THE NEW COVENANT IN EPHESIANS

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APPROVAL SHEET

THE NEW COVENANT IN EPHESIANS

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To Amelia,

my wife in the covenant of marriage

and fellow member of the new covenant

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*
ACCSNT	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament
ACCSOT	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AnBib	Analecta biblica
BDAG	Walter Bauer, Frederick William Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilber Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed.
BDB	Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
BDF	F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. Robert W. Funk
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BHS	K. Elliger, and W. Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 5th ed.
Bib	*Biblica*
BibS	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BibS(N)	Biblisch-theologische Studien (Neukirchen)
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
DPL	*Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*

EBC	*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*
EBib	*Études bibliques*
EDNT	Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EuroJTh	*European Journal of Theology*
ExpTim	*The Expository Times*
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GKC	Wilhelm Gesenius and Emil Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, trans. A. E. Cowley, 2nd rev. ed.
HALOT	Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. M. E. J. Richardson
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
IB	George Arthur Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Bible*
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
KBANT	Kommentare und Beiträge zum Alten und Neuen Testament
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer-Kommentar)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed.

MHT	J. H. Moulton, W. F. Howard, and N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4 vols.
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
NA[27]	Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed.
NAC	New American Commentary
NACSBT	NAC Studies in Bible and Theology
NCB	New Century Bible
NCCS	New Covenant Commentary Series
NGTT	*Nederduitse gereformeerde teologiese tydskrif*
NIB	*The New Interpreter's Bible*
NIBCNT	New International Biblical Commentary on the New Testament
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTL	New Testament Library
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
RCSNT	Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament
RechBib	Recherches Bibliques
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
SBJT	*The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series

SBLSBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
SJTOP	Scottish Journal of Theology: Occasional Papers
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra pagina
SR	*Studies in Religion*
SSEJC	*Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TrinJ	*Trinity Journal*
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZB	Zürcher Bibelkommentare
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

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PREFACE

That this dissertation has been finished testifies to the many individuals who have in some way played a part in it. First, I am grateful for the men on my committee—Professors Schreiner, Gentry, and Vickers—who spent hours carefully reading the initial draft. Thanks to Professor Gentry, who in many ways taught me how to read the Old Testament in light of the canon of Scripture, and who initially gave me a vision for the significance of the new covenant, including its presence in Ephesians. Thanks also to Professor Vickers for his kind words, penetrating questions, and fresh insights. Thanks especially to Professor Schreiner, my doctoral supervisor, for steering me clear of many exegetical pitfalls and offering insights and constructive critique where appropriate. I consider myself blessed to call him not only a supervisor but also a pastor and friend.

Thanks to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, an institution committed to the inerrancy and unity of the Old and New Testaments. It has been refreshing to write in an atmosphere that holds fast to the idea that the gospel predicted by the Old Testament prophets is the same gospel fulfilled in Christ and preached by the apostles. Thanks also to my church, Clifton Baptist in Louisville, for spurring me on to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24) and encouraging me to hold fast to the hope of the gospel in the midst of an arduous and tedious writing process.

Thanks to my family as well, without whom I would not have been able to complete this manuscript. Thanks to my parents for their unyielding support, love, encouragement, and daily prayers. This volume is the culmination of my formal education, for much of which they are directly responsible. Thanks also to our children, Daniel and Anna, for loving "Daddy," even when I was not able to play with them as much as they wanted. Thanks to my wife, Amelia, for loving and supporting me with

patience not only throughout the dissertation writing process but also through the coursework of the lengthy Master of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy degree programs. Amelia strove with me to see this project through to the end and allowed me time to write while she was at home doing the far more difficult task of parenting.

Finally, thanks be to the Triune God, who inaugurated the everlasting covenant in the fullness of time and included me as a covenant member through faith in Jesus Christ. Words do not express the depth of gratitude and joy I have from him and in him. This dissertation is but an overflow of that joy. "To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and forever, amen" (Eph 3:21).

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May 2014

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2003, two articles were published in the same volume on the role that covenant played in Paul's theology.[1] James Dunn surveyed the instances of διαθήκη in Paul's undisputed epistles and argued that Paul's conception of covenant theology was "ambiguous" and therefore insignificant. On the other hand, Stanley Porter argued that one cannot simply do a word study of διαθήκη in order to discover if Paul emphasized the notion of covenant or not. One must analyze, he argued, the semantic domain of the word to see what synonyms it might have possessed.

These articles demonstrate there is disagreement currently among Pauline scholars regarding the nature and significance of the role of covenant in Paul's theology. Every scholar would agree that Paul uses the word διαθήκη periodically, but how significant that word and its concept were to Paul is another question. Added to this is the difficulty of identifying which διαθήκη or διαθῆκαι Paul is considering. Some scholars write of "the covenant" in Paul without identifying its precise referent. Most scholars who have attempted to answer these questions have contented themselves to a word study of διαθήκη in Paul's writings. A few, such as Porter, have ventured beyond the word itself.

What is lacking, therefore, is a solid method by which one can ascertain the significance of Paul's covenant theology. Further, what is needed is textual analysis so

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[1]Stanley E. Porter, "The Concept of Covenant in Paul," in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo, SupJSJ 71 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 269-85; James D. G. Dunn, "Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology? Reflections on Romans 9:4 and 11:27," in *Concept of the Covenant*, 287-307.

that the interpreter does not import his own theology into the text but allows Paul to speak for himself.

Thesis

In this study I hope to show that the covenant concept was a crucial theological category for Paul in Ephesians. More specifically, the new covenant was a robust conceptual framework in which Paul developed and unpacked his soteriology, ecclesiology, and ethics. This is not to say that Paul considered the covenant concept as the center of his theology, but only that it was not a tangential or vague concept within that theology. Indeed, although Paul did not often use the term διαθήκη—it only appears once in Ephesians (cf. 2:12)—his use of OT terms and concepts associated with Israel's covenants suggests a broad covenantal substructure to his thought. Within this broader narrative, in which God was fulfilling his covenant promises in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, Paul constructed a theology in Ephesians in which Jews and Gentiles were brought into a covenant relationship with God (soteriology) and one another (ecclesiology). These new vertical and horizontal covenant relationships then informed how Paul instructed early Christians how to live (ethics).

History of Modern Research

In the recent research on Paul's view of the covenant concept, some scholars have found little evidence that such was significant, while others find it to have been the center of his theology. Many if not most scholars are somewhere in the middle, recognizing that Paul had a covenant theology that to some degree informed his theological formulation. For the sake of clarity in presentation, the two following categories represent ends of the spectrum on which scholars will land at varying points.

The Covenant Concept as Insignificant

James D. G. Dunn. James Dunn argues that Paul's notion of covenant was

one of "ambivalence."[2] Paul rarely uses διαθήκη, and when he does, he uses it more as a reaction than as his own theological reflection. Indeed, Paul knew and believed Israel's emphasis on covenant, expressed in terms of God's election of his people and his upholding of them by his divine חֶסֶד. In fact, Dunn argues that the central term in Paul's theology ("righteousness") can only be understood within the framework of Israel's covenant theology. But despite the seeming centrality of covenantal thought to Paul, the fact that Paul does not linger on it calls into question whether the concept was a remnant of his pre-conversion Judaism or a product of his own theological construction from the Scriptures as the apostle to the Gentiles.

After examining all the undisputed Pauline references to διαθήκη, Dunn concludes, "Paul does not make use of 'covenant' terminology as a major building block of his own theology as apostle to the Gentiles."[3] Paul tended to discuss διαθήκη only when writing to "reinforce" his claim that believing Gentiles are legitimate heirs to the covenant with the fathers. For instance, Paul never uses διαθήκη in Romans except in 9:4 and 11:27, where in both instances he is referring to ethnic Israel. For Paul, there was no separate Christian covenant; Paul conceived of covenant theology only in relation to Israel, into whom Christians are grafted and whose covenant blessings they share. Thus, the only times Paul used διαθήκη was when dealing with internal issues of how the covenant blessings were coming to Israel.[4]

J. Louis Martyn. In a 1993 article, J. Louis Martyn argued that the reason

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[2]Dunn, "Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology?" 287-307. Intriguingly, Dunn (ibid., 288) notes that he previously used the term "covenant" as a "leading term in my own statement of the 'new perspective on Paul,'" citing his Romans commentary (*Romans 1-8*, WBC 38a [Dallas: Word, 1988], lxviii).

[3]Dunn, "Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology?" 305. Again, "the theme of 'covenant' was not a central or major category within his own theologizing" (306).

[4]Ibid., 306-07.

Paul wrote of the covenants in Galatians was because his Judaizing opponents had connected the word διαθήκη to Abraham and Sinai, and had taught that these covenants were one and the same.[5] Therefore, because the opponents forced his hand, Paul contrasted the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants (Gal 3:15ff.; 4:21-31), connecting διαθήκη with the Abrahamic promise and divorcing it from the Mosaic law. The import of this is that Paul had not previously taught the Galatians any covenant theology, hence its relative insignificance in his thought. Further, Martyn notes that, since for Paul there is only a singular Scripture (ἡ γραφή), he does not truly trace the covenant conception from the Old to the New, nor does he write in terms of either "continuity" and "discontinuity" or, as the opponents emphasized, *Heilsgeschichte*. Rather, of more fundamental importance for Paul was equating or identifying Scripture and promise, the gospel and Abraham (Gal 3:8). The punctiliar nature of God's act in Christ is shown in the singularity of Christ as the "seed of Abraham" (Gal 3:16). Paul was not interested, then, in tracing out the biblical covenants on a line prior to Christ into which the church is conjoined. The Abrahamic covenant and the Scripture/gospel is always the promissory voice, and the law is always the voice of curse.[6]

H. A. A. Kennedy. Kennedy wrote an article in 1915 surveying the covenant conception in the New Testament.[7] When he comes to the Pauline literature, he recognizes the close connection between words like εὐλογία or ἐπαγγελία and διαθήκη. For instance, in Romans 11:27 Paul quotes from Isaiah 27:9 (LXX), which reads, "And

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[5]J. Louis Martyn, "Covenant, Christ, and Church in Galatians," in *The Future of Christology: Essays in Honor of Leander E. Keck*, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe and Wayne A. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 142. Similarly C. K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," in *Essays on Paul* (London: SPCK, 1982), 154-70 (esp. 162).

[6]Martyn, "Covenant, Christ, and Church," 145-51.

[7]H. A. A. Kennedy, "The Significance and Range of the Covenant-Conception in the New Testament," *The Expositor* 10 (1915): 385-410.

this is his blessing (εὐλογία), when I take away his sin," whereas Paul says, "And this covenant (διαθήκη) from me is with them, when I take away their sins." At this point Kennedy notes that εὐλογία in Isaiah 27:9 translates בְּרָכָה (cf. Gen 28:4) concerning the blessing to Abraham, "which virtually means the promise described in Genesis as embodied in a 'covenant.'"[8] As for the word ἐπαγγελία, Kennedy notes that the concept of promise has all but taken over the concept of covenant, such that διαθήκη is the equivalent of ἐπαγγελία. This is shown in Ephesians 2:12, where Paul refers to the biblical covenants as "covenants of promise." Promise has become for Paul the content of the historical covenants that are now fulfilled in Christ (Rom 4:13). Concerning Ephesians, Kennedy thinks covenant ideas may be used in 2:18 and 3:12 (cf. Rom 5:2) in the terms προσαγωγή and παρρησία, although he denies that Paul connected the death of Christ with the covenant-inaugurating ceremony that involves a blood sacrifice.[9] In conclusion, Kennedy evaluates the covenant conception as "of subordinate value for Paul's thought."[10] It certainly exists, but the concept of promise for Paul has utterly subsumed his covenant theology.

Ellen Juhl Christiansen. In a study on ritual boundaries as identity markers, Christiansen, a former student of Dunn, notes that the term διαθήκη has not been preserved well in Paul's writings.[11] Paul tended to avoid using the term, probably because it was too closely associated with law and slavery, or was too "overloaded with ethno-centric values."[12] Particularly in horizontal or ecclesiological contexts Paul refrained

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[8]Ibid., 402.

[9]Ibid., 402-06.

[10]Ibid., 395.

[11]Ellen Juhl Christiansen, *The Covenant in Judaism and Paul: A Study of Ritual Boundaries as Identity Markers*, AGJU 27 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 10.

[12]Ibid., 271.

from speaking in covenant terms; he limited his covenant terminology to a vertical relationship with God. For the ecclesiological contexts, Paul chose to use words or phrases like "church," "children of God," "called ones," "saints," and "beloved of God." Paul never describes the Christian community as a "covenant community," nor does he speak of being "in the covenant" but only "in Christ." Therefore, because the church and a covenant community are not the same for Paul, baptism cannot be a rite of initiation into the new covenant.[13]

Moreover, Paul tended to deemphasize the covenant conception in order to emphasize creation categories. For instance, in Romans 9:19-29 Paul quotes from Jeremiah 18:6 and Hosea 2:25 in order to move beyond speaking in terms of historical covenants and move toward creation language. Instead of highlighting election, he highlights the more creational language of "children of God." Paul considered the new relationship between God and humanity to be one based on faith and not on ethnocentricity, which entailed a limited use of covenant categories.[14]

The Covenant Concept as Significant

E. P. Sanders. In 1977 a landmark volume came out by Sanders entitled *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.[15] Sanders surveyed Jewish literature in the Second Temple period and argued that the Judaism of that era was not legalistic but undergirded by God's electing grace. He coined the term "covenantal nomism" to describe "the view that one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while

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[13]Ibid., 270-71, 321-24.

[14]Ibid., 230.

[15]E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

providing means of atonement for transgression."[16] With this definition in place, the concept of the covenant became foundational even where the word בְּרִית/διαθήκη was not used.[17] In applying covenantal nomism to Paul, Sanders argued that there was significant overlap between Paul and the Judaism of his day. Paul saw Christianity as a new covenant similar to the old in that it provided salvation for its members but not for those outside, and that it expected obedience of its members.[18] Sanders' work set off a debate regarding whether Paul can rightly be considered a "covenantal nomist," a debate which has hardly lessened.

Stanley E. Porter. In a recent article, Porter raised questions about the approaches of Pauline scholars to his covenant theology.[19] In particular, he noted that the "word-concept" fallacy, which James Barr was to have debunked decades ago,[20] is still quite prevalent in this area of research. For instance, διαθήκη need not mean "covenant" with its full covenantal freight every time the word is used (e.g., Gal 3:15). On the other hand, διαθήκη need not be present for the covenant concept to be present either; other considerations must be taken into account. Porter does not delineate what these other considerations might be, except for the study of semantic domains. Using Louw and Nida, such a study shows that terms such as διατίθημι, ἔγγυος, μεσίτης, ἐπαγγελία, the δικαιο- word group, and the διακον- word group may contain semantic overlap with

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[16]Ibid., 75.

[17]For a good example, Sanders (ibid., 82) explains how it is "clear" that the covenant conception is presupposed in *Sipre Num.* 1, and that "*the bulk of the halakic material deals with the elaboration and definition of Israel's obligation to God under the covenant. This is what accounts for the halakic material in general*" (emphasis original; see ibid., 420-21).

[18]Ibid., 511-14. But Sanders makes clear that the covenant conception cannot be the center of Paul's thought, chiefly because it cannot account for key doctrines such as participation in Christ.

[19]Porter, "The Concept of Covenant in Paul," 269-85.

[20]James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

διαθήκη. In other words, if, for example, ἐπαγγελία or δικαιοσύνη contain semantic overlap with διαθήκη, then the theme of covenant may be important not just in Romans 9-11 but in all of Romans.[21] Recognizing the value of semantic domains, then, may provide valuable insights into Paul's covenant theology. And it is only one avenue among many that a scholar should utilize in formulating such. In short, Porter calls for "a more widespread and consistent application of the best methods of lexicography (and other linguistic study) to the study of the New Testament."[22]

Hermann N. Ridderbos. Many Pauline scholars do not have a section in their Pauline theologies on the "new covenant" in Paul's thought, but Ridderbos is an exception.[23] He sees the new covenant to be a significant category for Paul, because Paul applies Old Testament covenant terminology to the church. Since the church is the redemptive-historical continuation of the nation of Israel, "the privileges and qualities attributed to ancient Israel in the making of the covenant in the wilderness had found their God-intended application in this church."[24] For Paul, the term ἐκκλησία parallels the term קָהָל in the Old Testament; believers are "saints" and as such constitute "the eschatological Israel, which may apply to itself the promises of God because of the salvation that has appeared in Christ."[25] Paul also describes the church as "elect," "beloved," and "called." Just as Israel was specially chosen, beloved, and called, so also believers in Christ partake of this special covenant relationship with God.[26] Specifically

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[21]Ibid., 284-85.

[22]Ibid., 285.

[23]Hermann N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard de Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 334-41.

[24]Ibid., 328.

[25]Ibid., 331.

[26]A greater list of these privileges would include sons of God (Rom 8:14ff.; Eph 1:5), heirs

in regard to Ephesians, Ridderbos claims that the Gentiles' plight (Eph 2:12) and salvation (Eph 2:19) are presented with covenantal terminology, and now they are the people of God's own possession (Exod 19:5 = Eph 1:14; cf. Titus 2:14).[27]

Ridderbos also notes that just because the term διαθήκη is not present does not give grounds to dismiss the importance of the covenant conception:

> The New Covenant is one of the great supports of [Paul's] spiritual and universal definition of the church as the people of God and the new Israel. To be sure, he speaks only in a few places explicitly of the New Covenant, namely, in 1 Corinthians 11:25 and 2 Corinthians 3:6ff., but it has frequently been pointed out rightly that the idea of the New Covenant in Paul's conception of the New Testament church and the salvation given to it plays a much greater role than may be gathered from the sparing use of this datum of revelation and from the slight attention that has been paid to it in the history of interpretation.[28]

Hence, scholars must be willing to look for evidence of Paul's covenant theology even in the absence of διαθήκη, and they will find that Paul held the new covenant conception to be of great significance.

N. T. Wright. Wright, one of the most influential New Testament scholars in the last few decades, firmly states that Paul held a robust covenant theology. He goes so far as to connect virtually every aspect of Paul's thought to the covenant conception. He defines righteousness as membership within the covenant and justification as God's declaration that believers are true members of the covenant. Referencing Daniel 7 and 9, Wright contends that lawcourt imagery and covenant themes coalesce.[29] Indeed, "the overarching category which enables Paul to hold together 'justification' and 'being in

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according to the promise (Gal 3:29; 4:7), sharing in the inheritance promised to Abraham (Rom 8:17; cf. 4:13; Col 1:2), heirs of the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal 5:21), and hope in the glory of God (Rom 5:2; 8:21; 2 Cor 3:7ff., 18; Phil 3:19; cf. Rom 9:4; ibid., 337).

[27]Ibid., 337-38.

[28]Ibid., 335.

[29]N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's vision* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 63, 100.

Christ' is precisely the covenant: the covenant God made with Abraham and fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah."[30] Wright often speaks of a "renewed covenant," which most likely refers to the renewal of the Mosaic covenant prophesied in Deuteronomy 30. And he also refers to the "single covenant from the beginning, now fulfilled in Jesus Christ,"[31] perhaps referring to the Abrahamic covenant. What is clear is that Wright considers the most important covenant to Paul to be the Abrahamic covenant, for it was through Abraham and his family that God had chosen to bring blessing to the nations. The Abrahamic covenant, therefore, was the foundation for all God's saving acts in, among, and through his people.

The fact that the word διαθήκη is relatively rare in Paul does not indicate an absence of the concept:

> Exegesis needs the concordance, but it cannot be ruled by it. It is no argument against calling Paul a covenantal theologian to point out the scarcity of *diathēkē* in his writings. We have to learn to recognize still more important things, such as implicit narratives and allusions to large biblical themes. Just because we cannot so easily look them up in a reference book that does not make them irrelevant.[32]

The fact that Paul writes within the context of the grand narrative of the Bible, which is rooted in Genesis 15, Deuteronomy 27-30, and Daniel 9, is reason enough for presupposing the foundational character of the covenant concept. For example, Wright contends, no one would know Paul's view of the Lord Supper if he had not described it in 1 Corinthians 10-11; and no one will deny the significance of the Supper to Paul.[33] In the same way, the covenant concept, although rarely stated, was clearly foundational for Paul.

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[30]Ibid., 230-31.

[31]Ibid., 95.

[32]N. T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 26.

[33]Wright, *Justification*, 96-97.

R. David Kaylor. In a study of Romans Kaylor finds the concept of the new covenant to be the dominant and underlying motif of Paul's theology, for it functioned fundamentally as a conviction as well as an idea.[34] It was a concept which he likely understood from childhood, and, although he left behind many aspects of his Pharisaic theology from his conversion, the significance of God's covenant with his people was not one of them. Kaylor claims that "central to Paul's thought is an underlying convictional center which he seldom articulates: an underlying conviction concerning the covenanting words and actions by which God chooses to be bound to the people of Israel and to all humankind."[35] The coming of Christ meant that the new covenant had been inaugurated and that the covenant was to be extended to the Gentiles. For Kaylor, this underlying center to Paul's thought in Romans was not justification or sin, righteousness, and faith, but the new covenant community consisting of Jews and Gentiles, a community in danger of schism for failure to apprehend the relationship to the Gentiles of the gospel and Torah.[36]

T. J. Deidun. In a study on Paul's ethics,[37] Deidun argues that the new covenant is the center (*Mitte*) of Paul's theology and provides the ground and the content of the Christian imperative. He claims that the new covenant "does not simply stand alongside other themes in Paul's theology; rather, other themes are expressly or implicitly related to it as to the comprehensive expression of his understanding of the salvation deed

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[34]R. David Kaylor, *Paul's Covenant Community: Jew and Gentile in Romans* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988).

[35]Ibid., 3.

[36]Ibid., 16-19.

[37]T. J. Deidun, *New Covenant Morality in Paul*, AnBib 89 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981). Deidun notes in the preface that he chose not to include in his analysis the disputed Pauline letters (Eph, Col, 2 Thess, 1-2 Tim, Titus).

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itself."[38] The presence of the Spirit of Christ in the believer is the fulfillment of the new covenant promise (Gal 3:1-14). The new covenant, which is synonymous with the gospel and sums up the eschatological promises of God, is the theological foundation that undergirds the Christian imperative, at the heart of which is the call to love God and neighbor.[39]

Deidun shows the centrality of the new covenant for Paul by analyzing Paul's prescripts in Romans, 1 Thessalonians, and 1 Corinthians, where Paul describes believers as God's holy people. He also shows that the content of the Pauline imperative is in concert with Israel's mandate for purity (cf. 1 Thess 4:1-12), and is summed up in the love command.[40]

W. D. Davies. In a work comparing Paul's religion and Rabbinic Judaism, Davies claims that Paul formulated his theology by drawing upon concepts found in Rabbinic Judaism and connecting them to the Christ event.[41] Because Christ had come, for Paul everything was new, but everything new was related to the old. For instance, to become a Christian was to enter into a new exodus or a new covenant; there was a new Torah in Christianity, defined as the inward Spirit; and the death of Christ, tied to the Passover festival through the remembrance of the Lord's Supper, was a covenant-inaugurating event (1 Cor 5:7; 11:17ff.).[42] Davies claimed that his study revealed "how much Paul carried over into his interpretation of the Christian Dispensation the

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[38]Ibid., 45.

[39]Ibid., 45-50.

[40]Ibid., 51-103.

[41]W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1955).

[42]Ibid., 216ff., 225, 250, 259ff., 323.

covenantal conceptions of Judaism."[43] Paul, even after his conversion, still retained his

Jewish roots, loved his kinsmen according to the flesh, and preached salvation to the Jews

first. Therefore, it is unlikely that his post-conversion covenant theology was utterly

different than his pre-conversion covenant theology. Rather, for Paul becoming a

Christian as a Jew was the completion of Judaism; Christianity was not set against

Judaism but was its blossom. Hence, Davies concludes,

> We felt justified in describing the Pauline Christ as a New Torah . . . . Paul was the preacher of a New Exodus wrought by the "merit" of Christ who was obedient unto death, but this New Exodus like the Old was constitutive of community, it served to establish the New Israel; it also led to the foot of a New Sinai, and Paul appeared before us as a catechist, the steward of a New Didache that imposed new demands. "Torah," "Obedience," and "Community" then are integral to Pauline Christianity no less than to Judaism. The source of Pauline Christianity lies in the fact of Christ, but in wrestling to interpret the full meaning and implications of that fact Paul constantly drew upon concepts derived from Rabbinic Judaism; it was these that formed the warp and woof if not the material of his thought.[44]

Peter J. Gentry. Recently Peter Gentry has argued in a massive volume that

the storyline of Scripture unfolds with the arrival of the biblical covenants.[45] Although

most of his work focuses on the OT, one chapter is dedicated to the covenantal

framework of Paul's instructions in Ephesians.[46] He argues that to "speak the truth in

love" (Eph 4:15) is to summarize the instruction of the Torah of Christ, for it matches the

OT's summary of the Torah in the word pairs "justice/righteousness" and

"lovingkindness/truth" (Isa 5:16; 11:3-5; 16:5).[47] Further, the structure of Ephesians 4:25-

5:5 is patterned after the Ten Commandments and thus is framed as covenant

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[43]Ibid., 259-60.

[44]Ibid., 323.

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

[46]Ibid., 565-87; cf. Peter J. Gentry, "Speaking the Truth in Love (Eph 4:15): Life in the New Covenant Community," *SBJT* 10, no. 2 (2006): 70-87.

[47]Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 573-82.

instruction.[48] Undergirding Paul's instructions, then, is a broad biblical-theological narrative guided by the covenant concept.

The present work. The present work falls into the latter category, viewing the new covenant as significant in Paul's thought. The scholars in this category, as does the present work, recognize the covenant concept can be present where διαθήκη is not. Although this work does not view the new covenant as the center of Pauline theology, it is in substantial agreement with those scholars who find the new covenant significant. One of the distinctive features of the present work is that it will focus on Ephesians, which, as a disputed Pauline letter, is not generally analyzed as thoroughly by Pauline scholars for its contribution to Paul's covenant conception. Further, this work will attempt to unpack the significance of the *new* covenant to Paul, as opposed to the other biblical covenants. Some of the other biblical covenants will by necessity be discussed, given their relationship to Christ and the new covenant, but they will not be the focus.

Method

I will employ a rigorous exegetical method concerning the relevant texts, using all the best tools for modern biblical studies. I will also synthesize the exegetical findings in order to provide conclusions relevant to the thesis of the project. Throughout the project I will utilize Richard Hays' approach to intertextuality, which outlines seven tests the interpreter can use to decide whether or not Paul was alluding to or echoing Old Testament texts (availability, volume, recurrence, thematic coherence, historical plausibility, history of interpretation, and satisfaction).[49] To demonstrate the validity of

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[48]Ibid., 568-70.

[49]Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 29-32.

an allusion or echo, a text need not fit every criterion, as Hays himself notes,[50] yet it must carry enough freight to be credible to the reader. However, I will allow for the possibility that Paul was consciously or subconsciously thinking of the Old Testament's new covenant texts, even when the presence of an allusion is not demonstrable by Hays' method. In other words, as Brian Rosner notes in his work on 1 Corinthians 5-7, interpreters must be aware of "not only explicit use of Scripture but also what might be called implicit and instinctive use of Scripture."[51] Thus, I will allow for the possibility that Paul "instinctively" wrote of and assumed the new covenant's blessings, inauguration, and ethic, even when a quotation from or an allusion to a particular new covenant text is not demonstrable by Hays' criteria.

Of course, one must be careful of the charge of "parallelomania," which claims dependence where only similarity is demonstrable.[52] Thus, to be free of this charge, I will study the new covenant within the OT itself, in order to show the language and ideas present within those texts. If Paul quotes the OT, I will examine the broader OT context to detect any thematic coherence with Paul's argument. But I will consider other points of comparison as well: allusions, echoes, motifs, and synonymous vocabulary. Second, when appropriate I will compare and contrast possible new covenant promises in Ephesians with the way in which the literature from the Second Temple period also conceived of those promises. Finally, because of the recognized similarities between Ephesians and Colossians, I will utilize the parallel texts in Colossians to elucidate the meaning and possibility of a new covenant reference in Ephesians. In short, if it can be shown that Paul *substantially* made use of new covenant texts and promises, then the

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[50]Ibid., 32-33.

[51]Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5-7*, AGJU 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 17. I am indebted to Rosner's work for much of the method proposed here.

[52]See Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 1-13.

influence of the new covenant upon his thought will be validated.

In chapter 2 I will survey the new covenant in the OT. The only text in the OT that uses the phrase "new covenant" is Jeremiah 31:31-34, but I will show that the other prophetic texts that speak of an "everlasting covenant" or a "covenant of peace" likely refer to the same new covenant. I will analyze these prophetic texts briefly, showing that the prophets themselves prophesied of a day coming when God would bring about a new covenant that would fulfill all the promises made to the patriarchs, Israel, and David. I will summarize my analysis by listing the major themes associated with the new covenant, with a view toward exploring which of these themes Paul emphasizes in Ephesians.

In chapter 3 I will analyze Ephesians 1:3-14 and highlight the blessings associated with the new covenant (election, forgiveness, inheritance, and the Spirit). I will seek to show that there is sufficient textual warrant to conclude that Paul conceived of these blessings as blessings associated with the new covenant. I will show that the blessings are conceived as given in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, and that the eschatological character of the blessings (1:10) indicates the presence of the new covenant.

In chapter 4 I will analyze Ephesians 2:11-22 in order to demonstrate that Paul considered the plight and solution of the Gentiles to be covenantal. They were at one time "strangers to the covenants of promise" (2:12), but in Christ they have been brought near to God and his people such that they are now "no longer strangers and aliens but are fellow citizens with the saints" (2:19). Paul's citation from Isaiah demonstrates this, for he used Isaiah's new covenant emphasis on a new, worldwide people who are reconciled to God. Also Paul emphasizes that this new covenant was inaugurated by Christ's death on the cross (2:13, 17-18), for by his death he abolished the Mosaic law-covenant (2:14-15). Therefore, the "one new man" brought together in Christ is the community of the

new covenant promised by the prophets.

In chapter 5, I will analyze Ephesians 4:17-5:5 to demonstrate that Paul's ethics reflect and summarize the ethics of the new covenant. To be sure, Paul places the general stipulations within the framework of the old and new humanity, which reflects the reality of the new creation in Christ. Yet he also emphasizes the covenantal nature of the specific stipulations, for they are similar to the Ten Commandments and summarize in various ways the ethic of the old covenant. This is particularly reflected in Ephesians 4:25, which quotes the new covenantal ethic of Zechariah 8:16, and Ephesians 5:1-2, which summarizes how to live in right ways before God and others. Thus, the new humanity and the new covenant community are one and the same, and the ethical stipulations of 4:17-5:2 form the sum and substance of Paul's new covenant instruction.

In the conclusion, I will summarize and synthesize the exegetical conclusions of chapters 3-5, showing that Paul considered the new covenant to be of soteriological, ecclesiological, and ethical significance in Ephesians. I will draw out some implications from this evidence for Pauline theology in general, as well as suggest further areas of research on the covenant concept in Paul.

CHAPTER 2

THE NEW COVENANT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The first step to discern the place of the new covenant in Paul's thought is to ascertain its place within the OT. Specifically, what are the ways the OT describes the new covenant, and how prominent is it within the saving plan of God for Israel? Further, what terms and concepts are closely aligned within the conceptual domain of the new covenant? If one can discern and locate the variety of promises and descriptions of those promises regularly associated with the new covenant, one can with greater clarity adjudicate whether or not the new covenant was a prominent soteriological, ecclesiological, and ethical framework in Paul's theology. Specifically, then, in this chapter I will analyze the various words, phrases, and concepts frequently associated with the new covenant in order to understand the nature, duration, and effect of the new covenant. In showing this, I will demonstrate that while the prophets spoke of the new covenant in various ways, they shared a common linguistic and conceptual eschatological framework. Recognizing the linguistic and conceptual domain of the new covenant will enable one to compare and contrast it with Paul's theological framework.

Defining the new covenant itself is a difficult venture, since not everyone would agree on what constitutes a "new covenant text"—the phrase "new covenant" only occurs once in the Hebrew Bible (Jer 31:31)—or even how broad the covenant concept is within the OT. Given the focus of the present work, by necessity my analysis will be limited to only those texts that indicate an eschatological covenant by virtue of the eschatological and promissory nature of the immediate context as well as the use of the term בְּרִית + modifier (e.g., "everlasting covenant"). More significant texts could be

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included for analysis (e.g., Hos 2:18-25 [Eng. 2:16-23]; Zech 9:11), but restricting the focus to the clearest texts indicating an eschatological covenant will be sufficient for the purposes of this study. Hence, the major texts for consideration in this chapter are portrayed in Table 1, along with their distribution in the prophetic literature.[1]

Table 1: Names for the new covenant in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel[2]

New Covenant Names	Isaiah	Jeremiah	Ezekiel
"New covenant"		31:31	
"Everlasting covenant"	55:3; 61:8	32:40; 50:5	16:60; 37:26
"Covenant of peace"	54:10		34:25; 37:26

The New Covenant in Isaiah

In Isaiah 55:3 and 61:8, Isaiah uses the phrase "everlasting covenant," and in 54:10, "covenant of peace." Additionally, he refers to a future covenant with Israel as "my covenant" in 59:21, and in two of the Servant Songs he describes the servant as a "covenant for the people" (42:6; 49:8). In all of these God promises his people and the nations a time in the future in which he will keep his covenant promises in a new covenant relationship.

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[1]The phrase "everlasting covenant" also occurs in Isa 24:5 and Jer 50:5. For the sake of space I have omitted analysis of them, for the former refers to the Noahic covenant and the latter is a restatement of Jeremiah's new covenant promises in 31:31-34 and 32:36-44. Also for space considerations, I have omitted several texts in the "Book of the Twelve" that pertain to the new covenant (Hos 2:18-25 [Eng. 2:16-23]; Zech 8:8; 13:9). More work will be done in Zech 8 when I analyze Eph 4:25 below. Finally, I will briefly analyze Isa 59:21, which Paul applies as an eschatological covenant to Israel in Rom 11:26-27, as well as two texts where the term בְּרִית does not occur (Ezek 11:14-21; 36:16-38), since it is recognized that these texts convey new covenant promises of a new spirit and a new heart.

[2]Adapted from Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 434.

Dominating the second half of Isaiah are the four Servant Songs that describe the identity and function of the servant of Yahweh.[3] Combined with these songs is Isaiah's consolation to Israel and proclamation to the nations. The reason for both consolation and universal proclamation is that God has provided redemption for his people, which is defined in terms of release and forgiveness (42:18-44:23). The need for release was because the people of Judah had been carried off into Babylon, hence their need to be released from exile and brought back to the land.[4] The need for forgiveness was because the reason for exile was the people's sin, which had infected every member of Israel, including their kings and leaders (Isa 5; 7; 39). They were guilty of religious and social sins (e.g., 1:10-17), which led to the curse of exile.[5] Hence, in his plan of redemption God was providing for the two great needs of his people. Specifically, God was redeeming his people through his two agents: Cyrus, to carry out the promise of

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[3]A minority position is that a fifth song is located in 61:1-9 (Allan Harman, *Isaiah: A Covenant To Be Kept for the Sake of the Church*, Focus on the Bible [Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2005], 455). Also, I am aware of the vast discussion on the identity of the servant, a topic that is too broad to consider here in any depth. For a programmatic work on the subject, see Christopher R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah: An Historical and Critical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948). The view that best accounts for the Isaianic evidence as well as the apostolic understanding is that the servant is distinct from Israel in that his task is to bring Israel back to Yahweh (49:5; 53:5-6), but that he also embodies or represents Israel as her king. Thus, in a sense the nation of Israel can be called God's servant (42:18-19; 44:1), and thus her king can legitimately be called "Israel" also (49:3). Thus, even though some have rejected the notion that the servant is seen as a king (e.g., North, *The Suffering Servant*, 218), the Davidic character of Isa 1-39 renders it likely that the same figure is referred to in Isa 40-55, albeit in terms of service. Gentry and Wellum (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 411) cite Stephen Dempster's insight that the LXX translates יוֹנֵק in 53:2 as παιδίον, which is the same word the translator used in 9:5 (Eng. 9:6) to refer to the coming king. Also John T. Willis (*Isaiah*, The Living Word Commentary on the Old Testament [Austin, TX: Sweet, 1980], 421), rightly links 53:2 with 11:1.

[4]Here I am assuming that much of Isa 40-55 applies to the exiles in Babylon. Recently Gary Smith has raised questions about the historical background of Isa 40-55 and concluded that it fits better the historical circumstances of eighth-century Judah than the sixth-century exile in Babylon (see "Isaiah 40-55: Which Audience Was Addressed?" *JETS* 54 [2011]: 701-13). Even if Smith is correct, the plight of Judah will still result in exile, which is predicted in 39:6-7; 43:28; and 45:13. Hence, God's provision of Cyrus would still hold meaning for the future hope of a restored Judah in the land.

