

כרת was also used as an “extermination formula” or an “excommunication formula.”⁴² Hasel points out that the niphal is utilized 24 times in connection with this formula. He provides a good list of covenant violations that justified the judgment to be enforced: refusal to be circumcised (Gen. 17:14), transgression of the Passover (Ex. 12:15, 19), failure to fast on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:29), failure to remember the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14), consuming sacrificial fat (Lev. 7:25) or blood (Lev. 7:27), eating sacrificial flesh while unclean, unauthorized use of anointing oil, and transgression of sexual ordinances. Most of these violations had to do with the basic covenantal relationship, whether in sacrificial or worship life of the community. In commenting on Numbers 15:30-31,⁴³ Stuart states that,

This is describing not an occasional intentional sin but what was at the heart of all abuses of the law that bring about being “cut off”: a level of disobedience that constituted blasphemy, a defiance that indicates that the person despised God's word. That was the sort of person who could not be counted among the faithful in Israel, who had by his actions shown clearly that he did not desire to keep covenant with the true God. Such a person loses out on God's covenant benefits in this life and his eternal blessing as well.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Robertson, 8-9.

⁴² G. F. Hasel, “krt,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974-), 7.339-352.

⁴³ “But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the LORD, and that person must be cut off from his people. Because he has despised the LORD'S word and broken his commands, that person must surely be cut off his guilt remains on him.”

⁴⁴ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 285.

To be “cut off” was the ultimate curse of the covenant, a legal judgment to be separated from Yahweh’s people and to be separated from Yahweh Himself. It was a spiritual death penalty.

It may appear at first reading that the concept of remembrance received short shrift in the institution of circumcision. However, in verses 9 and 10, Yahweh twice over made a command to “keep,” “preserve” or “take great care over” the covenant, first in verse 9 to Abraham תִּשְׁמֹר and then as a general declaration in verse 10 תִּשְׁמְרוּ. The relationship between “remember” and “keep” is deep as shown in certain ancient Near Eastern treaties.⁴⁵

In addition, Exodus 2:23-25 writes the “remembrance” language back into the Genesis 17 passage, declaring that God “remembered” His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. This remembrance drove God’s actions in the rest of the book of Exodus.

²³ ¶ μετὰ δὲ τὰς ἡμέρας τὰς πολλὰς ἐκείνας ἐτελεύτησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Αἰγύπτου καὶ κατεστέναξαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων καὶ ἀνεβόησαν καὶ ἀνέβη ἡ βοή αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων ²⁴ καὶ εἰσήκουσεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν στεναγμὸν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐμνήσθη ὁ θεὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ τῆς πρὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ²⁵ καὶ ἐπείδεν ὁ θεὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐγνώσθη αὐτοῖς

After those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and (וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת-בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת-אַבְרָהָם אֶת-יִצְחָק וְאֶת-יַעֲקֹב) God remembered ἐμνήσθη his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

Ray Carlton Jones puts it well: “The biblical concept of anamnesis is not an abstract concept or mere recollection, but in the Old Testament it is always closely bound up with

⁴⁵ Garcia Lopez, “smr,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974-), 15.279-305.

an action and with cult—with a feast, a sacrifice, an offering, and the like.”⁴⁶ To remember a covenant through its signs was a covenantal or legal action, calling for actions specified in the covenant. Such remembrances call upon commitments made in a relationship and anticipate conduct faithful to that relationship.

This passage transitions from a rather lengthy introduction (in which Israel’s condition is described and Moses is introduced) to the story line of Exodus.⁴⁷ The next scene describes not only how God introduced himself to Moses through the burning bush and His covenant name, Yahweh, but also describes how Yahweh planned to deliver His people out of the land of Egypt. Yahweh’s actions throughout the rest of the book of Exodus were driven by His “remembering” His covenant. Yahweh’s remembering was not a mere psychological event of recollection. His remembering was an event based on relationship, an act based on law, committing Himself to act in conformance with the covenant.

The sign of circumcision also gave cause for a pivotal event in the Exodus story. There is a strange interjection in the story at 4:24-26. Moses, Yahweh’s covenant mediator, had not administered the sign of circumcision to his son. When Moses returned to Egypt to execute Yahweh’s plan, he stayed at a lodging house, but Yahweh “sought to put him to death.” Moses’ wife, being quick witted, immediately responded to what was happening and cut off her son’s foreskin and touched Moses’ feet⁴⁸ with it. So God let him alone. When Yahweh had made His covenant with Abraham, He commanded that it

⁴⁶ Ray Carlton Jones, Jr., “The Lord’s Supper and The Concept of Anamnesis,” *Word & World* 4 (Fall 1986): 434.

⁴⁷ Stuart, 103.

⁴⁸ It is not exactly clear whose feet Moses’ wife touched with the foreskin. The Hebrew indicates that she touched “his feet” לְרַגְלָיו. However, his wife’s comments following on the event appear to suggest that she touched Moses’ feet. In either event, the point is the same. Yahweh enforced the sign of the covenant.

would be an everlasting covenant and that any uncircumcised male shall be cut off

(וַיִּזְכֹּר יְהוָה) from His people. Yahweh had remembered His covenant, but His mediator

had not. It was imperative that that situation be corrected. This event shows the reader

how seriously Yahweh takes his covenantal remembrances. Yahweh will enforce His

covenant, and He will be faithful to His covenant.

4. Mosaic Covenant - Sabbath Day

The Sabbath Day calls for a more extensive discussion within the book of Exodus,

which will be the subject of Chapter 3. However, for the sake of setting forth an

understanding of how the Sabbath embodies a covenantal sign, I will conclude this

chapter with a few initial comments. Exodus 20:8-12 reads as follows:

μνήσθητι τὴν ἡμέραν τῶν σαββάτων ἁγιάζειν αὐτήν ⁹ ἔξ ἡμέρας ἐργᾶ
καὶ ποιήσεις πάντα τὰ ἔργα σου ¹⁰ τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ σάββατα
κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ σου οὐ ποιήσεις ἐν αὐτῇ πᾶν ἔργον σὺ καὶ ὁ υἱός σου καὶ
ἡ θυγάτηρ σου ὁ παῖς σου καὶ ἡ παιδίσκη σου ὁ βοῦς σου καὶ τὸ
ὕποζυγιόν σου καὶ πᾶν κτήνός σου καὶ ὁ προσήλυτος ὁ παροικῶν ἐν σοί
¹¹ ἐν γὰρ ἔξ ἡμέραις ἐποίησεν κύριος τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν
θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ
διὰ τοῦτο εὐλόγησεν κύριος τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἑβδόμην καὶ ἡγίασεν αὐτήν
¹² ¶ τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μητέρα ἵνα εὖ σοι γένηται καὶ ἵνα
μακροχρόνιος γένη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τῆς ἀγαθῆς ἧς κύριος ὁ θεός σου δίδωσίν
σοι

Remember (וַיִּזְכֹּר) the Sabbath day to hallow it. There are six days to work and you will do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath day to the Lord your God. You shall not do any work in it-and your son and your daughter and your boy servant and your maidservant and your ox and your ass and all your animals and the proselyte living as a stranger in you. For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them and He ceased on the seventh day and hallowed it. Honor your father and your mother in order that it may become well to you and in order that it may be well with you and you be long-lived on the good earth which the Lord your God gives you.

There are several things to note from this passage. First, the covenant formula command

to remember initiates the passage, וַיִּזְכֹּר, μνήσθητι. This aspect of the covenant event will

be a significant focus of Chapter Three. As I have previously stated, Yahweh's covenantal act of remembering in Exodus 2 drove all of His conduct through the remainder of Exodus. His people were thereafter commanded to respond to Him in like kind, to remember the Sabbath and so commit themselves to a life with Him. Second, the Sabbath was the sign to be remembered. Third, there was repetition in that every seventh day, all must remember the Sabbath.

Fourth, succession of the covenant is expressed in the combination of the fourth and fifth commandments. The fourth commandment to remember the Sabbath and the fifth commandment to honor father and mother are reciprocal covenantal obligations. They are the only two positive commands in the ten. The younger generation is the object of the fourth commandment in that the Sabbath remembrance is to be conducted before them and for their benefit, and the older generation is the object of the fifth commandment in that they are to be obeyed in their remembrance.

Fifth, there are blessings and curses bound up in the remembrance of the Sabbath. The purpose of these two reciprocal commandments is so "that it may be well with you and you be long-lived on the good earth which the Lord your God gives you." While a blessing is partially expressed in the conclusion of the fifth commandment, the full explication of the blessings and curses of the Sabbath is not described until chapter 31 of Exodus. Exodus 31:12-17 concludes a significant portion of the book of Exodus, which is devoted to the construction and contents of the Tabernacle, the place of worship. Verses 12-17 are designed to make sure that the things of worship are used properly, used on the Sabbath.⁴⁹ The passage states:

⁴⁹ See Stuart, 653.

And the LORD said to Moses, "You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, 'Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, Yahweh, sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death.

Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off (וַיִּכָּרְתֶּיהָ) from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Yahweh.

Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed."⁵⁰

Verses 16/17 repeat much of the content of verses 13/14a, establishing an inclusio for verses 14b/15. Both verses 13 and 17 declare the Sabbath a sign, σημείον, אֵימֶן. Within this inclusio, verses 14b/15 command:

πᾶς ὃς ποιήσει ἐν αὐτῷ ἔργον ἐξολεθρευθήσεται ἡ ψυχὴ ἐκείνη ἐκ μέσου τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ ¹⁵ ἔξ ἡμέρας ποιήσεις ἔργα τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ σάββατα ἀνάπαυσις ἁγία τῷ κυρίῳ πᾶς ὃς ποιήσει ἔργον τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ θανάτῳ θανατωθήσεται

Each one who does work in it [the Sabbath] that soul shall be cut off וַיִּכָּרְתֶּיהָ out of the midst of his people. Six days you will do work but the seventh day is a Sabbath, a holy ceasing to the Lord. All who do work in the seventh day shall be put to death.