[5]For a good discussion of the meaning of justice in Isaiah, see Thomas L. Leclerc, *Yahweh Is Exalted in Justice: Solidarity and Conflict in Isaiah* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001).

release from exile (44:24-48:22), and the servant, to carry out the promise of forgiveness of sins (49:1-53:12).[6]

After the Fourth Servant Song (52:13-53:12) comes the universal proclamation of comfort to Zion and the nations in Isaiah 54-55. It is crucial to recognize that Isaiah places these chapters immediately after the work of the sin-bearing death of the servant, for it is only after his work is accomplished that a call of comfort can go out to Zion and the world.[7] Further, the servant is intimately connected and central to God's covenant relationship with his people, for Yahweh gives the servant as a "covenant for the people" (עָם לִבְרִית, 42:6; 49:8). As the Fourth Servant Song unfolds, it becomes clear that the way the servant achieves this lasting covenant relationship is through his sin-bearing sacrifice. The two covenants in 54:10 ("covenant of peace") and 55:3 ("everlasting covenant"), which are the same covenant portrayed from two perspectives, are likely a commentary on the nature and the extent of the covenant relationship the servant achieved by his death.

Isaiah 54:1-17

Isaiah 54 is an invitation to rejoice and a call of comfort to Zion because of the finished work of the servant.[8] Isaiah 54 alludes to the covenants with Abraham (vv. 1-3) and Israel (vv. 4-10), and has Davidic overtones (vv. 11-17; cf. 55:3). Thus, this text suggests that the work of the servant fulfills the various covenants made with God's

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[6]Robin Routledge ("Is There a Narrative Substructure Underlying the Book of Isaiah?" *TynBul* 55, no. 2 [2004]: 199-204) rightly argues for the centrality of the servant to the plight of Israel and the nations in Isaiah.

[7]So John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 414.

[8]So Harman, *Isaiah*, 419; R. Reed Lessing, *Isaiah 40-55*, Concordia Commentary: A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture (St. Louis: Concordia, 2011), 636-37. Gary V. Smith (*Isaiah 40-66*, NAC, vol. 15b [Nashville: B&H, 2009], 474) rightly states, "Although 54 does not discuss the exaltation of the Servant (52:13-15), the close association between these chapters naturally leads to the possibility that this call for Zion to respond has something to do with what happened in chap. 53."

people. His work is the climax of God's covenantal plan of salvation.

The focus of 54:1-3 is that God will fulfill through the servant the promises he made to Abraham. First, the "barren woman" of verse 1 is likely Abraham's wife Sarah, for she served as the paradigm for Israel of the power of God to bring about miraculously the promised seed of Abraham (Gen 11:30; 16:1).[9] Although Sarah was barren (עֲקָרָה), God chose her to bear the child of promise, Isaac, instead of allowing Abraham to sustain his lineage through natural means with Hagar. The paradigmatic nature of the miraculous birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah is significant in the near context of Isaiah, for in 51:2 God uses them as an analogy to show Zion that he is able to bring life to the dead and joy amidst grief.[10] Similarly, in 54:1 Zion is called upon to rejoice because she, as Sarah was, is utterly desolate and barren, having no hope of a future apart from God's miraculous intervention. But the God who created life in Sarah's barren womb is the same God who will create even more children than the married woman.[11]

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[9]Isa 51:2 is the only place in the Old Testament outside of Genesis that the name Sarah is used. Also, עֲקָרָה is used in Gen 11:30; 25:21; and 29:31 to refer to the barrenness of Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel, respectively. See also Judg 13:2-3 (Samson's mother); 1 Sam 2:5 (Hannah). Cf. Lessing, *Isaiah 40-55*, 626; Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40-66: Translation and Commentary*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 417. The promise of Exod 23:26 is meant as a fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs, for it affirms that there would be neither miscarrying nor barrenness when God brought his people into Canaan and they dispossessed the nations.

[10]Harman, *Isaiah*, 419; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 403-04.

[11]Given the Abrahamic context of vv. 1-3, and that most likely the "desolate woman" is Sarah, the "married woman" is most likely a reference to Hagar, who was given by Sarah to Abraham as a wife (Gen 16:3), and who subsequently bore Ishmael to Abraham. While God showed care for Hagar and Ishmael, he chose not to establish his covenant with Ishmael, instead promising that the child of promise would come through Sarah. Thus, even from the early Scriptures, one sees in these two women a picture of the human race: those who are in a covenant with God and are children of the promise, and those who are not. Isaiah, recognizing that Moses intended to foreshadow these realities when writing the Genesis narrative, described Zion, the transformed city of God, as the Sarah-like desolate woman (cf. Isa 1:9) who will by the work of the servant bear more children than those outside the promise, who correspond to the Hagar-like married woman (cf. Gal 4:22-31; Ardel B. Caneday, "Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured: 'Which Things are Written Allegorically' [Galatians 4:21-31]," *SBJT* 14, no. 3 [2010]: 50-77). Contra Smith (*Isaiah 40-66*, 476-77) who argues the married woman does not refer to any particular woman but describes "anyone who is married."

Second, 54:2-3 calls upon Zion to enlarge her tent because her offspring is numerous.[12] The word פָּרַץ ("spread abroad") alludes to the promise to Jacob in Genesis 28:14 that God would multiply his offspring like the dust of the earth and spread them abroad in all directions (cf. Gen 30:30, 43; Exod 1:12).[13] Further, the promise in verse 3 that Zion's "offspring will possess nations" alludes to the promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:17 that his "offspring will possess the gate of his enemies" (cf. Gen 24:60).[14] This phrase is used with variation in Exodus 34:24 when the covenant at Sinai is renewed: "I will dispossess nations from before you" (cf. Deut 9:11; 11:23). Thus, the patriarchal promise of a large and growing land for Abraham's seed is a major element of the Abrahamic covenant, which was fulfilled when God brought Israel into Canaan (Josh 23:9).[15] Yet the Old Testament expectation, which was hinted at even in Genesis 22:17, was that the possession of God's people would one day include a land without boundaries. This is clear from Psalm 2:8, where the Davidic king is promised "the nations as your inheritance" (cf. Ps 72:8-11). This same promise is found in Isaiah 54:3, where it, in fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham, is accomplished because of the work of the servant. The "many" (רַבִּים) that the servant will justify in 53:11 are the "many" (רַבִּים) in 54:1 that the land can no longer hold.[16] The promise of numerous seed and increasing land comes about through the work of the servant.

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[12]So Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, trans. David M. G. Stalker, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 272-73.

[13]Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 417; similarly Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 419; Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 479; R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1975), 184-85.

[14]So Lessing, *Isaiah 40-55*, 639.

[15]So Harman, *Isaiah*, 420.

[16]Motyer, *Isaiah*, 445; cf. Lessing, *Isaiah 40-55*, 626. Paul (*Isaiah 40-66*, 415) lists the common phraseology linking the Fourth Servant Song and 54:1-17.

In 54:4-10, God fulfills the marriage promises he made to Israel through the servant. The references to God's marriage to Israel remind the reader of the inauguration of the Sinai covenant, the time when God, having redeemed his people from Egypt, formalized his marriage relationship with them. They were to be his special people and he their covenant God in a marriage relationship (cf. Exod 19:5-6; Ezek 16:8-14). But, throughout their history, from their captivities in Egypt ("youth") to that in Babylon ("widowhood"), they had experienced disgrace and shame (v. 4).[17] Indeed, because of their sin God had cast them off by sending them into exile (vv. 7a, 8a). Nevertheless, because he was their Maker, Husband, and Redeemer (v. 5), God would again show compassion upon them (vv. 7-10; cf. Hos 2:21 [Eng. 2:19]).[18] For a brief moment he had been angry with them by sending them into exile, but in stark contrast he would show unceasing and endless compassion on them.[19] In fact, God compares the everlasting nature of his compassion with the covenant with creation in the days of Noah (vv. 9-10).[20] As God had sworn in an "everlasting covenant" (Gen 9:16) never again to destroy the earth with a flood, so God swore in a "covenant of peace" never again to be angry

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[17]Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 442; contra, Willis (*Isaiah*, 428) who thinks Israel's "youth" refers to all the invasions of Judah between Solomon and the Babylonian exile (similarly Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 421; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 185). But the time of Israel's "youth" frequently refers to the time when God entered into a marriage covenant with Israel at Sinai (cf. Ezek 16:8, 22). Perhaps, with Oswalt (*Isaiah 40-66*, 418), the entirety of a woman's life (i.e., Israel's history) is in view.

[18]Westermann (*Isaiah 40-66*, 274) rightly notes vv. 7-10 is the climax of the poem.

[19]Smith (*Isaiah 40-66*, 483) claims the Babylonian exile cannot be in mind because it was not a "brief moment." However, this is precisely the point Isaiah is making, for God's new covenant love will last forever, making the seventy-year exile seem like a "brief moment" (so Harman, *Isaiah*, 421; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 286).

[20]There is debate over whether there is a covenant with creation in Gen 1-2. For a persuasive argument for a covenant with creation, see Gentry and Wellum (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 177-221) who argue that the Noahic covenant is a confirmation of the already-inaugurated covenant with creation. But even if one does not agree with this, Isaiah's point still stands, for the everlasting nature of the Noahic covenant is well recognized (cf. Gen 8:21-22; 9:11-17 [esp. 9:16]).

with his people.[21] Even if God's covenant with creation could be overturned (v. 10ab), yet God's covenant of peace would stand (v. 10cd).[22]

The significance of the phrase "my covenant of peace" (בְּרִית שְׁלוֹמִי; LXX ἡ διαθήκη τῆς εἰρήνης) should not be missed.[23] The term שָׁלוֹם does not simply describe the absence of hostility, but connotes that all is well between God and his people. They live in a right relationship toward him and others, and this new relationship is defined in covenantal terms.[24] Having peace with God and others in some sense summarizes the solution of the plight of Israel. Their leaders were characterized by injustice and faithlessness (Isa 5; 7), which is one reason why they needed a "Prince of Peace" (9:5 [Eng. 9:6]). Significantly, 48:22, which transitions from the redemption of release from exile (44:24-48:22) to the redemption of forgiveness of sins (49:1-53:12), reminds God's released people that there is no peace for the wicked (cf. 57:20-21).[25] Like a tolling bell,

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[21]It is evident even from this comparison that the "everlasting covenant" and "covenant of peace" are one and the same covenant. The comparison with the Noahic covenant suggests this, as does the near context of Isaiah, where the emphasis is on God's "everlasting steadfast love" (v. 8)—which is itself synonymous with the phrase "everlasting covenant"—and his Davidic "everlasting covenant" (55:3; so Harman, *Isaiah*, 421-22; Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 424). Lessing (*Isaiah 40-55*, 632) rightly translates חֶסֶד as "covenant love." The reason why it is described in v. 10 as a "covenant of peace" is because God wanted to emphasize not only the duration but also the effect of his covenant. Westermann (*Isaiah 40-66*, 275-76) notes that, strictly speaking, this covenant confirms God's prior saving act.

[22]כִּי is most likely concessive here ("though, although"), although it could be asseverative ("surely, indeed"); see Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 485-86.

[23]Bernard F. Batto ("The Covenant of Peace: A Neglected Ancient Near Eastern Motif," *CBQ* 49 [1987]: 190-91, 211) rightly explains that the point of the comparison with the Noahic covenant is not only the reliability of the divine word but also the certain assuagement of divine wrath. Although some of Batto's statements about the primeval-mythological background to the notion of a "covenant of peace" are speculative, he is correct to emphasize that the notion must be seen against the backdrop of divine wrath, a point clear in both the Noahic and Isaianic narratives.

[24]So Lessing, *Isaiah 40-55*, 632; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 423; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 187. Westermann (*Isaiah 40-66*, 275) rightly notes that שָׁלוֹם is connected to the language of blessing. Paul (*Isaiah 40-66*, 427) notes, "The term שלום is also part of the vocabulary pertaining to pacts and treaties" (cf. Josh 9:15; Ps 55:21).

[25]In fact, Lessing (*Isaiah 40-55*, 632) notices that the term שָׁלוֹם unites Isa 48-55 (cf. 48:18, 22; 52:7; 53:5; 54:13; 55:12).

it reminds Israel that their most fundamental plight—lack of peace with God and one another—has not been solved by the edict of Cyrus. That remains the task of the servant, who achieves it by his sacrificial death (53:5). As a result of his work, the good news of God's salvation is published to a worldwide audience in terms of peace (52:7; 57:19).[26]

Therefore, in 54:10 it is this same peace with God and one another that is formalized in the bond of a covenant. That a covenant has been enacted strongly suggests that a sacrifice has occurred, and this is precisely what Isaiah 53 makes clear.[27] The servant's death was a "guilt offering" (אָשָׁם, 53:10) and by it he "sprinkles nations" (יַזֶּה גּוֹיִם, 52:15), which brings to mind the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 (cf. vv. 14-15, 19).[28] Thus, having borne the sins of his people (53:6), the servant brought them "peace" (שָׁלוֹם, 53:5).[29] His substitutionary atonement explains how God can be faithful to his sweeping promise in 54:9-10 never again to be angry with his people, given the extent and depth of their sin. Because of the covenant-inaugurating sacrifice of the servant, then, God can dwell forever in the midst of his people, and it can be said of Zion, "Great shall be the peace of your children" (54:13b; cf. 57:15-19).[30]

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[26]As will be seen below, this is why Paul can refer to his gospel as the "gospel of peace" in Eph 6:15.

[27]While noting there were a variety of ritual ratification ceremonies in the ancient world, George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion ("Covenant," in *ABD*, ed. David Noel Freedman [New York: Doubleday, 1992], 1:1182) state, "One observation, however, is probably valid: the ratification of the covenant was frequently associated with the sacrifice of an animal." This observation implies that the death of the servant in Isa 53 was the sacrifice enacting the covenant of peace in Isa 54 (contra Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 486).

[28]Many commentators (e.g., Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 253) as well as *BHS* emend the MT to יִרְגְּזוּ, which accords with the LXX (θαυμάσονται). But the MT likely preserves the correct reading of the Hiphil from נָזָה, "to sprinkle" (rightly Peter J. Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song [Isaiah 52:13-53:12]," *SBJT* 11, no. 2 [2007]: 27).

[29]Isa 53:5 is the last time שָׁלוֹם is used before 54:10, and the readers would not have missed its significance (so Lessing, *Isaiah 40-55*, 643; Motyer, *Isaiah*, 447, 449; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 424).

[30]So Harman, *Isaiah*, 423; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 428.

Verses 11-17 show that God will fulfill through the servant the promises he made to Zion. The renewal and transformation of Zion carry Davidic overtones as the city where God's king would sit and rule on David's throne (cf. 1:26-27; 29:1-8).[31] Significantly, the city's inhabitants are "taught of Yahweh" (v. 13a), which means they are his disciples and salvifically know him. This phrase indicates that the new covenant has dawned (cf. Jer 31:33-34), for every member of the covenant community knows Yahweh.[32] Perhaps this is why the city is described as sparkling and precious, for like lasting building materials, every person within the community possesses an enduring knowledge of God.[33] Further, the sons enjoy abundant "peace" (v. 13b) and "righteousness" (v. 14a, 17d) and will never again experience warfare (vv. 14-17b). Verse 17c says, "This is the inheritance (נַחֲלָה; LXX κληρονομία) of the servants of Yahweh," which sums up all the abundant blessings that God's people have as their possession.[34]

Again, it should not be missed that these blessings only come about through the work of the servant, for the same descriptions applied to the servant are applied to the new people of God in Isaiah 54. Throughout the Servant Songs the word "servant" is only

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[31]Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 443. For a defense that the servant is Davidic, see Daniel I. Block, "My Servant David: Ancient Israel's Vision of the Messiah," in *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 17-56.

[32]So Harman, *Isaiah*, 423.

[33]Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 444; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 426-27 (cf. 1 Pet 2:5; Ezek 28:13-14; Rev 21:15-21; Tob 13:16). G. K. Beale (*The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004], 132-33, 365-72) suggests the whole city becomes a temple and thus the stones form the walls of the temple. Hence, probably Whybray (*Isaiah 40-66*, 188) is incorrect to state Isa 40-66 shows no interest in a rebuilt temple but only a "renewed community," for the renewed community *becomes* the temple (56:6-7; 61:6).

[34]So Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 431; Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 492. Lessing (*Isaiah 40-55*, 635) limits the inheritance to the servants' righteousness in the next phrase. Smith (*Isaiah 40-66*, 487n507) rightly concludes that v. 17 fits much better with Isa 54 than with Isa 55 (contra John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, WBC, vol. 25 [Waco, TX: Word, 1987], 244).

used in the singular. Yet in verse 17 it is used in the plural to show that God's people are now his servants because of the work of the servant.[35] In other words, Isaiah 54 is only true because of Isaiah 53. Further, the necessity of the servant's work is shown in that the adjective לִמּוּד in verse 13a ("taught") is used of the servant in 50:4 in relation to Yahweh: "My Lord Yahweh has given to me the tongue of those who are taught (לִמּוּד) . . . . Morning by morning he awakens my ear to hear like those who are taught (לִמּוּד)."[36] That anyone in Israel would be characterized as "taught by Yahweh" is astonishing, given that, despite having been commanded by God to "learn to do good" (1:17), Israel had rejected God as their king and instead followed the commandments "taught by men" (29:13). Indeed, although God was their teacher, Israel did not pay attention to his commands and thus had no peace or righteousness (48:17-18). And, although God still had promised to redeem and transform his people (48:20-21; cf. 29:23-24), there is the reminder in 48:22 that "there is no peace . . . for the wicked." Israel would obtain peace and righteousness only when Israel was transformed. Significantly, then, it is only after the servant, who is himself a disciple (50:4), finishes his work that the people are also described as "taught by Yahweh" and thus experience peace and righteousness (54:13-14; cf. 32:17; John 6:45).[37] Indeed, the righteousness experienced in Zion (v. 14a) comes only from God (v.

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[35]So Harman, *Isaiah*, 424; Lessing, *Isaiah 40-55*, 635, 645; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 432. This explanation is more satisfactory than that offered by Whybray (*Isaiah 40-66*, 190) who uses the distinction in grammatical number to argue for multiple authorship of Isaiah. The link between the singular and the plural is obscured by the LXX, which consistently translates the singular עֶבֶד as παῖς yet renders the plural עַבְדֵי יְהוָה as θεραπεύουσι κύριον. See 20:3; 41:8-9; 42:1, 19; 44:1-2, 21; 45:4; 52:13 (49:3 and 53:11 are rendered with the δοῦλος word group; cf. also 65:8, 13-14).

[36]The root למד is found 13 times in Isaiah, 9 as a verb, and 4 as an adjective (1:17; 2:4; 8:16; 26:9, 10; 29:13, 24; 40:14 [twice]; 48:17; 50:4 [twice]; 54:13).

[37]So Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 444; Lessing, *Isaiah 40-55*, 634. The connection with the servant indicates that Whybray (*Isaiah 40-66*, 188-89) is off the mark in suggesting being "taught of Yahweh" refers to having the skills needed to rebuild the city.

17d), and, more specifically, through the work of the servant, for he is the righteous one who declares the many to be righteous (53:11).[38]

Thus, Isaiah 54 describes the results of the servant's work. His work fulfills the promises to Abraham, Israel, and the Davidic city, Zion. He produces offspring for Abraham and increasing land (vv. 1-3), and will bring about the intended marriage between God and his people (vv. 4-10). Zion will sing for joy as she is filled with precious sons and righteous servants of Yahweh (vv. 11-17). At the heart of the servant's work is the inauguration of God's "everlasting חֶסֶד" or his "covenant of peace," which must be understood as explicating the covenant of the servant in 42:6 and 49:8. It is this new covenant that fulfills God's earlier covenantal promises, and it is likely that this covenant is the same as that envisioned by Jeremiah, for every member of the covenant community knows Yahweh (v. 13; cf. Jer. 31:33-34). And, with the Noahic covenant as analogous to the new covenant for its perpetuity, one can conclude with Gentry and Wellum: "Thus, in the brief span of 17 verses, the new covenant is in some way either compared or correlated and linked to all the previous major covenants in the Bible."[39]

Isaiah 55:1-13

The second half of the "tailpiece" following the Fourth Servant Song is Isaiah 55, which, similar to Isaiah 54, is an invitation to come and rejoice in Yahweh based on the work of the servant.[40] But in 55:1-13 the focus is primarily on inviting a worldwide people to join in God's banquet.[41] Of significance is the "everlasting covenant" in 55:3

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[38]So Lessing, *Isaiah 40-55*, 635-36. Hence Watts (*Isaiah 34-66*, 134, 239) wrongly contends that the term צְדָקָה connoted Jerusalem's legitimacy in the eyes of the Persian empire.

[39]Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 441. Similarly Harman (*Isaiah*, 422) notes, "All that the earlier Old Testament covenants intended will find fulfillment in the new covenant."

[40]So Lessing, *Isaiah 40-55*, 660.

[41]Contra some who take Isa 55 to be a summons to the exiles to leave Babylon (e.g., Lessing,

(בְּרִית עוֹלָם). Most likely this refers to the same covenant as the "everlasting חֶסֶד" and "covenant of peace" of the previous chapter (54:8, 10).[42] The difference in this phrase is the appositional clause "the faithful kindnesses of David," which defines the nature of this covenant as Davidic (cf. 2 Sam 7).[43]

"The faithful kindnesses of David" (חַסְדֵי דָוִד הַנֶּאֱמָנִים) is difficult to interpret, for the normal pattern in a bound phrase with "חֶסֶד + free member" is that the free member is the subject of the verbal idea present in חֶסֶד (cf. Isa 63:7; Lam 3:22).[44] But it is not at all clear how Yahweh would bring about his everlasting covenant because of the faithful covenant obedience of the historical David. Most English translations and commentators thus render the phrase as an objective genitive: e.g., "the steadfast, sure love for David" (ESV).[45] However, the subjective genitive is still the likely meaning, for the Davidic figure in verse 3 is not the historical David but a future David.[46] Thus, God brings about his everlasting covenant by the faithful covenant obedience of a future David.[47] This interpretation does justice to the normal pattern with "חֶסֶד + free member" and it accounts for the future tense: "I will cut an everlasting covenant."[48] Further, that

Isaiah 40-55, 660-61; Whybray, _Isaiah 40-66_, 190; Willis, _Isaiah_, 430-31). The invitation does not preclude the exiles, but the universal language of the chapter indicates a worldwide invitation, which fits with Isaiah's emphasis on a new, worldwide people of God (so Smith, _Isaiah 40-66_, 494).

[42]So Smith, _Isaiah 40-66_, 497.

[43]Lessing (_Isaiah 40-55_, 654) notes the verbal parallels between 2 Sam 7:8-16 and Isa 55:3-4.

[44]So Gentry and Wellum, _Kingdom through Covenant_, 408-09; Smith, _Isaiah 40-66_, 499.

[45]So Harman, _Isaiah_, 425; Lessing, _Isaiah 40-55_, 652-53; Oswalt, _Isaiah 40-66_, 438; Paul, _Isaiah 40-66_, 438; Westermann, _Isaiah 40-66_, 283-84; Whybray, _Isaiah 40-66_, 191; Willis, _Isaiah_, 431.

[46]For a thorough and convincing argument for the subjective genitive, see Gentry and Wellum, _Kingdom through Covenant_, 407-21; Smith, _Isaiah 40-66_, 497-502. Because he fails to see that a future David is in view, Paul (_Isaiah 40-66_, 434) holds that in Isa 40-66 there is no promise of a renewed Davidic kingship (so Whybray, _Isaiah 40-66_, 192; rightly Lessing, _Isaiah 40-55_, 662).

[47]See Deut 7:9 for a collocation of the terms אמן, חסד, and ברית.

[48]The Qal perfect in 3:4a is a prophetic perfect and emphasizes the certainty of God's plan through the future David (so Gentry and Wellum, _Kingdom through Covenant_, 410).

Isaiah would have believed that a future David would rule is clear from earlier in the book. In 11:1 he calls the future king "the root of Jesse," which suggests not a coming descendant of David but another David (cf. 6:13; 9:5-6 [Eng. 9:6-7]).[49] This king would usher in the new creation (11:6-9) and, unlike Ahaz (7:1-12 [esp. 9]) and Hezekiah (39:1-8), he would be faithful to Yahweh. That 55:3 refers to a future David was understood by Paul when he quoted the verse to the residents of Pisidian Antioch in Acts 13:34, for in Acts 13:36-37 Paul, in applying Isaiah 55:3 to Jesus, distinguishes between the historical David who died (v. 36) and Jesus, who "did not see corruption" (v. 37).

Most likely the future David is the same figure as the servant in Isaiah.[50] As already shown, the servant is responsible for inaugurating this everlasting covenant (54:8-10), and it is likely that he is a royal figure in that he embodies the nation of Israel as her king. Further, like the future faithful David, the servant in Isaiah is faithful to Yahweh, for he trusts in Yahweh in time of need (49:4), listens to Yahweh "as those who are taught" (50:4), does not act with violence or deceit (53:9), and knows Yahweh (53:11).[51] At this point Isaiah 1-37 (the Book of the King) and 38-55 (the Book of the Servant) converge on one figure. The servant, as the new David, brings about the everlasting covenant by his obedience and atoning death for the people (53:11). And in so doing, he brings about the blessing of Abraham on a worldwide people through his gospel (55:4-5).[52]

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[49]Rightly Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 438-39.

[50]See Daniel I. Block, "My Servant David," 17-56. Too speculative is Watts' view (*Isaiah 34-66*, 246) that suggests the figure is Darius the Persian.

[51]The word דַּעַת refers to the servant's fear of Yahweh and obedience to him.

[52]Although Lessing (*Isaiah 40-55*, 659, 664) is correct that vv. 4-5 hint towards the notion that believers in Jesus, the new David, are to be a witness to the nations, the emphasis in is on the future David's task of being a "witness to the peoples," which includes sharing the Torah of Yahweh with them (cf. Isa 2:3; rightly Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 413-17; Harman, *Isaiah*, 425-26; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 439). Contra Whybray (*Isaiah 40-66*, 192), 55:3-5 does not indicate the end of the

The everlasting covenant inaugurated by the servant is characterized by forgiveness of sins. The emphasis on forgiveness flows from the structure of the text at the macro and the micro level. At the macro level, Yahweh's two agents of redemption (Cyrus and the servant) correspond to his twofold plan of redemption (release and forgiveness). The section on forgiveness (43:22-44:23) begins and ends with a statement that God will "blot out" (מָחָה) the sins of his people (43:25; 44:22).[53] Hence, the whole section is framed by the people's need for forgiveness, and thus Yahweh's redemptive intent is to forgive their sin by means of the servant's sacrificial death (49:1-53:12).

On the micro level, forgiveness is also central to the everlasting covenant, for the two sections of Isaiah 55 are parallel.[54]

Come to Yahweh (vv. 1-3a)

   Purpose: life/everlasting covenant (3b)

      David as the world's leader (4-5a)

         Reason: because of Yahweh (5b)

Seek Yahweh (vv. 6-7a)

   Purpose: compassion/abundant forgiveness (v. 7b)

      The certainty of God's promises (vv. 8-13a)

         Goal: the everlasting name of Yahweh (v. 13b)

As the outline shows, both sections invite the individual to seek Yahweh (cf. Jer 29:10-14). The first section emphasizes the free grace Yahweh provides for those who turn to him, and the second section emphasizes the need for the individual to repent when

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Davidic monarchy due to the supposed democratization of the Davidic blessings to the nation.

[53]מָחָה can refer to the blotting out of a covenant breaker's name (Deut 29:19 [Eng. 29:20]) or the sin of those covenant breakers who repent. Harman (*Isaiah*, 426-27) rightly argues that the forgiveness in 55:7 is the same offer of pardon as that found in 43:25 and 44:22.

[54]Most commentators divide Isa 55 into at least vv. 1-5 and 6-13. Smith (*Isaiah 40-66*, 493) rightly notes the repentance of vv. 6-7 parallels the free grace of vv. 1-3.

seeking Yahweh. Both sections have purpose clauses. Verse 3 promises life and an everlasting covenant for those who come and listen to Yahweh,[55] and verse 7 promises God's compassion and abundant forgiveness on those who seek him and abandon their wicked ways.[56] Yahweh is central to both sections, for he is both the reason (v. 5b) and the goal (v. 13b) of the covenant promises fulfilled (cf. Ezek 36:22). He is the one who gives David to be the instructor of the peoples (v. 4b), and the word of his promise will never fail (vv. 10-11). In short, then, both sections of Isaiah 55 say virtually the same thing, with minor variations. Hence, the everlasting covenant (v. 3) is intricately connected to God's abundant forgiveness (v. 7). On the one hand, the everlasting covenant entails the covenant obedience of a future David (v. 3), and, on the other, the forgiveness of the wicked (v. 7).[57] These redemptive realities are two sides of the same coin: both are thoroughly covenantal and necessary to acquire the "joy" (שִׂמְחָה) and "peace" (שָׁלוֹם) of God's people (v. 12).

The verb "forgive" (v. 7) is סָלַח, which is collocated with כִּפֶּר in Leviticus to describe the result of the atoning sacrifices,[58] often describes what Yahweh does on

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[55]Although many English translations do not translate the jussive וּתְחִי and the cohortative וְאֶכְרְתָה as purpose clauses, the normal rules of Hebrew volitive sequences suggest otherwise, for in v. 3 an imperative (שִׁמְעוּ) precedes the jussive and cohortative clauses, indicating purpose or result (GKC, 320, 322-23; so Lessing, *Isaiah 40-55*, 651; Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 497). In any case, being in an everlasting covenant relationship with God explains the nature of the life given in v. 3a (so Motyer, *Isaiah*, 453; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 191).

[56]Westermann (*Isaiah 40-66*, 288) obscures the link with v. 3 by recommending that v. 7 was not original to vv. 6-11. The word "compassion" (רְחַם) links 55:7 with 54:7-10, which again shows that the same covenant is in view.

[57]Perhaps these two realities—covenant obedience and forgiveness of sin—are found in 53:11: covenant obedience is reflected in the phrase "by his knowledge the righteous one, my servant, will justify many" and forgiveness of sin in the phrase "and their iniquities he will bear."

[58]See Lev 4:26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18, 26 (Eng. 6:7).

account of his covenant faithfulness (Pss 25:10-11; 103:3-4; Dan 9:18-19).[59] Thus, it describes Yahweh's covenant faithfulness in forgiving the sins of his people on account of an atoning sacrifice. It is the basis for any covenant relationship with God, including the new covenant in Jeremiah (Jer 31:34, סָלַח). Similarly, in Isaiah 55:7 it is at the heart of the everlasting covenant of verse 3 and, similar to but different from the Levitical sacrifices, comes about as a result of the guilt offering of the servant (אָשָׁם, 53:10; cf. 33:24).[60]

Isaiah 59:21

In the last section of Isaiah (56:1-66:24) the sin of the people remains central, beginning with the programmatic command in 56:1 (cf. 58:1-14). Isaiah uses מִשְׁפָּט with צְדָקָה to form a wordpair describing the lack of social justice among the people.[61] Whereas keeping the Sabbath was at the heart of God's interest (56:2), the people profaned it by doing what was evil (cf. 66:22-23). Indeed, their sin was so heinous that it separated them from God (59:2-15a). Therefore, since there was no one to intercede for the people to be spared from God's vengeance, God took matters into his own hands—with his own "arm" (זְרֹעַ, 59:16)—both for judgment (59:16-19) and salvation (59:20-21).

The salvation in 59:20-21 is expressed in two ways: redemption and

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[59]סָלַח is translated with several terms in the LXX: καθαρίζω (Num 30:6, 9, 13), οὐ + μιμνήσκομαι (Jer 40:8]), ἀφαιρέω (Exod 34:9), ἀφίημι (Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18; 5:26 [Eng. 6:7]; 16:10; 19:22; Num 14:19; 15:25, 26; Isa. 55:7 [cf. Isa 33:24]), ἵλεως γίνομαι (Amos 7:2; Jer 5:7), ἵλεως εἰμί (Num 14:20; 3 Kgdms 8:30, 34, 36, 39, 50; 2 Chr 6:21, 25, 27, 39; 7:14; Jer 5:1; 27:20; 38:34; 43:3), ἱλάσκομαι (4 Kgdms 5:18, 18; 24:4; 2 Chr 6:30; Ps 24:11; Lam 3:42; DanTh 9:19), ἱλασμός (Ps 129:4; DanTh 9:9). In Isa 55:7 סָלַח is rendered with ἀφίημι, whereas in Jer 31:34 with ἵλεως εἰμί, but the meaning is the same. Num 14:19 links God's forgiveness (סָלַח) as a function of his covenant love (חֶסֶד).

[60]Rightly Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 444.

[61]See Leclerc, *Yahweh Is Exalted in Justice*, 160-65. "Social justice" has a variety of meanings in the western world. Here I am thinking more narrowly of right behavior toward others within the covenant community, particularly the helpless (i.e., widows, orphans, the poor). In this way, social justice is a way of summarizing the stipulations of the Torah.

covenant.[62] In 59:20, God as the "redeemer" (גּוֹאֵל) comes to Zion to save all who repent. In 59:21 he establishes a covenant with the people to ensure their obedience. In these two verses, then, God is renewing and restoring the covenant relationship with his people and ensuring its permanence.

There are two significant aspects of the covenant in 59:21. First, Isaiah hints that the covenant will come to fruition through an individual. The verse begins with an emphatic first person pronoun (אֲנִי), showing God has assumed total responsibility for the salvation of his people. God then states, "This is my covenant with them,"[63] which refers back to "those who turn from transgression in Jacob" (v. 20). But then Yahweh defines his covenant as "my Spirit (רוּחִי), which is upon *you*, and my words which I have placed in *your* mouth. They shall not depart from *your* mouth, and from the mouth of *your* offspring and from the mouth of *your* offspring's offspring." The switch to the second person masculine singular pronominal suffix from the third plural must be accounted for with careful exegesis.[64] While it is possible for ךָ to have the collective antecedent such as "Jacob" in 59:20,[65] it is more likely that the singular refers to an individual: (1) the Spirit resting "on you" is reminiscent of the Davidic figure in 11:2 who has the Spirit resting on him; (2) the servant is Spirit-anointed in 42:1 (cf. 48:16); (3) the Spirit anoints an individual distinct from Israel in 61:1; and (4) the singular pronouns in 61:10-62:7 seem

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[62]While some commentators see 59:21 as unrelated to 59:15-20 or out of place (e.g., Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 345, 352), its juxtaposition to the redemption of 59:20 and the emphasis on the divine initiative (וַאֲנִי) make it a good fit in the context (similarly Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 287).

[63]אִתָּם is a better reading than the MT's אוֹתָם, for it is attested by 1QIsaᵃ, many Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX, Syrohexapla, Targums, and the Vulgate.

[64]Whybray (*Isaiah 40-66*, 299) notes that the pronouns both refer to God's people, for prophetic literature often alternates between the second and third person. Such alternation does occur (Isa 1:27-31), but the move from the third person plural to the second person singular is not common.

[65]So Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 531; Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 512; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 229; Willis, *Isaiah*, 451.

to distinguish an individual from Israel.[66] Hence, an individual is likely in view in 59:21 as well. The individual could be Isaiah himself with whom God makes a covenant,[67] although if one considers the rest of Isaiah, this individual is the Spirit-anointed king (11:1-2) and the servant, who also is the recipient of the divine Spirit (42:1) and has offspring (53:10).[68] Hence, Yahweh inaugurates a covenant with the people ("with them"), but the blessings of the covenant are granted only through an individual ("you"). Like the servant whose work produced "servants" (54:17), so this figure is the means of God's covenant blessings.

Isaiah 61:1-11

Isaiah 61 begins with another text concerning the Spirit-anointed individual: "The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is upon me."[69] The Spirit-anointed figure has a variegated task, which includes comforting, healing, liberating, and proclaiming God's day of salvation and vengeance (vv. 2-3a). The result of his task is that the people of God will be "oaks of righteousness, the planting of Yahweh" (v. 3b)—a stark contrast to their old idolatrous shrines. The tailpiece to the section is 61:4-9, which, like the tailpieces to

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[66]Motyer, *Isaiah*, 489; Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 605.

[67]Because of the emphasis on the "word" and his understanding of the individual figure as the prophet, Wonsuk Ma (*Until the Spirit Comes: The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah*, JSOTSup 271 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 135-36) understands the prophetic circle as the recipients of the Spirit, and that the "covenant is a firm assurance that prophecy by the spirit of Yahweh and words will perpetually exist in Israel." But the probable connection with 44:1-5 indicates that all the people of God are the recipients via the anointed figure (cf. 51:16; 54:13; Joel 3:1-2 [Eng. 2:28-29]; similarly Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 531-32; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 299).

[68]Motyer, *Isaiah*, 490. Although he does not link the individual with the servant, Joseph Blenkinsopp, (*Isaiah 56-66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 19b [New York: Doubleday, 2003], 203) rightly notes the similarities between the promised "prophet like Moses" in Deut 18:15-18 and Isaiah's figure. Watts (*Isaiah 34-66*, 287) thinks the individual is Artaxerxes, but such speculation is unwarranted.

[69]So Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 629. Harman (*Isaiah*, 455) may be correct in considering it to be a Fifth Servant Song, for many of the phrases and concepts of the Servant Songs find their place in this text as well.

the Servant Songs, confirms that the figure will succeed in his task. Indeed, the ruins in the land will be rebuilt (v. 4), and God's people will include strangers and foreigners (v. 5, cf. 56:3-8), who will be priests and ministers in the presence of Yahweh (v. 6a). The word שָׁרַת is the normal term to describe the ministry of the Levites within the tabernacle or temple (Deut 10:8; 17:12; 21:5; 1 Kgs 8:11; Jer 33:21); hence, the priesthood of all God's people, promised in Exodus 19:6, comes to fruition through the figure's work.[70] Further, this individual will succeed in doubling Israel's inheritance (חֵלֶק, v. 7b; "the double"/מִשְׁנֶה, v. 7ac; LXX κληρονομέω; cf. 40:2), which will bring them great joy. God will also give his people their "due" (פְּעֻלָּה) by making with them an everlasting covenant (בְּרִית עוֹלָם, v. 8b). That is to say, he will be totally faithful (אֱמֶת) to his saving promises for his people. Because of his character—he loves justice and hates robbery (v. 8a)[71]—he will do what is right for his people by saving them through his everlasting covenant. It is likely that this covenant is the same one as in 55:3 where the phrase "everlasting covenant" is also applied.[72]

The everlasting covenant fulfills God's promises to Abraham of a worldwide people blessed by Yahweh.[73] In 61:9 the people of God are known by all the nations, and,

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[70]Harman, *Isaiah*, 457; Motyer, *Isaiah*, 502.

[71]Literally the MT reads "robbery with burnt offering." Some Hebrew manuscripts and the versions read the text with an alternate pointing, בְּעַוְלָה ("with iniquity"; so most commentators, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, 228; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 573; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 370; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 244; Willis, *Isaiah*, 456). Since 1) בְעוֹלָה is the more difficult reading, 2) reading בְּעַוְלָה is actually redundant alongside גֵּזֶל (unless construed as a hendiadys), and 3) the context refers to priests and priestly activities, the MT is weightier, and the text means that God hates robbery, which was apparently linked with blemished burnt offerings (so Harman, *Isaiah*, 458).

[72]So Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, 229; Harman, *Isaiah*, 459; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 573; Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 629, 640-41; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 244.

[73]So Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, 229-30; Harman, *Isaiah*, 459; Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 304; Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 244.

specifically, they are recognized as "seed whom Yahweh has blessed (בֵּרַךְ)."[74] This climactic statement echoes the promises to Abraham of great blessing and numerous offspring (Gen. 12:1-3). Thus, just as the Davidic covenant is fulfilled through the covenant faithfulness of the servant (55:3), so also does the blessing of Abraham come to fruition through the work of the conqueror, for the offspring of Abraham is his offspring (59:21; cf. 53:10).

Conclusion

To summarize the new covenant in Isaiah, I have analyzed four texts that refer to a future covenant. Two texts described the covenant as an "everlasting covenant" (55:3; 61:8), one as "my covenant of peace" (54:10), and one as "my covenant" (59:21). Isaiah 54:10 and 55:3 referred to the covenant inaugurated by the work of the servant, and 59:21 and 61:8 by the work of the Spirit-anointed figure. The servant achieved the covenant blessing of the forgiveness of sins (55:6-7; cf. 53:4-6, 10-12), whereas the Spirit-anointed figure achieved the transformation of God's people. Both individuals, who are likely identical,[75] have offspring (53:10; 59:21) who know Yahweh (54:13; 59:21; cf. 44:5), and both bring about peace with God such that he can dwell with his people (53:5; 54:9-10; 57:19). Further, both figures fulfill the promises made to Abraham, Israel, and David. Through them blessing comes to a worldwide people, and through them there is access to God, for the servant intercedes for the people (53:12) and the anointed figure removes the problem of the sin barrier (59:2, 15ff.). The people of God inherit the land on account of their work (54:2-3; 61:7), and the servant is seen as a new David who fulfills the Davidic covenant (55:3). Finally, resting upon both

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[74]This is an asyndetic relative clause. Westermann (*Isaiah 40-66*, 370-71) rightly connects the "seed" language of v. 11 with the "planting" of v. 3, for the new seed is evidence of a new creation (cf. Deut 26:19).

[75]See Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 562-63.

individuals is the Spirit (cf. 11:2), whose presence indicates the dawning of the new age and the internalization of Yahweh's instruction (44:3; 59:21). All of these blessings coincide with and flow from the everlasting covenant of peace.

The New Covenant in Jeremiah

Jeremiah 30-33 is known as the "Book of Consolation," for it is filled with hope and comfort for an exiled people. Jeremiah does not limit his message of hope to this section of his book,[76] but most of his prophecies apart from 30:1-33:26 contained a message of judgment. The structure of 30:1-33:26 is delimited by the mainly poetic section of 30:1-31:40 and the mainly prose section of 32:1-33:26. Both sections contain variegated messages of hope, including the promise of a new relationship with God based on new covenantal promises (Jer 30:22; 31:1, 31-34; 32:40; 33:21). For my purposes, I will analyze 31:27-40, which describes a "new covenant," as well as 32:36-44, which describes an "everlasting covenant."[77]

Jeremiah 31:27-40

Jeremiah 31:27-40 contains the famous new covenant text (vv. 31-34) and is the only instance in the Hebrew Bible of the phrase "new covenant." The analysis, however, cannot be limited to verses 31-34, for the structure suggests 31:27-40 should be read together. In 31:26, Jeremiah inserts an editorial comment that after his vision of restoration ("after this," עַל־זֹאת) he awoke, and as he reflected on what he had envisioned, he was pleased. Thus, verse 26 is a clear section break, as it was the end of

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[76]See 3:15-18; 12:15-16; 16:14-15; 23:3-8.

[77]For the sake of space I will not consider 33:14-26, although it also emphasizes the permanence of the Davidic and Levitical covenants (vv. 17-22), in which God's people would be righteous because of David's son (v. 15). Once again the covenant with creation, for its permanence, is the analogy for the everlasting covenant with David and the Levites (vv. 20-21, 25-26). Also, once again God will keep his promises to Abraham through the permanent covenants with David and the Levites (vv. 22, 26).

his vision while he slept.[78] Verse 27, then, begins a new section with the phrase "Behold, days are coming," a threefold phrase structuring the section (vv. 27, 31, 38).[79] Verses 27-40 envision a new day when God would restructure his covenant community (vv. 27-30), inaugurate with them a new and permanent covenant (vv. 31-37), and rebuild/reconstitute their city and her inhabitants as devoted to Yahweh (vv. 38-40).

First, 31:27-30 shows that the new age will have a prosperous and restructured covenant community. In verses 27-28, God fulfills his promise to Abraham of numerous descendants by "sowing" his people with "the seed of man (זֶרַע אָדָם) and the seed of beast" (cf. Hos 2:25 [Eng. 2:23]). Because of Babylon, the population and flocks were devastated.[80] But in the coming days God would create a new humanity (אָדָם) who would once more prosper in the land. That the land is repopulated in the coming days forms an inclusio with 31:38-40, where the city is once more rebuilt and enlarged because the population is numerous. Thus, the new covenant promises of 31:31-34 are framed by God's fulfillment of his promises to Abraham, indicating that God will fulfill the Abrahamic covenant when he inaugurates the new covenant.

Also, in verses 29-30, Jeremiah says that "in those days" the covenant community will have a new structure that coincides with the new covenant, for it will no longer be the case that the sins of the fathers will be visited on the children. The proverb in 30:29, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (ESV), is a way of saying that the children are directly affected by the sins of their fathers. This proverb corresponds to the structure of the old covenant community, which was tribal and into which entrance was gained by physical birth. In the new covenant,

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[78]Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 494.

[79]Also, the programmatic words נָתַשׁ ("uproot"), הָרַס ("overthrow"), and בָּנָה ("rebuild") are found in vv. 28 and 38-40, which serves as an inclusio delimiting the text.

[80]J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 578.

however, the structure will be different, as verse 30 says, "But everyone shall die for his own sin. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge" (ESV). In other words, the structure of the covenant community is markedly different, for a person is not affected in the same way by the actions of his father. This new situation is what verse 34 describes when it says that covenant members will no longer need to call on other members to "know Yahweh," for they will all already know him. Gentry and Wellum describe the new situation well:

> What verse 34 is saying, however, in contrast to verses 29-30, is that in the old covenant, people became members of the covenant community simply by being born into that community. As they grew up, some became believers in Yahweh and others did not. This resulted in a situation within the covenant community where some *members* could urge other *members* to know the Lord. In the new covenant community, however, one does not become a member by physical birth but rather by the new birth, which requires faith on the part of every person. Thus only believers are members of the new community: all *members* are *believers*, and *only* believers are members. Therefore in the new covenant community there will no longer be a situation where some members urge other members to know the Lord. There will be no such thing as an unregenerate member of the new covenant community. All are believers, all know the Lord, because all have experienced the forgiveness of sins.[81]

Second, 31:31-37 describes the inauguration of a new covenant with God's people ("Israel/Judah").[82] After the statement of the new covenant's existence in verse 31, verse 32 describes the covenant negatively and verses 33-34 positively. Negatively, it will not be like the Sinai covenant, which is associated with the exodus from Egypt and God's marriage to his people, and which the people broke (11:10; 22:9). Rather, it will

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[81]Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 510 (emphasis original).

[82]It is debated whether the word חָדָשׁ refers to a "new" or "renewed" covenant. The word itself can mean either, hence the immediate and canonical context must inform one's interpretation. I contend that this is a "new" covenant because the phrase "cut a covenant" (כָּרַת בְּרִית, v. 31) most likely refers to the inauguration of a new covenant (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 151-61). Jason C. Meyer (*The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology*, NACSBT 6 [Nashville: B&H, 2009], 72-73) also notes that the new created thing in Jer 31:22, which likely is a poetic way of describing Israel as a faithful covenant partner (cf. 31:18), points toward the concept of newness and not renewal. In any case, the new covenant does not abolish the Abrahamic covenant but fulfills it, for it fulfills the latter's promises.

internalize God's תּוֹרָה (v. 33bc),[83] ensure community-wide knowledge of God (יָדַע, v. 34a), and provide lasting forgiveness of sins (v. 34b). At the heart of the new covenant is the covenant formula, "I will be their God, and they will be my people" (v. 33de). In short, this new covenant would achieve what the Sinai covenant could not: a lasting relationship with God with lasting heart transformation and forgiveness of sins.

The promise that the Torah would be within the people and written on the heart is described elsewhere in Jeremiah as circumcision of the heart. In 4:1-4, Yahweh calls for the people of Israel and Judah to repent (v. 1, שׁוּב) by removing their "detestable things" (v. 1) and by swearing allegiance to Yahweh "in truth, in justice, and in righteousness" (v. 2, בֶּאֱמֶת בְּמִשְׁפָּט וּבִצְדָקָה). God is calling his people to act truthfully toward one another and thus to fulfill the intent of the Sinai covenant by living in a right relationship toward God and others. Only when this happens will the blessing of Abraham go out to the nations, who will "bless themselves" (הִתְבָּרְכוּ) in Yahweh. Two metaphors describe this repentance in 4:3-4. In verse 3, Yahweh uses a farming metaphor by calling the people to break up the fallow ground of their hearts (cf. Hos 10:12). In verse 4, he uses a circumcision metaphor by calling the people to circumcise themselves to him by removing the foreskin of their hearts. In other words, Israel needed to be devoted to Yahweh from the heart; they needed an inward transformation to live rightly toward God and one another. Further, in the latter days,[84] Yahweh promises in 9:24-25 (Eng. 9:25-26) to punish all those nations—including the "house of Israel"—who are circumcised merely outwardly (lit. "with regard to foreskin"). Again, the problem was that Israel had uncircumcised hearts and thus needed an inward transformation. Hence,

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[83]The Qal perfect נָתַתִּי is a prophetic perfect to emphasize the sure guarantee of the new covenant's promises.

[84]Jer 9:24 (Eng. 9:25) begins with the phrase, "Behold, days are coming," which indicates an eschatological perspective.

even within the book of Jeremiah itself, there are multiple ways of referring to the depth of Israel's sin and the promise of heart transformation (13:23; 17:9).

Most likely, then, the promise that the Torah would be "within" the people and written on the heart is describing the solution to the uncircumcised hearts of the people. To be circumcised inwardly is to have a new heart that knows Yahweh and his ways, to repent of sin and trust in Yahweh. This reality of the new covenant, then, fulfills the promise of Deuteronomy 30:6: "And Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring to love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you might live."[85] At the heart of the Sinai covenant was the command to love Yahweh with all of one's being (Deut 6:5), and thus to live in a covenant relationship with him, yet this command was not realized in the history of Israel nor did the people obey the Deuteronomic command to circumcise their hearts (Deut 10:16) and place Yahweh's words upon their hearts (Deut 6:6; 11:18). But in the dawning of the new covenant, finally Israel receives new hearts when the Torah is written upon them, and thus the sum and substance of the Sinai covenant is finally realized.[86]

Another promise of 31:31-34 is community-wide knowledge of God (v. 34a). The word "know" (יָדַע) is pregnant with meaning, suggesting that the entire community has a relationship with Yahweh such that they love and serve him.[87] Like the previous promise of heart transformation, this promise contrasts sharply with the situation of Israel. Jeremiah 6:13 states, "From the least to the greatest of them, all of them (מִקְּטַנָּם וְעַד־גָּדוֹל כֻּלּוֹ), gain unjustly" (cf. 8:10). In contrast, the new covenant will ensure that all

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[85]So Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 581.

[86]More will be said below, but for now this promise corresponds to the Isaiah's promise that the Spirit would bring about the new age where the words of Yahweh will never depart from the mouths of God's people (Isa 59:21). The connection between the Spirit and circumcision of the heart will be demonstrated below.

[87]So Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 581.

the community (כֻּלָּם . . . לְמִקְטַנָּם וְעַד־גְּדוֹלָם) will know Yahweh, loving and serving him with justice and righteousness.[88] Thus, this promise corresponds to the Isaianic "covenant of peace" in Isaiah 54:13: "All your sons will be taught by Yahweh."[89]

Finally, 31:34 promises forgiveness of sins, which provides the reason (כִּי) why everyone in the covenant community has a relationship with Yahweh (cf. 33:8). As seen in Isaiah 55:7, the verb סָלַח is the standard word for forgiveness or pardon, and was the result of the Old Testament sacrificial system.[90] Like with the other new covenant promises, this stands in stark contrast to the situation in Israel. סָלַח is used in Jeremiah 5:1 concerning the impossibility of forgiveness for Israel. Like Sodom and Gomorrah, there was not a single person who did justice (מִשְׁפָּט) or sought truth (אֱמוּנָה), in order that Yahweh might forgive Jerusalem (5:7).[91] But in the new covenant, Yahweh forgives the entire community, for they, with the internalization of the Torah, repent of their sins. In a sense, in the new covenant there is no more sin in Israel, for Yahweh will never again (עוֹד) bring it to mind (33:8; 50:20).

The confirmation of the new covenant comes in 31:35-37. The twofold statement "Thus says Yahweh" (vv. 35, 37) uses creation to illustrate the permanence of the new covenant relationship between God and the "offspring of Israel" (vv. 36-37). Verses 35-36 argue from the fixed order (חֻקִּים) of creation: if creation can budge (מוּשׁ; cf. Isa 54:10), then so can God's people cease from being a "nation" (גּוֹי) in Yahweh's

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[88]BDB, 583, notes that the phrase לְמִן . . . וְעַד is an idiom describing a class comprehensive in scope. For this construction in Jeremiah, see 6:13; 42:8.

[89]Rightly Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 510.

[90]LXX-Jer consistently translates סָלַח with ἵλεως ἔσομαι/γίνομαι (but 40:8 [MT 33:8] οὐ μὴ μνησθήσομαι), whereas LXX-Isa uses ἀφίημι (55:7), although the meaning is the same.

[91]Thompson (*Jeremiah*, 236) notes that actually God offers easier terms of forgiveness for Jerusalem than Sodom and Gomorrah, for God required ten righteous men to forgive those cities (Gen 18:23-32), whereas he only required one to forgive Jerusalem (cf. Ezek 16:48), yet not one was found.

presence. Typically Israel is called God's "people" (עַם), which is a kinship term to describe God's care for and close relationship to his people. The term גּוֹי, which Jeremiah can use ironically concerning Israel if Israel resembles the "nations" (גּוֹיִם) in their sin (e.g., 5:9), here reminds one of Yahweh's promise to make Abraham a "great nation" (גּוֹי גָּדוֹל, Gen 12:2). God keeps his promise to Abraham by inaugurating a new covenant that is as fixed and permanent as creation itself. And through this new covenant, he ushers his people permanently into his very presence (v. 36b). In verse 37 Yahweh argues the same point from the immeasurability of the universe: if one can measure the universe, then Yahweh will reject his people. The phrase "on account of all that they have done" refers to the numerous sins of the people, which deserve Yahweh's everlasting rejection but instead are remembered no more (v. 34). Yahweh will never again "reject" (מָאַס) his people as he did at the exile (cf. Isa 54:6; Jer 6:30), for he will always forgive their sins and ensure that they repent and love and serve him from the heart (vv. 33-34). Like the "covenant of peace" (Isa 54:10), this new covenant is as permanent as creation itself.

Verses 38-40 also begin with the phrase, "Behold, days are coming,"[92] which will include the rebuilding and enlarging of the city.[93] The entire city will be "for Yahweh" (v. 38) or "holy to Yahweh" (v. 40), which indicates that the people within its walls are holy (Isa 54:11-13).[94] When Yahweh first chose Israel, Israel was "holy to Yahweh" (2:3), but they forsook Yahweh (2:13). Because of the new covenant, though, the people again will be his special possession devoted to him, and thus fulfill the goal of the Sinai covenant (Exod 19:5-6). Further, the enlarged city suggests that the population

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[92]With the Qere and many manuscripts and versions, בָּאִים should be read, its omission owing to homoeoteleuton with נְאֻם.

[93]Although Jer 31:38-40 contains various textual difficulties, the main point is clear: the entire city will be rebuilt and enlarged.

[94]Presumably God's pervasive presence throughout Jerusalem is why Jeremiah says in that day there would be no ark of the covenant, nor would it be missed (3:16).

of the city is more numerous than before (Isa 54:1-3). Through the new covenant, then, God is again keeping his promise to Abraham of numerous descendants, and never again (עֹוד לְעֹולָם) will they be uprooted from his presence (v. 40).

Jeremiah 32:36-44

Jeremiah 32:1-15 recounts how Yahweh told Jeremiah to purchase his cousin's field, and how Jeremiah obeyed Yahweh in this. In 32:16-25, Jeremiah asks why he bought the field, given that the Chaldeans were plundering and taking the people into exile. God responds with two "therefore" (לְכֵן) statements that flow from the truth that there is nothing too difficult for God (v. 27). The first (vv. 28-35) explains that the reason the Chaldeans were capturing the city was because Yahweh had given the city over to them due to the people's sin. The second (vv. 36-44) explains that one day Yahweh will bring the people back from exile and plant them again in the land, and ensure through a new covenant that his relationship with them will never again be broken. The structure of 32:36-44 shows that this new covenant is the basis for Israel's ongoing relationship with God in the land.

Promise of land (v. 37)

    Promise of an everlasting covenant (vv. 38-41a)

Promise of land (vv. 41b-44)

After restating Jeremiah's doubts in verse 36 about the future of the land and the city, God promises to bring Israel back to "this place" (v. 37) and to plant them again in "this land" (v. 41b). Verses 42-44 confirm ("For thus says Yahweh") that God will in fact reconstitute Israel in the land.

But living once again in the land would not solve the sin problem of Israel. They needed to live in a right relationship with God and one another, and their failure to do so brought about the exile. Hence, at the heart of these promises to Israel, God promises to inaugurate an everlasting covenant, which would effect these right

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relationships (vv. 38-41a). That a right relationship with God is in view is seen in the covenant formula of verse 38. And this covenant will be an "everlasting covenant" (בְּרִית עוֹלָם, v. 40a), a covenant that God will never allow to be broken and thus will bring about lasting goodness on his people.[95] It can never be broken because God will instill within his people hearts that are always united to fear him (vv. 39, 40b). The phrase "one heart and one way" (לֵב אֶחָד וְדֶרֶךְ אֶחָד, v. 39) indicates that the people of God are no longer fractured but reunited, not only geographically but also spiritually.[96] Every member of the covenant community is totally devoted to God and his way, and finally fulfills the Deuteronomic ideal of fearing Yahweh and walking in his ways.[97] Just as Yahweh promised never to turn away from his people, so he promises that they will never turn away from him (v. 40b). And this is why the covenant is everlasting, for it, unlike the Sinai covenant, ensures the people's everlasting fear of God and his continual goodness to them.

Conclusion

Most likely the new covenant of 31:31 and the everlasting covenant of 32:40 refer to the same covenant, for they occur in the Book of Consolation and their content is similar. Although they differ in that 32:36-44 does not explicitly emphasize the forgiveness of sins, both texts do emphasize the internalization of God's ways in the

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[95]The LXX translates אֲשֶׁר לֹא־אָשׁוּב in v. 40a as ἣν οὐ μὴ ἀποστρέψω, suggesting ἀποστρέφω is transitive. More likely, אֲשֶׁר is a final conjunction marking result (GKC, 504) and אָשׁוּב is intransitive, which fits its use in the Qal stem: "so that I will not turn away from following them to do good to them." Although he does not argue that Jeremiah alluded to Isaiah's everlasting covenant (Isa 55:3), Ute Wendel (*Jesaja und Jeremia: Worte, Motive und Einsichten Jesajas in der Verkündigung Jeremias*, BibS(N) 25 [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1995]) contends that Jeremiah knew about and used Isaiah (cf. Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*, 53-55).

[96]The LXX reads ὁδὸν ἑτέραν καὶ καρδίαν ἑτέραν. The MT is likely the correct reading, since the LXX could easily have misread אֶחָד as אַחֵר, as ד and ר were easily confused.

[97]See Deut 4:10; 5:29; 6:2, 13, 24; 8:6.

hearts of his people and their unity in knowing him.[98]

The new covenant fulfills the intention of the Abrahamic and Sinai covenants. As God had promised Abraham, through the new covenant there is the promise of numerous descendants, a great nation, and enlarged land (31:27, 36-40). As the Sinai covenant intended, Israel was to fear Yahweh and walk in his ways. Yet this was hardly realized in the nation of Israel, and they were sent into exile for their sin, which was not surprising, given that God did not circumcise their hearts in that covenant (Deut 29:3 [Eng. 29:4]). But in the new covenant, God circumcises their hearts by writing his law upon them. The people would always be united to fear Yahweh, for they would all know him (31:33; 32:39-40).

Finally, central to the new covenant is the forgiveness of sins, which serves as the basis for the new covenant's promises (31:34). Unlike Isaiah, no sacrifice is described that would bring about such forgiveness, although it should be noted that a Jew in Jeremiah's day could hardly conceive of the inauguration of a new covenant without the shedding of blood (Heb 9:22).

The New Covenant in Ezekiel

Like Isaiah, Ezekiel speaks of a "covenant of peace" (34:25; 37:26), and like both Isaiah and Jeremiah, an "everlasting covenant" (16:60; 37:26). But more than his prophetic forebears, he utilized the covenant formula, particularly at the end of text-units (cf. 11:20; 34:30-31; 37:27). Here my analysis will include several texts, two of which do not use the term בְּרִית (11:14-21; 36:16-38). However, in both of these is the covenant formula as well as the promise of a new heart and a new spirit, which probably indicates

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[98]The promises of 31:33 and 32:40 are linked, for in both texts the internalization of God's law is in view. As Ps 19:9 indicates, the fear of Yahweh is closely linked with the Torah. That Jeremiah would describe once more the new covenant in 32:36-44 is not surprising, since in Hebrew literature such recursive writing is typical and provides a kaleidoscopic view of the topic.

that Ezekiel was explicating Jeremiah's new covenant promise that the Torah would be written on the people's hearts (Jer 31:33) and that the people would be given "one heart and one way" (Jer 32:39). Thus, these texts should be analyzed along with those in Ezekiel that use בְּרִית + modifier.

Ezekiel 11:14-21

Ezekiel 8:1-11:25 describes the departure of Yahweh from the temple and Jerusalem.[99] The glory of Yahweh moves from the temple (8:4) to "the mountain east of the city" (11:23). The reason for the exit was because of the rebellion of the people. Israel had failed to love and serve Yahweh because they had hard hearts (2:4; 3:7). As a result, God sent most of his people into exile and the idolaters and evil counselors who stayed in Jerusalem he destroyed (9:1-11; 11:1-13). This punishment made Ezekiel ask the main question of the section: "Ah, Lord Yahweh, will you be the destroyer of all the remnant of Israel?" (9:8; cf. 11:13). In 11:14-21, God answers Ezekiel's question with a message of hope. Not only will he provide a sanctuary for his people while in exile, but also he will bring his people back to the land and inaugurate a new covenant relationship with them.

Ezekiel 11:15 is rich with irony, for the wicked who remained behind in Jerusalem at the exile ("the inhabitants of Jerusalem") mocked the exiles, claiming that the exiles were now without Yahweh or an inheritance (מוֹרָשָׁה; LXX κληρονομία).[100] Yet, besides the fact that Yahweh himself was moving out of the city and thus away from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, he emphatically excludes the Jerusalemites from the people of

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[99]Ezek 8:1-11:25 is a section because 8:1 as a temporal marker demarcates the time of the vision, and 11:24 says the vision came to an end. Ezek 12:1 then describes a new section with a prophetic heading: "And the word of Yahweh came to me, saying."

[100]So Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 347-48.

Israel when he describes Ezekiel's fellow exiles as "all the house of Israel, all of them."[101] In so doing God affirms that the inheritance was still a significant promise but only belonged to his true people, the remnant. In fact, as verse 21 shows, God will punish the Jerusalemites in accordance with their evil (cf. 9:10).[102]

In 11:16-21 God responds to their command with two "therefore" (לָכֵן) statements. First, in verse 16 God states that he will be a sanctuary (מִקְדָּשׁ) for his people when they are in exile, which shows that God is still devoted to his people, the remnant in exile.[103] Second, in verses 17-21 he encourages the people that they will not always be in exile but will one day return to the "ground of Israel" (אַדְמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל) which, echoing the patriarchal and Deuteronomic promises, God will give (נָתַן) them (v. 17; cf. Gen 15:18; Exod 6:6-8; Deut 1:8; Josh 1:2).[104] When this new exodus occurs, God will do something new: he will cause his people to remove their idols from the land (v. 18) so that no more will they repeat the idolatrous pattern that initially brought about divine anger. Instead, a new relationship will be formed in which the people will have "one heart" (לֵב אֶחָד) and a "new spirit" (רוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה, v. 19a). The phrase "one heart" demonstrates that Ezekiel's

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[101]כֻּלֹּה is כֹּל + third masculine singular pronominal suffix, not a Pual perfect 3ms from כָּלָה, as the LXX (συντετέλεσται) seems to read and which Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion correct (πάντες). So Block (*Ezekiel 1-24*, 341n3), who notes the parallel emphatic construction in Ezek 20:40; 35:15; 36:10.

[102]Ezek 11:21 is difficult to interpret, literally reading "their heart goes to the heart of detestable and abominable things." Block (*Ezekiel 1-24*, 342n13) is likely right to see וְאֶל־לֵב as a circumstantial clause with אֶל like עַל: "Now concerning the heart—their heart goes after detestable and abominable things." But contra Block (*Ezekiel 1-24*, 355), the verse contrasts with vv. 16-20 as an inclusio with v. 15: just as God will save and transform his true people in exile (vv. 16-20), he will judge the Jerusalemites.

[103]The term מְעַט could be adjectival ("a small sanctuary"), which the Targums read as referring to synagogues, or adverbial marking time ("for a little while") or measure ("to a small degree"). In any case, the meaning is that God will be with his people even in exile, although his presence with them is not what it will be in the future (cf. 37:28). As Block (*Ezekiel 1-24*, 349) notes, this statement is new in the Hebrew Bible and looks forward to the New Testament's teaching that the temple need not be constrained to a single place (cf. John 2:19-22; Eph 2:20-22).

[104]Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 352.

vision is the same as Jeremiah's (Jer 32:39; cf. 31:33), where the people are united in their devotion to Yahweh, and the phrase "new spirit," commanded in 18:31, looks forward to the promises of 36:26-27.[105] To have a double heart is to be insincere and double-minded.[106] But the people are united in their love for and fear of Yahweh, which is itself a gift from Yahweh (נָתַן). They will no longer have a "heart of stone," which was their pre-exilic plight (2:4; 3:7), but God will give them a "heart of flesh" (v. 19b) "in order that" (לְמַעַן) they might obey him in contrast with their former way of life (v. 20a; cf. 11:12). Hence, God is not only promising to bring his people back physically from exile; he is also promising to inaugurate a new relationship of love and loyalty, and to ensure that it will last. This new relationship is described not with the term בְּרִית but with the covenant formula, which explicates the meaning of בְּרִית as the goal of Yahweh's saving purposes.[107] Once again, this relationship was the goal of the covenants with Abraham and Israel, where Israel would love and serve him in the land (Exod 6:6-8). But only now in this new covenant would that goal be fulfilled.

Ezekiel 16:59-63

Ezekiel 16:59-63 describes the inauguration of a new covenant that would unite Samaria and Sodom to Jerusalem, atone for Israel's sins, and create shame within Israel for her failure to live faithfully to the Lord. Chapter 16 provides a summary of God's redemptive acts toward Israel. Israel had base beginnings, an infant who had

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[105]Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 474. Block (*Ezekiel 1-24*, 353) rightly says that Ezek 11:19-20 expounds on Jer 32:39, where 11:19 explicates Jeremiah's "one heart" and 11:20 his "one way." It should also be noted, as above, that the new spirit "within you" (בְּקִרְבְּכֶם) in v. 19 that leads to Torah obedience in v. 20 parallels the internalization of the Torah ("within them," בְּקִרְבָּם) in Jer 31:33.

[106]Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 353. See Pss 12:3 (Eng. 12:2); 86:11; 1 Chr 12:34 (Eng. 12:33), 39 (Eng. 12:38).

[107]So Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 352.

pagans as parents and was utterly unloved and forsaken (vv. 3-5). But, probably referring to the time of the patriarchs, God saved the life of Israel and began to make her flourish (vv. 6-7). At a later time, he entered into a marriage covenant with Israel, which undoubtedly refers to the inauguration of the covenant at Sinai (vv. 8-14; cf. Isa 54:4-6). But instead of responding with reciprocal love and affection, Israel "trusted in [her] beauty" (v. 15) and played the whore with Egypt, Assyria, and the Chaldeans, showing herself to be worse than common prostitutes by bribing her lovers (vv. 15-34). Therefore, God was faithful to bring about the curses of the Sinai covenant on them by giving them into the hands of their lovers/enemies (vv. 35-43). God indicts them further by saying Judah is similar to and even worse than her sisters, Samaria and Sodom, respectively (vv. 44-52). Yet, in the midst of judgment, God promises a miraculous and intriguing reversal of fortunes: Samaria and Sodom will be restored from their non-existence so that Israel would be ashamed of her sin (vv. 53-58).[108]

This miraculous promise is explained (כִּי, v. 59) in 16:59-63 in terms of a new covenant. Verse 59 summarizes the judgment described in 16:37-43, as God brings about the covenant curses from the Sinai covenant for all that Judah had done (עָשָׂה). Like Jeremiah 31:32, Ezekiel 16:59 emphasizes that Israel "broke" (הֵפֵר) the marriage covenant at Sinai. But in verse 60, God emphatically states that he will "remember" the Sinai covenant, which was made "in the days of your youth."[109] Even though Israel broke that covenant, he pledges to remember his marriage promises, and thus chooses to "establish for you an everlasting covenant" (הֲקִמוֹתִי לָךְ בְּרִית עוֹלָם) to ensure those

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[108]Block (ibid., 514) rightly argues the purpose of the restoration of Samaria and Sodom was so that Jerusalem "may bear her disgrace and feel ashamed not only for her actions but also for having caused Sodom and Gomorrah to breathe easier."

[109]The time when Israel was a "youth" refers to the time leading up to the Sinai covenant (vv. 6-9, 22), for the Sinai covenant in vv. 8ff. is seen as the covenant that covers the people's nakedness and washes them of their blood.

promises will never be broken. Identifying this covenant is not an easy task, but it likely refers to the new covenant, for in 37:26 Ezekiel uses the phrase בְּרִית עוֹלָם to describe what seems to be the eschatological "covenant of peace."[110]

Two infinitive construct phrases (בְּקַחְתֵּךְ, v. 61a; בְּכַפְּרִי, v. 63b) describe events that will coincide with the inauguration of the new covenant. First, Samaria and Sodom will be joined into the one people of God (v. 61). Just as God remembered his promises at Sinai (v. 60), so Jerusalem will remember her many sins (v. 61), and it is at this time that Samaria and Sodom, Jerusalem's sisters (vv. 44-58), will become subservient to her as her daughters.[111] Samaria was the region of the northern kingdom that had been decimated by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Since then, Samaria's inhabitants consisted of a variety of ethnicities and religious beliefs, the Assyrians having colonized the region with peoples from different lands (2 Kgs 17:24-41; Joseph. *Ant*. 9.277-91). In short, Samaritans were perceived by Jews as false worshipers who had no place in the people of God, for they refused to worship at the temple in Jerusalem (cf. John 4:20). As for Sodom, it had been annihilated in the time of Abraham (Gen 19) and had become a

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[110]For a good discussion of the debate, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 475-76. The use of the phrase הֵקִים בְּרִית to indicate covenant initiation is unusual, since typically this construction describes the act of fulfilling a covenant promise. Hence, it is possible that a renewal of the Sinai covenant is in view. More likely, though, Ezekiel sees God initiating a new covenant that fulfills the goal of the Sinai covenant, for the newness of this covenant especially is evident in the inclusion of Samaria and Sodom as covenant partners. In 37:26, Ezekiel will define the "everlasting covenant" as the "covenant of peace," a term that is descriptive of the new life for God's people in the new creation (34:25-31). Hence, although perhaps the phrase הֵקִים בְּרִית had become almost synonymous with כָּרַת בְּרִית in the exilic period, it may be that Ezekiel wanted to emphasize the close link between the new covenant and the Sinai covenant. Indeed, Yahweh remembers his marriage promises to Israel at Sinai (v. 60a) and then inaugurates a new covenant to ensure that those promises will never be broken (v. 60b). Thus, in contrast to the Sinai covenant that could be and was broken, the new, eschatological covenant can never be broken and hence is called the "everlasting covenant." In any case, what is primary for this analysis of vv. 60-63 is that in a new age God would fulfill his promises to Abraham and Israel through an eschatological covenant.

[111]So Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 518. The LXX wrongly translated לבנות as a Qal infinitive construct from בָּנָה (= לִבְנוֹת), rendering it as οἰκοδομή. Intriguingly, if Paul read 16:61 the same way, it may have informed his emphasis in Eph 2:20-22 on the one new people of God as a "building" (οἰκοδομή). But given the familial language of 16:44-63, the MT is likely the correct reading.

byword for heinous sins (v. 56).[112] Yet, miraculously, God was promising to bring them into his new covenant community. The dregs of the world, the worst imaginable pagans—people as morally far off as possible from God and his people—would be brought into the one people of God as a result of the new covenant, not on the basis of the Sinai covenant.[113]

Second, after reiterating that Jerusalem would remember and be ashamed of her sins, Yahweh promises that he would atone (בְּכַפְּרִי; LXX ἐξιλάσκεσθαι) for the sins of the people (v. 63). Yahweh himself would take responsibility to atone for the abominations of Jerusalem, which were so despicable that they made Samaria and Sodom appear righteous (vv. 51-52). The only other instances of the term כִּפֶּר in Ezekiel are 43:20, 26 and 45:15, 17, 20, where the new temple is restored and atonement is offered to purify the altar, the temple, and the people of Israel. This indicates that the everlasting covenant would include a new temple with effective sacrifices.[114] For just as Yahweh would deal with the people "according to what you have done" (כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂית, v. 59), so in the new covenant he will make atonement for "all that you have done" (כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂית; cf.

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[112]Scholars debate whether the name "Sodom" is a metonymy for the region south of Judah or the Canaanite inhabitants residing in the land (for a good discussion, see Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 513-14). More likely, one should let the name stand at face value, for the point is that, when the new covenant is inaugurated, a new, global people of God will arise, including the worst imaginable pagans. All things will be made new, even those things deemed utterly irredeemable (cf. 47:1-12).