Yahweh once again confirmed his covenantal sign with a blessing and a curse. The one who broke the covenant was to be “cut off” or put to death for violating the Sabbath.

To conclude, Yahweh called His people to remember His covenantal signs on a regular basis. This remembrance was not a mere intellectual act. The word זָכַר, “remember,” in such contexts entails more than a mere psychological sense of

⁵⁰ I have restructured the passage from the ESV structure to highlight its chiasmic structure.

recollection.⁵¹ Particularly for God, it was not as if God forgot and had to recall His promise. For God, remembering was a covenantal or legal action of commitment to His promise.⁵²

What was important about the Sabbath day was that it was a command for the covenant people to remember the covenant. The command was not intended to produce a slavish, works righteousness attitude toward worship. It was formative in the cultivation of a life style passed on from one generation to the next. In the words of Maxie D. Dunnam, the command was intended to produce a rhythm to life.

The principle behind this commandment is twofold. First there must be a rhythm to life, a rhythm of work and rest, certainly a rhythm of worship in the midst of our ongoing life. The second principle is that all time belongs to God. One day out of seven, set aside as a special day, serves to remind us of the sacredness of all our days.⁵³

I propose that the Fourth and Fifth Commandments are reciprocal commandments, inculcating a dance between generations. As the older generation is faithful in the “rhythm of life, a rhythm of work and rest” and the younger generation is faithful to obey, there is a holy dance in which the younger generation receives covenant succession from Yahweh. Yahweh, through His Spirit, enters into the dance, uniting believers to Himself and transmitting righteousness and grace from one generation to the next in the obedient execution of the dance. Yahweh formed the dance in the fabric of creation in Genesis 1 and confirmed it within the liturgical life of His people. Yahweh engages His people even today with blessings and executing blessings and curses on the world through His Sabbath, so transforming the world.

⁵¹ H. Eising, “zkr,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974-) 4.64-82. See also Stuart, 103.

⁵² J. Blau, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 241.

⁵³ Maxie D. Dunnam, *Exodus*, *The Communicator's Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word Books), 260.

CHAPTER THREE

WORSHIP IN THE EXODUS: A LEGAL TRANSACTION

1. Background

As I have previously shown, covenantal signs have at least five components:

1. a sign,
2. a remembrance,
3. repetition,
4. an expression of blessings and curses, and
5. an expression of succession.

The Sabbath day, just like Yahweh's prior covenantal remembrances, follows this pattern. As a matter of fact, the Sabbath becomes the pinnacle of covenant remembrance in the book of Exodus and the rest of the Old Testament. To understand the Sabbath Day, it must be seen in the context of the Book of Exodus, and the Book of Exodus must be understood as a book of worship. Finally, worship must be seen as a legal transaction, an expression of relationship.

Yahweh dramatically redeemed Israel out of the land of Egypt, declaring that He would do so in order that His people would serve and worship Him. He entered into a covenant with them at Mount Sinai. The giving of the Ten Commandments, set forth in chapter 20 of the Book of Exodus, and the anticipated worship service in chapter 24, were the pivotal points in the book.

Three themes in Exodus focus the reader on worship as a legal transaction. First, the theme of service or worship itself unifies the book. Second, the theme of

“remembering” זָכַר drives the events of the story and gives the book its covenantal flavor. Third, the theme of “testing,” tied to the Sabbath, gives a flavor to the developing relationship in the covenant. Ezekiel confirms the role of the Sabbath as the sign of the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

2. Worship

Exodus itself has a bifid structure. Chapters 1-18 tell the story of Yahweh’s leading His people out of Egypt to Mt. Sinai in order to worship. Chapters 19-40 describe His covenant with them.⁵⁴ As Wenham describes it, the focus of Exodus is “on the establishment of the covenant between God and Israel at Mt. Sinai: the first half of the book looks forward to this, and the second half looks back to it.”⁵⁵ All events in the Pentateuch prior to Exodus 19 lead up to the events of the covenantal worship service described in Exodus 24, and everything in the Pentateuch thereafter flows from that event of worship. Indeed, it has been observed that the Pentateuch is one unified book with Exodus 19-24 as the pivotal section.⁵⁶

The idea of “service” or “worship” is a central theme in the first eighteen chapters of Exodus. In chapters 1-18, God repeatedly declares His purpose for the Exodus. “Let my people go, so that they may serve me.”⁵⁷ (יַעֲבֹדֵנִי qal, weyqtl, 3cp w/ 1cs suff. “so

⁵⁴ Stuart, 19. Stuart would divide the book in two segments 1-19 and 20-40. However, as I will elaborate later, chapter 19 describes the people’s preparation for receiving the covenant from God. Therefore, I would include chapter 19 with the following chapters.

⁵⁵ D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, and G.J. Wenham, eds., *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994), 44.

⁵⁶ T. D. Alexander, *From Paradise to Promised Land* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), 97, 99; Stuart, 20.

⁵⁷ Exodus 9:1. See also 3:12, 4:23, 7:16, 26; 9:13, 10:3, 10:7 (“serve Yahweh”), 10:26 (“to serve Yahweh”).

that they may worship me”)⁵⁸ This formula is also given with variations, such as “to offer sacrifices” in 8:8 and “to celebrate a festival” in 10:9.

Chapter 19 makes a clear literary break from the prior chapters by declaring that, “On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt . . . [they] came in the wilderness of Sinai.” Yahweh commanded the people to consecrate themselves and warned them not to touch the mountain. “Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death.”⁵⁹ Thereafter, during the encampment, He gave his people the Ten Commandments along with what many consider the Book of the Covenant.⁶⁰ Yahweh concluded the recitation of His laws by declaring that He would send His angel before the people into Canaan. He further informed them that if they obeyed the angel, they would be blessed and their enemies would be cursed. Against this backdrop of austere warning against touching the mountain, Yahweh commanded Moses in chapter 24 to “come up to Yahweh” *עֲלֶה אֶל־יְהוָה* with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy elders and “worship from afar” *וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם מֵרֶחֶק*.

Chapter 24 divides into five separate sections, all related to Yahweh’s command to “come up.” *עֲלֶה*, in verse 1 and in verse 12, are in the qal, imperative form. Then in verses 9, 13, 15 and 18, Moses “went up.” *וַיַּעַל*, in each case a qal, wayyiqtol, indicates Moses’ response to the command, “he went up.” The story can be divided into the following sections:

⁵⁸ The form in this situation has a consequential force. Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 562 (§33.4).

⁵⁹ v. 12.

⁶⁰ Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, eds., *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1994), 67. Dillard and Longman also observe that Exodus 19-24 is in the form of a covenant treaty document itself.

- 1-2 Yahweh's command to "come up."
- 3-8 Moses prepared the people to go up through worship.
- 9-11 Moses and the elders went up, ate and drank with Yahweh.
- 12-14 Moses prepared the elders for him to leave and go up.
- 15-18 Moses went up.

There is literary tension in verses 1-8. The people had been warned in chapter 19 not to touch the mountain, but in verse 24:1 Yahweh commanded Moses to come up the mountain. Moreover, Yahweh commanded Moses and the elders to "come up" to him in verse 24:1, but in verses 3 through 8, Moses did not immediately respond. It was not until verse 9 that Moses and the elders responded by going up.⁶¹ Instead, verses 3 through 8 describe a worship liturgy as follows:

- 3 Moses "came" and "told" the people the words of Yahweh.
The people answered, "All the words which Yahweh has spoken will we do."
- 4 Moses "wrote" all the "words of Yahweh."
Moses "arose" and "built" an altar.
- 5 Moses "sent" young men to offer burnt offerings and sacrifice peace offerings.
- 6 Moses "took" half the blood and "threw" it on the altar.
- 7 Moses "took" the book of the covenant and "read" it to the people.
The people answered, "All the words which Yahweh has spoken will we do, and obey."
- 8 λαβὼν δὲ Μωυσῆς τὸ αἷμα κατεσκέδασεν τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ εἶπεν ἰδοὺ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης ἧς διέθετο κύριος πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων τῶν λόγων τούτων
And Moses after taking the blood, he sprinkled the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which Yahweh decreed to you concerning all these words."

In this passage the reader hears echoes from prior passages of the story. Chapter 24 is preceded by a long section describing the "words of Yahweh." Those words included the laws about building altars. On those altars, the people were to sacrifice their "burnt offerings" and "peace offerings." The people had previously committed in 19:8 "All that Yahweh has spoken we will do." These repetitions remind the reader that the approach to

⁶¹ Walter Brueggemann observes that these verses do not logically belong here but after 20:17 or 20:21. Walther Brueggemann, *The Book of Exodus*, The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 1:880. While I disagree with Brueggemann, his issue on this point highlights that Moses did an effective job at creating tension in the story and focusing the reader on the worship service.

Yahweh was in accordance with the “words of Yahweh” as they had committed. Finally, the sprinkling and declaration of “the blood of the covenant” (ἰδοὺ τὸ αἶμα τῆς διαθήκης “Behold the blood of the covenant”) and the reading of the book of the covenant confirmed the covenant.⁶² The worship service predicted throughout chapters 1-18 became a reality, a legal transaction confirming the relationship previously described, “I will take you to me to be a people and I shall be to you a God.” The point of the passage is that an approach to God is based only upon covenantal liturgy.

Moses and the elders then “went up” to Yahweh in verse 9 only after the confirmation of the covenant. In verses 9-11, the story reaches a crisis. Yahweh had previously declared in verse 19:12 that, “Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death.” Yet the elders saw Yahweh, but Yahweh did not lay His hand upon them and they ate and drank. This tension can only be resolved in the covenantal liturgy in verses 2-8. The people’s commitment to the Word, the killing of the sacrifices and the sprinkling of the blood admitted the people into Yahweh’s holy presence.

While the passage does not explicitly indicate what the elders ate and drank, a careful reading suggests that it was the peace offerings that Moses sacrificed during the covenantal ceremony. According to Leviticus 7:11-18, the peace offering was to be eaten on the day of its offering. Therefore, the elders’ eating and drinking was a continuation of the liturgical transaction, i.e. a feast of thanksgiving culminating the ceremony. What had been a formal ceremony became an intimate fellowship, a feast of relationship, a celebration of rest with their conquering king and covenantal lord. Indeed, the people

⁶² U. Cassuto is helpful here. He observes that, “The solemn repetition of the word וַיִּיקַח wayyiqqah [‘and he took’] at the beginning of three consecutive verses indicates three important phases in the ceremony of making of the Covenant” U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1967), 313.

had been conquered, but they had been conquered by a loving Lord who sought to bring them into intimate fellowship with Him.

3. Remember

In Exodus, Moses used the verb “remember” זָכַר five times in the qal, including twice in the wayyiqtol and twice in the infinitive. He used the wayyiqtol in verses 2:24 and 6:5 to describe Yahweh’s remembrance of His covenant with Abraham as the reason for His actions in the Exodus. Verse 6:5 reiterates verse 2:24. Verse 6:6 sets forth Yahweh’s command, “Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am Yahweh, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.’” Moses then used the qal, infinitive absolute זָכַר twice, in 13:3 and 20:8, as commands.⁶³ Based on His remembering and His mighty actions, Yahweh commanded His people to “remember,” to fulfill their covenant obligations. The first of these commands was to remember the Passover; the second was to remember the Sabbath.

Exodus 12:1-13:16, describing the Passover, is a fairly complex section which encompasses verse 13:3.⁶⁴ The fulfillment of the tenth plague, the death of the firstborn, is set apart and described in 12:29-32 within the context of legal material related to the Passover. Exodus 13 starts with a command from Yahweh to Moses. The passage can be divided as follows:

13:1-2 “Yahweh said to Moses, ‘**Consecrate to me all the firstborn . . .**’”

⁶³ Waltke & O’Connor, 593. In verse 32:13, Moses uses the qal. imperative to describe Moses request that Yahweh “remember” his covenant with Abraham and so not destroy his people.

⁶⁴ Stuart, 269.

- 13:3-10 “Then Moses said to the people, ‘**Remember this day** [the Passover] in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a hand Yahweh brought you out from this place. . . .’”
- 13:11-16 “When Yahweh brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, you shall **set apart to Yahweh all that first opens the womb** . . . You shall say to [your son] ‘Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem. It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand Yahweh brought us out of Egypt.’”⁶⁵ [Emphasis added]

I have divided the passage between verses 13:2 and 3 and again between verses 13:10 and 11. However, there is something to be gained by seeing the connections between these divisions. Verse 11 refers back to verses 1 and 2, and in verses 11-16, Moses explicitly relays that command to the people. Again, as in Exodus 24, the delay in Moses’ execution causes some tension.

How are verses 3-10 explained in the context of the delay? The answer is found in the parallels between verses 3-10 and 11-16, such as the reasons to be given by the father for the Passover in verse 8 and the reason to be given by the father for the setting aside of the firstborn in verses 14 and 15. Yahweh had claimed the firstborn as an obligation of the covenant that the people were to fulfill, a claim based on His passing over the firstborn of Israel. Moses commanded the people to set aside the firstborn to Yahweh, but not before setting the liturgical/legal foundation for the response. In celebrating the Passover, the people would continually “remember” their obligation to set aside the firstborn, and more importantly to be wholly devoted to their covenant Lord. Such a remembrance was a weighty undertaking. The Passover and the remembrance

⁶⁵ I have quoted extensively in order to give the reader the sense of the reoccurring themes and legal/covenantal language of memorial/statute. It should also be pointed out that there is a parallel instruction from father to son quoted from 13:11-16 contained in 13:3-10. Covenantal succession is a recurring theme in this passage as well.

thereof were given to commemorate the redemption of the first born. Again, the action of remembering was a covenantal act of commitment.

Moses next used the qal infinitive absolute זָכוֹר in verse 20:8.

זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Yahweh commanded His people to keep His “covenant” in verse 19:5 based upon the relationship He established in bringing them out of the land of Egypt. In chapter 20, Moses described Yahweh giving the Ten Commandments of His covenant. Moses prefaced the covenant by recalling that Yahweh was the one “who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” in verse 20:2, just as he had done with the Passover in verses 13:3-10. However, the sign of the covenant was not given until the Fourth Commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day.”

The people had already been impressed with the weight of the legal obligation to remember in the Passover. In giving this understanding of the act of remembrance in the Passover, God brought all of the weight of covenantal remembrance into the Sabbath day. By declaring νήσθητι τὴν ἡμέραν τῶν σαββάτων ἁγιάζειν αὐτήν, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” the worship cycle of the Passover that had previously been an annual cycle, became a weekly cycle. The Passover became incorporated into the Sabbath, and the Sabbath day became the centerpiece of the covenantal remembrance. Thereafter, whenever the Passover was addressed in the Pentateuch in a juridical manner, it was always addressed in the context of the Sabbath. See Exodus 34:21-26; Leviticus

23; Numbers 28; and Deuteronomy 15-16.⁶⁶ The Passover became part of something greater: the Sabbath.

4. Testing

The word “test” πειράζω also creates a legal theme in the Exodus story, a legal theme tied to the Sabbath. Yahweh saved his people by the cloud and through the sea in chapter 14; both were signs of relationship as Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 10. In Exodus 15:24, and again in Exodus 16:2, Israel quickly forgot the salvation of Yahweh and began to “grumble” διεγόγγυζεν against Moses, the first time for water, the second time for food. Concerning the first event, at verse 15:25b-26, Moses wrote:

ἐκεῖ ἔθετο αὐτῷ δικαιώματα καὶ κρίσεις καὶ ἐκεῖ ἐπείρασεν αὐτὸν ²⁶ καὶ εἶπεν ἂν ἀκοῇ ἀκούσης τῆς φωνῆς κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου καὶ τὰ ἀρεστὰ ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ ποιήσης καὶ ἐνωτίση ταῖς ἐντολαῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ φυλάξης πάντα τὰ δικαιώματα αὐτοῦ πᾶσαν νόσον ἣν ἐπήγαγον τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις οὐκ ἐπάξω ἐπὶ σέ ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι κύριος ὁ ἰώμενός σε

There Yahweh placed to him (Moses or the people) a statute and a rule, and there he tested him. And he said if you hear the voice of Yahweh your God and do pleasing in his sight and give ear to his commandments and guard all his statutes, all of the diseases which I brought on the Egyptians I will not bring on you, for I am Yahweh your healer.

In response to Israel’s grumbling for food, Yahweh again declared a test for Israel

ἐπείρασεν, יִסְּוּ. Yahweh declared in verse 16:4:

ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ὕω ὑμῖν ἄρτους ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἐξελεύσεται ὁ λαὸς καὶ συλλέξουσιν τὸ τῆς ἡμέρας εἰς ἡμέραν ὅπως πειράσω αὐτοὺς εἰ πορεύονται τῷ νόμῳ μου ἢ οὐ

⁶⁶ While Deuteronomy 15-16 does not explicitly address the Sabbath day, it is within a portion of the book of Deuteronomy which provides the casuistic law detailing the apodictic law of the Fourth Commandment, which includes a discussion of the Sabbatical Year, the Passover, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Booths. See James B. Jordan, *Covenantal Sequence in Leviticus & Deuteronomy* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), 62. Numbers 9 provides a historical narrative of the celebration of the Passover in the second year after the people had come out of Egypt. Numbers 33:3 likewise gives an historical account of the celebration of the Passover.

Behold, I will rain bread from heaven to you and the people will go out and gather day into day in order that I may test them if they will go to my law or not.

Yahweh determined to test them with manna, and the substance of the test was their collection practices, whether they would follow the Sabbath principle in their work and rest cycle.

ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ ἐξήλθοσαν τινες ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ συλλέξαι καὶ οὐχ εὗρον ²⁸ εἶπεν δὲ κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν ἕως τίνος οὐ βούλεσθε εἰσακούειν τὰς ἐντολάς μου καὶ τὸν νόμον μου ²⁹ ἴδετε ὁ γὰρ κύριος ἔδωκεν ὑμῖν τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην τὰ σάββατα διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν ὑμῖν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ ἄρτους δύο ἡμερῶν καθήσεσθε ἕκαστος εἰς τοὺς οἴκους ὑμῶν μηδεὶς ἐκπορευέσθω ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτοῦ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ ³⁰ καὶ ἐσαββάτισεν ὁ λαὸς τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ

And it happened on the seventh day, some of the people went out to collect and did not find. And Yahweh said to Moses, “How long will you not desire to preserve לְשׁוּבָה my commandments and my law. See! Yahweh has given you the Sabbath day. On account of this He has given you the sixth day bread for two days. Each one sit in your houses and no one go out of your place on the sixth day. And the people rested on the seventh day.

In these passages, the testing can be seen as a legal component arising from the covenant relationship. Yahweh showed Himself to be faithful to the relationship by giving the manna. The test was a standard by which the people could show their faithfulness to the covenant in following the Sabbath principle. The improper unlawful collection of manna on the Sabbath was a violation of the covenant test of relationship.

The term “diseases” מַחֲמָזִים in this passage has significant covenantal implications as well. The word itself is unique, occurring only three other places in the Old Testament. Stuart observes that this verse is wrongly interpreted to the effect that those who place their faith in Yahweh will not get sick. Stuart suggests, rather, that

Israelites would be free from the plagues.⁶⁷ It is hard to come up with a better alternative interpretation. The only Egyptian diseases Exodus speaks of are the plagues. In this context, what was a curse on the Egyptians would not be brought on Israel if they fulfilling the test. The clear implication from the passage was that if Israel was not faithful to the covenant, what had been a curse to Egypt would become a curse to Israel.