[113]The phrase וְלֹא מִבְּרִיתֵךְ (v. 61) is to be construed as causative: "but not on the basis of your covenant" (similarly Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 476). Block (*Ezekiel 1-24*, 518) argues for a concessive sense: "even though they are not your covenant partners," meaning Samaria and Sodom receive blessings from the covenant with Israel even though they are not technically members of the covenant.

[114]Just what sort of new temple is described in Ezek 40-48 is debated. The most likely explanation is that the new temple, as described in the New Testament, is Jesus himself (John 2:21; Col 2:9), with believers forming its structure when they are united to him by faith (Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:4-6), and that the promised effective sacrifices find their fulfillment in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross (Heb 8:1-10:18). Intriguingly, Ezekiel may hint at this christological fulfillment in 45:17, where it is the responsibility of the "prince" (נָשִׂיא) of Israel to offer the sacrifices for atonement.

Jer 31:37). Complete forgiveness of sin is offered Israel as part and parcel of the new covenant.

In 16:59-63, Ezekiel seems to be offering Judah a hope similar to his earlier contemporary, Jeremiah (Jer 31:31-34).[115] Both prophets emphasize the Sinai covenant is Yahweh's covenant (בְּרִיתִי), and that the covenant was broken (הֵפֵר). In both there are consequences of covenant unfaithfulness, and there is hope for a future renewal and forgiveness of sin. Finally, both promise that Israel will "know" (יָדַע) Yahweh when the new covenant is established. Like Jeremiah, then, Ezekiel promises Judah that the inauguration of a new covenant will bring to fruition the promises of the Abrahamic and Sinai covenants (cf. Lev 26:40-45).

Ezekiel 34:20-31

Ezekiel 34 is an oracle against the "shepherds of Israel" (v. 1), who are most likely Israel's kings, and Israel's lay leaders (vv. 17-19).[116] The first indictment against Israel's kings is in 34:2-6, where a series of kings had failed to care for and protect the people, and instead had exploited the people for their personal gain. God responds in 34:7-16 (vv. 7, 9, לָכֵן) by asserting his own kingship over the nation, except he will rescue the scattered sheep (v. 10) by bringing them back to the land and caring for them like a good shepherd (vv. 11-16). The second indictment, this time against Israel's lay leaders, asserts that Yahweh will judge those members of the community who act unjustly toward other members (vv. 17-19).[117] Again, God responds in 34:20-31 (v. 20, לָכֵן) with a series

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[115]Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 517.

[116]Block (*Ezekiel 25-48*, 279-82) rightly argues that in the ANE kingship was tied to the motif of shepherding, and that this is so in Ezek 34 for two reasons: 1) Ezekiel himself seems to distinguish between the "shepherds" and those members of the flock who are bullying other members of the flock (vv. 17-19), which suggests a distinction between kings and lay leaders; and 2) the promise in vv. 23-24 that a future David would serve as a shepherd-prince over Israel implies that shepherding is a kingship motif.

[117]Block notes that אֵילִים (v. 17) is a common title for community leaders (17:13; 30:13; 31:11,

of waw-consecutive perfects promising a new age with a new David and a new covenant.[118] Thus, the literary structure of Ezekiel 34 is as follows:

Introductory formula (v. 1)

A[1]   Indictment #1: Against the shepherds (vv. 2-6)

   B[1] Therefore: God's response (vv. 7-16)

      C[1]   The promise of rescue (vv. 7-10)

      C[2]   Explanation of the rescue (vv. 11-16)

A[2]   Indictment #2: Against the lay leaders (vv. 17-19)

   B[2] Therefore: God's response (vv. 20-31)

In 34:23-24, God establishes "one shepherd,"[119] which, contrary to the many past shepherds of Israel, indicates the future king will never be succeeded. Called a "prince" (נָשִׂיא),[120] this new king will be another David and will have the lofty title "Servant of Yahweh." He will be central in bringing about God's promises, including the covenant relationship between God and his people. The structure of verse 23 indicates this:[121]

A[1]   I will establish over them one shepherd

14; 32:20; 39:18; ibid., 292-93).

[118]Block suggests vv. 23-31 is its own section because it introduces new content (ibid., 296), but v. 23 continues the series of waw-consecutive perfects that begins in v. 20 and does not end until v. 31 (notwithstanding the brief confirmation in v. 24: "I, Yahweh, have spoken"). Indeed, in v. 20 the phrase הִנְנִי־אָנִי is a macrosyntactical signal of a new section.

[119]The MT's אֶחָד is the correct reading against the LXX's ἕτερον, which likely read אַחֵר, confusing the consonants ד and ר. Dominique Barthélemy et al. (*Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project* [New York: United Bible Societies, 1980], 5:118) argue for an original אַחֵר that scribes emended either for theological reasons or by confusion of consonants. But confusion of consonants could argue for either reading, as could theological motivation.

[120]This term is Ezekiel's favorite to describe a ruler such as Zedekiah (7:27; 12:10, 12; 21:30), the leaders of Judah (21:17; 22:6; 45:8-9), foreign princes (26:16; 27:21; 30:13; 32:29; 38:2-3; 39:1, 18), and a future Davidic king (34:24; 37:25; 44:3; 45:7-46:18; 48:21-22).

[121]The LXX omits the second phrase "he will shepherd them," doubtless for its redundancy.

    B^1 and he will shepherd them,

       C   my servant David,

    B^2 he will shepherd them,

A^2 and he will be their shepherd.

As shown, the phrase "my servant David" is at the center as the one shepherd for God's people. The implication is that no longer will God's people be ruled by wicked leaders, nor will they be divided, for they will have one shepherd.

At the time this future David takes the throne as Israel's shepherd-king, God will bring about a new covenant. The first half of the covenant formula is present in verse 24 ("I, Yahweh, will be their God"), indicating that the covenant relationship between God and his people is established and unbroken. The covenant formula appears again in verses 30-31 where God affirms that he is their God and they his people/flock. Through his servant David, then, God will bring about the new covenant, in which the goal of God's past covenants with the patriarchs and his people—a reconciled relationship of love and trust—will come to fruition.

After Yahweh confirms his commitment to the new David in 34:24 ("I, Yahweh, have spoken"), he "cuts" a new covenant in verse 25 (כָּרַת בְּרִית), which is described as a "covenant of peace" (בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם, v. 25; LXX, διαθήκη εἰρήνης). The only other time the phrase "covenant of peace" is used in the Prophets is in 37:26 and Isaiah 54:10, suggesting that Ezekiel was reflecting on Isaiah's text at this point.[122] Just as Isaiah had promised that God would have compassion on his people and no longer be angry with them, so Ezekiel promises that God would renew his relationship with them in

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[122]The phrase "covenant of peace" is also used with reference to Phinehas in Num 25:12. For other texts that demonstrate a close connection between the theme of covenant and peace, see Josh 9:15; 2 Sam 3:21; 1 Kgs 5:26 (Eng. 5:12); Job 5:23; Ps 55:21 (Eng. 55:20); Obad 7; Mal 2:5. It is likely that Ezekiel also was reflecting on Hosea's covenant with the animals in Hos 2:18-25 (Eng. 2:16-23; so Batto, "Covenant of Peace," 189).

the land.[123] There is no mention here of the aversion of divine wrath, but the parallel with Isaiah and the atonement in Ezekiel 16:63 suggests that a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin is part and parcel of the everlasting covenant of peace.

The peace promised in 34:25-29 is portrayed in Edenic terms. There is peace from wild animals in the land (vv. 25b-d, 28b-d), blessings for the vegetation (vv. 26-27c, 29a-b), and freedom from their oppressors (vv. 27d-28a, 29c).[124] The word בֶּטַח appears throughout the passage (vv. 25, 27, 28), indicating the total security from fear and death experienced by God's people. In short, all is right in their relationships with God and one another.[125] No more will God show an outpouring of his wrath upon Jerusalem for their sin (9:8; 36:18). Such promises of peace echo the blessings of obedience outlined in Leviticus 26:4-13.[126] However, unlike Leviticus, Ezekiel has no conditions for the promises of peace; God will most assuredly bring to pass this Edenic picture. Here again, the new covenant fulfills the old, inasmuch as it brings the goal of the old covenant to fruition. And the blessing of the land promised to Abraham is fulfilled in the prosperity of the land under the covenant of peace (בְּרָכָה, v. 26).[127]

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[123]Probably for contextual reasons (see vv. 23-24), the LXX sees the covenant of peace as made "with David" instead of "with them." But the MT preserves the more difficult and thus correct reading. The covenant is made with all God's people.

[124]Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 305-06.

[125]Block rightly says, "The description offers one of the fullest explications of the Hebrew notion of *šālôm*. The term obviously signifies much more than the absence of hostility or tension. It speaks of wholeness, harmony, fulfillment, humans at peace with their environment and with God" (ibid., 303).

[126]Block provides a fine synopsis of Lev 26:4-13 and Ezek 34:25-30 (ibid., 304). He also notes (305) that since the root ברך is absent from Lev 26:4-13, the covenant blessings of Deut 28:2-14 are most likely in view also.

[127]If in v. 29 one accepts the MT (מַטָּע לְשֵׁם, "a planting for a name"), this also points to the promise to Abraham that God would make his "name great" (Gen 12:2). However, the LXX (φυτὸν εἰρήνης), Syriac, and the Targums probably read מַטָּע שָׁלֹם, "a planting of peace" (by metathesis of the שׁ and the ל), which would certainly fit the context. Batto ("Covenant of Peace," 201-02) argues for the reading "planting of peace" and suggests that the phrase is intimately connected to the covenant of peace.

Ezekiel 36:16-38

The eschatological climax of Ezekiel, it may be argued, comes in Ezekiel 36-37. As already seen, the prophet has touched on themes of restoration and transformation, but it is here that he finally brings all those themes together in greater detail. Hence, Ezekiel 36-37 does not describe a new plan of salvation but clarifies the nature of the plan and provides further details about how it will be accomplished.

From 35:1-36:15 Yahweh has Ezekiel prophesy to Mt. Seir (35:1-15) and to the mountains of Israel (36:1-15), showing that Mt. Seir, which represents the nations, will suffer reproach for their oppression (36:7), while Israel will be secure and prosperous (36:8-15). The goal of the restoration of Israel's land was that the nations would "know that I am Yahweh" (35:4, 9, 12, 15).

Ezekiel 36:16-38 is a new oracle in which Yahweh restores his honor. The means by which he restores his honor is (1) the transformation of his people by his Spirit and (2) the return from exile and provision of prosperity in the land. These themes are then picked up and explained further with the two pictures of Ezekiel 37: verses 1-14 focus on the Spirit-wrought transformation of Israel, and verses 15-28 on the return from exile and the unity of the nation in the land. Both themes occur when the new covenant is inaugurated, for the covenant formula is present in 36:28 and 37:23, 27, and the covenant is named the "covenant of peace, the everlasting covenant" in 37:26.

The structure of Ezekiel 36:16-38 is clear. Verses 16-21 present the crisis of Yahweh's honor, and verses 22-32 the restoration of that honor. Verses 33-36 and 37-38 were perhaps originally self-contained oracles, both beginning with a common formula ("Thus says the Lord Yahweh"), but they fit nicely with the theme of restoration, the former emphasizing the restoration of the land and the latter the restoration of the population.

Verses 16-21 explain how Israel defiled (טִמֵּא) herself with her sins, which resulted in exile (vv. 17-19). The problem the exile entailed was a theological one, for the

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absence of Israel from the land caused the nations to question Yahweh (v. 20). Block explains the situation well:

> As the God of Israel, Yahweh was obligated to defend his land and his people, and to prevent the divorce of the two. But the divorce has occurred, throwing into question both Yahweh's and the people's claims. Outsiders were left to conclude that either Yahweh had willingly abandoned his people, or that he was incapable of defending them against the superior might of Marduk, the god of Babylon. The first option challenges Yahweh's credibility and integrity; the second, his sovereignty. In either case, his reputation has been profaned among the nations. Thus the defilement of the land had led ultimately to the defilement of Yahweh's *name*.[128]

For this reason, Yahweh showed concern for "my holy name" (שֵׁם קָדְשִׁי, v. 21). By restoring his people to their land and inaugurating a covenant by which he could dwell with them forever, he would show that he is the only God and truly is devoted to his people.

Yahweh responds in verse 22 that he is not acting for the sake of Israel but for the sake of his holy name, a statement reaffirmed in verse 32, and which thus serves as an inclusio for the section. After affirming that he will sanctify (קָדֵשׁ) his name in the sight of the nations (v. 23), Yahweh gives the details of this plan with a string of waw-consecutive perfects in 36:24-31. First, he will bring them back from exile into the land (v. 24). The phrase "I will gather you from all the countries" suggests a reuniting of all Israel, a unity made explicit in 37:15-28. Second, he will cleanse the people from their sin and transform them into obedient servants by his Spirit (vv. 25-27). The promise of verse 26 clearly reflects Ezekiel's earlier promises (11:19-20; 20:37-41) that Yahweh would make his people new by inwardly transforming their desires and thoughts ("a new heart and a new spirit"). But verse 27 introduces a new concept: Yahweh would give the people a new spirit (v. 26) through the gift of his own Spirit ("my Spirit"; cf. 37:14; 39:29) and thus ensure that his people would fulfill his commands.[129] This promise yet

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[128]Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 347-48 (emphasis original).

[129]The phrase אֶת אֲשֶׁר is an object clause describing what Yahweh will accomplish (GKC,

again demonstrates that restoration for Israel could only be achieved by God, whose Spirit alone could raise Israel from their spiritual death. As seen with Ezekiel's senior contemporary Jeremiah, the Spirit-enabled transformation promised in 36:26-27 most likely echoes the Deuteronomic concept of the circumcision of the heart (Deut 10:16; 30:6). Later interpreters also recognized this connection, for in *Jubilees* 1:23 it reads, "And after this they will turn to Me in all uprightness and with all (their) heart and with all (their) soul, and I will circumcise the foreskin of their heart and the foreskin of the heart of their seed, and I will create in them a holy spirit, and I will cleanse them so that they shall not turn away from Me from that day unto eternity."[130] What this indicates is that Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel describe the same promise: that God would one day inwardly transform his people so that they would fulfill his Torah.

This promise would occur when Yahweh entered into a new covenant with his people. When God brings his people back to the land (v. 28a), then the covenant ideal will be realized (v. 28b). God would enact an unbroken relationship with his kin (עַם), and they would no longer defile themselves nor profane his name, for he alone would be their God. He would "save" (הוֹשִׁיעַ) them from their defilements (v. 29a), and thus remove the possibility for any future exile. They would always repent of their sins in the newly-prosperous land (vv. 29b-31). God had previously not allowed the people to inquire of him due to their sin (אִדָּרֵשׁ, 14:3; 20:3; cf. 8:18), but now with the new covenant the relationship is restored and God again will hear his people's prayers (אִדָּרֵשׁ, v. 37).[131]

Further, 36:33-36 begins with a confirmatory "Thus says the Lord Yahweh" and emphasizes the restoration of the land. The cities of Israel will be inhabited and

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504n1). For a similar example with the particle שֶׁ, cf. Eccl 3:14.

[130]The translation is from R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English: With Introductions and Critical Explanatory Notes to the Several Books* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913).

[131]Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 364.

fortified and the land will be recognized by all as "like the garden of Eden" (v. 35) that

"will be worked" (תֵּעָבֵד, v. 34), indicating that through the new covenant Yahweh would

recreate his place as well as his people.[132] A similar theme surrounding this new creation

occurs in verses 37-38, also confirmed by the phrase "Thus says the Lord Yahweh", for

Yahweh promises to "multiply" (אַרְבֶּה) his people "like the flock of mankind" (כַּצֹּאן

אָדָם), a reference to the expansive population of God's people. The promise to multiply

the people echoes the Edenic command to multiply (Gen 1:28) and the promise of the

Abrahamic (Gen 17:2) and Mosaic (Lev 26:9) covenants, which shows that Yahweh is

fulfilling in his people what he originally commanded mankind to do and promised in

past covenants.

Significantly, the inauguration of the new covenant is cotemporaneous with the

new creation. Verse 33 notes that the land will be populated "on the day when I cleanse

you from all your iniquities." The word "cleanse" (טָהֵר) adequately summarizes the

inward transformation described in 36:25-29, at the heart of which is the new covenant

(v. 28). Thus, the day when God's relationship with his people is restored is the same day

when he will recreate his people and his place.

Ezekiel 37:1-28

Ezekiel 37 illustrates and explains further the message of 36:16-38,

emphasizing the inward transformation of God's people by his Spirit (vv. 1-14) and the

unity of his people in the land (vv. 15-28). The first illustration shows Ezekiel in a valley

of dry bones. Yahweh asks the presenting issue in verse 3: "Can these bones live?"

Yahweh then commands Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones that they may receive flesh,

sinews, and breath for life. Ezekiel obeys, and Yahweh causes flesh and sinews and then

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[132]As seen in Gen 2:15, Adam's main task in the garden was "to work it and to keep it" (לְעָבְדָהּ

וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ).

finally breath to come upon the bones. The result is that the resurrected bones came to life and were "an exceedingly great army" (חַיִל גָּדוֹל מְאֹד־מְאֹד, v. 10). The illustration is interpreted in verses 11-14: just as the bones seemingly had no hope of life, so also Israel was lifeless and without hope (v. 11). But Yahweh promises to do the impossible and raise them, as it were, from the dead and bring them back into the land (vv. 12-13). Verse 14 echoes the promise of 36:26-27 and shows the means of this resurrection: God puts his Spirit (רוּחִי) within his people to bring them to life. Thus, the plight of Israel is geographical and spiritual: they are outside the land promised to their fathers, and they are spiritually dead. Both problems must be dealt with in order for the people to live in a covenant relationship with their God. And, indeed, it is God's covenantal commitment to his people that assures them that he will raise them from the dead, for in the midst of verses 12-13, Yahweh calls Israel "my people" (עַמִּי) twice, as if to remind them that they are indeed his kin with whom he has pledged himself in a covenant.[133] God reminds his people the reason he is recreating them is because he is faithful to his covenant promises.

The second image used in Ezekiel 37 comes in verses 15-28, where Yahweh tells Ezekiel to join two sticks together, which represented the northern (Joseph/Ephraim) and southern (Judah) kingdoms, respectively, which had been split ever since the days of Rehoboam. The image of Ezekiel joining the sticks together, then, indicates that the two kingdoms will one day become one again (vv. 19-22), and that there would be one king over them, "my servant David" (vv. 24, 25). After the illustration of the sticks and the people's question about its meaning, Yahweh explains the essence of the illustration in verse 19 in terms of the future unity of the two kingdoms, which is explained further in 37:21-28. The literary structure of verses 21-28 is as follows:[134]

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[133]The Syriac omits both references, and the LXX includes only the second, but both are well-attested in the Hebrew manuscripts.

[134]Most translations place a paragraph break between vv. 23 and 24. But there is no reason for

Introduction: Return from exile (v. 21)

Section 1: A united and faithful kingdom (vv. 22-24)

    A   National unity (v. 22)

        B   A clean people (v. 23a-c)

            C   A new covenant (vv. 23d-24)

            C^1 National unity (v. 24a)

            C^2 A clean people (v. 24b)

Section 2: Yahweh's everlasting presence (vv. 25-28)

    A^1 Everlasting land/people (v. 25)

        B^1 Everlasting covenant (v. 26a)

    A^2 Land/people (v. 26b)

        B^2 Everlasting covenant (vv. 27-28)

After promising a return from exile in verse 21, Yahweh elaborates in two sections what kind of a future kingdom Israel will experience. On the one hand, Israel will have a united kingdom and a newly transformed people, which are based on a new covenant relationship (vv. 22-24). On the other hand, a multiplied Israel will experience Yahweh's everlasting presence in the land (vv. 25-28). Both sections emphasize that the new age for Israel will coalesce with the inauguration of the everlasting covenant.

Verse 22 emphasizes the everlasting unity of the future kingdom. The first half positively affirms that Yahweh will make Israel "one nation" (גּוֹי אֶחָד) and "one king" (מֶלֶךְ אֶחָד) will be over them, and the second half negatively states through a threefold use

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this according to the principles of Hebrew discourse, which instead indicate that v. 24—a series of noun phrases that break the waw-consecutive perfect pattern of vv. 21-23—provides "offline" information, describing in greater detail the nature of the future kingdom in the new covenant age. Thus, the break should be between vv. 24 and 25, where the waw-consecutive perfect pattern resumes. Further, as Block (ibid., 409) indicates, 34:24 is a pattern showing the close connection between the covenant relationship and the future Davidic ruler, and such is the case in 37:23-24.

of עוֹד[135] that Israel's new kingdom will never again be split.[136] The reader should not miss the nationalistic import of this statement: the word "nation" (גּוֹי) is rarely used to describe Israel and, when used, brings to mind Yahweh's promise to make Abraham into a great nation (Gen 12:2). Further, the term מֶלֶךְ is almost never used by Ezekiel, who prefers נָשִׂיא (see v. 25), probably because the former carried overtly nationalistic connotations.[137] The "one king" over Israel in the future kingdom is clarified in verse 24 as "my servant David," who, in contrast to the bad shepherd-kings of Israel described in Ezekiel 34, will serve as the climactic shepherd-king and thus, in accord with the expectations of Deuteronomy 17:18-20, lead the people to love and serve Yahweh. Thus, the unity of the future kingdom is ensured by the presence of the one Davidic king.

Another emphasis of the first section is the transformation of the people. As Yahweh had previously promised, so in 37:23 he promises that the people will no longer defile themselves by their previous sins,[138] but instead he will "save" (יָשַׁע) and "clean" (טָהֵר) them from their sins.[139] This is expressed in greater detail in verse 24, which describes the people as fulfilling the Torah (36:25-28). Indeed, the people are considered

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[135]The LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate omit the final עוֹד, likely because it seemed redundant. But they failed to recognize that the repetition of the adverb emphatically declares that the promises are unending.

[136]Who precisely constitutes the nation of Israel in v. 22 is a difficult question, for the northern kingdom had been decimated by the Assyrians and its inhabitants dispersed. Given that the everlasting covenant of 16:61 included in the new covenant people those from Samaria and Sodom, and given the parallel nature of 16:59-63 and 37:15-28 due to the appearance of the "everlasting covenant" in both texts (16:60, 62; 37:26), it is likely that the "one nation" of Israel in 37:22 is comprised of both Jews and Gentiles who are together members of the new covenant community.

[137]In fact, the LXX uses ἄρχων instead of βασιλεύς to translate מֶלֶךְ, probably for the same nationalistic reasons.

[138]With many manuscripts, it is better to repoint the MT as יִטַּמְּאוּ, which is a reflexive Hithpael ("they will defile themselves").

[139]The MT reads "settlements," but, given the context, "their turnings" (מְשׁוּבֹתֵיהֶם) makes more sense and requires only a metathetical error of the ו and the שׁ in the MT (ibid., 407n79).

to be holy, for Yahweh is the one "who sanctifies Israel" (מְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל, v. 28) and as a result his "holy place" (מִקְדָּשׁ) always is among them.

The basis and goal of Israel's future national unity and her eschatological transformation is her covenant with Yahweh. As is often the case in Ezekiel (11:20; 14:11; 34:24, 30-31), the covenant formula appears close to the end of the unit (v. 23), indicating the climactic nature of the statement. Indeed, Israel's future blessings are connected to this future covenant. A discourse analysis of the Hebrew text of 37:23-24 shows this: verse 24 is a series of noun phrases that break the waw-consecutive perfect pattern of verse 23, indicating that verse 24 provides "offline" information, describing in greater detail the nature of the new covenant. Verse 24, then, does not resume the prophetic line of promises but expands on the nature of Israel's new relationship with Yahweh. In fact, verse 24a corresponds to verse 22, and verse 24b corresponds to verse 23, indicating that the presence of the new covenant explains the presence of Israel's future united kingdom and her future transformation. The new covenant brings to fruition the national promises made to Abraham, Israel, and David in their respective covenants.

The second section (vv. 25-28) emphasizes the everlasting presence of Yahweh among his people. The keyword in the section is עוֹלָם, which occurs five times. The structure above shows that there is an ABAB pattern, with the first and third sections showing a numerous Israel dwelling in the land forever, and the second and fourth God's everlasting covenant with Israel. These are not two separate ideas but two sides of the same coin, for Israel's everlasting presence in the land means that Yahweh has also chosen to reside there permanently. As demonstrated in 8:1-11:25, Yahweh's departure from the land shows that he will not tolerate Judah's sin. But the converse is true also: the everlasting presence of Yahweh in the land means that he is reconciled to his people and they to him in an everlasting covenant relationship.

As in 37:22-24, the second section shows that the new age will be the time when God's covenant promises will be fulfilled. Verse 25a promises not just everlasting presence in the land but also reminds that such is the fulfillment of the land promises to the patriarchs. For the two relative clauses respectively mention "my servant Jacob," the eponymous ancestor of Israel, and "your fathers," a reference to Israel's patriarchs. Further, verse 25b affirms that "my servant David" will be "prince" (נָשִׂיא) in Israel forever, thus fulfilling the promises made about David's offspring in 2 Samuel 7:13. Finally, verse 26 promises that Yahweh will "multiply" (הִרְבֵּיתִי) Israel in the land, in fulfillment of his promises to Abraham and Israel (Lev 26:9).[140]

In 37:26 Yahweh promises to "cut for them a covenant of peace" (כָּרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם) and an "everlasting covenant" (בְּרִית עוֹלָם), which are not two different covenants but one and the same. At this point in the book, Ezekiel, in keeping with the prophetic recursive manner of writing, is bringing together all the major covenantal themes mentioned earlier in his text.[141] In 16:60 the covenant was the "everlasting covenant," and in 34:25 it was the "covenant of peace." In 37:26 it is clear that these covenants are one and the same.

The phrase כָּרַת בְּרִית shows that this is the inauguration of a new covenant. As in 34:25, Ezekiel emphasizes that the new covenant will ensure peace between God and Israel. To have peace with God would mean that Israel would no longer be taken in exile, for Israel would no longer persist in unbelief and idolatry. Israel would be cleansed of their sin (v. 23), and, even though Ezekiel does not say it as explicitly as Jeremiah,

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[140]The phrase "and I will give them and multiply them" is omitted in the LXX, and the editors of *BHS* suggest its deletion. Others suggest deleting וּנְתַתִּים because it seems out of place, having no direct object. But the LXX is explained by the scribal error of homoeoteleuton, and וּנְתַתִּים is shorthand for establishing the people in the land and thus fits the context nicely.

[141]Gentry and Wellum (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 481) summarize it nicely: "This passage, then, draws together all the different strands dealing with the new covenant that are treated separately in earlier passages in Ezekiel."

presumably their sins would be atoned for and forgiven (cf. 16:63). Further, this covenant of peace would never end, for it is described as an everlasting covenant. The goal of God's redemptive plan toward Israel—an everlasting relationship of unswerving love and loyalty—would be complete when Israel would finally and immutably be reconciled to him.

The evidence of the effective nature of the new covenant is found in 37:26d-28, where Yahweh promises his everlasting presence ("holy place" [מִקְדָּשׁ, LXX τὰ ἅγια]) among his people. Verses 26 and 28 form an inclusio, both ending with the phrase "my holy place in their midst forever" (מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתוֹכָם לְעוֹלָם). This serves as a stark contrast to the beginning of the book, where the glory of Yahweh exited Jerusalem. It also contrasts with the genuine yet comparatively small promise in 11:16 that Yahweh's sanctuary would be among the exiles "for a little while" (מְעַט). But in 37:26-28 the promise is that Yahweh will always have a dwelling place (מִשְׁכָּן) among his people, and their city will be named "Yahweh Is There" (48:35). The explanation for the new situation is the inauguration of the everlasting covenant of peace. The fact that Yahweh again chooses to make the city his "holy place" shows that the covenant of peace ensures the holiness of Jerusalem's citizens. Indeed, Yahweh will be known to the nations as the "Sanctifier of Israel" (מְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל, v. 28a), rendering no further need of a divine exit from the city. In short, the everlasting covenant of peace ensures the holiness of God's people and thus his everlasting presence among them.

Conclusion

In Ezekiel several texts refer to a future covenant. Not every text emphasized the same promise, but put together, one has a kaleidoscopic view of Ezekiel's message concerning the nature and effects of the new covenant.

The new covenant was described as the "everlasting covenant" (16:60; 37:26) and the "covenant of peace" (34:25; 37:26), which respectively refers to duration and

effect of the same covenant. Unlike the Sinai covenant, this covenant would never end, for by providing forgiveness of sin (16:63) and Spirit-empowered obedience (11:19-20; 36:25-28; 37:14) the new covenant would never be broken or annulled. It would coincide with the reign of a future Davidic ruler, who would ensure that there would be unity within the one people of God not seen since the days of David and Solomon (34:23-24; 37:22). In fact, the one new people of God would consist not only of ethnic Israelites, but also of people from Samaria and Sodom (16:61), indicating that Gentiles would form an integral part of God's people. The new covenant would also coincide with the restoration of God's people to the land, where they would live in holiness (37:26-28). His holy presence would forever dwell with his people in the land, for they would be holy before him. Finally, the inauguration of the new covenant would coalesce with the eschatological new creation, as shown in the adjacent illustrations of 37:1-14 and 15-28.

All these themes are connected to the inauguration of the new covenant, and hence, the new covenant fulfills God's past promises made to Abraham, Israel, and David.

Conclusion

The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel foresaw a day when God would fulfill his saving promises to his people. They spoke of that day in varying ways, with each prophet retaining his own distinctive nuances. Yet, despite these varying nuances, the prophets essentially referred to the same eschatological reality, at the heart of which God would inaugurate a new covenant with his people.

Jeremiah alone spoke of a "new covenant" (31:31), which was also an "everlasting covenant" (32:40; 50:5). Isaiah spoke in terms of a "covenant of peace" (54:10), an "everlasting covenant" (55:3; 61:8), or simply "my covenant" (59:21). Ezekiel, probably using both Isaiah and Jeremiah, prophesied of a "covenant of peace" (34:25; 37:26) as well as an "everlasting covenant" (16:60; 37:26), and he, more than his

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forebears, utilized the covenant formula (e.g., 11:20; 34:24; 37:23). Although they used these different terms, it is likely that these descriptors refer to the same covenant. Often the descriptors are juxtaposed so as to provide a kaleidoscopic view of the same covenant (Isa 54:10; 55:3; Jer 31:31; 32:40; Ezek 37:26), and the similarities of the eschatological promises surrounding the covenant formula or the term בְּרִית indicate that the same covenant is in view.

Associated with this new covenant are many promises. Foremost among these are the promises of internal transformation, forgiveness of sins, and return to the land. As to internal transformation, Jeremiah spoke in terms of God's Torah being written on the heart such that Israel fulfilled its intent (31:33). On the other hand, Isaiah and Ezekiel emphasized that such transformation would come about by the Spirit of Yahweh (Isa 59:21; Ezek 36:25-27; 37:14), who would be "poured out" on all flesh (Isa 44:3), including Israel (Ezek 39:29). The promises refer to the same eschatological reality that would bring to fruition the heart-circumcision intended by the Sinai covenant (Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4), such that the whole community would now "know Yahweh" (Jer 31:34; cf. Isa 54:13; Ezek 34:30; *Jub.* 1:23) and have "one heart and one way" (Jer 32:39; cf. Ezek 11:19-20).

Associated with the new covenant would also be full forgiveness of sins. Such is explicitly stated in Isaiah 55:7 (cf. 33:24), Jeremiah 31:34 (cf. 33:8), and Ezekiel 16:63, and it is implied when God promises never again to be angry with his people (e.g., Isa 54:7-10), or that his people will always enjoy his everlasting presence and peace (e.g., Ezek 34:25-29; 37:26-28). Forgiveness is the basis of the community-wide knowledge of God in Jeremiah 31:34, and it plays a major role in Ezekiel's vision of how the one new people of God will be formed (16:63).

Restoration to the land is also a major theme associated with the new covenant, for it appears in all three prophets with regularity (e.g., Isa 54:3; 61:7; Jer 32:37, 41; Ezek

11:17). And not only does Yahweh promise to bring his people back from exile, but he also promises to "multiply" them in the land, in accord with his promise to Abraham (Isa 54:1-3; Ezek 36:37; 37:26). The land is where they will live forever as a holy and reconstituted people with God's sanctuary ever with them (Jer 31:40; Ezek 37:26-28). And the basis of God's everlasting presence in the land is that he has inaugurated an everlasting covenant by which his people are immutably reconciled to him (Ezek 37:26-28).

In the midst of these new covenant promises there are indications that one individual would be instrumental in bringing them about. Isaiah emphasizes that the servant of Yahweh would bring about God's saving blessings to Israel and the nations (49:5-6), and that the Spirit-anointed conqueror of 59:21 would be the means of transformation for God's people. In fact, Isaiah uniquely emphasized that the servant would be a "covenant for the people" (42:6; 49:8). In 55:3 he clarifies that this figure would be a future David who in his faithfulness to God would bring about the everlasting covenant. Jeremiah and Ezekiel also emphasize that a figure known as "my servant David" would once again rule in Israel (Jer 33:21, 26; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25). He would be instrumental in reuniting the divided kingdoms of Israel (Ezek 37:22), such that Israel would finally be a "nation" (גוי, Jer 31:36; Ezek 37:22) in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. Ezekiel clarifies that under this king the reconstituted Israel would include Gentiles (16:61), who together with ethnic Israelites would comprise one new humanity (34:31; 36:37).

This overview of the new covenant in the Old Testament has demonstrated that the prophets predicted fundamentally the same eschatological reality, namely, that God would fulfill his saving promises to his people by means of inaugurating a new covenant. Although they sometimes utilized different words or emphasized varying nuances, there was still a common conceptual and linguistic stock from which they drew. For them,

certain words, phrases, or concepts were significant as they explicated the hope of restoration for Israel and the nations. The frequent repetition of words such as שָׁלוֹם, סָלַח, קדש, לֵב/רוּחַ, יָדַע, עֶבֶד/דָוִד, אֶרֶץ/אֲדָמָה/נַחֲלָה, and עוֹלָם, as well as the word groups ברך and קדש, surrounding the term בְּרִית or the covenant formula, give evidence that such words and concepts were central to their conception of the new covenant's blessings. Such words or word groups were not technical terms, since they could be used in varying ways, but together they formed a collection of ideas associated with the new covenant. Furthermore, in some cases there is evidence that the prophets knew of and used prior prophetic texts to expound on the new covenant (e.g., Jer 32:39 in Ezek 11:19-20; Isa 54:10 and 55:3 in Jer 32:40 and Ezek 34:25; 37:26).

This chapter has demonstrated that the new covenant is at the heart of God's plan of salvation for his people in the OT. It described the way in which God would save his people and bring them together as a unified people in a covenant relationship with him forever. Elements of soteriology and ecclesiology, then, are easily discernable within the promises of the new covenant. Moreover, the new covenant provided the needed heart transformation and renewal for God's people to live out right relationships with God and one another. This means that the new covenant also provided the foundation for ethics within the new covenant community. In this way, then, the new covenant was a broad concept within the OT that held soteriological, ecclesiological, and ethical promises. To put it starkly, without the new covenant in the OT, there would be no hope for salvation, unity, or transformation for the people of God. In the next three chapters I will demonstrate that this major concept within the OT undergirded the biblical-theological narrative that informed Paul's own soteriology, ecclesiology, and ethical instruction in Ephesians.

The table on the following page provides a summary of the varying names for the new covenant in the prophets as well a description of the promises accompanying it.