5. Prophetic Execution of the Sabbath

The writings of Ezekiel the prophet bolster the case that the Sabbath functioned as a covenantal legal transaction for the people. Ezekiel 20:1-31 has been divided various ways by the commentators, however, there is a repeated cycle of themes in the passage of revelation, rebellion, and wrath.⁶⁸ As the cycles progress, the themes of wrath and judgment are heightened in each subsequent cycle. According to the passage, Yahweh made reference to the Sabbath six different times, at verses 12, 13, 16, 20, 21, and 24. In each case, He referred to the Sabbath immediately after He referred to His statutes and judgments. This simple distinction could possibly giving special significance to the Sabbath commandment.⁶⁹

In verse 12 He “gave” His “statutes” and “judgments” as well as His Sabbaths. In this regard, His statutes and judgments were a way of life, “if a man does them, he will live in them.” Also, the Sabbath was “a sign . . . that they might know that I am Yahweh who sanctifies him. However, in verse 13, the people “did not walk in my statutes and rejected my judgments,” and they “greatly profaned my Sabbaths.” In verse 16, the

⁶⁷ Stuart, 368.

⁶⁸ Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-28*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 29: 5-8; Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: chapters 1-24* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 620-624.

⁶⁹ Daniel Block opines that Ezekiel gives special place to the Sabbath based on the influence of Jeremiah, “for whom the keeping of the Sabbath had become a primary determinant of Yahweh’s favor.” See Jer. 17:19-27 and Isa. 56:2, 4, 6. Block, 632.

people “rejected my judgments and did not walk in my statutes,” and they “profaned my Sabbaths.” Again, in verses 19 and 20, God reminded his people to walk in His statutes and be careful to obey His judgments. He also directed them to keep “my Sabbaths,” again as a “sign . . . that you may know that I am Yahweh your God.” In verses 21 and 24, God twice more recognized that his people did not obey His statutes and judgments and profaned His Sabbaths.

Verses 25 and 26 express the most damning judgment, significantly stressing the import of the Sabbath. After stating that He gave the people His statutes and judgments, Yahweh did not mention the Sabbath. Instead, He stated,

וְאַטְמָא אוֹתָם בְּמַתְנוֹתָם בְּהַעֲבִיר כָּל־פֶּטֶר רַחֵם לְמַעַן
אֲשֶׁמֶם לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יֵדְעוּ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי יְהוָה:

And I defiled them by their gifts by causing all the firstborn to pass through to destroy them in order that they might know that I am Yahweh.

In verses 12 and 20 the Sabbath had been represented as the sign that they might know that He was Yahweh who sanctified them. However, in verses 25 and 26 the defilement and destruction would cause them to know that He was Yahweh.

The two key words used in verse 26 describing what Yahweh did to the people are **טמא** and **שָׁמַם**, “defile” and “destroy,” respectively. The vast majority of the occurrences of the word **טמא** are in Leviticus and Numbers. In Leviticus, the word is used almost exclusively for a ceremonial “uncleanness” arising from contact with a dead body or an unclean animal. The book of Numbers follows this usage, but also

characterizes sinful sexual relations as making someone “defiled.” Therefore, the sense of the word is that Yahweh was making the people ritually unclean.⁷⁰

Hermann Austel points out that the basic idea of **שׁמָה** is a devastation caused by some great disaster, usually as the result of divine judgment. It is most frequently applied to places and things and rarely to people.⁷¹ What is most intriguing, however, is that the term is used nine times in the Pentateuch, seven of which are in Leviticus 26:31-43, referring to the devastation Yahweh will bring upon the land if the people walk contrary to Him. In the Leviticus passage, Yahweh repeated three times that the land would have its Sabbath rest during the time of such devastation. The land would receive the covenant blessing of rest during the time of the covenant curse on the people.

It therefore appears that verse 26 is portraying Yahweh as executing the covenantal curses on the people to fulfill the covenantal blessings promise to the land, all brought about by Israel’s failure to faithfully observe the Sabbath. The conclusion to be drawn is that the Sabbath was a bellwether of the moral and covenantal state of the people. Yahweh executed the legal requirements of the blessing and curses for the sake of the covenant sign, the Sabbath.

⁷⁰ Harris, 349

⁷¹ Ibid., 936. There is a secondary meaning and that is in a sense of “horror” or “shock.”⁷¹ Ezekiel uses the term this way, but it is typically associated with the use of **עלֶיךָ** (or “appalled at you”). See 26:16, 27:35.

CHAPTER FOUR

I CORINTHIANS 10: 1-13 – A RECALLING OF THE LEGAL TRANSACTION

1. Background

In this discussion, 1 Corinthians 10 holds an important place because in Paul's discourse Chapter 10 sets the stage for chapter 11 by immersing the reader in explicit Old Testament discourse and prepares the reader with a metalepsis from the book of Exodus. In the words of Richard B. Hayes,

Rather than sprinkling his readers with echoes and whispers, Paul immerses them in explicit and startling figurative claims; the effect of the passage is achieved through an outpouring of explicit figurations. Each of these figurations, however, considered individually, bears only slight "assertive weight."⁷²

Much study has been written regarding the rhetorical form of 1 Corinthians.

Witherington proposes one possible way to read the rhetorical structure of the letter from a classical Greek deliberative discourse perspective, as follows:

1. The epistolary prescript (1:1-3).
2. The epistolary thanksgiving and exordium (1:4-9)
3. The propositio introducing the letter with a parakalo formula and making the basic thesis statement of the entire letter (1:10).
4. A brief narratio (1:11-17) explaining the situation or facts that have prompted the writing of the letter.
5. The probatio (1:18-16:12), which includes arguments concerning various issues.
6. The peroratio (16:13-18).
7. The closing epistolary greetings and remarks (16:19-24).⁷³

⁷² Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), 91.

⁷³ Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 76.

According to Witherington, “The probatio was the heart of a rhetorical speech or letter and included the principal arguments used to persuade the audience. In a deliberative discourse these arguments could be arranged according to certain *topoi* or topics, in Greek called ‘heads’ (*kephalia*).”⁷⁴ Thiselton, on the other hand, warns against unnecessary polarizations that distort discussions of the role of rhetoric in Paul.⁷⁵ While accepting the warning not to rely on Greek thought to guide our understanding of the book, we should also not be surprised to find Paul speaking into the culture in which he lived and utilizing forms that the culture understood, while still speaking in covenantal terms, particularly if the structure makes the “hypothesis work in practice.”⁷⁶ While the form may be greek, the substance is entirely covenantal.

Where Witherington’s proposal is particularly helpful is in its proposition that the *propositio*, found in 1 Cor. 1:10, is the thesis statement of the entire letter, unifying the various *topoi* that follow. 1 Corinthians 1:10 provides the reader with Paul’s primary theme of the letter:

Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες καὶ μὴ ᾗ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, ἥτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῒ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ.

I beseech you brothers, in the name of the our Lord Jesus Christ that you all may speak and there be no divisions in you and that you may be established in the same mind and in the same opinion.

Paul’s main theme is the cultivation of the unity of the body and the prevention of divisions. In the verses that immediately follow verse 10, Paul stresses the unifying effect of Christ’s crucifixion and baptism into Christ. In other words, his unifying theme is the covenant. He mentions baptism six times in the immediately following verses. In

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 41.

⁷⁶ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress), 133.

chapters 2 through 6, Paul addresses several topics, including some oral reports of divisions in the Church.⁷⁷ In chapter 3, in particular, he highlights that the people are not πνευματικοίς “spiritual” but σαρκίνοις “fleshly.” He portrays their disputes as the prime example of why they are σαρκικοί “fleshes.” He describes them as a building for God and concludes, Οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστε καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν; “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you?” The strong connection Paul makes between the spiritual and unity and the strong distinction he makes between spiritual and the flesh are important. Unity is spiritual.

It is the temple analogy that implicitly affects Paul’s discourse in chapter 5. In chapter 5, he takes up the issue of an incestuous relationship in the Church. He instructs the Corinthians παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, “to deliver this one to Satan for destruction of the flesh.” He grounds his judgment in Exodus, with a command to ἐκκαθάρατε τὴν παλαιὰν ζύμην, “clean out the old leaven,” and a reference to Christ as the Passover Lamb.⁷⁸ Finally, Paul commands, ἐξάρατε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν, “Purge the evil one out of you,” echoing repeated commands in Deuteronomy.⁷⁹ In this way, Paul firmly ties together the life and spirituality of the people, i.e. their unity, the ceremonial law of the Old Testament, the temple, the Exodus, and the Passover. All of his discussion which follows regarding unity and idolatry is driven by this command to “purge the evil one out of you.”

In verse 2 of chapter 10, Paul reintroduces the concept of baptism discussed briefly in chapter 1. Verse 10:2 reads: “καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ

⁷⁷ 1 Cor. 1:11.

⁷⁸ 1 Cor. 5:7. Exodus 12:15.

⁷⁹ Deuteronomy 21:9, 21:21, 22:21, 22:22, 22:24, 24:27. See Roy E. Caimpa and Brian S. Rosner, “1 Corinthians,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 709.

νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ“ “And all [our fathers] were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” He refers to the new covenantal sign of baptism but ties it into the same events he discussed in chapter 5: the Exodus, Passover and the temple or tabernacle.

2. Structure of 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Verses 1 through 13 of 1 Corinthians 10 are highly structured.⁸⁰ Verse 1 expresses Paul’s desire in the first person present indicative Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλῃν ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διήλθον “For I do not want you not to know brothers that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea.” In this first verse of the passage, he expresses his point that the Exodus generation was unified in these events. He follows the statement with five references to πάντες “all our fathers.” The first refers to “fathers” explicitly, οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλῃν ἦσαν, “All our fathers were under the cloud.” The following four statements all start with the phrase καὶ πάντες “and all.” The καὶ in these verses strongly ties the four following past (aorist tense) verbs together to the first. Verse 5 then presents a strong contrast through the use of the disjunctive Ἀλλ’ “but.” Verse 6 then expresses Paul’s conclusion that these past events τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν “became [or happened as] our types [or examples].”