Table 2: New covenant names and promises

Promises	Isaiah	Jeremiah	Ezekiel
New covenant		31:31	
Covenant of peace	54:10		34:25; 37:26
Everlasting covenant	55:3; 61:8 (cf. 59:21)	32:40; 50:5	16:60; 37:26
Covenant formula		30:22; 31:1, 33; 32:38	11:20; 34:24, 30-31; 36:28; 37:23, 27 (cf. 37:12-13)
Transformation/circumcision of heart/Torah internalized/Spirit	59:21 (cf. 44:1-5)	31:33	11:19-20; 36:25-27, 33; 37:14, 23-24
Community-wide knowledge of God	54:13	31:34; 32:39	11:19-20
Forgiveness of sins/atonement	52:13-52:12; 55:7	31:34, 37	16:63
Peace	54:10, 13-17 55:12 (cf. 57:19)		34:25-29; 37:26
Land/inheritance	54:3, 17; 61:7	31:28, 40; 32:37, 41-44	11:15, 17; 36:24, 28; 37:12-14, 21, 25
Through one individual: Servant, Spirit-anointed figure, David	49:1-53:12; 55:3; 59:21; 61:1-4	30:9; 33:14-26	34:23-24; 37:24-25
Parallels with creation to show permanence	54:9-10	31:35-37 33:20-21, 25-26	
Numerous descendants	54:1-3; 59:21; 61:9	31:38-40; 32:42-44	34:31; 36:37; 37:25-26
Blessing	61:9 (cf. 44:3-4)		34:26
New humanity	55:1-13 (cf. 44:5; 56:3-8)		16:61
Holiness (including temple language)		31:40	11:16; 16:63; 37:26-28
New creation	44:1-5		34:25-29; 36:33-36

CHAPTER 3

EPHESIANS 1:3-14

In chapter 2 I surveyed the most explicit new covenant texts in the OT. Although Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel present Israel's hope of restoration with a variety of nuances, they fundamentally portray the same message. In the last days, God would restore his covenant relationship with his people and would bring to completion all his saving promises, in fulfillment of his promises to the patriarchs. There would never be a breach in this new relationship, for it would be founded on covenant promises that could not be broken (cf. Jer 31:31-34). Hence, the new covenant is called the "covenant of peace" (Isa 54:10; Ezek 34:25; 37:26) and the "everlasting covenant" (Isa 55:3; 61:8; Jer 32:40; 50:5; Ezek 16:60; 37:26). As such, the new covenant was a prominent theological concept for the prophets as they presented Israel's eschatological hope.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the new covenant was a prominent concept in Paul's theology. As a Jew, he certainly would have been familiar with the new covenant's promises, although one may argue he did not find much use for the covenant concept after his experience on the Damascus road. Hence, it remains to discover whether or not Paul found in the new covenant a robust theological concept as he made known his gospel. Specifically, in this chapter I will analyze Ephesians 1:3-14 as the starting point in my analysis of Ephesians.[1] It is an apt place to start because it contains a wealth of

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[1]The arguments in favor of Pauline authorship of Ephesians are convincing (e.g., Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002], 2-61; Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010], 1-5). Nevertheless, even if Pauline authorship is rejected, it would not mitigate the likelihood that Ephesians still accurately reflects Pauline thought. For if Paul did not write the letter, then the author most likely would have been one of the earliest interpreters of Paul's thought, and who would have attempted to transmit accurately Paul's theology. As regards the audience of

blessings all believers have obtained in Christ. If the promises of the new covenant were

significant for Paul, it would not be surprising to find them in the opening benediction of

Ephesians.

Structure of Ephesians 1:3-14

The structure of Ephesians 1:3-14 has received much attention among

Ephesians scholars.[2] The variety of proposals and lack of consensus should give caution

in dogmatically asserting a structure. Nevertheless, there is a certain discernable flow to

the benediction. Verse 3 is the heading and appears to be followed by three sections:

verses 4-6, 7-10, and 11-14. The final section (vv. 11-14) should be considered as one

section with two parts (vv. 11-12 and vv. 13-14). Verses 11-14 as a whole concern the

inheritance believers enjoy, which is guaranteed by the Spirit's presence. Nevertheless, in

1:13 Paul applies the blessings directly to the Ephesian believers with the second person

pronoun ὑμεῖς ("you also"), which indicates a bipartite structure to the section.[3]

The most significant discourse marker appears to be the repetitious

christological modifiers throughout the text.[4] The relative pronoun phrase ἐν ᾧ, which

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Ephesians, the manuscript evidence may indicate the letter was intended to circulate throughout the region surrounding Ephesus. Throughout this dissertation, at times the name "Ephesians" or "Ephesian believers" will appear, but this is for the sake of convenience and is not intended to make a statement whether or not the believers at Ephesus were the only intended audience of the letter.

[2]Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 160-61) lists forty-three attempts. Some have attempted to discern an original hymn (e.g., Gottfried Schille, *Frühchristliche Hymnen* [Berlin: Evangelische, 1965], 65-73). John Muddiman (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, BNTC [London: Continuum, 2001], 64) argues 1:3-10 is a pre-formed Jewish *berakah* and that the author added 1:11-14. With many recent commentators (e.g., Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 72; Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998], 109; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC, vol. 42 [Dallas: Word Books, 1990], 14; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 91), 1:3-14 was likely an ad hoc composition, for its style and theology fits well with the rest of the letter, and attempts to discern pre-formed hymnic elements are speculative and subjective (rightly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 40).

[3]Many commentators make vv. 13-14 a new section (e.g., Arnold, *Ephesians*, 76; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 40-43). My approach is similar in that it recognizes the application of the blessings to believers in v. 13, yet it is distinct in viewing the inheritance theme in vv. 11-14 as an *inclusio* bracketing vv. 11-14.

[4]So Helmut Krämer, "Zur sprachlichen Form der Eulogie Eph. 1:3-14," *Wort und Dienst* 9

always refers to Christ, is a structural marker, found at the beginning of verses 7, 11, and

13 (Sections 2, 3a-b).[5] Closely corresponding to these markers are the phrases ἐν (τῷ)

Χριστῷ, ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ, and ἐν αὐτῷ, which likewise refer to Christ and occur at the

end of verse 3 (the heading) and verses 6, 10, and 12 (Sections 1-3a). The only places

where christological modifiers do not occur are: (1) the beginning of the benediction,

which fittingly begins with the term εὐλογητός; (2) the beginning of Section 1, which

with καθώς begins the list of blessings; and (3) the end of the benediction, which

concludes with the final goal of the benediction, the glory of the Father. This structure is

portrayed in Table 1.[6]

Table 3: The structure of Ephesians 1:3-14

Section	Beginning	End
Heading (v. 3)	εὐλογητός	ἐν Χριστῷ
Section 1 (vv. 4-6)	καθώς … (v. 4)	ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ (v. 6)
Section 2 (vv. 7-10)	ἐν ᾧ (v. 7)	ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ … ἐν αὐτῷ (v. 10)[7]
Section 3a (vv. 11-12)	ἐν ᾧ (v. 11)	ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ (v. 12)
Section 3b (vv. 13-14)	ἐν ᾧ (v. 13)	εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ (v. 14)

This structure is corroborated by other elements in the text. For instance, aorist

indicative verbs and aorist participles dominate the text, but in verse 7 the present

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(1967): 34-46. The christology of 1:3-14 is one of the main distinctives of the text, distinguishing it from a typical Jewish *berakah* (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 43). In fact, Arnold (*Ephesians*, 79) says, "'In Christ' is the most important phrase of this passage and for the letter as a whole." In arguing that the eulogy does not necessarily provide a thematic introduction to the rest of the letter (contra O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 93; idem, "Ephesians 1: An Unusual Introduction to a New Testament Letter," *NTS* 25 [1979]: 510-12), Best (*Ephesians*, 112) rightly notes, "There are good grounds for regarding the eulogy as christologically based rather than controlled by the ecclesiology of the remainder of the letter."

[5]NA[27] follows this division.

[6]For a table similar to this, see Thielman, *Ephesians*, 43.

[7]The phrase ἐν αὐτῷ concluding 1:10 serves as the conclusion to Section 2, not the introduction to Section 3 (rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 224; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 17-18; contra Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. H. Heron [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991], 48). As the conclusion to Section 2, it not only emphasizes the cosmic unification of all things in Christ but also allows Paul to conclude the section with a christological modifier.

indicative ἔχομεν occurs alongside ἐν ᾧ, suggesting the presence of a new section.[8]

Further, through a series of κατά prepositional phrases, each section emphasizes God's plan and purpose in blessing believers in Christ. Also, in Sections 1 and 3 the purpose of God's saving blessings is the praise of his glory and grace. Finally, the trinitarian focus of verses 3-14 may aid in structuring the text, for the Trinity appears in the heading (v. 3) as God (Father) provides in Christ (Son) spiritual (Spirit) blessings for believers.[9] Although one should not press the details too far, for the Father and the Son appear throughout 1:3-14,[10] the trinitarian heading may provide the structure for the benediction: the Father elects and adopts believers in Section 1, the Son sums up all things in Section 2, and the Spirit guarantees the inheritance in Section 3.[11]

The Heading: Blessing from the God of Abraham (1:3)

Paul begins the benediction of 1:3-14 with a typical Jewish blessing formula.[12] The term εὐλογητός is frequently found in the LXX as a benediction to bless God.[13]

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[8]So Arnold, *Ephesians*, 76. Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 15-16) and Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld (*Ephesians*, Believers Church Bible Commentary [Waterloo, ON: Herald, 2002], 38) overemphasize the aorist participles as discourse markers, which precludes them from seeing v. 7 as a new section.

[9]The Trinitarian character of the text has been recognized by many commentators (e.g., Thielman, *Ephesians*, 44; Brooke Foss Westcott, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: The Greek Text with Notes and Addenda* [London: Macmillan, 1906], 7).

[10]Rightly C. Leslie Mitton, *Ephesians*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1976), 44.

[11]Similarly Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 174), although he overemphasizes this point to the detriment of the other discourse features in the text. Best (*Ephesians*, 110-11) rightly notes that the eulogy begins with God's work in eternity past and ends with a look to the future and final blessing of inheritance.

[12]This point is frequently recognized by the commentators (e.g., Arnold, *Ephesians*, 77; Best, *Ephesians*, 104-06; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 10; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 89). For a good discussion of the form and content of first-century Jewish benedictions, see David Instone-Brewer, *Prayer and Agriculture*, vol. 1 of *Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 41-119.

[13]See Gen 9:26; 24:27; Exod 18:10; Ruth 4:14. Paul likely asserts God's praiseworthiness and ascribes praise to God, not merely the former (rightly O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 91, 94; contra T. K. Abbott, T. K, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1897], 3). The implied verb in the phrase εὐλογητός ὁ θεός is ἐστί, not εἴη (cf. Rom 1:25; Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, AB, vol. 34 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974], 77-78; Best, *Ephesians*,

Prayers and praise to God in Jewish literature are often expressed with a blessing formula[14] and typically provide the reason for the blessing immediately following the name of God.[15] Paul reflects this Jewish practice by praising the Father of Jesus and then providing the reason for the blessing: the Father "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ" (cf. 2 Cor 1:3; 11:31). The nature of these blessings are described in detail in 1:4-14.

Abraham and Blessing Terminology

The blessings from the Father given in Christ are seen as the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham. This is so for several reasons. First, the frequency of the εὐλογέω word group in verse 3 suggests a link with Abraham.[16] The Old Testament repeatedly uses the ברך/εὐλογέω word group to describe God's promises to Abraham. Genesis 12:2-3, the foundational promise made to Abraham, reflects the significance of the blessing terminology to God's promises: "I will make you a great nation and bless (ברך, εὐλογέω LXX) you and make your name great. Be a blessing (ברכה, εὐλογητός LXX), that I may bless (ברך, εὐλογέω LXX) those who bless (ברך, εὐλογέω LXX) you and curse the one who curses you, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed (ברך, εὐλογέω LXX)." The patriarchal narratives utilize the same blessing terminology to unpack the promise. God's promise is reiterated to Abraham (Gen 22:17-18), Isaac (Gen 26:3-4, 24), and Jacob (Gen 28:1-4, 13-15), and the nature of the promise is described with blessing

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112-13; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 162-63; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 50; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 45-46; contra Westcott, *Ephesians*, 6).

[14]See 2 Sam 22:47; 1 Chr 29:10-13; Tob 8:15-17; 1QS 11.15; 1QH^a 5.20; 10.14; 11.15, 27, 29, 33; 4Q434; 4Q502; 4Q512; Eighteen Benedictions.

[15]E.g., "Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me!" (1 Sam 25:32); cf. 1 Sam 25:39; 2 Sam 18:28; 1 Kgs 1:48; 2 Chr 6:4; Ezra 7:27-28; Luke 1:68. So O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 94-95.

[16]Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 165-67) aptly surveys the concept of blessing in the OT but fails to root it in the promises made to Abraham.

terminology.[17]

Subsequently the blessing of Abraham is applied to the nation of Israel as a whole in the form of the Aaronic blessing (Num 6:22-27). In language reminiscent of Genesis 12:3, Balaam is not allowed to curse Israel, for they were blessed by God (Num 22:14; 24:9). Deuteronomy repeatedly holds forth the promise of blessing if Israel obeys the covenant stipulations (7:13-14; 15:6, 10, 18; 26:15; 28:1-14; 30:16). The blessings promised to Abraham are also transferred to the Davidic dynasty when God makes a covenant with David and his offspring. All the promises made to David in 2 Samuel 7, which include the Abrahamic promises of land and a great name (vv. 9-10), are summarized when David prays, "And now be pleased to bless (ברך, εὐλογέω LXX) the house of your servant, that it may be before you forever. For you, Lord Yahweh, have spoken, and from your blessing (ברכה, εὐλογία LXX) will the house of your servant be blessed (ברך, εὐλογέω LXX) forever" (v. 29). The application of the Abrahamic promise to the Davidic king seems clear in Psalm 72:17, where Solomon prays that the nations would "be blessed" in the Davidic king (cf. Ps 132:11-18).[18] In other words, the blessing of Abraham is given to the people of God through the king God has installed.

The prophets also utilize blessing terminology to describe the application of the Abrahamic promises to the eschatological people of God. Not only Israel but also Egypt and Assyria will be blessed by God in the last days (Isa 19:24-25; cf. Jer 4:2). Comfort for future hope and restoration is offered Zion on the basis of God's promise of blessing to Abraham and Sarah (Isa 51:1-3). God's people will live with God's blessing in the new creation (Isa 65:23; Jer 31:23; Hag 2:19) and will "be blessed" by the "God of

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[17]See Gen 14:19-20; 24:1; 25:11; 26:29; 30:30; 32:30 (Eng. 32:29).

[18]The allusion to Gen 12:3 and 28:14 is even clearer in the LXX, which inserts the phrase πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς.

truth" (Isa 65:16).[19] The blessing of Abraham would arrive with the new covenant, which would finally fulfill God's promises as God's people and God's land are blessed in the sight of the nations (Isa 61:8-9; Ezek 34:25-26).

The apostles in the New Testament also occasionally use blessing terminology to refer to the promises to Abraham. Peter from Solomon's portico urged his kinsmen from Israel to repent of their sins and be forgiven because in Jesus God had fulfilled his promise to Abraham that all the nations would be blessed (Acts 3:25-26). Paul also links blessing terminology with Abraham. In Galatians 3:6-14 he reminds the Galatian believers that they are legitimate children of Abraham by faith in Christ.[20] They should not return to works of the law (ἔργα νόμου, v. 10) because such would only bring the curse of the law upon them. Christ redeemed them from this curse by his substitutionary sacrifice on the cross by becoming a curse in their place (v. 13). The goal of his death was "so that the blessing of Abraham (ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ) might come to the Gentiles" (v. 14). Faith in Christ alone, then, is the means of receiving Abraham's blessing (εὐλογέω, v. 9).

Similarly, in Ephesians 1:3 Paul overflows with blessing terminology in which he blesses God for blessing believers with many blessings. The expansive phrase "with every kind of blessing" (ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ) admits of no limits, which fits with the expansive promises to Abraham. Given the biblical-theological connection of blessing terminology with the promises to Abraham, it is probable that Paul considered the

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[19]Reading the Hithpael of ברך as a passive (with Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 466).

[20]Although space prevents further discussion here, I am persuaded that the phrase ἐκ πίστεως (cf. 3:7-9) describes the faith believers have in Christ, not Christ's faithfulness (rightly Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 193; contra Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, SBLDS 56 [Chico, CA: Scholars, 1983], 200-06).

blessings enumerated in 1:4-14 as the blessings God had promised to Abraham and had now fulfilled in Christ.

Abraham and the Spirit

The second reason why verse 3 likely refers to the promises made to Abraham is because Paul considers the blessings to be related to the Spirit ("every spiritual blessing," πᾶσα εὐλογία πνευματική). The term πνευματική does not indicate the opposite of physicality, as if to refer to every non-material blessing believers possess,[21] nor the inner, hidden part of an individual.[22] Rather, in keeping with Paul's typical usage of the term, it refers to the Holy Spirit, who is linked with every blessing believers have in Christ (Eph 5:19).[23]

For Paul, the arrival of the Spirit marked the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham. In 1:13 the Spirit is the "Holy Spirit of the promise" (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἅγιον), the promise being most likely the promise to Abraham (cf. 2:12; 3:6). Verse 14 substantiates this claim, for the Spirit is the guarantee of the believer's "inheritance" (κληρονομία), which recalls the land promise to Abraham (e.g., Gen 15:7-8; 22:17; 24:60). When Paul considers the concept of inheritance, he frequently connects it to

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[21]Francis W. Beare, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, in vol. 10 of *IB*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1953), 614; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 253; Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 66; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 7.

[22]G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon), in the Revised Standard Version: Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 33; H. C. G. Moule, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: With Introduction and Notes*, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1888), 45.

[23]Cf. Rom 7:14; 1 Cor 2:13-15; 3:1; 10:3-4; 12:1; 14:1; 15:44-46; Gal 6:1. So Barth, *Ephesians*, 101-02; Best, *Ephesians*, 113-14; Charles J. Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: With a Critical and Grammatical Commentary, and a Revised Translation*, 5th ed. (London: Longmans, Green, 1884), 5; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 167-68; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 19; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 95; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 50; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 46-47. Abbott (*Ephesians*, 4) sets up a false dichotomy between the Spirit characterizing and producing these blessings. The context indicates both, for the Spirit applies to believers the blessings of the Father secured by Christ.

Abraham (Rom 4:13; Gal 3:18, 29). This is especially clear in Galatians 3:29, where to be members of the family of Abraham is to be "heirs according to the promise" (κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι; cf. Acts 7:5; Gal 4:30; Heb 6:12-15; 1 Pet 3:9).

The link between the Spirit and Abraham is especially clear in Galatians 3:14. In addition to the phrase "blessing of Abraham" a corresponding purpose clause defines the blessing of Abraham as "the promise of the Spirit" (ἡ ἐπαγγελία τοῦ πνεύματος). The structure of Galatians 3:14 can be portrayed as follows:

14a ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,

14b ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως

The second ἵνα clause (v. 14b) is likely coordinate with, not subordinate to, the first (v. 14a).[24] The parallelism of the clauses suggests that ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ in 3:14a matches and is defined by ἡ ἐπαγγελία τοῦ πνεύματος in 3:14b. This does not mean that the gift of the Spirit exhausts the blessing of Abraham, which likely in Galatians 3 includes the gift of righteousness. But the structure of 3:14 does indicate a close connection between the Abraham and the Spirit (cf. Isa 44:3).[25] Indeed, to possess the Spirit was to be a true child of Abraham (Gal 3:29-4:7).

Similarly, in Ephesians 1:3 the Spirit's presence as the characteristic of every blessing suggests that Paul considers these blessings to be the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham. Evidenced by the arrival of the Spirit, the fulfillment of these

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[24]Rightly Schreiner, *Galatians*, 218-19. Even if v. 14b is subordinate to v. 14a, the link between the Spirit and Abraham's blessing would not be severed, for obtaining the blessing would result in the reception of the Spirit.

[25]The structure of 3:1-14 corroborates this conclusion, for Paul argues from the Galatians' reception of the Spirit (vv. 1-5) as well as (καθώς, v. 6) from the justification of Abraham and his family (vv. 6-9) that one is justified by faith and not by works of the law. After 3:10-13 support 3:6-9 with other arguments from Scripture, 3:14 forms the climax, in which the two ἵνα clauses correspond chiastically to the two arguments in 3:1-5 and 3:6-9, respectively. Hence, even the structure of 3:1-14 closely links the Spirit with the blessing of Abraham (similarly In-Gyu Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, JSNTSup 81 [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993], 39-42).

blessings signifies the dawn of the new age and the new covenant.[26]

**Abraham, Isaiah 44:1-5,
and Ephesians 1:3-6**

Another reason why it is likely Paul considered the blessings of 1:3-14 to be

the blessings promised to Abraham is because in 1:3-6 there appears to be an allusion to

Isaiah 44:1-5, a text that points to the fulfillment of patriarchal promises.[27] Isaiah 44:1-5

is a text promising future blessings for Israel. Coming on the heels of a description of

Israel's failure and sin (43:22-28), it presents a vision of hope that one day God would

pour out his Spirit on his people, multiplying and prospering them. Verses 1-2 introduce

the text by calling on Israel to listen to God's word and not fear. The content of the

promise is given in verses 3-5, where God pours out his Spirit upon his people. Like

water on dry ground, the Spirit restores and prospers Israel by multiplying her

descendants (vv. 3-4). In fact, the new people will include even Gentiles who join

themselves to Israel and the worship of Yahweh (v. 5).

Why would God make such grand promises to Israel? The answer is found by

observing the descriptions of Israel in 44:1-2 and the allusions to the promises to

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[26]Similarly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 78. Many interpreters throughout church history, without seeing πνευματικῇ as referring to the Spirit, have recognized that 1:3 describes the blessings of the new covenant. Viewing the blessings of the old covenant as temporal and material, they see the blessings of the new covenant as "spiritual," i.e., non-material and heavenly (e.g., John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, trans. T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin's Commentaries* [Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965], 124; William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967], 73; Jerome, Origen [Ronald E. Heine, *The Commentaries of Origen and Jerome on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 81-82]; J. Armitage Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: A Revised Text and Translation with Exposition and Notes*, 2nd ed. [London: Macmillan, 1907], 20). Representative of this view is John R. W. Stott (*God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today [Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1979], 34-35): "A contrast is probably intended with Old Testament days when God's promised blessings were largely material . . . . Nevertheless, the distinctive blessings of the new covenant are spiritual, not material; for example, God's law written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, a personal knowledge of God, and the forgiveness of our sins." While this view rightly perceives that 1:3 expresses the arrival of the new covenant, it arrives at that conclusion by the wrong interpretive road.

[27]In my research, no commentator on Ephesians has unpacked the significance of this allusion.

Abraham in 44:3-5. In 44:1-2 Israel is seen as God's servant and the one whom he chose (בחר). The language of God choosing Israel reflects his special covenant love he had set upon them (Deut 7:6-8). God had formed them "from the womb" (44:2), a reference to the tender care and creative power of God in the midst of Sarah's barrenness (51:1-3). Even the title "Jeshurun" (יְשֻׁרוּן, 44:2), although used with irony in Deuteronomy 32:15 (cf. Deut 33:5, 26), is a term of endearment, which the LXX reflects in the translation ὁ ἠγαπημένη Ισραηλ. Hence, God issues promises to Israel in Isaiah 44:1-5 on the basis of his covenant love for them.

Further, the promises in 44:3-5 allude to the Abrahamic promises of numerous descendants and universal blessing. The promised abundance of blessing (בְּרָכָה) on Israel's offspring (זֶרַע) reminds of the ubiquitous blessing terminology associated with Abraham (v. 3). Like willows by streams of water, the offspring of Israel would be numerous and prosperous (v. 4). Finally, that people in verse 5 would choose to call themselves by the name of Jacob and Israel suggests that they are not Israelites by birth but are joining themselves to the people of God, claiming allegiance to Yahweh.[28] This universal promise reflects the promise to Abraham that all the peoples of the earth would be blessed in him (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4). In short, God issues a vision of hope in Isaiah 44:1-5 on the basis of his promises to Abraham. He would fulfill these patriarchal promises by means of his Spirit in the last days (Isa 32:15).

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[28]This is the view of most of the older commentators (e.g., Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, trans. David M. G. Stalker, OTL [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969], 136-37; R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, NCB [London: Oliphants, 1975], 95). John D. W. Watts (*Isaiah 34-66*, WBC, vol. 25 [Waco, TX: Word, 1987], 144-45) contends that since the context of Isa 44 is exilic, the vision concerns those Jews who once were afraid to share their identity will now be proud of it. Against this view two points: 1) the context involves the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, which would naturally include universal blessing (cf. 45:14-17; rightly John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40-55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* [London: T&T Clark, 2005], 233); and 2) the individualizing phrase "this one . . . this one . . . this one" (זֶה . . . . זֶה . . . . זֶה, v. 5), while not ethnically specific, is similar to the individualizing techniques elsewhere in the OT that describe individuals from the nations joining themselves to the people of God (Ps 87:4-6; Zech 8:20-23; similarly John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 167-68).

In Ephesians 1:3-6, Paul seems to allude to Isaiah 44:1-5. The two texts manifest several verbal and conceptual similarities. There are at least four lexical parallels: both texts (1) emphasize that God chose his people (בחר/ἐκλέγω, Isa 44:1-2; ἐκλέγω, Eph 1:4-5); (2) employ the perfect passive participle from ἀγαπάω to describe the special love of God for his people (ἠγαπημένος, Isa 44:2; ἠγαπημένος, Eph 1:6);[29] (3) emphasize eschatological blessing (בְּרָכָה/εὐλογία, Isa 44:3; εὐλογέω/εὐλογία, Eph 1:3); and (4) locate the content of the blessing in the coming of the Spirit (רוּחַ/πνεῦμα, Isa 44:3; πνευματική, Eph 1:3).

Further, both texts exhibit similar conceptual parallels: (1) The concept of election in Isaiah is used to remind Israel of her continuing status as God's people. In Ephesians Paul uses the concept of election to remind the Ephesian believers that they are legitimate members of the people of God.[30] (2) In Isaiah the blessing of God in the eschaton will be expressed in the form of the outpouring of the Spirit. In Ephesians, every blessing believers possess in the fullness of time is characterized by the presence of the Spirit. (3) In Isaiah the love of God appears for his people in his election of them and their position as his servant. The special title "Jeshurun" especially appears to be a term of endearment, which the LXX translates as "beloved." In Ephesians the love of God appears for his people in his electing love for them and his adoption of them as sons. By faith believers experience the love of God "in the Beloved," Jesus Christ. (4) In Isaiah the blessings fulfill the promises made to Abraham of numerous descendants and universal blessing. In Ephesians the blessings also appear to fulfill the promises to Abraham,

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[29]If one interprets ἐν ἀγάπῃ in 1:4 as modifying προορίσας, then this also would support the loving character of God's election.

[30]The purpose of Ephesians is difficult to ascertain. Perhaps Paul's audience was discouraged (3:13) or divided (2:11-3:6; 4:3-6). For a good discussion of the issues, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lxxxv-lxxxvii; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 51-57; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 19-28. In any case, election reminded the Ephesians of their legitimate status as God's people.

especially given the collocation of the εὐλογέω word group and the arrival of the Spirit (cf. Gal 3:14). The fact that Gentiles in Ephesus were adopted by God as his sons indicates that the universal blessings promised to Abraham are being fulfilled in Christ.

These lexical and conceptual similarities are portrayed in Table 2.

Table 4: Lexical and conceptual links between Isaiah 44:1-5 and Ephesians 1:3-6

	Isaiah 44:1-5 (LXX)	Ephesians 1:3-6
Lexical links	ἐκλέγω (vv. 1-2) ἠγαπημένος (v. 2) εὐλογέω (v. 3) πνεῦμα (v. 3)	ἐκλέγω (v. 4) ἠγαπημένος (v. 6) εὐλογέω (v. 3) πνεῦμα (v. 3)
Conceptual links	Election Outpouring of Spirit God's love for Israel Promises to Abraham	Election Spirit's presence God's love for believers in Christ Promises to Abraham

Thus, from these evident lexical and conceptual parallels it appears that Paul alluded to Isaiah 44:1-5 in Ephesians 1:3-6.[31] He understood the blessings enumerated in 1:3-6 to be the fulfillment of God's covenant promises to Abraham. What Isaiah had predicted concerning the last days had come to fruition in Christ: God had poured out his Spirit of blessing on mankind, creating a new humanity who were chosen and beloved, and who claimed allegiance to the God of Israel. As he had chosen and set his love on Israel because of the oath sworn to the patriarchs (Deut 7:8), so now in the last days God had done so for all those in Christ.[32]

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[31]In terms of Richard B. Hays' criteria for determining an echo (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989], 29-32), Eph 1:3-6 matches Isa 44:1-5 in volume and thematic coherence (and possibly availability and satisfaction).

[32]The eschatological character of these blessings is also evident from the description of them in 1:3 as "in the heavenlies" (ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις). This enigmatic phrase does not describe the heavenly region God creates in believers (Abbott, *Ephesians*, 5) but the heavenly realms (Barth, *Ephesians*, 78-79; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 5; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 168-70; Andrew T. Lincoln, "A Re-examination of 'The Heavenlies' in Ephesians," *NTS* 19 [1973]: 468-83; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 96-97). It is the place where the resurrected Christ reigns with all believers (Eph 1:20; 2:6), although the hostile powers are also present (Eph 3:10;

Conclusion

What the analysis of the heading in 1:3 indicates is that Paul saw the blessings of 1:3-14 as the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham. Even though the name of Abraham is not found in the benediction, the blessing terminology, the Spirit's association with the blessings, and the allusion to Isaiah 44:1-5 render it likely that the blessing of Abraham is the backdrop of the whole passage. The cumulative effect of these observations indicates that "every spiritual blessing" believers possess in Christ is an outflow of God's faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham.

Section 1: The Blessing of Election (1:4-6)

The first blessing Paul mentions is election, which is the main blessing listed in the first section.[33] Verses 4-5 are remarkably parallel, having synonymous verbs ("chose"/"predestined"), christological modifiers ("in him"/"through Jesus Christ"), temporal indicators ("before the foundation of the world"/"*pre*destined") and purpose clauses ("that we should be holy and blameless before him"/"for adoption as sons to him").[34] Given these parallels, the main point of 1:4-6 is that God has blessed believers by electing them unto himself through Christ.[35] Their new status as elect, beloved sons of

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6:12). Hence, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 21, rightly understands the term within a framework of inaugurated eschatology: "In particular, the heavenly realms in Ephesians are to be seen in the perspective of the age to come, which has been inaugurated by God raising Christ from the dead and exalting him to his right hand . . . . Yet, since heaven is also still involved in the present evil age, there remain hostile powers in the heavenly realms (cf. 3:10; 6:12) until the consummation of the age to come" (similarly O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 96-97).

[33]Καθώς in v. 4 does not indicate the beginning of a quote (cf. Barth, *Ephesians*, 79; rightly Best, *Ephesians*, 119) but is causal, indicating the reason why God has blessed believers (so Arnold, *Ephesians*, 76; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 98). That election is the main point is also seen in that ἐξελέξατο is the only indicative verb in 1:4-6, with the exception of the indicative verb ἐχαρίτωσεν of the relative clause in 1:6.

[34]Although some have tried to distinguish between election and predestination, with the latter grounding the former (Abbott, *Ephesians*, 8; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 194), one should not exaggerate the differences, for it is typical in Ephesians to see a generous use of synonyms to connote the abundance of God's blessings (rightly Francis Foulkes, *The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., TNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989], 56; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 51).

[35]The concept of election is heavily debated. Several points should be observed: 1) God elects

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God and their new responsibility to live in a holy and blameless way in imitation of their Father is indicative that in Christ God had established a new covenant relationship with them.

Election and Covenant

Rooted in the OT, the concept of election frequently refers to a decision to enter into a covenant relationship.[36] For instance, in Psalm 89 Ethan the Ezrahite, reflecting on God's covenant with David, summarizes the content of the Davidic covenant in verses 4-5 (Eng. vv. 3-4): "I have made a covenant with my chosen one (בְּחִירִי); I have sworn to David my servant: 'I will establish your offspring forever, and your throne I will build for all generations'" (see vv. 20, 29-38 [Eng. vv. 19, 28-37]). Sirach 45:15-16 is similar, for God chose (ἐκλέγω) Aaron and his offspring to be priests

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believers unto eternal salvation; election cannot be limited to a mere synonym for God's purposes (contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 6; Best, *Ephesians*, 119, 124; William W. Klein, *Ephesians*, in vol. 12 of The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Tremper Longman, III, and David E. Garland, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006], 49; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 24). That this is so is evident from the eschatological perspective of v. 4, which envisions personal holiness before God on the last day. In describing election as "an expression of gratitude for God's inexplicable grace, not a logical deduction about the destiny of individuals based on the immutability of God's decrees," Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 24) sets up a false dichotomy. 2) Election contains both corporate and individual aspects (rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 176; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 99; contra Best, *Ephesians*, 124; William W. Klein, *The New Chosen People: A Corporate View of Election* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990]; Carey C. Newman, "Election and Predestination in Ephesians 1:4-6a: An Exegetical-Theological Study of the Historical, Christological Realization of God's Purpose," *RevExp* 93 [1996]: 239; Ben Witherington, III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 234-35). That the plural pronoun is used in 1:4 is no more an argument that election is only corporate than that adoption in 1:5 is only corporate on the basis of the plural pronoun (Arnold, *Ephesians*, 80). Indeed, the elect group is comprised of elect individuals. 3) God does not elect people on the basis of foreseen faith or holiness but with a view to faith and holiness (rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 95; Calvin, *Ephesians*, 125; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 177; contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 6). Charles Hodge (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* [New York: R. Carter and Brothers, 1856; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954], 35) argues that since in 1:4 the purpose of election is holiness, then holiness cannot have been the basis of election. Indeed, O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 100) rightly notes the pre-temporal emphasis of the verse: "To say that election took place before creation indicates that God's choice was due to his own free decision and love, which were not dependent on temporal circumstances or human merit."

[36]Similarly Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 58-59. This is not to argue that election terminology (בחר/ἐκλέγω) *always* is linked with a covenant relationship, for it can refer to a mere choice (e.g., 1 Sam 17:40; 1 Chr 19:10). Nevertheless, when the choice involves God's election of his people or Israel's choice of him, the covenant concept is intimately related.

before him forever (v. 16), which explains why he made an "everlasting covenant" with him (v. 15).

The concept of election in the OT especially refers to God's election of Israel.[37] This is especially clear in Deuteronomy, where God, out of his love for the patriarchs, "chose" (בחר [ἐκλέγω LXX]) their offspring, resulting in their redemption from Egypt and subsequent covenant at Sinai (4:37). It was not because Israel was a great nation that God "chose" (בחר [ἐκλέγω LXX]) them (7:7; 10:15); nevertheless, God had chosen them out of all the nations to be his treasured people so they were holy to him (14:2). The implication of these references is that God chose Israel so that he might establish a covenant relationship with them.[38] The covenant ceremony of Exodus 19-24 is seen as the formalization of God's prior decision to set his love on Israel.

The link between election and covenant is also shown in the restorative promises of a future election of Israel. After Israel broke the Sinai covenant, God promised "again" (עוֹד) to "choose" (בחר [ἐκλέγω LXX]) Israel (Isa 14:1; Zech 1:17), suggesting that he will make a new covenant with Israel. Repeatedly in Isaiah Israel is called God's "chosen one" (בְּחִירִי [ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου LXX], 42:1; 43:20; 45:4),[39] suggesting that despite their unfaithfulness he has not forsaken them. Through the work of the Isaianic servant, who embodies the nation and thus can be considered God's chosen one (Isa 49:7), the blessings of the everlasting covenant flow to the reconstituted Israel, who are subsequently considered God's "chosen ones" (בְּחִירַי [οἱ ἐκλετοί μου LXX], 65:9, 15, 22).[40] In other words, the hope for Israel's restoration in Isaiah involves a new election

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[37]So Best, *Ephesians*, 119; Lynn H. Cohick, *Ephesians: A New Covenant Commentary*, NCCS 10 (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010), 47; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 48.

[38]See 1 Kgs 3:8; 1 Chr 16:13; Pss 33:12; 47:5 (Eng. 47:4); 105:6; 135:4.

[39]Cf. Isa 41:8-9; 43:10; 44:1-2.

[40]As with the term "servant" in Isaiah, the term "chosen one" (בָּחִיר) is only used in the

that results in a new covenant through the work of the servant. God makes a new covenant with his people because he has elected his people in the servant.

Hence, the concept of election in the OT is closely tied to the concept of covenant. Typically election precedes and issues in a covenant, especially when election pertains to God's relationship with Israel. Indeed, God's election of his people in the OT is to be understood as God's decision to begin and maintain a relationship with them that is ratified by a covenant. As the OT comes to a close, the future redemption of Israel is rooted in God's faithfulness to choose Israel once more and to make with them a new covenant. This hope was intimately connected with a future individual who would come from the line of David and would bring about God's eschatological blessings on his people.[41]

The link between election and covenant in the OT is suggestive that in Ephesians 1:4-6 Paul also conceived of God's electing love in Christ as a decision to inaugurate a *covenant* relationship with believers.[42] Just as Israel had been chosen by God to be his special people, and just as God had formalized that new relationship by means of a covenant, so now in Christ God elected (ἐξελέξατο, v. 4) a people unto himself so that he might dwell with them and they with him in an everlasting covenant.[43] Further, the promise that a future individual would bring about God's blessing came to fulfillment

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singular prior to the work of the servant, whereas it is only used in the plural after the servant's work is complete. This suggests that the work of the "chosen one" produces many "chosen ones" in a covenant relationship with God.

[41]In Second Temple Judaism the link between election and covenant also clear (*Jub*. 22.9; *1 Enoch* 93.2; 2 Esdr 3.13-15; *2 Apoc*. *Bar*. 48.19-20; 1QS 4.22 [בם בחר אל לברית עולמים, "God chose them for an everlasting covenant"]; 1QS[b] 1.2; 1QM 10.9-10).

[42]Rightly Hodge, *Ephesians*, 31; Robinson, *Ephesians*, 25-26. While not utilizing the concept of covenant, O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 98-99) recognizes the OT background to the concept of election.

[43]That God's election of believers occurred "before the foundation of the world" should not be understood to mean that the new covenant has been in existence since eternity past (contra Westcott, *Ephesians*, 8), but only that God *planned* from eternity past to inaugurate a new covenant in Christ. The new covenant was never God's "plan B."

in Christ, for believers are elected "in him" (v. 4),[44] adopted "through Jesus Christ" (v. 5), and given grace "in the Beloved" (v. 6).[45] The title Χριστός, meaning "anointed one," carries royal connotations, implying that Jesus was the promised Davidic king (Eph 1:20-23; 2:6; 5:5) who embodies God's people and is the one who secures their every blessing.[46] That the believers at Ephesus were elect in this Davidic king indicates that they were partakers of the promised new covenant.

Holy and Blameless Sons

That a covenant relationship is being described in Ephesians 1:4-6 is also supported by the purpose statements in Ephesians 1:4-5. The first purpose clause is found in the infinitival phrase of verse 4 where God chooses believers "in order that we might be holy and blameless (ἅγιος καὶ ἄμωμος) before him in love."[47] In choosing to describe

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[44]The reading ἐν αὐτῷ is superior to the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτῷ. The latter is explained by the scribal desire to produce the theologically smoother reading in which God chooses people "for himself."

[45]Most often the "in Christ" formula in Ephesians is incorporative, not merely instrumental. In other words, while it is true that God brought about his saving blessings *through Christ*, it is also in view that believers experience those blessings because they *in Christ*, their corporate head (so Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 170-72; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 22). Barth (*Ephesians*, 78) and Best (*Ephesians*, 115) who find the promise of universal blessing "in Abraham" (Gen 12:3) to be a helpful parallel to Paul's "in Christ" formula. Moule (*Ephesians*, 46) calls him the "Covenant-Head, Root and Source of Life, and Representative, of the saints." Contra Constantine R. Campbell (*Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012], 343-49), Paul's "in Christ" formula should be understood to contain corporate elements of headship (rightly Sang-Won [Aaron] Son, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology: A Study of Selected Terms, Idioms, and Concepts in the Light of Paul's Usage and Background*, AnBib 148 [Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2001], 61-65).

[46]Similarly Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 59-60. Stephen E. Fowl (*Ephesians: A Commentary*, NTL [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012], 40) rightly perceives that the promises to Abraham are fulfilled in the election of Gentiles in 1:4-5, yet he does not recognize that what this entails is that the Gentiles have been included within the same new covenant promised to Israel (cf. Jer 31:31).

[47]The phrase ἐν ἀγάπη, describing the love that believers show toward one another, modifies "holy and blameless," not προορίσας (rightly Barth, *Ephesians*, 79-80; Calvin, *Ephesians*, 126; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 182-85; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 17; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 101; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 50; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 9; contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 8; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 82; Best, *Ephesians*, 123; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 7; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 47-48). Certainly the love of God is emphasized in Ephesians (2:4; 3:17, 19), and the concept of election naturally includes God's special love for his people. Nevertheless, it does not modify ἐξελέξατο because it is too far removed to be a plausible adverbial modifier (rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 182; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 17). It does not modify προορίσας because

believers as "holy and blameless," Paul drew upon two words commonly found in Israel's cultus.[48] Paul frequently refers to believers as οἱ ἅγιοι in Ephesians.[49] The term ἅγιος recalls the status and goal of Israel as a covenant member in the OT. In Deuteronomy the term קָדוֹשׁ (ἅγιος LXX) is used frequently to describe Israel's position in relation to God as a covenant partner.[50] In Deuteronomy 7:6 the people are already seen as "people holy to Yahweh your God" on account of God's election (Deut 14:2, 21). Deuteronomy 26:16-19, one of the most significant paragraphs in Deuteronomy, summarizes the oath declarations of God and Israel on the plains of Moab. In 26:17 Yahweh summarizes his oath declaration that he would be Israel's God. In verses 18-19 Israel summarizes their oath declaration with a series of four infinitive construct clauses: (1) Israel will be God's treasured possession; (2) Israel will obey the stipulations of the covenant; (3) God will exalt Israel above the nations; and (4) Israel will be God's holy people.[51] This summary of the oaths of the Sinai covenant shows that intrinsic to Israel's status as a covenant partner was that she was holy to Yahweh. Finally, the collocation of the term קָדוֹשׁ (ἅγιος LXX) with the covenant relationship formula ("I will be their God/they will be my people") in Deuteronomy suggests a relationship between the two concepts. The covenant formula appears seven times—whether partially or completely.[52]

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the structure of 1:3-14 consistently places the verbs and participles before their modifiers (rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 184; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 50). Yoder Neufeld (*Ephesians*, 44-45) thinks ἐν ἀγάπῃ can modify both believers' love and God's predestining activity.

[48]Best, *Ephesians*, 121. The phrase κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ also suggests a connection to the cultus (Best, *Ephesians*, 121; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 9).

[49]See Eph 1:1, 15, 18; 2:19; 3:5, 8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18.

[50]Similarly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 49.

[51]According to its usual function, the Hiphil of אמר in vv. 17-18 is causative: "You caused Yahweh to declare . . . . Yahweh caused you to say." For a persuasive analysis of this text, see Steven Ward Guest, "Deuteronomy 26:16-19 as the Central Focus of the Covenantal Framework of Deuteronomy" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 72-129.

[52]See 4:20; 7:6; 14:2; 26:17-19; 27:9; 28:9; 29:12 (Eng. 29:13); ibid., 158.

In four of these instances there is a reference to Israel being holy to Yahweh (7:6; 14:2; 26:19; 28:9). Hence, the concept of holiness seems to be inextricably linked with the concept of covenant, for it describes the status and responsibility of Israel within the Sinai covenant as a people holy to the Lord who are to imitate him in holiness (Lev 11:44-45; Deut 23:15 [Eng. 23:14]).

Further, the Ephesians were to live in the presence of God and toward one another in ways that were "blameless" (ἄμωμος), a term descriptive of OT sacrifices.[53] This cultic concept was eventually applied to the ethical purity of the worshiper, who was to be "blameless" as well.[54] The mandate for blamelessness in the presence of God is a significant element in the Abrahamic covenant, where in Genesis 17:1 God calls Abraham to "walk before me and be blameless (הִתְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנַי וֶהְיֵה תָמִים), that I may establish my covenant between me and you and multiply you exceedingly."[55] Hence, blamelessness was a way of summarizing how Abraham was expected to live as a covenant member.

Similarly, in Ephesians 1:4 Paul reminds believers that, just as God chose Israel in order that Israel might be holy and blameless in his presence, so God elected believers in Christ in order that they as covenant members might live in ways commensurate with their status.[56] They were to live blameless lives characterized by love, not that they might gain God's acceptance, but because they had already been adopted and forgiven on account of Christ's substitutionary death (Eph 1:7; 4:32-5:2;

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[53]See Exod 29:1; Lev 5:15, 18; 23:18; Num 19:2; 28:9, 19, 31; Ezek 43:22-23; 45:18.

[54]See 1 Sam 22:24; Pss 15:2 (LXX 14:2); 19:14 (LXX 18:14; Eng. 19:13); 119:80 (LXX 118:80); Prov 20:7; Ezek 28:15; 1 Macc 4:42; Sir 31:8; 40:19.

[55]While the LXX term translating "blameless" in Gen 17:1 is ἄμεμπτος instead of ἄμωμος, the terms are virtually synonymous when describing one's ethical behavior (cf. Phil 2:15). The LXX ἐναντίον ἐμοῦ is also parallel with κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ in Eph 1:4.

[56]Similarly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 81; Cohick, *Ephesians*, 47-48.

5:25-27).[57]

The second purpose of election is found in 1:5, where God predestines believers "for sonship" (εἰς υἱοθεσίαν) to himself.[58] According to his own pleasure, God chose to adopt into his family as his own sons those who were not by nature his kin but who were at one time "children of wrath" and "sons of disobedience" (2:2-3; 5:6).[59] In a letter intended to encourage Gentile believers of their legitimate status as members of the people of God, this blessing of adoption as sons would ring with comfort. The Ephesian believers, many of whom were Gentiles, are legitimate sons of God and "beloved children" (5:1; cf. 2:4; 3:19)![60]

As with the concept of holiness, to be a son of God likely indicates the presence of a covenant relationship. In the OT Adam, with whom God made a covenant, is seen as the son of God, as indicated by his existence in the image of God (Gen 5:1-3; cf. Luke 3:38).[61] Israel, the covenant people of God in the OT, is also seen as the son of God (Exod 4:23; Isa 1:2; Hos 11:1).[62] David and his descendants are also seen as sons of God. Central to the covenant promises of 2 Samuel 7 is God's promise: "I will be to him

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[57]Hence, against some commentators (e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 122; Moule, *Ephesians*, 46-47), progressive sanctification is in view, not imputed righteousness (rightly Abbott, *Ephesians*, 7; Bruce, *Ephesians*, 255; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 7).

[58]With many commentators (e.g., Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 197-98; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 55), εἰς αὐτόν refers to the Father (contra Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser: Ein Kommentar*, KBANT [Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1965], 54).

[59]With Arnold (*Ephesians*, 83), εὐδοκία represents God's delight or pleasure in election.

[60]Similarly Best, *Ephesians*, 120; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 44. Arnold (*Ephesians*, 83) probably goes too far in claiming Paul penned 1:4-5 to counterbalance the astrological fears of the new believers at Ephesus.

[61]For a persuasive defense of a covenant at creation as well as a close link between the image of God and sonship, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 155-65, 177-221 (cf. Jer 33:19-26; Hos 6:7).

[62]See John J. Schmitt, "Israel as Son of God in Torah," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 34 (2004): 69-79. Deuteronomy especially describes Israel as God's son: 1:31; 8:5; 14:1; 32:5, 19-20. Perhaps Israel is even seen as the adopted son of God in Hos 11:1 (Bruce, *Ephesians*, 256-57).

a father, and he shall be to me a son" (v. 14).[63] In urging the Corinthian believers to put away immorality, Paul appropriates this Davidic promise in 2 Corinthians 6:18, which parallels the covenant formula in 6:16. In other words, Paul gives two reasons why believers should put away immorality: because they have a covenant relationship with God and because he is their Father and they his children. While one can distinguish between a covenant relationship and sonship, Paul appears to see a close relationship between the two. For Paul, to be a son of God is to be in a covenant relationship with him.

Hence, in Ephesians 1:5 God has predestined the Ephesian believers to be in a father-son covenant relationship.[64] In them the image of God was being restored, and they were to live out the implications of their new covenant relationship by imitating their Father (Eph 4:23-24; 5:1-2).[65] The goal of God's adopting grace was to place believers in a covenant relationship with him characterized by a love, loyalty, and kinship. And just

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[63]Cf. 1 Chr 17:13; 28:6; Ps 89:26; *Jub*. 1.23-24; 4QFlor 1.10-12. Yoder Neufeld (*Ephesians*, 45) rightly emphasizes the royal status connoted in divine sonship. In the ANE kings understood themselves to be sons of a god, with whom the deity was in a covenant relationship (for a list of all the personal names of the type "son of [Divine Name]" in Amarna and Ugaritic texts, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 429-31). Such appears to be reflected in the Davidic covenant. Although one cannot be sure that Paul was familiar with every ancient Near Eastern custom, at the very least this background fits with and corroborates the way Paul understood the covenantal nature of sonship to God (2 Cor 6:18).

[64]Robinson, *Ephesians*, 27-28. S. D. F. Salmond (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, in vol. 3 of *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.], 252) rightly explains, "Paul regards our sonship, not as lying in the natural relation in which men stand to God as His children, but as implying a new relation of grace, founded on a covenant relation of God and on the work of Christ."

[65]Occasionally it will be argued that since the Jews had no legalized system of adoption, Paul must have drawn the metaphor from Roman law and not the OT (e.g., Abbott, *Ephesians*, 9; Best, *Ephesians*, 124-25; Fowl, *Ephesians*, 42; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 194-96). But this fails to account for Paul's application of the term υἱοθεσία to Israel in Rom 9:4 (cf. Rom 8:15, 23; Gal 4:5; Brendan Byrne, *"Sons of God" – "Seed of Abraham": A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background*, AnBib 83 [Rome: Biblical Institute, 1979], 79-84). Moreover, even though the Jews had no legalized system of adoption, they likely considered the exodus to be the moment when God adopted them as sons (cf. Exod 4:22-23; Hos 11:1). Hence, Paul probably drew from both Roman law and the OT background for his concept of adoption (so Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 25; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 51-52).

as Israel was chosen to declare the praises of Yahweh (Isa 43:7, 21; Jer 13:11), so the Ephesians had been elected and adopted to praise the glory of God for the abundance of his grace (εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ)[66] that he had lavished on them in Christ (v. 6).[67]

Conclusion

The first section of the benediction (vv. 4-6) emphasizes the electing love of God in Christ. From eternity past, he chose to set his covenant affection on believers, an affection that adopted into his family those who were at one time his enemies. The purpose of election in 1:4 is equally stunning, for it results in holiness and blamelessness in the objects of election, which will find its completion in the presence of God at the last day. In 1:4-6 the centrality of Christ is clear, for election, predestination unto adoption, and lavish grace is only "in him." The final goal of election is that believers might praise God's glory for his abundant grace.

The implication of the first section is that believers are members of the new covenant. In the same way that God chose to establish a covenant relationship with Israel, God's election of those in Christ indicates the presence of a covenant relationship. As

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[66]Δόξης is the objective genitive of the verbal noun "praise," with believers as the assumed actors. Δόξης is not functioning as an attributive adjective of χάριτος ("glorious grace"; contra Arnold, *Ephesians*, 84), since in the parallel clauses in vv. 12 and 14 χάριτος is omitted. Hence, the inclusion of χάριτος in 1:6 serves as a transition to the next phrase and thus does not receive the emphasis. Rather, χάριτος is to be read as an attributive genitive of δόξης ("gracious glory," "the glory with the quality of grace"; rightly Hoehner [*Ephesians*, 202], although he labels it a "genitive of quality"). Believers are enjoined to praise God's glory for his abundant grace. O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 103) captures nicely the interplay between God's pleasure in election and believers' resultant praise: "As men and women break out in praise (vv. 3, 6, 12, 14), their pleasure in God is a response to his delight in doing good to them."

[67]Although it is possible for χαριτόω in 1:6 to mean that God endues believers with a gracious character, in light of the context it is more likely descriptive of God's abundant and objective bestowal of grace on believers (rightly Abbott, *Ephesians*, 10-11; Barth, *Ephesians*, 81-82; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 9-10; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 202-03; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 55; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 10). Also, ἧς is the superior reading as opposed to ἐν ᾗ (rightly most modern commentators; contra Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 9; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 202). The relative pronoun is the genitive direct object of ἐχαρίτωσεν ("which he showed toward us"), its case being determined by attraction to the case of its antecedent (BDF, 153-54).

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covenant members, they are considered sons of God, beloved inasmuch as they are united to Christ, the promised Davidic king who embodies and represents his people. Further, their covenant membership and sonship include not only privilege but also the responsibility to live before God in holiness and blamelessness, which God will bring to completion in them on the last day. Finally, they are called to praise the glory of God for his abundant grace lavished on them in Christ. That these covenant blessings are present in Christ indicates that he is the new covenant's Davidic king who embodies his people and who secures for them every blessing. It is only by union with Christ that believers become recipients of the new covenant.

Excursus: Jesus as the True
Israel in Ephesians 1:6

In Jeremiah 31:31 God promises to make a new covenant "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." One may wonder, then, how Gentile believers at Ephesus can legitimately be considered members of the new covenant if they are not literally members of "the house of Israel and the house of Judah." While this is an issue too large to answer in an excursus, here I will note briefly that Ephesians 1:6 provides a hint, for there believers are said to receive grace "in the Beloved" (ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ). I will argue here that in calling Jesus "the Beloved," Paul, with an allusion to Isaiah 44:2, was calling Jesus the true Israel. Hence, if Jesus is the true Israelite who embodies God's people, then all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, can be legitimately considered members of "the house of Israel and the house of Judah."

The title "Beloved," which came to be a messianic title among early Christians (Ign. *Smyrn*. inscr.; *Barn*. 3.6; 4.3, 8), has caused some scholars to argue that Paul has in mind Jesus' baptism, and this view has some merit.[68] At his baptism Jesus is seen as the

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[68]Nils Alstrup Dahl, "The Concept of Baptism in Ephesians," in *Studies in Ephesians: Introductory Questions, Text- & Edition-Critical Issues, Interpretation of Texts and Themes*, ed. David

son (ὁ υἱός) whom the Father loves (ἀγαπητός) and with whom the Father is well pleased (εὐδοκέω, Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; John 1:34), terminology that resembles Paul's in Ephesians 1:4-6.[69] Similarly, Paul sees the Gentiles as sons (υἱοθεσία) of God through Jesus Christ (Eph 1:5). The blessing of predestination in verse 5 owes to the pleasure (ἡ εὐδοκία, v. 5) of the divine will and is granted in Jesus, who is "the Beloved" (ὁ ἠγαπημένος, v. 6; cf. Col 1:13). Hence, it is possible that Paul had Jesus' baptism in mind, although he did not develop the implications of this.[70]

Nevertheless, Jesus' baptism probably does not explain Paul's language in 1:4-6. While it is true that there are some verbal parallels, even these are not exact. In the Synoptic accounts, Jesus is called ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22), whereas in Ephesians 1:6 the perfect passive participle is used (ἠγαπημένος). There probably is not much difference in meaning between the two forms,[71] but given the consistency with which the Synoptics use the verbal adjective ἀγαπητός to describe Jesus, one wonders whether Paul actually had the baptismal narrative in mind.[72]

A better explanation for the title "Beloved" is that Paul was alluding to Isaiah 44:1-5, the arguments for which have already been given above. As seen, Isaiah 44:2 describes Israel as "Jeshurun" (יְשֻׁרוּן), which, given the parallelism of Isaiah 44:1 and 2b,

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Hellholm, Vemund Blomkvist, and Tord Fornberg (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 424-26; similarly J. C. Kirby, *Ephesians, Baptism, and Pentecost: An Inquiry into the Structure and Purpose of the Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: SPCK, 1968), 144-45.

[69]That the sonship of Jesus is in view in 1:6 is clear from the witness of a few manuscripts and versions (e.g., D, F, G, 629, old Latin, Sahidic), which insert the phrase υἱῷ αὐτοῦ after ἠγαπημένῳ.

[70]If Jesus' baptism were the background to 1:4-6, it would not follow that 1:3-14 or the letter as a whole are to be explained in terms of a baptismal liturgy (contra Dahl, "The Concept of Baptism," 413-39). Baptism hardly plays a crucial role in the letter, being mentioned only in passing in 4:5.

[71]Contra Beare, *Ephesians*, 617.

[72]Rightly Best, *Ephesians*, 129. Mitton (*Ephesians*, 52) thinks Jesus' baptism is not in view because Jesus is also called ἀγαπητός elsewhere (Matt 17:5; Mark 12:6).

is a substitute for the name "Israel."[73] The name Jeshurun is only mentioned four times in the Hebrew Bible: Isaiah 44:2 and three times at the end of Deuteronomy (32:15; 33:5, 26).[74] Deriving from the root ישר ("to be straight/upright"), Jeshurun means something like "Upright One."[75] In fact, this more literal translation of Jeshurun was the choice of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, who utilized a form of the εὐθύς ("straight") word group.[76] Similarly, the Vulgate reads *rectissme* ("most virtuous"). Nevertheless, Jeshurun appears to be a term of endearment, as recognized by the LXX translators, who accordingly translated it with the perfect passive participle ἠγαπημένος ("the beloved one").[77]

Given the presence of the allusion in Ephesians 1:3-6 and that Jesus is the referent of ἠγαπημένος in 1:6, it appears Paul drew upon the LXX translation for Israel's title Jeshurun and applied it to Jesus in 1:6.[78] That is to say, Paul understood Jesus to be

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[73]Goldingay (*The Message of Isaiah 40-55*, 229) considers it possible that Jeshurun is a play on words with the name "Jacob," because Jeshurun means "Upright" and "Jacob" means "Crook."

[74]It is also found in two manuscripts of Sir 37:25.

[75]Shalom M. Paul (*Isaiah 40-66: Translation and Commentary*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012], 226) notes the name is similar in form to Zebulun and Jeduthun. The *-un* ending could be a diminutive, perhaps indicating a hypocoristicon for Israel.

[76]According to the evidence of Jerome, the three revisers translated יְשֻׁרוּן with either εὐθύτατος ("very straight") or εὐθής ("straight"; *Isaias*, ed. Joseph Ziegler, vol. 14, Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1939], 285). Other than incorporating a plenary spelling (ישורון), 1QIsaᵃ agrees with the MT. The Syriac always translates יְשֻׁרוּן with "Israel." For a full discussion of this name, see M. J. Mulder, "יְשֻׁרוּן," in *TDOT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren; trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 6:472-77.

[77]The fact that Jeshurun is a term of endearment suggests it is used ironically in Deut 32:15, where it describes a rebellious Israel. In Isa 44:2 it also would have served as an ironic reminder that Israel was anything but "upright," for immediately preceding Isa 44 Israel is chided for being unfaithful. Nevertheless, in the midst of the irony the name Jeshurun would also have served as a promise that Israel would one day be "the Upright One" because she is chosen by God.

[78]Commentators regularly recognize—without suggesting the presence of an allusion—that ἠγαπημένος was used to translate יְשֻׁרוּן in the LXX and that such may inform the background of 1:6 (e.g., Arnold, *Ephesians*, 84; Barth, *Ephesians*, 82; Best, *Ephesians*, 128-29; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 26; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 105). Even if one does not find persuasive Paul's' application of the name Jeshurun to Jesus,

Jeshurun, or Israel. Certainly Paul could distinguish individual Israelites from Jesus, as he does so elsewhere (e.g., Rom 9:4). But this does not mitigate the idea that Paul could have seen Jesus as the representative or corporate head of his people.[79] Indeed, Isaiah himself does this, as seen in chapter 2. On the one hand, he calls Israel as a nation the servant of Yahweh (42:18-19; 44:1); on the other hand, the servant seems to be distinct from the nation as well, for he will bring her back to Yahweh by atoning for her sins (Isa 49:5; 53:5-6). The likeliest explanation is that the servant, as the king of Israel, embodies or represents the nation. In a similar way, Paul sees Jesus as the representative or corporate head of believers. He is Israel, and he is so on behalf of all those connected to him by faith.[80]

The significance of this point comes to a head when one realizes that Paul was writing to a predominantly Gentile audience at Ephesus. All believers, not merely those of Jewish descent, are in Christ, the true Israel. They all share in equal measure the blessings of election and sonship. And not only this, but they also share the name "Israel," for they are "in the Beloved/Jeshurun." Isaiah himself foresaw that such a situation would one day obtain within the people of God. Isaiah 44:5 is a promise of universal blessing, where the Gentiles proclaim their allegiance to Yahweh. But what must not be missed is that they also claim a share in the people of God, for they give

one can still note that frequently Israel in the OT is called God's "beloved" by means of the perfect passive participle from ἀγαπάω (Judg 9:4; Isa 5:1, 7; Jer 11:15; 12:7; 3 Macc 6:13; Bar 3:37; *4 Bar.* 3:11; 4:7). Thus, in any case, Jesus seems to be equated with Israel in Eph 1:6. Paul himself uses the participle six times (Rom 9:25; Eph 1:6; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13), and each time it is closely related to God's election of his people. This suggests that Israel's blessings are being applied to the church. See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 26-27.

[79]For a good discussion of the various senses to the term "Israel," see John S. Feinberg ("Systems of Discontinuity," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments: Essays in Honor of S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.*, ed. John S. Feinberg [Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988], 71-73), although he does not extend the name "Israel" to Gentile believers, as I do.

[80]As Thielman (*Ephesians*, 54) puts it, "It seems likely, therefore, that when Paul calls Jesus 'the Beloved' in this passage he has in mind Jesus's embodiment within himself of the beloved and elect people of God" (similarly Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 70).

themselves the name "Israel."[81] The name "Israel" is Isaiah's eschatological name applied to the universal people of God who confess allegiance to the name of Yahweh.[82] Although one can distinguish between Israel and the nations ethnically, which Isaiah often does, in the last days Isaiah envisions a converging of Israel and the nations into one eschatological, typological people of God. The name of this people would be "Israel," or as Paul says in Ephesians 2:15, "one new man." In his reading of Isaiah, Paul saw the fulfillment of Isaiah's vision in the arrival of Christ, the true Israel, in whom both Jews and Gentiles were joined by faith.[83]

This reading of Ephesians 1:6 explains why Paul applied not only the blessings but also the name of Israel to a predominantly Gentile audience in Ephesus. More broadly, recognizing that Jesus is the true and faithful Israelite who embodies his people explains why Paul can legitimately apply new covenant blessings to Gentiles, blessings promised to "the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." Members of the new covenant are not born into it as in the days of the old covenant. Now, regardless of ethnicity, all those united to Christ are full and equal members of the new covenant community.

Section 2: The Blessing of Eschatological Forgiveness (1:7-10)

The section second of 1:3-14 begins with ἐν ᾧ (v. 7) and concludes with the climactic statement that all things are summed up in Christ (v. 10). The section naturally

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[81]Here I am reading the Piel imperfect יְכַנֶּה, which is the reading of the MT (cf. Isa 45:4; Job 32:21). If one repointed the text to form the Pual imperfect יְכֻנֶּה, then it would be God who gives them the name Israel.

[82]Westermann (*Isaiah 40-66*, 137) notes that Isa 44:5 "represents the breakthrough to a new understanding of the chosen people as the community which confesses Yahweh."

[83]The Israel-Christ-church model for ecclesiology is unpacked well by Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 683-703.

can be divided into two subsections: verses 7-8 refer to the grace of forgiveness, and verses 9-10 to the revelation of the divine mystery in Christ. This does not mean the subsections are unrelated, though, as if forgiveness has nothing to do with God's cosmic plan.[84] Rather, the phrase "with all wisdom and insight" at the end of verse 8 serves as a link between the two sections. While in terms of grammar the phrase modifies ἐπερίσσευσεν,[85] its emphasis on divine wisdom closely correlates with the following explication of the divine plan in verses 9-10.[86] On the one hand, God's grace abounds toward believers in a way that demonstrates his divine wisdom (vv. 7-8). On the other hand, his divine wisdom is also demonstrated in the unfolding of his plan to sum up all things in Christ (vv. 9-10). Indeed, the abundance of God's grace is shown *in and through* his sovereign plan.[87] Put another way, the gift of forgiveness (vv. 7-8) would not

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[84]Rightly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 63. Many commentators (e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 133), view 1:9 as beginning a new section of the eulogy because it does not seem to fit the emphasis on grace in 1:7-8.

[85]Given the context of the divine plan, the wisdom and insight in view are God's (cf. Jer 10:12; Prov 3:19; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 86; Best, *Ephesians*, 133; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 62). Believers possess wisdom as well in Eph (1:17; 5:15; Col 1:9), but this is not in view in 1:8 (contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 14-15; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 11-12; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 212-13; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 17; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 107-08; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 56-57; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 12). Barth (*Ephesians*, 84-85) thinks the wisdom and insight are the property of both God and believers in 1:8. Contra Yoder Neufeld (*Ephesians*, 48-49), Paul is not personifying wisdom as a variant of his "in Christ" formula.

[86]Many have argued that the phrase "with all wisdom and insight" modifies γνωρίσας instead of ἐπερίσσευσεν, since to describe God's wisdom is closely related to God "making known" his mystery (e.g., Arnold, *Ephesians*, 86; Best, *Ephesians*, 133; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 11-12). While it is true that God's wisdom is closely connected with his revelation of the mystery, this does not mean the two phrases are syntactically related. As with the phrase ἐν ἀγάπῃ in v. 4, word order is determinative in making a decision. As a function of the plenary style of Ephesians, prepositional phrases in Ephesians typically follow the words they modify. Hence, if one can make sense of the phrase "he abounded grace to us with all wisdom and insight," it would seem the burden would be on those who argue otherwise (rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 213; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 17; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 107-08; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 62; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 12). Thielman (*Ephesians*, 62-63) puts it well: God's "decision to lavish his grace upon his people by paying the cost of their redemption in the death of his Beloved Son was in accord with his infinite capacity for wisdom and understanding. Once again, Paul emphasizes that God's graciousness to his people is not a marginal or occasional characteristic of his dealings with his people, but integral to his character and thus to the way he acts."

[87]If this is correct, then γνωρίσας is an adverbial participle of means or manner (so Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 214; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 108, n. 89). Arnold (*Ephesians*, 86) considers it temporal.

be possible were it not for the revelation of Christ in "the fullness of time" (vv. 9-10). Hence, the entire section emphasizes God's plan to forgive individuals in and through the climactic revelation of Christ.

Such an emphasis on forgiveness in the last days indicates that the dawn of the new covenant. Although Paul does not use the phrase καινὴ διαθήκη in verses 7-10, the collocation of forgiveness and eschatology climactically achieved in the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ suggests that the promises of the OT culminated in the coming of Christ. The fulfillment of these promises in "the fullness of time" shows the arrival of the new covenant in Christ.

Forgiveness of Sins (1:7-8)

The emphasis in 1:7-8 is on the believer's present possession of forgiveness.[88] The present indicative ἔχομεν in verse 7 denotes a stark contrast to the aorist verbs and participles surrounding it.[89] Indeed, the list of blessings in 1:4-14 is almost entirely composed from a perspective of what God has already accomplished for believers. He chose and predestined them to be his sons before the creation of the world (vv. 4-6, 11-12). In the "fullness of time" he set forth his son as the revelation of the cosmic mystery (vv. 9-10). Further, believers have already obtained the guarantee of their inheritance, the promised Spirit, with whom they were sealed at their conversion (vv. 13-14). Hence, the present tense of ἔχομεν is a marked tense, indicating a new section of the eulogy as well as highlighting the believer's present possession of forgiveness.[90]

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[88]So Barth, *Ephesians*, 83; Best, *Ephesians*, 129; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 10; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 105.

[89]The aorist ἔσχομεν, supported by a few manuscripts (e.g., the original correctors of א and D), likely reflects a scribal tendency to harmonize the indicative tenses throughout 1:3-14.

[90]I am aware of the debates among Greek grammarians regarding the relationship between the Greek verb and tense. Contra Stanley E. Porter (*Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament: With Reference to Tense and Mood*, Studies in Biblical Greek 1 [New York: Peter Lang, 1989]), tense is

The initial term to describe this new reality in 1:7 is ἀπολύτρωσις ("redemption"), a term that hearkens back to Israel's exodus from Egypt and her hope for future restoration.[91] Although the ἀπολυτρόω word group hardly occurs in the LXX, only appearing in three instances (Exod 21:8; Zeph 3:1; DanLXX 4:34), its meaning is not significantly different than that of the more common λυτρόω word group.[92] The λυτρόω word group often signifies God's deliverance or salvation of an individual from death or oppression.[93] Mostly, however, it is used to describe God's deliverance of Israel at the exodus.[94] Indeed, the language of redemption in connection with freedom from Egypt became the verbal pattern for subsequent expressions of hope for Israel's restoration and deliverance (1 Macc 4:8-11; Sir 50:24). This is especially clear in the prophets, who longed for an eschatological deliverance—a "second exodus"—wherein God would save Israel from her enemies.[95]

Not only this, but also Israel's hope for redemption entailed deliverance from her sins. The prophets recognized that Israel's plight lay fundamentally in her

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grammaticalized in the indicative mood, although it is true only aspect is grammaticalized outside the indicative. Since ἔχομεν is a present indicative, then, forgiveness is the present possession of the believer.

[91]So Arnold, *Ephesians*, 85; Caird, *Paul's Letters*, 36; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 27; Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 71; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 105-06; Robinson, *Ephesians*, 29; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 59; N. T. Wright, *The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon*, Paul for Everyone (London: SPCK; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 9.

[92]This is evident especially in Exod 21:8, where ἀπολυτρόω describes a situation where a slave master must allow the female slave to be "redeemed" or "bought back" by her father. In Exod 21:30, in a case where an ox with a history of goring gores a person to death, not only the ox but also the ox's owner will be put to death, unless the ox's owner pays a redemption price (λύτρον) for his life. In both instances, the meaning is to "buy back" something or someone. The ἀπο prefix in the ἀπολυτρόω word group, then, merely makes explicit what is often implicit in the λυτρόω word group.

[93]See Pss 7:3 (Eng. 7:2); 25:11 (MT/Eng. 26:11); 31:7 (MT/Eng. 32:7); Jer 15:21; DanLXX 3:88; 6:23; Sir 51:2.

[94]See Exod 6:6; Deut 7:8; 9:26; 13:5 (MT 13:6); 15:15; 24:18; 1 Chr 17:21; Pss 77:42 (MT/Eng. 78:42); 105:10 (MT/Eng. 106:10); 135:24 (MT/Eng. 136:24); Mic 6:4; Isa 63:9. In fact, the first instance of the λυτρόω word group in the LXX canon is in Exod 6:6, where God makes his programmatic promise to deliver Israel from bondage. This sets the tone for further usage of the term.

[95]See Isa 41:14; 43:1, 14; 51:10-11; 52:3-6; Jer 31:11; 50:34; Mic 4:10; Zeph 3:15; Zech 10:8.

unfaithfulness to Yahweh (Lam 5:7-8; Hos 7:13; 13:12-14). Hence, Israel's hope for redemption included a hope for forgiveness. Isaiah 44:22-23, which links redemption with forgiveness of sins, is worth quoting in full: "I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed [λυτρόω] you. Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it; shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the LORD has redeemed [λυτρόω] Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel" (ESV). The same connection between redemption and forgiveness is made in Psalm 130:7-8: "O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption [λύτρωσις]. And he will redeem [λυτρόω] Israel from all his iniquities" (ESV; cf. Ps 103:3-4). Hence, redemption from sin was part and parcel of Israel's hope for redemption.

The fact that the hope of redemption was closely tied to the promise of forgiveness indicates that final redemption would coalesce with the new covenant. As noted in chapter 2, in the new covenant God would finally and completely forgive his people's sins, and his resolve to forgive would be the basis for his everlasting presence with his people (Isa 33:24; 54:7-10; 55:3-7; Jer 31:34; 33:8; 50:24; Ezek 16:63). In Isaiah 59:20-21, when the redeemer (גּוֹאֵל) arrived in Zion, there would be repentance, forgiveness, and a new covenant.[96]

In keeping with this prophetic hope, Paul in Ephesians 1:7 links redemption with forgiveness of sins (cf. Col 1:14).[97] Paul does not often use the term ἄφεσις

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[96]Although it is difficult to see precisely how Paul used Isa 59:20-21 in Rom 11:26-27, the collocation of redemption, repentance, forgiveness, and a new covenant show that final redemption and freedom from sin were closely entwined with the new covenant.

[97]Τὴν ἄφεσιν is in apposition to τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν. That Israel's hope for redemption was alive and well in the first century A.D. is demonstrated in the songs of Zechariah and Simeon as well as by the Jewish disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 1:68; 2:38; 24:21). Westcott (*Ephesians*, 11) rightly notes that redemption in 1:7 includes deliverance from sin's penalty and power (similarly Hendriksen, *Ephesians*, 82-83; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 208). Barth (*Ephesians*, 84), on the other hand, woefully underestimates the gravity of sin—he labels it "lapses" and "pitiable mishaps"—and thus the weight of forgiveness.

("forgiveness"), for it occurs only here and in Colossians 1:14.[98] This does not mean that forgiveness was unimportant to Paul, as is indicated by Paul's explication of justification in terms of forgiveness in Romans 4:6-8 (cf. 2 Cor 5:19).[99] Rather, the OT background once again sheds light on the significance of the blessing of forgiveness. Just as the prophets foresaw a day when God would redeem Israel from not only her enemies but also her sins and in so doing inaugurate a new covenant, so Paul saw this day as finding its fulfillment in the cross of Christ. Final forgiveness of sins was offered in his name, indicating that the promise of Jeremiah 31:34 had come to fruition.[100]

Specifically, it was through Christ's blood (διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ) that the redemption of forgiveness was accomplished (cf. 2:13). In describing Jesus' blood as the price of redemption (cf. Mark 10:45),[101] Paul brings to the fore Jesus' death as a

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[98]He uses the verb ἀφίημι in the sense of forgiveness only in Rom 4:7. The noun and verb forms, though, play a significant role in Matthew's Lord's Supper tradition (Matt 26:28), Luke's apostolic kerygma (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18), the Johannine concept of forgiveness (John 20:23; 1 John 1:9; 2:12), and Hebrews' atonement theology (9:22; 10:18). Hence, although Paul does not often use the term, it seems to have had a significant function in early Christian soteriology.

[99]Rightly O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 106; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 60. Hence, E. P. Sanders (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977], 499-501) misses the significance Paul placed on sin and transgression and thus the necessity of repentance and forgiveness in Christ.