Verse 6 is also a transition sentence introducing verses 6 through 11, structured after the pattern of verses 1 through 4, but contrasting the unfaithfulness of the people with the grace of God. Koet points out that verses 6 through 11 are an inclusio. Paul utilizes τύποι in verse 6 and τυπικῶς in verse 11, referring to certain events as types.⁸¹

⁸⁰ For a general discussion, see B.J. Koet, “The Old Testament Background to 1 Cor 10:7-8,” in *The Corinthian Correspondence*, ed. R. Bieringer (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1996), 608.

⁸¹ Ibid., 609.

Verses 6 through 10 contain warnings for the Corinthians, so that εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν, καθὼς καὶ κεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν “we would not be desirous of evil as they desired evil.”

Verses 6 through 11 contain five negative judgments within the inclusio. These five negative judgments on Israel parallel the five closely connected expressions of God’s grace in verses 1 through 4. Verses 7 through 10 contain four negative warnings highlighting “some of them” following the pattern μηδὲ . . . καθὼς⁸² τινες αὐτῶν “and let us not . . . as some of them . . .,” just as verses 1b through 4 contain four indicative statements highlighting “and all.”⁸³ Verse 11 closes the inclusio and draws another conclusion by utilizing similar language to verse 6 ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νουθεσίαν ἡμῶν “But these things came together [or happened] as a type [or example] but were written for our warning.” Verses 12 and 13 express the final conclusion of the entire passage, introduced by the connecting word Ὡστε “therefore.”

3. Substance of 1Corinthians 10:1-13.

a. 1 Corinthians 10:1-5.

Within this highly structured passage, Paul “immerses [the Corinthians] in explicit and startling figurative claims; the effect of the passage is achieved through an outpouring of explicit figurations”⁸⁴ in verses 1-4.

Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλῃν ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διήλθον ² καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ ³ καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον ⁴ καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ

⁸² In verse 10, Paul uses a similar word καθάπερ.

⁸³ Verses 7 and 10 use a second person plural imperative verb while verses 8 and 9, utilize a first person plural subjunctive verb, indicating a type of chiasmus. See Koet, 608.

⁸⁴ Hays, 91.

πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα· ἔπινον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης
πέτρας, ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός.

For I do not want you to not know brothers, that all our fathers were under the cloud and all went through the sea and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea and all ate the same spiritual food and all ate the same spiritual drink for they drank from the spiritual rock following and the rock was Christ.

Paul builds the foundation of the fathers' unity once again in the covenantal signs. The frequent repetition of the *και πάντες* in verses 1 through 4 strongly connects the past events and all the fathers: all the fathers being under the cloud, and all passing through the sea, all being baptized into Moses, and all eating the same spiritual food and drinking the same spiritual drink. The fathers were unified in their baptism and in their eating of the spiritual food and drinking the spiritual drink. Paul also unites the Corinthian generation to them, utilizing new covenant concepts to describe old covenant signs: baptism and food and drink.

However, Paul's use of these references creates a tension from the metalepsis of the Exodus events. More specifically, being under the cloud and passing through the sea refer to Exodus 14:19-22, and the spiritual food and drink refer to Exodus 16:4-30.⁸⁵ The tension arises from the themes of "service" combined with "grumbling" and "testing" found in the Exodus passages. This unity and tension establish the foundation upon which Paul issues his warnings in verses 6-10. And it is the theme of "testing" that Paul highlights in verses 9, 12 and 13.

In verse 5, Paul builds on the tension created by the "grumbling" and "testing" themes in Exodus 14 and 16. Verse 5 begins with a contrasting "but" Ἀλλ' followed by Paul's observation that οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός, "the Lord was not

⁸⁵ See Ciampa and Rosner, 723.

pleased with most of them.” He draws his conclusion from the fact that Israel was overthrown (or killed) in the wilderness (“κατεστρώθησαν γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ.”) The γὰρ in this passage is explanatory and not causative.⁸⁶ The aorist passive κατεστρώθησαν indicates that it was not the overthrowing of the people that caused the Lord to be displeased but a result and evidence of His displeasure. Rather, the reason for their being overthrown was their grumbling and testing. Paul fills this argument out further in verses 6-11.

b. 1 Corinthians 10:6-11

In verse 6, Paul labels these events in Exodus 14 and 16 τύπον, “examples,” “patterns,” or “types” for the Corinthians and thereby creates an inclusio of five negative warnings contrasting the five positive statements in verses 1-4. The purpose of the τύπον was so that τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν, καθὼς κάκεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν “we may not be those desirous of evil as they desired those things.”

This first summary warning is followed by four structured commands based on four specific examples. The first such example is verse 7:

μηδὲ εἰδωλολάτραι γίνεσθε καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν, ὥσπερ γέγραπται·
ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν.

Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written: the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

The citation here is to Exodus 32:6. Ciampa and Rosner rightly point out that Exodus 32:6 describes a perversion of the covenant ratification ceremony in Exodus 24:5-11.⁸⁷

They also suggest that παίζειν indicates some sort of pagan revelry.⁸⁸ While most of the uses of παίζειν in the LXX refer to some type of celebration, good and ill, the Hebrew

⁸⁶ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 673-674.

⁸⁷ Ciampa and Rosner, 725.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

צחק, in Exodus 32:6, suggests some type of contemptuous laughing.⁸⁹ In either event, the condemnation is clear. In Exodus 24:5-11, Israel had eaten and drunk in the presence of Yahweh in a covenantal worship service. In Exodus 32, they had eaten and drunk in an idolatrous service in the presence of a golden calf.

The second example is verse 8, which states:

μηδὲ πορνεύωμεν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν καὶ ἔπεσαν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ
εἴκοσι τρεῖς χιλιάδες.

We must not commit prostitution (or sexual immorality) as some of them committed prostitution and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.

While the specific reference in verse 7 is clear, the reference in verse 8 is not. The reference to ἐπόρνευσαν is likely a reference to Numbers 25 and Israel's misconduct with the Moabite women at Shittim.⁹⁰ However, the judgment of twenty-three thousand falling in one day does not coincide exactly. Numbers 25:9 portrays twenty-four thousand dying by a plague. Some have speculated Paul simply made a mistake.⁹¹ Koet suggests that the reference to twenty-three thousand is a merging of the twenty-four thousand of Numbers 25:9 and the three thousand who died in Exodus 32:28. He finds more similarities between the Exodus 32:28 and 1 Cor. 10:8, namely the use of the word ἔπεσαν "fell" and the description that the judgment occurred all in one day.⁹² While this argument in isolation may not be compelling, it is hard to argue with the idea that Paul's dialogue in 1 Corinthians has consistently been founded upon Exodus. A reference to Exodus 32:28 certainly would fit Paul's argument.

⁸⁹ Gen. 17:17, 18:12, 18:13, 18:15, 19:14, 21:6, 21:9.

⁹⁰ Ciampa and Rosner, 726.

⁹¹ Koet, 607.

⁹² Ibid., 612.

There is additional support for Koet's position on verse 8 in verse 9 since Paul clearly merged two events in his third example in verse 9.

μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπείρασαν καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ὄφεων ἀπώλλυντο.

We must not put Christ to the test as some of them tested and were destroyed by serpents.

The use of the word ἐπείρασαν "they tested" utilizes a theme from Exodus 14 and 16. I have already discussed how Exodus utilizes the theme of "testing." Paul's use of the form of the word ἐκπειράζωμεν "we must not test" makes another distinct reference to three passages in Deuteronomy (6:16, 8:2, 8:16) and one in Psalm 77:18, all of which refer back to Exodus 14-17. However, the reference to ὄφεων "serpents" is a clear reference to Numbers 21⁹³ and the plague sent by God when the people complained about the manna. Yahweh sent εἰς τὸν λαὸν τοὺς ὄφεις τοὺς θανατοῦντας "on the people the serpents putting them to death." Here the merging of the two events takes on a clearer parallel in that the sin in Exodus 16 and the sin in Numbers 21 both relate to complaining about food in the wilderness. In Exodus 16, manna was given as a test to the people in response to their complaining about a lack of food. In Numbers 21, the people again failed the test by complaining about the manna. What was provided as a test in Exodus in response to grumbling continued in its role as a covenant sign by showing the people's unfaithfulness in the events in Numbers. The sin of one generation in reference to the covenant sign carried on from that generation to the next.

This concept of the sin of the people as it related to covenant sign carrying forward from one generation to the next is a common theme in Old Testament Scripture. This is a theme addressed by the Prophets. See in particular Hosea 4 and Ezekiel 20.

⁹³ Ciampa and Rosner, 726.

Paul, by his merging of events in his discourse, co-opts this theme for his purposes to make the Corinthians consider themselves as part of that heritage.

The ambiguity in Paul's fourth example in verse 10 reinforces the trajectory of Paul's theme.

μηδὲ γογγύζετε, καθάπερ τινὲς αὐτῶν ἐγόγγυσαν καὶ ἀπώλοντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ.

Do not grumble as some of them grumbled and were destroyed by the destroyer.

The verb used here for “grumble” γογγύζετε is the same word as used in Exodus 17:3. The term is indistinguishable from διεγόγγυσεν used in Exodus 15:24 and 16:2 in that both Greek terms translate the Hebrew גִּלְגֵּל, which is used in Exodus 15:24, 16:2 and 17:3. Therefore, the starting point of the warning is founded in Exodus. However, the same word is also used in Numbers 11:1, 14:27, 14:29, 17:6 and 17:20. In Numbers 11, the word refers to Israel's grumbling after leaving Mt. Sinai. In Numbers 14, the word is used in Yahweh's indictment against the people for their refusal to enter into the Promised Land. In chapter 17, the word is used in reference to Yahweh's judgment of the people after Korah's rebellion. This verse suggests a consistent grumbling of the generations of Israel throughout the wilderness journey.