[100]Abbott's argument (*Ephesians*, 13-14) that Paul was fighting an early Gnostic misunderstanding of redemption seems farfetched.

[101]There has been much debate whether Jesus' blood is seen as the ransom price for believers' redemption in 1:7. Abbott (*Ephesians*, 11-13) argues forcefully that the term ἀπολύτρωσις does not inherently connote the payment of a price, and that it is not clear to whom was the ransom paid. While it must be allowed that ἀπολύτρωσις does not necessarily indicate a ransom price, in the OT a person or animal often is redeemed by means of a price paid (Exod 13:13-16; 21:30; 30:12; 34:20; Lev 25:29, 48; Num 18:15-17; Ps 49:8-9 [Eng. 49:7-8]; Prov 6:35; 13:8). Moreover, a price is likely in view in Eph 1:7 because Christ's blood is explicitly seen as the means of redemption (rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 85; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 10; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 205-06; Moule, *Ephesians*, 49; Origen [Heine, *Origen and Jerome*, 91]; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 57-60; contra Beare, *Ephesians*, 617-18; Caird, *Paul's Letters*, 36-37; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 28). Best (*Ephesians*, 130) notes one would expect a genitive of price as opposed to διά with the genitive, but other constructions could have served just as well (cf. Heb 9:12; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Rev 5:9). Thielman (*Ephesians*, 58-59) rightly argues the Ephesians would have most naturally understood ἀπολύτρωσις in terms of slave redemption and διὰ τοῦ αἵματος as the price of freedom. For a convincing explanation of how Christ's blood was the price for redemption, see John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 175-82.

sacrifice.[102] Although he does not go into detail in his understanding of the soteriological function of the blood of Christ, it is likely that Paul considered Jesus' death to fulfill the OT sacrifices, which were intended to provide forgiveness (Lev 4:26; 5:18). That an individual would be sacrificed for the people reminds one of the suffering servant of Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song, whose death would be a "guilt offering" (Isa 53:10). His sprinkled blood would atone for the sins of "many nations" (52:15) and bring peace and righteousness (53:5, 11), for he would bear the iniquity of the people (53:6, 11-12). His death would not only atone for sin, though; it would also inaugurate the "covenant of peace" (54:10; cf. Zech 9:11) that would be an "everlasting covenant" for the nations (55:3).

In Ephesians 1:7 it is also likely that Paul saw Jesus' death as a sacrifice inaugurating the new covenant.[103] (1) Outside 1 Corinthians, Paul does not often describe Jesus' death in terms of his blood (Rom 3:25; 5:9; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Col 1:20). In 1 Corinthians 10:16 and 11:25-27, Paul refers to the blood of Christ to remind the Corinthians of the meaning of the Lord's Supper. In 1 Corinthians 11:25, Paul quotes Jesus' saying regarding the cup: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood."[104] Hence, Paul understood the blood of Christ to be the sacrificial means by which the new

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[102]Contra Bradley H. Mclean (*The Cursed Christ: Mediterranean Expulsion Rituals and Pauline Soteriology*, JSNTSup 126 [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 41-145), the best model for understanding Jesus' saving work is not an apotropaic ritual but a sacrifice. Many commentators regard the description of the blood of Christ to be rooted in traditional material (e.g., Barth, *Ephesians*, 9; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 56). While this may be the case, Paul used the tradition according to what he intended to write. Hence, there is no need to pontificate that Paul did not agree with or emphasize the tradition. Further, the blood of Christ signifies his death, not his life (rightly Salmond, *Ephesians*, 255; contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 13). E. F. Scott (*The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, MNTC [New York: Harper, 1930], 143) wrongly thinks the reference to blood is merely descriptive of a violent death and carries no sacrificial connotations.

[103]Similarly Salmond, *Ephesians*, 254.

[104]Paul's transmission of Jesus' statement conforms most closely to the Lukan tradition (Luke 22:20; cf. Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24).

covenant was inaugurated (cf. Zech 9:11).[105] (2) The promise of the forgiveness of sins is not limited to a few Levitical sacrifices but is one of the major promises undergirding the new covenant (Jer 31:34). (3) In his Lord's Supper account, Matthew recounts Jesus' saying concerning the cup: "This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν; 26:28). Mathew explicitly links the forgiveness of sins with Jesus' blood that inaugurates a covenant. Hence, it is not farfetched that the blood of Christ that brings about the redemption of forgiveness in Ephesians 1:7 is seen as blood that inaugurates the new covenant. The shedding of Christ's blood was not only the Passover sacrifice that achieved the longed for redemption of God's people (1 Cor 5:7) but also the sacrifice that inaugurated the new covenant, the basis of which was the forgiveness of sins (1 Cor 11:25).[106]

The Plan for the Fullness of Time (1:9-10)

In 1:9-10 the grace God caused to abound toward believers in verses 7-8 was

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[105]Contra Best (*Ephesians*, 131), it is not farfetched to see the Lord's Supper as illuminating the background of Eph 1:7. The Lord's Supper linked Passover and redemption with covenant inauguration, which is precisely what Paul does in Eph 1:7.

[106]That Paul would link in the one death of Christ what technically were two separate sacrifices (Passover and covenant) merely demonstrates that he saw Christ's death as the fulfillment of both sacrifices. Indeed, such an intertwining of sacrifices in Jesus' death was part and parcel of early Christian understanding of the atonement, for in the Last Supper accounts Jesus' death is seen as redeeming God's people (hence, the Passover sacrifice) and bringing about the new covenant's forgiveness of sins. Caird (*Paul's Letters*, 37) rightly describes how Christians viewed Jesus' sacrifice: "Round the institution of sacrifice had gathered many powerful associations, whose blurred edges tended to fade into one another: the gift of tribute to the majesty of God, the establishment of communion or covenant, the commemoration of past redemption (Passover), and the release of power through the surrender of life." As Muddiman (*Ephesians*, 71) puts it, "The original 'redemption' of Israel from slavery in Egypt was through the blood of the Passover lamb (Exod 12:13), which Pauline (and Johannine, see John 19:36) Christians reinterpreted in relation to the death of Christ (1 Cor 5:7), re-establishing a 'new covenant' (1 Cor 11:25). Strictly speaking, the Passover is not a sacrifice for sins, but first-century Christian Jews seem to have merged the different types of sacrifice into one composite and general idea" (similarly Moule, *Ephesians*, 49; Thomas B. Slater, *Ephesians*, SHBC, vol. 27a [Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2012], 44). Thus, there is no need, as does Foulkes (*Ephesians*, 58), to interpret Jesus' death in Eph 1:7 either as a Passover sacrifice or a sacrifice for sin. Klyne Snodgrass (*Ephesians*, NIV Application Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 51) summarizes 1:7 nicely: "The price paid is clearly the 'blood' of Christ, which merely is a shorthand way of pointing to his sacrificial death and the new covenant it established with God" (cf. Heb 9:15-22).

in accordance with the divine plan. Terms like θέλημα, εὐδοκία, and οἰκονομία appear, giving the sense of an overall divine plan to the abundance of grace.[107] This plan he has made known (γνωρίζω)[108] to believers, which as a mystery (μυστήριον) was previously unknown (cf. 3:3-5). The time the plan was to be revealed was in the fullness of time (τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν καιρῶν), and the plan centered on Christ, who would sum up all things. The cosmic scope of the plan shows that verses 9-10 are one of the climaxes of the benediction. [109]

The μυστήριον of God's will. The term μυστήριον is frequently used in Paul's literature to describe something once hidden but now revealed (Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 3:9-11; Col 1:26-27).[110] Whereas the content of the mystery changes according to the

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[107]Difficult to decide is whether οἰκονομία describes a plan (Arnold, *Ephesians*, 87-88; Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, SP 17 [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2000], 202), the administration of a plan (Best, *Ephesians*, 138-39; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 217-18; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 32; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 113), or the office of administrator (Barth, *Ephesians*, 86-88; Moule, *Ephesians*, 50-51; cf. 3:2; 1 Cor 9:17; Col 1:25). The second option is slightly more probable, since this is a frequent meaning of the term (cf. 3:9), it allows for a more natural use of the telic εἰς (Hoehner [*Ephesians*, 217] probably is incorrect in reading εἰς temporally), and it allows τοῦ πληρώματος to be read as an objective genitive of the verbal noun οἰκονομία. In either case, the emphasis in 1:9-10 remains on the fulfillment of a divine plan in Christ. As one traces the meaning of οἰκονομία in patristic literature, it is fascinating to discover that the term became associated with salvation history and covenant theology, a meaning that perhaps was spawned by its usage in Ephesians and Colossians (see John Reumann, "*Oikonomia* = 'Covenant': Terms for *Heilsgeschichte* in Early Christian Usage," *NovT* 3 [1959]: 282-92).

[108]The aorist infinitive γνωρίσαι is supported by F, G, and the entire Latin tradition. While it may be considered the more difficult reading, since the participle fits the pattern in the eulogy, the external support is too minimal to override the reading of the NA[27].

[109]Schnackenburg (*Ephesians*, 48) calls it "an unmistakeable climax." Best (*Ephesians*, 110) labels it "a kind of summit." O'Brien (Ephesians, 92) describes it "the summit of Paul's statements." Yoder Neufeld (*Ephesians*, 49) says, "Verses 9 and 10 are undoubtedly the apex of this recitation of God's blessings and the key to understanding the vision of Ephesians as a whole." John Paul Heil (*Ephesians: Empowerment to Walk in Love for the Unity of All in Christ*, SBLSBL 13 [Atlanta: SBL, 2007], 17-19) has 1:10 as the center of his chiastic arrangement of 1:3-14.

[110]So Abbott, *Ephesians*, 15. For a convincing demonstration of the close connections between the mystery in Daniel (רז, Dan 2:18-19, 27-30, 47; 4:6) and in Ephesians as well as cautious remarks regarding the influence of Qumran on the μυστήριον concept in Ephesians, see Chrys C. Caragounis, *The Ephesian* Mysterion*: Meaning and Content*, ConBNT 8 (Lund: Gleerup, 1977), 121-35.

context, Paul's μυστήριον is almost always eschatological and christological.[111] In Ephesians 1:9-10, the eschatological character is clear, for God planned to unveil the mystery in "the fullness of time" (τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν καιρῶν). Paul uses a similar phrase in Galatians 4:4 (τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου) to indicate the arrival of Christ.[112] Through his work, he inaugurated a new epoch of salvation history in which the people of God no longer were "under the law," "under a pedagogue," or "infants," but now had matured and as sons had become heirs (Gal 3:23-4:7). Now that Christ had come, a return to the Sinai covenant would be a return to slavery, whereas in the coming of Christ there was a new covenant associated with freedom (Gal 4:21-5:1). Similarly, "the fullness of time" in Ephesians 1:10 describes that period of salvation history where God would bring to light his good pleasure and bring all his saving promises to completion (cf. *Diogn.* 9.2).[113] The plural τῶν καιρῶν indicates the plurality of history's ages or epochs, over which God is sovereign (cf. 1 Cor 10:11; 1 Thess 5:1).[114] In short, then, the time in which Christ came marked the culmination of salvation history, when God would bring about his saving

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[111]For instance, the mystery is eschatological in its description of: a partial hardening for Israel (Rom 11:25); the gospel of Christ (Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:7); the future bodily resurrection (1 Cor 15:51); the union of Christ and the church (Eph 5:32); Christ's presence in believers (Col 1:26-27); Christ himself (Eph 3:3-5; Col 2:2; 4:3); eschatological lawlessness (2 Thess 2:7); and godliness (1 Tim 3:16). The eschatological character of the mystery is typical of Jewish apocalyptic literature (4 Ezra 4:15; DanLXX 2:28-29).

[112]For a discussion of the differences between χρόνος and καιρός, see Westcott, *Ephesians*, 13 (but see the cautious and salient comments of James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*, 2nd ed., Studies in Biblical Theology [London: SCM, 1969], 21-49; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 32).

[113]Since its nominalized derivative πρόθεσις in 1:11 describes God's purpose, προτίθημι in 1:9 probably should not be given a spatial ("to set forth"; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 58) or a temporal ("to set first upon"; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 87; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 63; Schlier, *Epheser*, 63) meaning. Rather, it refers to God's act of purposing to show his good pleasure in Christ (cf. Rom 3:25; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 215; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 31).

[114]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 219; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 64 (cf. DanLXX 2:21; 4:37; Tob 14:5; 4 Ezra 4:37; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 40.3; 1QS 4.18; 1QM 14.14; 1QpHab 7.2, 13). Schnackenburg (*Ephesians*, 59) says it well: "The 'fullness of the times' indicates the climax of all earthly times, the (eschatological) time of Christ, in which God's mystery in Christ is revealed, realised and developed" (similarly Caird, *Paul's Letters*, 38).

promises. As seen in chapter 2, the promise of the new covenant was at the heart of "the fullness of time."[115]

The summation of all things in Christ. The content of the mystery is likely expressed in 1:10 in the ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι infinitival clause.[116] The precise meaning of ἀνακεφαλαιόω has been debated. Some argue the meaning of headship must be involved, since the verb derives from the root for "head," κεφαλή. Taken with its prepositional prefix ἀνά, which means "up," ἀνακεφαλαιόω would then mean "to head up" something, which fits with the Ephesianic context of Jesus as the head of all things and of the church (1:22; 4:15; 5:23). If this is the case, then the mystery would be that Jesus is the head of all things.[117] While this is an attractive position since it is sensitive to the larger context of Ephesians, it is not likely, for the verb ἀνακεφαλαιόω typically means "to sum up" something such as the main points of an oration.[118] The verb derives from the noun κεφάλαιον,[119] which, although related to κεφαλή, does not mean "head" but the main

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[115]Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 219) wrongly limits the "fullness of time" to a future earthly messianic kingdom. Since in chapter 2 the presence of the new covenant was part and parcel of the "fullness of time," the final epoch of salvation history has already begun in Christ, although it awaits its consummation (cf. Mark 1:15). If one interprets the "strong covenant" in Dan 9:27 as a description of the new covenant (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 531-64), then it is possible that Paul's τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν καιρῶν alludes to Daniel's prophecy that "the times will be emptied out" (ἐκκενωθήσονται οἱ καιροί, DanTh 9:25), and hence would signify that the new covenant had been inaugurated through the "anointed one" (χριστός).

[116]So Abbott, *Ephesians*, 18; Best, *Ephesians*, 139; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 30; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 111; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 65. Sometimes commentators (e.g., Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 14; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 216) will suggest ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι defines God's purpose (πρόθεσις) or goal, but the meaning is not greatly altered thereby. The content of the mystery in 3:6 also is expressed with an infinitival clause.

[117]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 87-88; Hendriksen, *Ephesians*, 86; Moule, *Ephesians*, 51; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 59-60. MacDonald (*Ephesians*, 203) argues the implication of Christ's cosmic headship is that "his body fills the whole world," but this is an unnecessary deduction.

[118]LSJ, s.v. "ἀνακεφαλαιόομαι." Thielman (*Ephesians*, 66-67), citing Dionysius Halicarnassus and Quintilian, notes that the noun ἀνακεφαλαίωσις means "summary" or "recapitulation."

[119]So many commentators, e.g., Abbott, *Ephesians*, 18; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 14; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 32; contra Peter S. Williamson, *Ephesians*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand

point of an author or orator (Heb 8:1).[120] Moreover, the only other time Paul uses the verb

ἀνακεφαλαιόω is in Romans 13:9, where the commandments are "summed up" in the

commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself. If this is correct, then the mystery in

Ephesians 1:9-10 has to do with the summing up or uniting together of all things in

Christ.[121] The following phrase, "things in heaven and things on earth in him," clarifies

the cosmic scope of the mystery.[122] Given that at this point Paul is emphasizing God's

sovereignty over history and that the end of the ages had arrived in Jesus, what it means

for Jesus to sum up all things probably means he is the goal of history and creation,

which find their culmination in him. He is the "main point," as it were, of all creation; all

things cohere and find their being in him.[123] An apt parallel to explain Christ's

summation of all things is Colossians 1:16, "All things in heaven and on earth were

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Rapids: Baker, 2009), 38.

[120]The verb κεφαλαιόω does not occur in the NT, although κεφαλιόω in Mark 12:4 is probably an abbreviated form of it. In Mark 12:4, it appears to mean "to strike on the head," but as the literature indicates, this is an unusual meaning, which more typically is "to sum up" (LSJ, s.v. "κεφάλαιος").

[121]So Abbott, *Ephesians*, 18; Best, *Ephesians*, 140-42; Calvin, *Ephesians*, 129; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 111-12; Origen [Heine, *Origen and Jerome*, 97]; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 66-67. Arnold (*Ephesians*, 89), Ellicott (*Ephesians*, 14), and Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 33) probably go too far in arguing the prefix ἀνά, which can mean "again," denotes a recapitulation or restoration of a creational harmony lost on account of sin. Barth (*Ephesians*, 89-92) and Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 219-21) think both Christ's headship and unification of the cosmos are in view.

[122]The reading ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ("upon the heavens," 𝔓46, ℵ*, B, D, 630, 1241) is superior to ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ("in the heavens," ℵ2, A, F, G, 33, 81, 1739, 1881) because it is more difficult to conceive of how things could be "on the heavens" (so many commentators). It may be present for stylistic variation (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 222; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 34), and Westcott (*Ephesians*, 14) notes that with the dative ἐπί can refer to simple position. Indeed, such an expression, combined with ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, forms an apt merism of the totality of reality (rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 223). They limit the scope of the merism too much by limiting what is in heaven and on earth to the powers and the church, respectively (e.g., Caragounis, *Ephesian Mysterion*, 144; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 112-13); angels and people, respectively (e.g., Calvin, *Ephesians*, 129-30; Moule, *Ephesians*, 51); or believers in heaven and believers on earth, respectively (Hodge, *Ephesians*, 51-55).

[123]Similarly Best, *Ephesians*, 142; Ralph P. Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, IBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 17; Robinson, *Ephesians*, 32-33. Ellicott (*Ephesians*, 15) rightly notes that such a universal statement does not mean every person without exception will be reconciled to God (contra Barth, *Ephesians*, 144; Best, *Ephesians*, 142).

created by him, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things are created through him and for him" (cf. Rom 8:18-25; Col 1:20). As Paul will clarify throughout Ephesians, Jesus' summation of all things entails his lordship over rulers and authorities (1:20-21), the unity of Jews and Gentiles (2:11-3:6), and his headship over the church (4:15; 5:23).[124]

Hence, the mystery in 1:9-10 is christological in content and eschatological in timing.[125] While the prophets of old foresaw that in "the fullness of time" God would restore the fortunes of his people and that he would do so through one individual, they did not see clearly that the individual would be the goal of creation and history. In this sense for them it was a mystery yet to be revealed.[126] Nevertheless, one should not overemphasize the differences between the expectation of the prophets and the person of Christ in 1:9-10. Indeed, the prophets did anticipate that in the last days there would be a unique Davidic figure integral to the fulfillment of God's saving promises and whose rule would be "from sea to sea." The figure of 1:9-10 is Davidic, for Paul calls him "the Christ," his rule is cosmic, and he is integral to God's saving promises, as seen throughout 1:3-14.[127] Further, the timing of Christ's coming in the eschatological

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[124]Caragounis (*Ephesian* Mysterion, 118) rightly argues that the mystery of 3:1-13 is a subset of the programmatic and cosmic mystery of 1:9-10. Part of the way Christ sums up all things is through the unification of Jew and Gentile in one church, which then demonstrates to the rulers and authorities the unfathomable wisdom of God (so O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 110; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 14).

[125]As O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 113-15) rightly explains, the aorist infinitive ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι does not indicate that all things have already been summed up in Christ, but provides the goal or purpose of the mystery, which has begun in Christ and will be completed on the last day.

[126]Robinson (*Ephesians*, 33) rightly notes that a cosmic unification around one individual goes beyond even the global promises to Abraham and the prophets (Gen 12:3; Zech 14:16). Barth (*Ephesians*, 127) misses the point when he limits the mystery merely to God's love of his people before creation. It was not God's love of his people that was unknown in ages past but the precise relationship of Christ to salvation history.

[127]For a defense that Paul viewed Χριστός as a messianic title, see N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 41-55. The presence of the article in ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ (v. 10) is perhaps significant, since Paul's normal usage is anarthrous. It is possible the article is present to emphasize the uniqueness of the Messiah. Westcott

"fullness of time" matches the eschatological timing of the events of the new covenant, wherein God would raise up a Davidic ruler to usher in a new covenant and lead his people in peace (Isa 55:3; Jer 33:21, 26; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-26). Hence, even though the christology of 1:9-10 exceeds the prophetic expectation, it is not unfaithful to it but fulfills it in ways much greater than the prophets could have imagined.

Section 3: The Blessing of a Guaranteed Inheritance
(1:11-14)

The third section of the benediction (vv. 11-14) describes the guaranteed inheritance believers possess in Christ. Inheritance terminology brackets the section (κληρόω, v. 11; κληρονομία, v. 14), suggesting its centrality. The inheritance is guaranteed because it is grounded in the God who "works all things after the counsel of his will" (v. 11) and because the Spirit has sealed believers to obtain it (vv. 13-14). As mentioned above, the section is divided into two subsections, with the first applied to all believers (vv. 11-12) and the second specifically applied to Paul's recipients at Ephesus (vv. 13-14). The rhetorical effect of addressing the Ephesian believers directly is intended to encourage the Ephesian believers that they are legitimate members of the people of God. Indeed, they receive the same inheritance as all believers, and, like all believers, they receive it for the glory of God (vv. 12, 14).

Inheritance Guaranteed
by a Sovereign God (1:11-12)

The only indicative verb of verses 11-12 is ἐκληρώθημεν in verse 11, which indicates that it, like ἐξελέξατο (v. 4) and ἔχομεν (v. 7) before, is the main idea of the subsection.[128] Paul's meaning here, though, is far from certain. The verb κληρόω nowhere

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(*Ephesians*, 14) thinks the article shows Χριστός is being used distinctively as a title, whereas Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 221-22) considers it may emphasize that it is Israel's Messiah who will unite all things. Best (*Ephesians*, 143) finds no significance in the construction.

[128]A few manuscripts (A, D, the first corrector of F, and G) read ἐκληθῶμεν, deriving from

else occurs in the NT, although it is frequently attested in the LXX where it commonly refers to the allotment of land for Israel (Num 26:55-56; Josh 14:2-3, 13-14; 17:4-6). According to the standard Greek lexicon by Liddell, Scott, and Jones, κληρόω means "to appoint by lot, to allot, to assign," and as a passive "to be appointed by lot."[129] It is possible that the passive voice indicates that believers are God's portion or his inheritance, a common notion in the OT (Deut 4:20; 9:29; 32:9; 1QS 2.2; 1QM 1.5).[130] This may be correct, given that in 1:18 believers are considered God's inheritance. However, the passive transformation of the causative verb stresses that God causes believers to obtain an allotment.[131] Further, in verse 14 it is the believer's inheritance (κληρονομία) that the Spirit guarantees, not God's.[132] Finally, the parallel text, Colossians 1:12, corroborates Ephesians 1:11 as referring to the allotment that God causes believers

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καλέω and meaning "we were called." While this would fit Pauline soteriology quite well, given the close connection Paul makes between predestination and calling (Rom 8:28-30), the external evidence is not weighty, nor is it likely a scribe would have changed the more familiar Pauline term καλέω to the less familiar κληρόω (rightly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 16).

[129]LSJ, s.v. "κληρόω." Recently there has been some discussion among Greek grammarians regarding the function of the -η/θη- morpheme, with a few arguing that it is not, strictly speaking, an indicator of passive voice (see Carl W. Conrad, "New Observations on Voice in the Ancient Greek Verb," accessed 6 January 2014, http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~cwconrad/; Internet). If, rather, the -η/θη- morpheme indicates intransitivity, with the semantic value of the voice being generated by other factors, it is possible that ἐκληρώθημεν could be read as a middle voice, i.e., "obtain by lot." However, even if Conrad is correct, ἐκληρώθημεν probably has a passive semantic value with God as the implied agent, since throughout the benediction the Father has always been responsible for blessing believers (see ἐσφραγίσθητε, v. 13).

[130]So Arnold, *Ephesians*, 89; Barth, *Ephesians*, 93-94, 118; Beare, *Ephesians*, 621-22; Bruce, *Ephesians*, 263; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 15-16; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 227; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 115; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 14-15.

[131]Similarly Hodge, *Ephesians*, 55-56. This point is illustrated by Aristophanes, who in the active voice construction κληρώσω πάντας did not mean "I will inherit everyone" but "I will have everyone draw lots" (text and translation from Jeffrey Henderson in *Aristophanes: Frogs, Assemblywomen, Wealth*, LCL 180 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002], 341). Hence, the passive transformation would not be "I am inherited" but "I am made to draw lots."

[132]While Abbott (*Ephesians*, 19) is correct to note that κληρόω does not mean "inheritance," the fact that it is from the same root as κληρονομία demonstrates the close connection between the meaning of κληρόω in 1:11 and the believer's inheritance in 1:14.

to obtain. Colossians 1:12 states that the Father qualifies believers "to share in the allotment [εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου] of the saints in light." Even though κλῆρος is used instead of κληρόω, the same notion of an inheritance is present, wherein believers come to share in the portion or the allotment of the people of God. Hence, just as in the OT Israel's tribes were granted a portion of the land as their inheritance (Josh 14-19), so in Christ all believers have a share in the final inheritance.[133] On account of their union with Christ, all believers—including Gentiles (cf. Eph 3:6)—have been granted by God an allotment in the kingdom of Christ (cf. Eph 5:5).[134]

That the Ephesians possessed a future inheritance in Christ suggests that the land promise in the OT comes to fruition through Christ and is granted to all those united to him by faith. Even though the term κληρονομία is not always used in the new covenant texts surveyed in chapter 2, the promise that Israel would once again have a portion in the land was at the heart of the promises of the new covenant.[135] Indeed, the land was the place where God would dwell with his people forever in an everlasting covenant relationship (Ezek 37:24-26). While Paul does not emphasize the land promise in Ephesians, the fact that he holds out the promise of a future inheritance in the kingdom of Christ (Eph 5:5) must be seen against the backdrop of the new covenant's land promises with a greater David installed as king. The Ephesians were to gain comfort that they had been included in the future inheritance of God's covenant people.[136]

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[133]So Abbott, *Ephesians*, 20; Best, *Ephesians*, 146; Hodge, *Ephesians*, 55-57; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 62; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 73. Yoder Neufeld (*Ephesians*, 53) thinks the ambiguity in ἐκληρώθημεν indicates both believers as God's portion and their own inheritance, but this is unlikely.

[134]This interpretation is corroborated by similar language at Qumran, which combines notions of election and inheritance: "To those whom God has selected he has given them as everlasting possession; until they inherit them in the lot of the holy ones" (1QS 11.7).

[135]See Isa 54:3, 17; 61:7; Jer 31:28, 40; 32:37-44; Ezek 11:17; 36:24, 28; 37:12-14, 21, 25.

[136]Similarly Wright, *Prison Letters*, 11-12. This point is not mitigated by the aorist tense of ἐκληρώθημεν. All believers have already been allotted a share in the inheritance, and God has already given them at conversion a downpayment or a guarantee of this future inheritance in the presence of the Spirit (v.

The final inheritance is guaranteed for believers because it is grounded in the sovereign God.[137] Echoing verse 5, Paul describes God as the one who "predestines" (προορίζω) believers for this inheritance. Whereas in verse 5 God's predestination resulted in believers' adoption as sons, in verse 11 it results in the sons obtaining their inheritance. Further, the emphasis in verse 11 is on the immutable and meticulously sovereign plan of God.[138] Just as Christ sums up "all things" (τὰ πάντα, v. 10), so God is the one who sees to it that "all things" (τὰ πάντα, v. 11) follow his plan, and such meticulous direction over things in heaven and earth guarantees the predestined goal that God's sons will obtain their inheritance.[139]

In verse 12 Paul provides the purpose of the inheritance, namely, so that believers might exist for the praise and glory of God.[140] Such a doxological purpose befits the benediction of 1:3-14, for God is seen as responsible for all the blessings believers possess.

"We who first hoped in Christ" (1:12). More specifically, though, Paul clarifies that it is "those who hoped at first in Christ" who exist for the glory of God.

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14). Hence, it is proper to describe believers as having already been allotted the inheritance, which they will experience in full when all things are finally summed up in Christ.

[137]Προορισθέντες is likely an adverbial-causal participle (so Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 228).

[138]There may be irony in the fact that casting lots, which is associated with the κληρόω word group, is typically associated with random chance, and yet God's apportionment of the inheritance to believers was precisely because he planned it in detail, leaving nothing to chance.

[139]Rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 229. The terms πρόθεσις, βουλή, and θέλημα are synonymous, whose repetition emphasizes that the blessing of the inheritance is according to the divine plan (so Arnold, *Ephesians*, 90).

[140]While it is possible for εἶναι to modify προορισθέντες, more likely it modifies ἐκληρώθημεν (rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 231; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 36), although the meaning is not significantly altered. Also, τοὺς προηλπικότας should be read in apposition to ἡμᾶς and not as the predicate accusative of εἶναι (rightly Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 36; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 63; contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 21). The purpose clause in 1:12 is not that believers should hope in Christ but that they should praise the glory of God.

Whom Paul has in mind when he describes τοὺς προηλπικότας has been the subject of much debate, which turns on the reason for the pronominal switch from first to second person in 1:12-13, as well as the semantic value of the prepositional prefix πρό on προηλπικότας. There are three main interpretations of πρό:[141] (1) πρό does not have a temporal value but strengthens or intensifies the verbal idea inherent in ἐλπίζω.[142] In this view, those who "firmly" hope in Christ exist for God's glory (v. 12), and included among these are the Ephesian believers (v. 13).[143] (2) Πρό has a temporal value and refers to believers who hoped in Christ prior to the Ephesian believers.[144] Thus, the believers in 1:12 are distinct from the Ephesian believers in 1:13. Although in 1:12-13 there is no mention of Jews or Gentiles, most scholars who hold this view see the believers in 1:12 as Jewish Christians and the Ephesian believers in 1:13 as Gentiles (cf. 2:11-22).[145] (3) Πρό has a temporal value and refers to the hope believers possessed at their conversion. In this view, believers who have "already" or "earlier" hoped in Christ at their conversion

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[141]Recently Pheme Perkins (*The Letter to the Ephesians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections*, in vol. 11 of *NIB*, ed. Leander E. Keck [Nashville: Abingdon, 2000], 375) has argued that the "we" in 1:12 should be understood as distinguishing Paul as the speaker from his audience in a manner similar to Paul's "mission" texts (Col 1:4-5). But Eph 1:3-14 is not an example of such a "mission" text, despite the reference to the Ephesians' conversion in 1:13 (rightly MacDonald, *Ephesians*, 204). Also Larry J. Kreitzer (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, Epworth Commentaries [London: Epworth, 1997], 40) uniquely argues the "we" of 1:12 refers to believers at Colossae (the mother church) and the "you" of 1:13 to believers at Hierapolis (the daughter church).

[142]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 91; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 37.

[143]Best (*Ephesians*, 147) argues that the phrase "in (the) Christ" is not the object of the believer's hope in 1:12, but the object of hope can have ἐν + dative (1 Cor 15:19; rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 233-34).

[144]A variation of this is that Paul has in mind Jews who hoped in Christ prior to Christ's first advent (so Abbott, *Ephesians*, 21; Barth, *Ephesians*, 130-33; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 17; Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 63; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 15-16). Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 37) rightly argues that it would make little sense at this point in Paul's benediction to refer back to the pre-messianic hope of the Jews.

[145]Beare, *Ephesians*, 622; Bruce, *Ephesians*, 264; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 16-17; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 116-17. A variation of this view holds that Paul distinguishes between first-generation believers and newer converts (Calvin [*Ephesians*, 130] recognizes this as a possibility; see Mitton, *Ephesians*, 57-58).

exist for God's glory (1:12), among whom the Ephesians are to be included (1:13).[146]

The best interpretation is the last one mentioned for several reasons. First, while it is possible for prepositional prefixes to strengthen or intensify the verbal idea of the root, especially in the Hellenistic period of the Greek language, typically Paul does not use πρό to achieve this. In fact, in the nineteen occurrences of the verb ἐλπίζω in Paul's literature, it never occurs in a compound form apart from Ephesians 1:12.[147] It seems unlikely that 1:12 would be the only time when Paul wished to intensify or strengthen the verb by means of πρό. More significantly, when Paul forms compound verbs with πρό, most often he does so to indicate a time antecedent to that of the verbal root.[148] Even in Ephesians this is evident, where προορίζω (1:5, 11) and προγράφω (3:3)—and perhaps προτίθημι (1:9)—are temporal. Within the benediction itself the preposition πρό has played a significant temporal role in reminding the Ephesian believers of their past blessings.[149] These observations suggest that πρό also carries a temporal element in προελπίζω in Ephesians 1:12 and does not, then, merely intensify the verb. The burden of proof is on those who argue otherwise.

Second, with regard to the view that Paul distinguished between two groups of

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[146]Best, *Ephesians*, 147-48; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 63-64. Although Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 37) sees πρό without a temporal reference, his translation "who already hoped in Christ" aligns more closely with this third position. Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 233) uniquely argues believers have hope that "already existed" out of their reading of 1:7-11, but this appears forced. Moule (*Ephesians*, 52) and Thielman (*Ephesians*, 75-76) read the prefix πρό as prospective, i.e., from the vantage point of the consummation of all things. In this view, throughout the believer's life he is characterized by hope for the final consummation. While possible, typically πρό is retrospective.

[147]See Rom 8:24-25; 15:12, 24; 1 Cor 13:7; 15:19; 16:7; 2 Cor 1:10, 13; 5:11; 8:5; 13:6; Phil 2:19, 23; 1 Tim 3:14; 4:10; 5:5; 6:17; Phlm 22.

[148]A survey of Paul's literature revealed that of the twenty-nine compound verbs Paul forms with πρό, in at least twenty of them πρό is temporal and in five πρό is spatial (perhaps προγράφω in Gal 3:1 could also be spatial). Besides προελπίζω, this leaves only προκαλέω (Gal 5:26), προτίθημι (Rom 1:13; Eph 1:9), and προλαμβάνω (1 Cor 11:21; Gal 6:1), and even these examples are debated.

[149]See πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου (v. 4), προορίζω (vv. 5, 11), προτίθημι (v. 9), πρόθεσις (v. 11), and προελπίζω (v. 12).

believers in 1:12-13, it must be noted that in the benediction thus far there has been no hint that Paul has limited the scope of believers in Christ. Even from 1:2, where Paul greets his audience ("you") with a wish for grace and peace, he immediately switches to the first person ("from God *our* Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"). His audience would naturally have felt included in the first person reference in 1:2 and in the subsequent first person references thereafter. Hence, it would be extremely confusing for Paul to have excluded his audience every time he used the first person pronouns in the benediction. Indeed, that Paul would suddenly clarify in 1:12 that the first person pronouns refer only to Jewish believers would call into question whether any of the previous blessings in 1:3-11—all of which "we" have possessed—are properly the possession of Gentile believers. Indeed, in a letter meant to encourage the predominantly Gentile believers at Ephesus that they are full and equal members of the people of God, it is difficult to conceive how Paul could have achieved his purpose by excluding the Gentiles from the blessings in 1:3-11.[150] While it is true that Paul's audience would have been predominantly Gentile, it does not follow that ethnicity must have been Paul's main concern in 1:12-13 or that he would have used the pronominal references throughout Ephesians in the same way he did in 2:11ff.[151] Therefore, it is not likely that Paul meant to distinguish between two groups of believers in 1:12-13.

Third, the most helpful parallel text for interpreting 1:12-13 is Colossians 1:5, which describes the hope (ἐλπίς) of believers that they "heard beforehand" (προακούω) in

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[150]As Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 38) notes, "The proposed distinction between 'we' as Jewish Christians and 'you' as Gentile Christians is one that simply does not hold for the rest of the letter. In fact the return to the first person plural in v 14 tells overwhelmingly against such a proposal" (similarly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 232; contra O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 117).

[151]It should be noted that even in 2:11-3:13 the distinction in pronouns are not rigidly applied (cf. 2:14, "our peace"; 2:18, "we have access"; 3:11-12, "our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access").

the gospel, a reference to their conversion.[152] Like in Ephesians 1:13, the gospel is defined as "the word of truth" (ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀληθείας). These links clarify Paul's meaning in Ephesians 1:12-13, for they exemplify how Paul can describe the past experiences of his audience by means of πρό prefixed as a temporal indicator. Even though in Colossians πρό is not prefixed to ἐλπίζω but ἀκούω, it does carry a temporal notion referring back to the time of conversion, a time at which believers are said to have "first heard" of hope in Christ through the gospel. The prefix neither strengthens the verbal root ("truly heard") nor distinguishes between two groups of believers at Colossae. It merely causes the Colossian believers to remember their past experience of conversion, when they initially heard the gospel and hoped in Christ. In a similar way, in Ephesians 1:12 Paul begins to transition from the objective blessings the Ephesians had received in Christ (vv. 4-11) to their subjective experiences at the time of their conversion. He reminds them that all believers ("we") "first put their hope" in Christ at the time of conversion (v. 13).[153] The switch from the first to the second person pronoun in 1:13, then, is owing to Paul's desire that the Ephesians see themselves as included among all those who have shared this hope since conversion.