Paul's reference to τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ “the destroyer,” as Ciampa and Rosner point out, is likely the death angel of the Passover in Exodus 12:23, who carried out subsequent divine judgment.⁹⁴ Ciampa and Rosner are supported in their judgment by the use of the word “plague” πλῆγῆν and its relationship to the destroyer's conduct in Exodus. In Exodus 11:1, Yahweh claimed that he had one more plague to bring upon Egypt, the

⁹⁴Ibid., 726.

Passover. Exodus equated the plague as the work of the destroyer in Exodus 12:23. In the same verse, Yahweh equated the work of the destroyer with his own work. In Exodus 33:5, shortly after the golden calf incident, Yahweh proclaimed to Moses that the people were a stiff-necked people, and he would plague πληγήν them if He entered into their presence for even one moment. Then, through the course of the wilderness journey, the people became subject to the plague as they rebelled against Yahweh. More specifically, the word πληγήν is used in Numbers 11:33, 14:37, 25:8, 25:9, 25:18, 26:1, and 31:16. What had started as a judgment on the Egyptians through the Passover, Yahweh converted to a curse on Israel for their grumbling against Yahweh and their ingratitude for His work in the Exodus. Therefore, verse 10 is consistent with the progression of Paul's argument that sins pertaining to covenantal signs have an impact on later generations, making them susceptible to the same sin and liable to the covenantal judgment.

Hays summarizes the issue well: "Why, then, does Paul cite this single verse for Exodus [32:6 in 1 Cor. 10:7] when his allusions to Israel's wilderness experience have already set the stage clearly? And why quote a passage from Exodus when the incidents described in the catalogue of errors in verses 6-10 seem otherwise to allude to the narrative of Numbers? (See Num. 14:26-35, 25:1-9, 26:62, 21:5-9, 16:41-50)" He concludes, "The Exodus quotation anchors the discourse at the point of its central concern (idolatry) and does so in a way that permits the poetic expansion of Paul's germinal metaphorical intuition into a metaphysical conceit, spanning the experiences of

Israel and church with multiplex analogies.”⁹⁵ Hays moves the discussion in the correct direction. The anchor point is the foundation built in verses 1-4.

Paul grounds the identity of the fathers in their baptism into Moses, their eating the same spiritual food and drinking the same spiritual drink. Paul’s continued use of the terms “grumble” and “test” anchor his argument back into Exodus through verses 1-4.

Israel’s identity was found in how Yahweh marked them out as a people, through covenantal signs. The point of departure is anchored in the Exodus quotation in 1 Corinthians 10:7. “Some of them” committed idolatry with the golden calf and so departed from their true identity. The poetic expansion of Paul’s germinal metaphorical intuition into a metaphysical conceit is in the sin that permeates the generations that followed. The sin that started with the golden calf and the rejection of the covenantal signs resulted in corruption of the next generation, a loss of covenantal succession. Through his commands, Paul instructed the Corinthians not to follow in the path of the prior generations in Moses’ time. This assessment becomes abundantly clear as Paul draws to his conclusion in verses 12 through 13.

c. 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

Verse 11 links the five previous examples with Paul’s paraenetic conclusion in verses 12 and 13. His conclusion is that the examples were “written down for our instruction.” (ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν) Paul relies heavily on the case he made in verses 6 through 10 by utilizing the images of “testing” previously expressed in verse 9.

ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντηκεν. Ὡστε ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι βλεπέτω μὴ πέσῃ. ¹³ πειρασμὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος·

⁹⁵ Hays, 92.

πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεός, ὃς οὐκ ἑάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε ἀλλὰ ποιήσει σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἔκβασιν τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑπενεγκεῖν.

But these things came together as a type to them and were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore, the one who thinks he stands take care lest he fall. A testing has not taken you except (what is) common to man, but God is faithful who will not permit you to be tested above that which you are able but will make with the test also the way out to be able to endure.

It is the concept “to test” πειράζειν, as previously discussed, that is front and center as Paul pulls his conclusion from Exodus 14 and 16 through the wilderness generation in Numbers and into 1 Corinthians 10. He uses the word three times in three different forms: πειρασμός, πειρασθῆναι, and πειρασμῷ. Moses’ generation had been given signs of intimate relationship with Yahweh, marking them out as His people and unifying them in one body. Some of them were being distracted and divided by sexual immorality and idolatry. They were testing God. Paul’s message is the Exodus generation was given covenantal signs to unify them and make them spiritual in relationship to Yahweh. He pulled the covenantal signs into the present by proclaiming that the people were “baptized” into Moses and that the rock from which the water came was “Christ.” The Corinthians were in precisely the same situation as the fathers in Moses’ generation in relation to their idolatry. The question was whether the Corinthians would be faithful to the covenantal signs of relationship or continue the sin of their fathers as the following generation by testing God.

However, the passage contains more than simple warning. It provides a solution to their testing from God. Paul promised the Corinthians that God provided a way out for the Corinthians. These verses beg the question what is the “way out to be able to endure.” Paul knit this passage tightly together for a reason. Paul did not tell his readers

to look for some abstract, unidentified way out. He called the Corinthians to look back through the discourse to find the way out. The “way out” was the signs of unity with which God’s covenant people have been marked. Their baptism and their common meal of spiritual food and drink was the way out. That promise, consistent with the metalepsis of the Exodus passage, extended not only to the wilderness generation but also to their descendants the Corinthians. The Corinthians would return to unity among themselves and for the next generation in remembering their baptism and remembering the Lord’s Supper.

CHAPTER FIVE

I CORINTHIANS 11: THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT

What is the Lord's Supper? The easy answer is that it is a sacrament.⁹⁶ While useful, this answer can be anachronistic in some senses when applied to the biblical passages describing the institution of the Supper. The term sacrament is of early church origin and medieval church development.⁹⁷ Jesus would not have understood the concept of a "sacrament." He would have understood the concept of a covenant.

According to Paul, Jesus said, "τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι/This cup is the new covenant in my blood." Collins finds that this language evokes Jer 31:31 (LXX 38:31),⁹⁸ which is clearly correct. "διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰουδα διαθήκην καινὴν/I will grant to the house of Israel and the house of Judah a new covenant." However, Paul's reference goes further back. He utilized the concept of "blood of the covenant" to once again go back to Exodus. Exodus 24:8 declared, "ἰδοὺ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης ἧς διέθετο κύριος πρὸς ὑμᾶς/Behold the blood of the covenant Yahweh grants to you." In chapter 10, Paul immersed his reader once again in Exodus. Whereas, in chapter 10, Paul tied Israel's passing through the sea to baptism

⁹⁶ Westminster Shorter Catechism answer 96 states as follows in response to the question: "The Lord's supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is shewed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace."

⁹⁷ C. O. Buchanan, "Sacrament," in *New Dictionary of Theology* ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1988), 606.

⁹⁸ Collins, "The Eucharist as Christian Sacrifice," 2.

and their eating and drinking in the wilderness to the Lord's Supper, in chapter 11, he ties the cup to "the blood of the covenant" in the worship service in Exodus 24.

As has already been discussed, Paul undertakes in his letter to restore the Corinthians to a place of submission under Christ and to move them to unity.⁹⁹ In verses 10:23-11:1, he discusses the matter of food sacrificed to idols, but in verse 11:2, he interjects a discussion utilizing the connector δὲ. Some commentators have suggested that in verse 11:2 Paul is addressing a matter that they have not inquired about,¹⁰⁰ but it is more likely that he is entering into an extensive excursus on the matter he has been discussing: "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."¹⁰¹ In verse 11:1, in the context of his discussion of eating and drinking to the glory of God, he writes, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Then he sets forth a contrast in the Corinthians' conduct on two matters which he discusses in verses 2 through 16 and verses 17 through 34. In verse 2 he commends them for their conduct because they remembered him in everything and maintained the traditions even as he entrusted παράδωκα the traditions to them; they have been imitators of him. However, in verse 17 he chides them because they have not kept the traditions that he entrusted to them, utilizing παράδωκα in verse 23. They had forsaken the tradition of the Lord's Supper. They were despising the Church of God by humiliating those who had nothing. In verse 22, he repeats his condemnation. On this matter, they had not been imitators of him as he was of Christ.

⁹⁹ Hans Bayer "Acts and Paul," (Lecture, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, March, 2008).

¹⁰⁰ Paul uses δε rather than Περὶ δε to introduce this section. He returns to Περὶ δε in 12:1. See William H. Mare, *I Corinthians*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 10: 226, 255. See also Thiselton,, 849.

¹⁰¹ I Corinthians 10:31.

Then in verse 23, he states the tradition: “Εγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ παρεδίδοτο ἔλαβεν ἄρτον / For I received from the Lord what I also entrusted to you, that on the night the Lord Jesus was handed over, he took bread.” The language is the language of tradition. The commentators generally agree that παρέλαβον and παρέδωκα are here used in a technical sense of tradition, potentially even a legal sense.¹⁰² While liturgical and highly structured, these words, based on Paul’s authority, are represented as having come from Christ, and so they are a corporate confession of what the community believed Christ instituted.¹⁰³

Paul then recites the liturgy in verses 24-26:

καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν· τοῦτό μού ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.²⁵ ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι λέγων· τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνετε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.²⁶ ὡσάκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνετε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ.

And after giving thanks, he broke (it) and said: “This is my body (given) on your behalf. You do this in remembrance of me (or “for my memorial).” In like manner also (he took) the cup after the supper, saying: “This cup (is) the new covenant in my blood. You do this, as often as you drink, it in remembrance of me (or “for my memorial).” For as often as you eat this bread and you drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

¹⁰² C.K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1968), 265. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 548. See also G. Delling, παραλαβανω, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:11.

¹⁰³ Much has been written regarding the possible competing traditions of the institution and corporate confessions of the Supper as well as whether Paul received his tradition directly from the Lord or as it was passed on from others. I do not intend to get involved in the discussion. Such discussions do not bear on the point I am making here. Paul intended to make a point that the Corinthians had to do all to the glory of God and follow the traditions that he passed on.

Paul's discourse adopts the form of covenant memorials previously discussed for the rainbow, circumcision and the Sabbath. The five components of (1) a remembrance, (2) repetition, (3) a sign, (4) blessings and curses, and (5) succession are clearly identifiable.

1. A Remembrance – Do This in Remembrance of Me

Collins rightly advises, that whereas Paul uses ἀνάμνησις, the LXX generally utilizes μνησκόμαι when it translates the Hebrew word זָכַר, “remember.” However, as I hope to show, this minor distinction is inconsequential when compared to the weight of the other evidence, particularly when seen within the supporting structure of the components of the sign.

As a general observation, O. Michel notes that the traditions of both terms, ἀνάμνησις and μνησκόμαι, are close to one another.¹⁰⁴ Further, the Old Testament is not completely void of the use of ἀνάμνησις. In all, ἀνάμνησις is used eight times in the Bible, four times in the Old Testament, once in Leviticus, once in Numbers and once each in Psalms 38 and 70. The first of these is likely the most helpful. In Leviticus 24:7, ἀνάμνησις is used to translate the noun לֶאֱזַכְרָהּ. In Leviticus, the term אֶזְכָּרְתָּהּ is used five other times,¹⁰⁵ all translated by the greek μνημόσυνον. In all six cases, the term refers to the memorial portion of the grain offering offered to Yahweh. From this perspective, it appears that the terms may be used interchangeably to represent the Hebrew term for memorial, זָכַר. What is more striking is that Leviticus 24:7 and following describe that the memorial portion was to be arranged and eaten every Sabbath by the priests as a

¹⁰⁴ Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 4:676

¹⁰⁵ 2:2, 2:9, 2:16, 5:12, and 6:8.

covenant forever. Then in Psalms 38 and 70 the LXX uses the term ἀνάμνησιν to translate לַאֲזִכָּרָה and לַהֲזָכִיר, the memorial offering.¹⁰⁶

2. Repetition

Paul also highlights the element of repetition in the new covenant sign. In verse 25, he writes “τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὡς ὅσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν / You do this as often as you drink the cup, in remembrance of me.” He highlights the concept of repetition, using ὡς ὅσάκις “as often as.” He uses ὡς ὅσάκις a second time in the following verse. “ὡς ὅσάκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ/For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” ὡς ὅσάκις occurs three times in the New Testament, twice in this passage and once in Revelation 11:6. In Revelation 11:6, the word refers to God’s two witnesses that may bring plagues on the earth “whenever they desired.” While the word gives us very little insight into the frequency of the repetition, it highlights repetition, leaving frequency to be understood from the rest of the context.

3. Sign

Clearly, this passage never refers to the bread and the wine explicitly as signs σημείον as do the Old Testament memorial statements. However, in its history, the Church has never failed to recognize them as signs. Following on a long history of church tradition, the answer to question 92 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, “What is a sacrament?” states, “A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by

¹⁰⁶ See also Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 153.

sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.” The Church has always understood the bread and the wine to be a sign of the covenant.

4. Blessings and Curses

This component of the Lord’s Supper is the most nuanced of the whole discussion. Are there blessings and curses associated with the Lord’s Supper? Didn’t Christ through His death and resurrection receive the final curse for our blessing? The passage certainly seems to suggest that some aspect of blessings and curses still exists. As a matter of fact, Paul devotes more time on the curse aspect than any other component:

“Ὡστε ὃς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνη τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως, ἔνοχος ἔσται τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου. ²⁸ δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω. ²⁹ ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα. ³⁰ διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοι καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί. ³¹ εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα. ³² κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ [τοῦ] κυρίου παιδευόμεθα, ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν.

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. A man must prove himself in this manner how he shall eat the bread and drink the cup. For the one who eats and drinks judgment to himself eats and drinks not recognizing the body. Because of this many in you are sick and ill and a large number are falling asleep. But if we judge ourselves, we will not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are trained in order that we may not be condemned with the world.

There can be no denying that there are very strong proclamations of covenantal judgment in this passage. ἔνοχος has strong connotations of bloodguilt and capital punishment.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ See Gen. 26:11, Exo. 22:2, Lev. 20:9, Num. 35:27, Deut. 19:10.

Likewise, while κοιμῶνται can mean either to sleep or to die,¹⁰⁸ Paul clearly means something more here than literal sleep.

As has already been discussed, blessings and curses of a covenant frequently go together in one way or another. Work is simultaneously a blessing and a curse. The curse of the exile brought blessings to the nations and to Israel. The death of Christ brings blessing to all who believe. It must also be noted that curses fall on some because of the sins of the community. Daniel was taken into exile and became a blessing to Babylon. God works in His world by executing His will through blessings and curses. In reading the blessings and curses of 1 Corinthians, this synthesis must be embraced. It is this understanding that brings the reader to verse 32 of chapter 11, “κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ [τοῦ] κυρίου παιδεύμεθα, ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν/ But when we are judged by the Lord, we are trained in order that we may not be condemned with the world.”

Scripture speaks of us being refined by fire and the word of God being a sharp double edged sword, dividing bone from marrow. While the written word of God does these things, so does the Word of God do these things through His covenant meal. Barrett goes part of the way there when he writes,

The verse as a whole deals with the one who *eats and drinks*-a participant in the Lord's Supper. Such a man *eats and drinks judgement* (sic)(κρίμα) *to himself*; that is, he exposes himself to judgment, not simply in the sense that all men must appear before God for judgment . . . but in a special sense. . . . The persons in question thus incur judgement (sic), expose their own guilt, when they come together to the Lord's Supper.¹⁰⁹

Inasmuch as the Eucharist is a community event as is the Sabbath, the entire community voluntarily submits itself to judgment, exposing its guilt, for the blessing of the entire community. In doing so, it subjects itself to the training of God as a community. In a

¹⁰⁸ See Job 21:26.

¹⁰⁹ Barrett, 274.

sense, the Holy Spirit through the blessings and curses of the covenantal meal drive the Church in the way it should go.

Luke admirably communicates this principle in his Gospel. With the triumphal entry to Jerusalem described in Luke 19:28, the story takes on a theme of judgment unlike in previous chapters. Jesus tells of the destruction of Jerusalem; He cleanses the temple and passes judgment on the city of Jerusalem. At the center of Jesus' progression to the cross, He institutes the Supper. And with the pouring out of the cup, Jesus announces judgment on Judas and prophesies Peter's denial. These two declarations drive the story to the cross and resurrection.

Just as Israel did in Exodus 24, at the Lord's Supper, the Church comes into the presence of her covenant God. The close presence is an intimate relationship. The Church must remember that we come in close contact with a holy God. The very expression of the Word of God, being sharper than any double edged sword, assumes that we will be cut in such close presence. As the sacrifices were cut up and rearranged on the altar, we can expect to be cut up and rearranged in the Lord's Supper.

Covenantal blessings and curses are God's means of transforming the world. Work transforms the world. God, in His judgments on the people of Israel and the surrounding nations, transformed the world. Jesus, undergoing the curse of the cross, transformed the world. The Church, in remembering Jesus in the Lord's Supper, receives the sanctions of the covenant and brings on the Holy Spirit's transforming work to the world.

Within this context, what is Paul's call to examine oneself? At verse 29 of 1 Corinthians 11, Paul writes, “ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ

διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα For the one eating and drinking judgment to himself he eats and drinks not recognizing the body.” Paul uses the word “body,” σῶμα five times in chapters 10 and 11. In three instances, 10:16,¹¹⁰ 11:24 and 11:27, he uses the word in combination with the word “blood,” αἷματι. In each case he refers to the elements of the Supper, the bread and the wine. In verse 10:17, he uses the word σῶμα alone, referring to the congregation. In verse 11:29, like in 10:17, he does not use the word σῶμα in combination with αἷματι, indicating that he is referring to the congregation, the people of God, not the bread.

Thiselton outlines the three broad traditions of interpreting the phrase κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα: distinguishing between the sacred Eucharistic elements of the Lord’s body and ordinary bread of the table, discerning the body as referring primarily to respect for the congregation of believers as the body of the Lord (the position taken in this thesis), and being mindful of the uniqueness of Christ, who is separated from others in the sense of giving himself for others in sheer grace.¹¹¹ Thiselton adopts the third position for two reasons. First, according to Hofius, the use of τὸ σῶμα in this verse stands *pars pro toto*. Second, and more decisively according to Thiselton, Wolff argues, that, “The social is founded on the salvific: the issue is understanding the entailment of ‘sharing as participants in the death of Jesus “for you.”’ The context of vv. 24 and 27, . . . is most decisive of all, since it is this that impinges transformatively on believers’ attitudes and behavior towards others.”¹¹²

¹¹⁰ The use of the words τὸ σῶμα in 10:16 is ambiguous. It is just as possible that Paul utilized τὸ σῶμα in verse 16 to anticipate his use of the word in verse 17. For the sake of argument, I will assume the words to refer to the bread.

¹¹¹ Thiselton, 892.

¹¹² Ibid., 893.

In response, the first of Thiselton's arguments does not go far enough and the second goes too far. The argument that τὸ σῶμα stands *pars pro toto* for the body and the blood begs the question. Rules of discourse exist to help discern the author's intent. *Pars pro toto* means that one component of a thing is stated so as to refer to the whole. The rule arises from what a culture experiences in its discourse. A common example is the term "glasses" is used to mean something more than simply two pieces of glass. In this reference, we share a common culture and recognize this common word as an appropriate shorthand. We understand the meaning within a context. However, the context of Paul's discourse shows the argument to be misplaced. Paul uses the phrase "body and blood" three times in vv. 16, 24 and 27. If τὸ σῶμα was commonly understood to stand *pars pro toto* for "body and blood," why didn't he use it in any one or all of the other three places? Simply declaring τὸ σῶμα *pars pro toto* does not make it so. A more appropriate maxim in this case would be *noscitur a sociis*, "The meaning of a word is or may be known from the accompanying words."¹¹³ According to this maxim, "body and blood" refers to the bread and the wine as used in verses 11:16, 24 and 27, "body" refers to the congregation as used in 10:17 and 11:29.

The argument that the social is founded on the salvific, while not more decisive is more nuanced. While the proposition is ultimately true, the proposition is not the point Paul is making in the passage; Thiselton's and Wolff's argument lifts the verse out of context. Paul's theme in the letter was one of unity. His theme in verse 10 of chapter 1 was unity. He called the Corinthians to unity through Baptism and the Lord's Supper in chapters 10 and 11. Wolff's proposition might be better stated as "the social is founded

¹¹³ Black's Law Dictionary 956 (rev. 5th ed. 1979).

on the salvific through the Lord's Supper." By jumping from the social directly to the "sharing as participants in the death of Jesus for you," Wolff skips the clear and primary step in Paul's argument in chapter 11 and that is the unity of "the body" through the Supper.

5. Succession

As was previously discussed, the fifth commandment to honor one's father and mother is reciprocal to the fourth commandment to remember the Sabbath day. How this looks in real life is a dance. As the older generation is faithful in the rhythm of life, a rhythm of work and rest and the younger generation is faithful to obey its mother and father, there is a holy dance in which the younger generation receives covenant succession from Yahweh. The Eucharist takes on this same feel only in the form of a meal.

How is this fleshed out in 1 Corinthians 11? It is fleshed out in verse 26: "ὅσάκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ/For as often as you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes." This brings us back to the contention that Millard made: "Each time the Corinthian Christians shared the Lord's Supper they purported to show their allegiance to the covenant it symbolized."¹¹⁴ In both verse 24 in reference to the bread and verse 25 in reference to the cup, Paul recites the command of Christ, "do this (ποιεῖτε)"¹¹⁵ in remembrance of me." Just as Yahweh had commanded his people to remember the Passover and remember the Sabbath, he commands His people to

¹¹⁴ See note 21, above.

¹¹⁵ Present, Active, Imperative, 2nd, plural.

eat the bread and drink the cup as his memorial. From Paul's perspective, this was a directive for a command performance from the head of the Church.¹¹⁶

Paul's use of the word "proclaim" (καταγγελλετε) reinforced the concept of a formal covenant commitment ceremony. It is a proclamation that the Church must make until he comes ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ. Some do not see the act itself as the proclamation,¹¹⁷ presuming instead that a verbal proclamation must be associated with the event. However, the text gives no basis for the presumption. This is a failure to see the Eucharist within the covenantal context of the Sabbath. There is a command to undertake a legal commemorative act. It is the repetition of the eating and the drinking that is the proclamation. The covenantal events rehearse the signs of unity before the community. This proclamation occurs within the community and before the next generation. The blessings and curses of the covenant fall on the next generation through the faithful practice of the sign.

¹¹⁶ Colossians 1:18-20.

¹¹⁷ Fee, 557; Thiselton, 851. Barrett, 270.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

In drawing conclusions in this thesis, I would like to return to the words of A. R. Millard once again. “Each time the Corinthian Christians shared the Lord's Supper they purported to show their allegiance to the covenant it symbolized, and therefore could not but expect its provisions to be active upon them for good or for ill.”¹¹⁸ Millard has captured the two sides of the covenant relationship in the phrases “show their allegiance” and “expect its [covenant] provisions to be active upon them for good or for ill.” Jesus formulated His sign of the new covenant as He did for good reason. In formulating it as the “blood of the covenant,” He showed it to be the culmination of the covenant relationship within a covenant renewal event. In formulating it as a covenantal sign, He established it as a binding memorial through which He would work through His church through the generations, bringing transformation to the world and succession to the church.

In this new covenant as in the old, the practice of the Lord's Supper is an act in which both man and God remember. This is clearly seen in the book of Exodus. God initiated His covenantal actions in remembering His covenant with Abraham. Based on His remembrance He brought Israel out of bondage. He then commanded them to remember His Passover and His Sabbath. Finally, He acted in the history of Israel in conformity with their conduct on the Sabbath.

¹¹⁸ Millard, 245.

I have previously compared the conduct of the generations as they relate to the Sabbath as a holy dance between generations, resulting in covenantal faithfulness of the following generation. The indispensable relationship in this dance is the relationship with Yahweh who instituted the dance through the Sabbath. In the Lord's Supper, Yahweh enters into the dance in a new way through His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, in the dance, nourishes His church with Christ. Through the dance, the Holy Spirit executes the blessings and curses and grants succession to the community.

If, as a community, we see that the Lord's Supper is the consummation of Yahweh's intimate relationship with us, we will want to partake of the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day. Is it possible to claim that weekly communion is mandated from the pages of Scripture? Not in so many words. However, the thrust of Scripture is very strong in that direction. If Jesus folded his transformative Supper into the liturgical order of redemptive history in His words "blood of the covenant," recalling Exodus 24, and if we seek intimate relationship with Him every Lord's Day, there is every motivation to partake of Him in the Supper every Lord's Day.

Yahweh's blessings and curses are His instruments of transformation. They are His means of grace to His people for their good and the transformation of the world. One excellent example of how the Spirit works His blessings and curses for the transformation of the world can be seen in 2 Kings 23. After the priests brought the lost Book of the Covenant to Josiah, Josiah read the Book of the Covenant to the entire nation and the nation committed itself to covenant with Yahweh. Subsequently, Josiah ordered that all of the high places be destroyed. Renewal of the covenant brought renewal to the people and devastation to evil in their midst.

When Yahweh's community participates in the covenantal meal of Jesus, He will act, not because the Church has some control over Him, but because He has promised to act on her behalf in His covenant. His promises surrounding His covenant should put His people, His bride, in a state of expectation and anticipation as they approach the table. What will Yahweh do for us today through the Supper? If the Church wants to see the world transformed, I suggest one way of doing it is to reassess its commitment to frequent communion with Jesus.

Christ, in the institution of His Supper incorporated it into a glorious line of covenantal signs. These covenantal signs were and are acts of special intimacy between Yahweh and His people. Such signs were corporate events, involving a community of people. Individuals received blessings from Yahweh in the worthy participation of sign as they participated in the community. One special aspect of this was that later generations were blessed in the prior generations' worthy participation in the sign, covenant succession.

This understanding of the Lord's Supper is particularly helpful on the issue of the so called efficacy of Baptism. This view of the Supper highlights that indeed this may not be the best way to characterize the issue. If someone were to pose the question of the efficacy of my intimate relationship with my wife, I would dismiss the question out of hand. When a relationship is involved, all questions of efficacy should be disregarded.

However, viewed from the perspective of the Lord's Supper, Baptism can be seen as an entry into the Church. There is nothing new in this assertion. The Church has always considered Baptism as an entry to the Church. However, there is a new component which arises from the conclusions of this thesis. As a relational event, the

Supper takes on a more didactic, nurturing character and becomes less of a test that must be passed. It becomes more of an act of faith of a community expressed in an expectation of Yahweh's covenant response. It becomes more of an expectation of joy in the union with Christ and with His body. Paul queried, "Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God."¹¹⁹ Likewise, what is the value of Baptism? Much in every way. To begin with, the Church has been entrusted with the Word and with the Eucharist. Baptism is entry into the blessed sacramental relationship of joy with Jesus.

Covenantal signs are calls to obedience, without condition. "Remember the Sabbath day" was and is a call to covenantal obedience without regard to age or mental capability. Circumcision was a call to covenantal obedience without condition. Should we expect anything else with regard to the sign of the new covenant? No. Any call to the contrary should bear the burden of proof.

The two weighty aspects of the Supper discussed in this thesis are the sanctions and succession. With the Sabbath and circumcision, the sanctions and succession attached to them with respect to how the older generation engaged in them with the younger generation. It is with the next generation in mind that the Church should partake of the Supper. With the Supper, as with the Sabbath, the Church is the means by which its little ones may experience the grace of Yahweh in His appointed ordinances.

This understanding of the Lord's Supper has an impact on our view of paedocommunion. Children are more capable of recognizing the community than the leaders of the Church were, as evidenced by Paul's rebuke. Children know "Mommy" and "Daddy." They will readily throw up their arms for help to "Mommy" and "Daddy."

¹¹⁹ Romans 3:1-2.

Children also know those who sit at table with them. Children do not partake in power plays that disadvantage others. Rather, we grown-ups are to receive the kingdom like a little child. It is only adults who have the authority to execute abuses.¹²⁰ A child properly led will come to love the Church into which he has been admitted, especially if he is fed properly. Should we deny our little ones an intimate relationship with our Lord Jesus?

Certainly, there is a warning in 1 Corinthians 11 regarding the worthy participants examining themselves. And there are sanctions, i.e. blessings and curses, with which to be concerned. However, it is important to reassess those warnings and sanctions in light of an understanding of the Supper as a covenantal sign. First, it should be noted once again that remembering the Sabbath was a community activity. The sanctions did not fall on the individual on the basis of the individual's faithfulness exclusively but in large part on the faithfulness of the community. Daniel was carried off to exile without regard to his individual covenantal faithfulness to the Sabbath. To be particularly crass, what if the curses will fall on our infants without regard to their particular righteousness before Yahweh, why not let them take it anyway? Hopefully, the question makes the point. If there is blessing in the Supper, our infants should be permitted to partake.

The Lord Jesus Christ has given us a glorious sign of His love and care for us. It is an expression of His relationship to His people. Let us partake with one another in the glories of His marvelous feast. Let us anticipate what He will do within our midst to transform His Church and His world for the next generation through our celebration of His Supper.

¹²⁰ For an excellent discussion on this particular point, see "We All Partake of One Loaf: Restoring Our Children to the Lord's Table" in Meyers, 367.

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