Inheritance Guaranteed
by the Spirit (1:13-14)

Paul concludes the benediction by applying the blessings directly to the Ephesian readers by means of the second person pronoun ὑμεῖς.[154] He reminds them of

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[152]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 233; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 37; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 64.

[153]Perhaps the perfect tense (τοὺς προηλπικότας) is used to convey that their past experience has continuing results, or that their status is defined as those who have hoped in Christ.

[154]So Arnold, *Ephesians*, 91; Best, *Ephesians*, 148; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 38; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 78. The first person pronoun ἡμεῖς is the reading of several significant manuscripts (e.g., the second corrector of ℵ, A, K, and several minuscules), but this is explained as an itacism. The second person pronoun is surely correct, for it fits with the second person verb ἐσφραγίσθητε as well as Paul's tendency to apply blessings directly to his readers (cf. 2:22).

their experiences surrounding their conversion, which included hearing and believing the gospel, as well as being sealed by the Spirit.[155] The terms ἀκούσαντες and πιστεύσαντες, unlike many of the blessings in the eulogy, stand out in the text as subjective elements of the Ephesians' conversion.[156] Paul reminded them of the grace they had already received to encourage them of their legitimate membership in God's people.

Further, what they heard was God's true word, the gospel of salvation (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας, v. 13a).[157] The term εὐαγγέλιον was significant for the early church and for Paul as a description of what had God had done in Christ. Even in Ephesians it occurs several times to unpack the good news about peace with God and one another (3:6; 6:15, 19; cf. 2:17). Probably in the background of 1:13 is Isaiah 52:7, which

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[155]So Barth, *Ephesians*, 95. Some interpreters in the Puritan tradition—most fully developed in the works of Thomas Goodwin—have contended that the time when believers are sealed is subsequent to their conversion, and hence that only some believers have experienced this sealing (Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* [Scotland: James Nichol, 1861-1866; reprint, Eureka, CA: Tanski, 1996], 1:227-39; D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God's Ultimate Purpose: An Exposition of Ephesians 1* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978], 243-300). In response to this, the aorist participles ἀκούσαντες and πιστεύσαντες may indicate time antecedent to ἐσφραγίσθητε, but not necessarily so. Indeed, aorist participles can indicate coincident time, which is the most likely interpretation here (cf. Acts 19:2; so Best, *Ephesians*, 149; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 237; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 39; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 119; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 79). Even if in 1:13 the actions of hearing the gospel and believing in Christ are seen as temporally prior to the sealing of the Spirit (as argued by, e.g., Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 18), it does not follow that the sealing of the Spirit is temporally remote from the actual time of conversion; the events of their conversion are bound together. The argument of 1:13 appears to be that the Ephesians should consider the events surrounding their conversion to draw comfort that God has already blessed them in ways consonant with the ways he blesses all believers. Indeed, it would gut Paul's argument at this point if the sealing of the Spirit refers to a time subsequent to conversion that only some believers have experienced.

[156]The second instance of ἐν ᾧ in 1:13 is likely resumptive to emphasize that the Ephesians have been united to Christ (so Abbott, *Ephesians*, 22; Best, *Ephesians*, 149; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 17). Such an instance of anacoluthon ("in him you also—when you heard . . . —in him you also, when you believed, were sealed") is not infrequent in Paul's literature (cf. Rom 2:17-22; Gal 2:6; 1 Tim 1:3-4). Hence, the antecedent of both instances of ἐν ᾧ is not εὐαγγέλιον but Χριστός (contra Mitton, *Ephesians*, 59), and neither are the object of πιστεύσαντες but both modify ἐσφραγίσθητε. And thus there is no need to supply a verb such as ἠλπίκατε, ἐκληρώθητε, or ἐστέ after the first ἐν ᾧ (contra Beare, *Ephesians*, 623; Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 64; Hodge, *Ephesians*, 61; rightly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 78).

[157]There probably is not much difference between seeing τῆς ἀληθείας as an attributive genitive ("the truthful word") and a genitive of content ("the word whose content is truth"; Best, *Ephesians*, 148-49; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 236). Probably τῆς σωτηρίας is an objective genitive ("the gospel that produces salvation"; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 92; Best, *Ephesians*, 149; cf. Rom 1:16).

in the LXX combines the terms εὐαγγέλιον and σωτηρία, and which Paul appears to quote in Romans 10:16 and Ephesians 2:17 (cf. Nah 2:1 [Eng. 1:15]). Isaiah 52:7 describes the proclamation of good news that God was coming as Zion's king to redeem Zion. In the broader context of Isaiah, it is set within Isaiah's servant songs, in which the servant redeems God's people by dying in their place for their transgressions (Isa 52:13-53:12). As noted in chapter 2, the work of the servant benefits all those in humanity who repent of their sin and receive the pardon of Yahweh (Isa 55:1-13). Thus, the good news of Isaiah 52:7 is that a lasting covenant relationship has been inaugurated between God and his people through the work of the servant, and that salvation is freely offered to those who will receive it. In Ephesians 1:13, then, Paul wanted to remind the Ephesians that this "gospel of salvation," which was rooted in God's faithful word in the OT—"the word of truth" as opposed to a false gospel (cf. Rom 1:1-3; 16:25)—had been broadcast to them through his ministry, and they had become legitimate sharers of the promised salvation through faith in Christ. As he will later put it, they had become "fellow sharers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (3:6). Even though their salvation was not complete, in some respects they had already been saved at the moment they were raised from their spiritual deadness, delivered from the wrath of God, and given new life in Christ (2:4-9).[158]

Not only had God been faithful to his word by saving the Ephesians in accord with his OT promises, but also at the moment of their conversion he sealed them with the Spirit he had promised (v. 13b).[159] A seal (σφραγίς) was used in the ancient world to

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[158]So Caird, *Paul's Letters*, 41; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 119. Beare (*Ephesians*, 623) overemphasizes the present aspects of salvation, whereas Thielman (*Ephesians*, 80) overemphasizes the future aspects of salvation (cf. 1 Thess 5:8-9). Both aspects are present in Ephesians and in the phrase τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας.

[159]The seal is neither "that blessed hope and assurance which the Holy Spirit imparts to our spirit" (Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 18) nor the Spirit's ongoing work in believers (Barth, *Ephesians*, 139-43) nor baptism (*2 Clem.* 7.6; 8.6; *Herm. Sim.* 8.6.3; 9.16.3-7; 9.17.4; Beare, *Ephesians*, 623; Dahl, "The Concept

identity an object of ownership and protection or security.[160] When used in magic contexts, it would serve as a sign of protection by a deity, whose image would likely be on the seal.[161] Since σωτηρία in 1:13 is likely salvation from God's wrath against sin (cf. 2:3), God's seal of believers means he protects them from his wrath and preserves them as his people until "the day of redemption" (4:30; cf. Rev 7:1-8; 9:4).[162]

Indeed, God's seal, the Holy Spirit, was the guarantee (ἀρραβών) of the believers' future inheritance.[163] The ἀρραβών was a legal pledge or deposit that guaranteed the complete receipt of payment at a later time. The term ἀρραβών only occurs in the LXX when Judah pledged a young goat to Tamar by means of his signet, cord, and staff (Gen 38:17-20). The signet, cord, and staff were Judah's physical pledge (ἀρραβών) of the future payment of a goat. In the same way, God gives his Spirit to believers in the present as a pledge of their inheritance in the future (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5).[164] The Spirit's presence, then, is God's confirmation that what he has promised believers will come to fruition.[165]

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of Baptism," 425; MacDonald, *Ephesians*, 212-14; Scott, *Ephesians*, 148-49), but the Spirit himself (Best, *Ephesians*, 150-51; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 40; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 120; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 65). The arguments for baptism fail on account of the necessity to read second-century texts back into the NT (rightly Abbott, *Ephesians*, 22). Further, given the explicit parallels with 2 Cor 1:22 and 5:5, the Father is the one who seals as opposed to the Spirit.

[160]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 39; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 120.

[161]Gottfried Fitzer, "σφραγίς, σφραγίζω, κατασφραγίζω," in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich; trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 7:939-43.

[162]Rightly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 81.

[163]The reading ὅ is to be preferred on external grounds (so Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2002], 533; contra Barth, *Ephesians*, 95-96; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 19; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 241). It is not clear whether a scribe would have changed the masculine to the neuter to agree with πνεῦμα or the neuter to the masculine by attraction to ἀρραβών.

[164]It is likely, then, that Paul sees the inheritance for believers as a reality not yet applied to them (contra Arnold, *Ephesians*, 93). The Spirit himself is not the inheritance but the guarantee of it. Thus, the present tense ἔχει in Eph 5:5 is probably a futuristic present.

[165]In all three occurrences of the term ἀρραβών in the NT (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14), the

Not only does the Spirit's presence guarantee that God will keep his promises yet to be realized, his presence itself also is the fulfillment of God's new covenant promises. As verse 13 says, he is "the Holy Spirit of the promise" (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἅγιον), which, as argued above, likely indicates God's promises to Abraham are being fulfilled (Gal 3:14).[166] Indeed, as seen in chapter 2, the promise of the Spirit was a significant element of the new covenant, where God would pour out his Spirit on his people and give them hearts to obey his word (Isa 44:3; 59:21; Ezek 11:19-20; 36:25-27; 37:14), which corresponds to Jeremiah's circumcision of the heart (Jer 31:33; cf. Deut 30:6; *Jub.* 1:23). The Spirit's presence provides evidence that God has kept his OT promises and has inaugurated the new covenant through Christ.[167] Just as in the OT the Spirit's presence was the sign that God had reconciled his people to himself in a new and everlasting covenant relationship, so the Spirit's presence in the believers at Ephesus was God's confirmation that they were true recipients of "the gospel of peace" (Eph 6:15) and full members of his eschatological covenant community (Eph 2:19-22).

Another indication that God's covenant promises are fulfilled for the Ephesian believers is found in the difficult phrase εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως (v. 14). The term ἀπολύτρωσις I have already noted above connotes the concept of deliverance, yet, unlike the present possession of forgiveness in 1:7, the time of this act of deliverance in 1:14 appears to be the final deliverance, or as 4:30 describes it, "the day of

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context concerns the promises of God. In 2 Cor 1:18-22 Paul encourages the Corinthians that God's promises are always "yes" in Christ, for he has confirmed his word through the Spirit. Later in the letter (5:1-5), he describes his groaning to put on an immortal and resurrected body, which God, who alone can accomplish this, has promised him by means of the Spirit. Finally, in Eph 1:14, Paul describes the blessing of a future inheritance, which is guaranteed by the Spirit.

[166]Similarly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 92; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 18-19; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 40; Robinson, *Ephesians*, 35; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 82. Hence, ἐπαγγελία in 1:13 is not prospective of future blessings but retrospective of past promises now fulfilled (contra Best, *Ephesians*, 151; Bruce, *Ephesians*, 265; Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 56). Perhaps Jesus' promise of the Spirit is also in view (John 7:38-39; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; Moule, *Ephesians*, 54).

[167]So Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 240.

redemption."[168] Paul's conception of redemption had an "already-not yet" character. On the one hand, it was the present possession of believers in the sense that they were already forgiven of their sin and delivered from its penalty and power (Rom 3:24; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Titus 2:14). On the other hand, redemption was a promise for the future, when God would raise believers from the dead and give them their promised inheritance in the new creation (Rom 8:23). It is this future redemption Paul has in mind in Ephesians 1:14.

But the question remains who in 1:14 is responsible for this act of deliverance and how the genitive τῆς περιποιήσεως is related to it. There are two main interpretive options. First, περιποιήσεως could be an epexegetical genitive defining the nature of the redemption.[169] With this meaning, believers would be sealed for the goal of (εἰς) redeeming, which is explained as the acquisition of something. What would be the object of the redemption or acquisition is not explicit, although probably the believer's inheritance or final salvation would be in view. In this reading, believers would likely be those redeeming or acquiring their future inheritance. The strength of this interpretation is that it interprets the noun περιποίησις as a verbal abstract or "action noun," which is consonant with the meaning of many -σις nouns by the rules of Greek noun formation. Hence, περιποίησις as a verbal abstract of περιποιέω would lend to the translation "acquiring, obtaining, or preserving," a meaning found in Paul's literature (1 Thess 5:9; 2 Thess 2:14) and elsewhere (LXX Hag 2:9; Heb 10:39). Nevertheless, this view is not likely, since the head noun ἀπολύτρωσις is also a verbal abstract that most naturally takes an objective genitive as the recipient of the action inherent in the noun. Indeed, when περιποίησις functions as a verbal abstract, it too naturally has an objective genitive present

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[168]Rightly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 20; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 41.

[169]Abbott, *Ephesians*, 23-24; Best, *Ephesians*, 152-53; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 64; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 67.

(1 Thess 5:9; 2 Thess 2:14; Heb 10:39), which is noticeably lacking in Ephesians 1:14. Reading περιποίησις as an epexegetical genitive following ἀπολύτρωσις is too unnatural syntactically to be the correct reading.[170] Finally, the one most naturally responsible for the act of redemption is God, not believers.[171] Hence, it is not likely that the believer's own acquisition of the inheritance or salvation is in view.

The second—and more likely—interpretation is to understand περιποιήσεως to refer to believers as God's possession.[172] In this reading, περιποίησις, the objective genitive of ἀπολύτρωσιν, is not the act of acquiring or preserving something but that which is acquired, preserved, or possessed—a valid meaning for the term (2 Chr 14:12 [Eng. 14:13]; Mal 3:17; 1 Pet 2:9). Believers, then, would be sealed with a view toward (εἰς) the final redemption of the acquisition.[173] Whereas it is possible for believers to be those in possession of the acquisition, it is more likely that in this reading the possession is God's, which he will redeem on the final day.[174] If this is the case, then in referring to God's possession Paul probably alluded to those OT texts that describe God's people as his "treasured possession" (סְגֻלָּה, Exod 19:5).[175] The term סְגֻלָּה explicated the nature and goal of the covenant relationship established at Sinai. Hence, to be God's treasured

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[170]Rightly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 20.

[171]Rightly Caird, *Paul's Letters*, 42.

[172]So Arnold, *Ephesians*, 93; Barth, *Ephesians*, 97; Beare, *Ephesians*, 625; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 20; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 244-45; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 41-42; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 122. Westcott (*Ephesians*, 17-18) argues that the περιποίησις includes all of created reality (cf. Rom 8:18-25).

[173]It is not likely that the preposition εἰς means "until" here, since it is parallel with the final clause εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ (contra Arnold, *Ephesians*, 93; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 245).

[174]It is sometimes averred that Eph 1:14 says nothing about the possession being God's (Abbott, *Ephesians*, 23-24; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 85). But this fails to observe that in the near context (1:18) believers are called God's inheritance and that 1:5 has already described God's possession of them by adoption. Yet contra Westcott (*Ephesians*, 18), the αὐτοῦ in 1:14 is no argument in favor of the περιποίησις being God's possession (rightly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 20).

[175]Cf. Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4; Mal 3:17. Moule, *Ephesians*, 55.

possession was to be in a covenant relationship with him. In effect, then, if in the term περιποίησις Paul alluded to the סְגֻלָּה texts, Paul would be assuring the Ephesians that they are his "treasured possession," his covenant people, and that the new covenant relationship he has established with them will result in God's final deliverance of them on the last day.

A serious objection to this interpretation is that the typical LXX translation for סְגֻלָּה is περιούσιος, not περιποίησις. Hence, it is argued, it is not likely that one can establish an allusion to the סְגֻלָּה texts in the OT.[176] While this is a substantial objection, it must be noted that in LXX Malachi 3:17 the translator, in an evident wordplay on περιούσιος, translated סְגֻלָּה with περιποίησις.[177] The reason for the wordplay was probably because in Malachi 3:17 God spares or preserves the remnant in the end, which the term περιποίησις captures nicely while retaining the semblance of the more traditional translation περιούσιος. This wordplay is also found in 1 Peter 2:9, a text that evidently alludes to Exodus 19:5-6 yet uses Malachi's wordplay to emphasize the preservation of God's people as opposed to the destruction of unbelievers in 1 Peter 2:7-8. Hence, on the analogy of Malachi 3:17 and 1 Peter 2:9, it is possible that Paul also utilized a wordplay on περιούσιος in order to combine the notions that the Ephesians were both God's treasured possession and his saved remnant, whom God was to preserve until the day of redemption (Isa 43:21).[178]

Therefore, in Ephesians 1:14 the Spirit guarantees that on the last day God will

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[176]See Thielman, *Ephesians*, 85. In Ps 135:4 (LXX 134:4) it is περιουσιασμός.

[177]On the evidence of Jerome, Aquila reads περιούσιος, while Symmachus and Theodotion agree with the LXX.

[178]Thielman (*Ephesians*, 84-86) argues convincingly that since περιποίησις carries notions of preservation, in Eph 1:14 it describes the "saved remnant," which fits with the ideas of preservation in 1:13 (σωτηρία, σφραγίζω; contra Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 237). What he denies, though, is that Paul is *also* referring to God's people as his "treasured possession." But both meanings can be present, as they are in Mal 3:17 and 1 Pet 2:9.

redeem his own people, who are his treasured possession. That Paul calls the Ephesian believers God's סְגֻלָּה is a strong indication that the goal of the Sinai covenant had been fulfilled in Christ, and that the Ephesians were now in a new covenant relationship with God.

Conclusion

Hence, in 1:11-14 Paul encourages the Ephesian believers that in Christ they have been granted a share of the inheritance of the saints. It is an inheritance they are guaranteed to obtain because of the meticulous sovereignty of the God who plans and guides history (v. 11). Further, the inheritance is guaranteed by the presence of the Spirit within them, who is their seal of ownership by God (vv. 13-14). They are reminded of the events surrounding their conversion, when they heard the gospel and trusted and hoped in Christ (vv. 12-13).

That these blessings were present in the Ephesian church indicated that the new covenant had arrived. While the nature of the inheritance may be understood as salvation or eternal life (Luke 18:18; Heb 1:14), that the believer has been given an allotment (κληρόω) in 1:11 indicates that the land promises in the OT are in view, albeit in an expanded form.[179] Indeed, the new covenant contained promises that God's people would once again dwell in the land, yet the land would be coextensive with the new creation (Isa 65:16-17).[180] Hence, the fact that in "the fullness of time" a new humanity consisting of Jews and Gentiles in Christ—what Ephesians 2:15 calls the "one new man"—had been apportioned an inheritance is a decisive argument that Paul considered the new covenant to have arrived in Christ. Also, the presence of the Spirit in 1:13

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[179]Moule (*Ephesians*, 55) describes the inheritance as "the final Canaan of the true Israel."

[180]Rightly Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 461-70; Williamson, *Ephesians*, 43; Wright, *Prison Letters*, 12.

fulfilled the new covenant's promise that God would pour out his transforming Spirit on his people. Finally, in 1:14 the Ephesians are considered God's "treasured possession," whom he will preserve until the day of redemption. That Jewish and Gentile believers in the last days were considered God's סְגֻלָּה strongly indicates that God had established a covenant relationship with his eschatological people in Christ.[181]

Conclusion

In this analysis of Ephesians 1:3-14 it has been evident that Paul saw the new covenant as a significant soteriological concept that had found its fulfillment in the Trinitarian work of salvation. The heading (1:3) portrayed every blessing believers possess in Christ as the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham. The collocation in 1:3 of blessing terminology, the presence of the Spirit, and the allusion to Isaiah 44:1-5 framed the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham as the backdrop to the entire benediction. In Section 1 (1:4-6), election was the dominant motif, which hearkened back to God's choice to set his covenant affection on Israel. As he had adopted Israel as his son, so God had predestined to adopt all believers in Christ as his children, which is descriptive of a covenant relationship characterized by love, loyalty, and kinship. It was noted in the excursus that the predominantly Gentile audience at Ephesus could legitimately be included as members of the new covenant on account of their union with Christ, who as the promised Davidic king and true Israel, embodies or represents the new

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[181]Although he views the redemption of the περιποίησις in 1:14 to be a description of God's people as his possession in line with OT statements (Exod 19:5-6; LXX Exod 23:22), Barth (*Ephesians*, 97) resists any notions of supercessionism: "But expressions such as the 'new' or 'true' Israel (that seem to correspond to the 'new' covenant, the 'new' man, the 'New' Testament) are not found in this context or anywhere else in the NT." More accurately, Stott (*Ephesians*, 47) explains, "It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Paul is alluding to the church as God's 'inheritance' and 'possession.' These words used to be applied exclusively to the one nation of Israel, but are now reapplied to an international people whose common factor is that they are all 'in Christ.' The fact that the same vocabulary is used of both peoples indicates the spiritual continuity between them" (so Robinson, *Ephesians*, 36). Indeed, even the purpose of glorifying and praising God, a major theme in 1:3-14 and the note on which the benediction concludes, matches Israel's doxological purpose, which was unfulfilled in the OT (cf. Isa 43:21; Jer 13:11).

humanity as their corporate head.

In Section 2 (1:7-10) the blessing of forgiveness was pronounced, which believers presently possess (1:7-8). The promise of forgiveness was one of the hallmarks of the new covenant, serving as the basis of God's acceptance of his people (Jer 31:31). Jesus' death is seen as the sacrifice that redeems God's people from their sins and inaugurates the new covenant for them. Such abundant grace toward believers illustrates the rich wisdom and knowledge of God, who made known his grace to believers in "the fullness of time" (1:9), a phrase indicative of the eschatological character of the new covenant. The mystery that had been hidden in past ages was that the cosmos would find its goal and unity in Christ, a mystery that had begun in the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ, and which would be completed at his return.

Finally, in Section 3 (1:11-14) believers are allotted a share in the inheritance of the saints (1:11), an inheritance that is guaranteed by the presence of the Spirit, who seals all believers upon conversion. The promise of a future inheritance corresponds with the new covenant's promise that God's people would dwell in the expanded land when he restored their fortunes. That believers have the Spirit recalls the new covenant's promise that in the last days all God's people would have the Spirit within them (1:13-14). Finally, in 1:14 God's people are considered his "treasured possession," a term descriptive of God's covenant relationship with his people.

Hence, although Paul never explicitly refers to the new covenant in the benediction, the blessings for which he praises God indicate that the new covenant had arrived in Christ, for the same blessings were part and parcel of the prophetic program concerning Israel's eschatological hope in the new covenant. Paul's soteriological framework expressed in Ephesians 1:3-14, then, must be understood within the framework of the new covenant.

CHAPTER 4

EPHESIANS 2:11-22

Chapter 3 identified several new covenant promises for believers in Ephesians 1:3-14. It was demonstrated that the new covenant provided a key element to Paul's soteriological framework. Yet it is possible that 1:3-14 is an exception and thus not indicative of the significance of the covenant conception to Pauline soteriology. It remains, then, to analyze other texts in Ephesians to determine the extent of the new covenant's soteriological significance for Paul. Indeed, in Ephesians 2:11-22 I will show that the new covenant provides not only a significant soteriological but also an ecclesiological element to Paul's theology.

Ephesians 2:11-22 is at the heart of the letter, for it describes why the Gentiles are full and equal members of the people of God. Significantly, the only instance of the term διαθήκη in Ephesians occurs in this passage (v. 12), where Paul reminds the Gentiles of their pre-Christian plight as "strangers to the covenants of the promise." The covenantal nature of the Gentiles' plight, then, is explicit. But this does not exhaust the covenantal notions of the passage, for there are other textual and theological indicators that suggest the covenant concept, and the new covenant in particular, was part and parcel of Paul's understanding of not only the Gentiles' plight but also their solution and resultant status in Christ.

First, the plight of the Gentiles (vv. 11-12) is described as their lack of circumcision, the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, and their estrangement from Israel and her covenants. The way in which Paul seems to denigrate physical circumcision in verse 11, though, indicates that the solution for the Gentiles (as well as for the Jews) resides in

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the circumcision of the heart, a promise commanded by the old covenant (Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4) but only realized in the new. Second, the solution for the Gentiles (vv. 13-18) correspondingly emphasizes the new covenant, wherein God brought them near to himself and his people by the death of Christ. Christ's death abolished the old covenant and, in a way predicted by Isaiah, inaugurated the new covenant of peace for a worldwide humanity. Third, the resultant status for the Gentiles (vv. 19-22) shows the striking reversal of their plight, for in Christ they are now full members of the people of God. Their membership in the new covenant is made clear by their experience as constituent elements of the new temple, where, in fulfillment of the covenant ideal, God dwells among his people.

Hence, these textual and theological indicators in 2:11-22 suggest that the new covenant, far from being insignificant, was a robust theological concept for Paul and provided for him the framework to remind the Gentiles of their abundant soteriological and ecclesiological blessings in Christ.

The Structure of 2:11-22

What is universally agreed upon is that Ephesians 2:11-22 forms a unit. But what is generally less clear is how it relates to 2:1-10. The two texts are linked with the inferential conjunction διό in verse 11, indicating that in some sense 2:11-22 is grounded in something previously mentioned (probably in vv. 1-10).[1] Verses 1-10 relate how God in his love, mercy, kindness, and grace has resurrected all believers in Christ, whereas 2:11-22 focuses on what God has done specifically for the Gentiles.[2] The two units, then,

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[1]Rightly T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1897), 55. V. 10 uses a few of the same roots found in vv. 11-22 (ποίημα and κτισθέντες, v. 10; ποιήσας/ποιῶν and κτίσῃ, vv. 14-15), and thus serves as a nice transition. Ernest Best (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998], 238) suggests the "once – now" schema may be the connection between the two pericopes.

[2]Although in 2:1-3 perhaps one can discern a pronominal distinction between Jews and

are parallel, with the first grounding and setting the stage for the second.[3] That 2:11-22 is climactic fits nicely with the purpose of Ephesians, which was written specifically to encourage Gentile believers of their legitimate status in the people of God.[4] Hence, an initial summary of the chapter could be: because God has raised up *all believers* with Christ, even when they were dead in their sins, and because he did this out of his sheer love, mercy, and grace (vv. 1-10), therefore, *you Gentiles* should also remember specifically your own hopeless situation prior to being united to Christ, and how in Christ you were reconciled to God and how through Christ's work you have been joined into the one people of God, so that you too are his dwelling place (vv. 11-22).[5]

Ephesians 2:11-22 is divided into three sections: verses 11-12, 13-18, and 19-22.[6] Verses 11-12 describe the plight of the Gentiles. That Paul is calling on the Gentiles

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Gentiles, one should not read 2:4-10 in this way, for such a reading becomes too convoluted quite quickly: "God made us alive . . . by grace you were saved . . . kindness toward us . . . by grace you were saved . . . we are his workmanship."

[3]This pattern where Paul lists blessings for all believers and then applies them specifically to Gentile believers is found elsewhere in Ephesians, particularly in 1:3-14, where vv. 3-12 list blessings for all believers and vv. 13-14 focus specifically on Paul's audience. On a smaller scale, the same pattern is found in the parallel ἐν ᾧ phrases in 2:21-22, where v. 21 mentions "all that is built" (i.e., all believers) and v. 22 applies that truth specifically to the Gentiles.

[4]For a note on this point, see chapter 3.

[5]Similarly Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 152. Francis W. Beare (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, in vol. 10 of *IB*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick [Nashville: Abingdon, 1953], 648-49) is probably right that 2:11-22 explains more fully how it is that the church is the fullness of Christ (1:23).

[6]It is likely that vv. 13-14 should be read together (rightly Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, AB, vol. 34 [Garden City: Doubleday, 1974], 275; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], 294-95), although most commentators argue that v. 13 should be structured with vv. 11-12 (e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 236; Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002], 351; Edna Johnson, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Ephesians* [Dallas: SIL International, 2008], 91; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC, vol. 42 [Dallas: Word Books, 1990], 131; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 184; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 151). But this does not adequately explain the conjunctions in vv. 13-14: δέ in v. 13 introduces a new idea to Paul's argument (see Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*, Lexham Bible Reference [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010], 31-36, for an convincing defense of δέ as a marker of development), and the γάρ of v. 14 explains or grounds this new idea. These conjunctions explain the structure the discourse more than the switch from second to first person pronouns in v. 14, the use of Christ as the

to remember their plight is clear from verse 11, and the content of their plight is found in verse 12. Verses 13-18 describe the solution for the Gentiles in the death of Christ. Verse 13 begins with the eschatologically charged phrase νυνὶ δέ, where the adverb νυνί emphasizes that the eschatological reversal of the Gentiles' plight has come in Christ (cf. 2:4).[7] Verse 13 states the main point of 2:13-18, for it is grounded (γάρ, v. 14a) in verses 14-18. One of the key ideas in this paragraph is that in Christ the Gentiles have peace (εἰρήνη) with God, for the notion that Christ is "our peace" in verse 14a is developed in the succeeding verses in a twofold way: Christ as peacemaker (vv. 14b-16)[8] and peace-preacher (vv. 17-18).[9] Christ as peacemaker abolished the Sinai covenant (vv. 14b-15a), the twofold purpose (ἵνα, v. 15a) of which was to create a new humanity (v. 15b) and to reconcile this new humanity to God (v. 16). As peace-preacher, Christ proclaimed this peace to both Jews and Gentiles (v. 17), because (ὅτι, v. 18a) it is through him that they both come to God.

Verses 19-22 conclude by emphatically stating that the Gentiles are full and equal members of the people of God. It begins with the inferential phrase ἄρα οὖν,[10]

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grammatical subject beginning in v. 14, and the speculation of an early hymnic fragment consisting of vv. 14-18 (e.g., Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 128-29; Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, Believers Church Bible Commentary [Waterloo, ON: Herald, 2002], 112-13). The pronominal switch in v. 14 indicates only that Paul is applying Christ's reconciling work to all believers, not just to Gentiles. The use of Christ as the grammatical subject in vv. 14-17 is explainable, since in v. 13 the phrase "in Christ Jesus" is in a position of emphasis. Finally, the attempts to discern a pre-Pauline hymn in vv. 14-18 are too speculative, especially given the fact that, whatever sources Paul may have used in crafting vv. 11-22, he certainly used them for his own purposes (rightly Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 147; Best, *Ephesians*, 247-50; Thorsten Moritz, *A Profound Mystery: The Use of the OT in Ephesians*, NovTSup, vol. 85 [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 25-29; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 161-62).

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

[8]Note the repetition of the verb ποιέω in v. 14b, ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφότερα ἓν, and v. 15b, ποιῶν εἰρήνην.

[9]The καί beginning v. 17 shows the correlative relationship between vv. 14b-16 and 17-18.

[10]Although a few significant manuscripts omit οὖν (𝔓[46] [apparently], F, G, Ψ, 1739, 1881), it is likely original, for it is the *lectio difficilior*. Given ἄρα, a scribe would have been more likely to perceive

suggesting that the christological solution in 2:13-18 grounds the Gentiles' inclusion into the people of God. Their resultant status is explained in various ways in 2:19-22.

Hence, the structure of the text can be shown as follows:[11]

A Plight of the Gentiles (vv. 11-12)

B Solution for the Gentiles (vv. 13-18)

Christ brings the Gentiles near to God (v. 13)

For (γάρ) Christ is "our peace" (v. 14a)

Christ is peacemaker: abolishes the Sinai covenant (vv. 14b-15a)

To (ἵνα) create a new humanity (v. 15b)

And (καί) reconcile humanity to God (v. 16)

And (καί) Christ is peace-preacher to Jews and Gentiles (v. 17)

Because (ὅτι) both have access to God through him (v. 18)

C New status for the Gentiles (vv. 19-22)

What the structure indicates is that the main point of 2:11-22 is reflected in 2:19-22. There is a clear trajectory from the plight of the Gentiles (vv. 11-12) to their solution in Christ (vv. 13-18) and ultimately and climactically to their resultant status as the dwelling place of God (vv. 19-22).[12] If the structure above is correct, then verses 13-18 are not the goal of the text, for they *ground* verses 19-22, and therefore the latter serves as the conclusion and goal of the text. The fact that Paul ends 2:11-22 with a

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οὖν as redundant, or perhaps could have omitted it by way of parablepsis due to homoioarcton with οὐκέτι.

[11]Similarly Johnson, *Semantic and Structural Analysis*, 92, 97, 103; John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1979), 94. Some have attempted to show a chiasm in vv. 11-22, with the center generally associated with vv. 14-16 (e.g., John Paul Heil, *Ephesians: Empowerment to Walk in Love for the Unity of All in Christ*, SBLSBL 13 [Atlanta: SBL, 2007], 109-32; Giovanni Giavini, "La structure littéraire d'Éph. 2:11-22," *NTS* 16 (1969-70): 209-11; Ian H. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters*, JSNTSup 111 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 84-115). Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 126) rightly sees the structure rooted in the "contrast schema" of the passage (e.g., ποτέ . . . νυνὶ δέ in vv. 11-13), and if there is a chiasm, it is only "loosely chiastic" (so Arnold, *Ephesians*, 147).

[12]Thielman (*Ephesians*, 150) says Paul speaks "climactically" in vv. 21-22.

statement of the realization of the covenant formula in the new people of God heightens the significance of the new covenant for Paul.

"Strangers to the Covenants of the Promise": The Plight of the Gentiles in 2:11-12

In 2:11-12, Paul calls on the Gentiles to remember their plight before they were converted.[13] In verse 11 he reminds them that they were popularly known among ethnic Jews as "the uncircumcised," and in verse 12 he calls on them to remember their plight before God apart from Christ.[14] In this brief but compact description of their plight, which is set in salvation-historical terms, is the covenantal nature of the Gentiles' plight: on the one hand, they were not circumcised, which signified membership in the covenant community (v. 11), and on the other hand, they did not own the privileges and promises pertaining to the covenant community of Israel (v. 12).

"The Uncircumcision" and "The Circumcision" (2:11)

Verse 11 provides a detailed description of what it meant to be an ethnic Gentile. That ethnicity is in view is plain from the double use of the phrase ἐν σαρκί.[15]

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[13]Many commentators (e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 239-40) rightly note that the call for the Gentiles to remember what God has done for them parallels the Deuteronomic call for Israel to remember what God did for them (Deut 5:15; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22). Contra Beare (*Ephesians*, 649) and John Muddiman (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, BNTC [London: Continuum, 2001], 116), who think it is evidence of a post-Pauline situation. Even though grammatically the object of ὅτι is v. 12, Paul wants the Gentiles to remember not only who they were apart from Christ but also his reconciling work for them in Christ in vv. 13-18 (contra Best, *Ephesians*, 244-45). This is already a hint that Paul considers the Gentiles to be full members of the new community of God.

[14]Although there are two instances of ὅτι in vv. 11-12, the second is resumptive, not parallel, and introduces the real object of the verb μνημονεύετε (contra Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 116). Thus, v. 11 is parenthetical, providing a full description of what it meant to be an ethnic Gentile.

[15]Most likely, Paul is not using σάρξ to refer to a person's sinful nature, as in 2:3 (Best, *Ephesians*, 238; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 354; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 135); contra Barth, *Ephesians*, 254. In 2 Cor 10:3 ἐν σαρκί refers to an "element of life" and κατὰ σάρκα to the "standard and rule of life" (Brooke Foss Westcott, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: The Greek Text with Notes and Addenda* [London: Macmillan, 1906], 34).

Ethnically and physically speaking, the Gentile believers were uncircumcised; they had never received the physical sign of the Abrahamic covenant, circumcision of the foreskin (Gen 17:11; *Jub.* 15:33-34), which also came to be associated with the Mosaic covenant (Gal 5:3).[16] To be uncircumcised, then, was to be outside of God's covenant people.[17] Since circumcision was the clear, ethnic boundary that separated Jews and Gentiles, there was tension between Jews and Gentiles, which resulted in the Jews popularly and derisively calling (λεγόμενοι) the Gentiles "the foreskin" (ἡ ἀκροβυστία; cf. Acts 11:3).[18] And even though Paul hints in 2:11 that outward circumcision no longer matters (see below), he still emphasizes that, before Christ came, the Gentiles were outside the people of God and were not near God in a covenant relationship like Israel was (Rom 3:1-2).[19]

Nevertheless, Paul hints that their plight would not be solved by adherence to the strictures of the old covenant, for he indicates that outward circumcision no longer is necessary for one to become a member of the people of God. First, he describes the Jews as "the so-called circumcision" (ἡ λεγομένη περιτομή). The present passive participle λεγομένη probably indicates not merely the popular name for the Jews but also Paul's negative outlook on outward circumcision as an indicator of God's people.[20] It is true that

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[16]As some have noted (e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 239), the Jews were not the only people to circumcise and thus Ephesians must have been written by someone other than Paul, who would have known this. But Paul was specifically writing from the Jewish perception of the Gentiles. The Jews considered themselves to be the "true circumcision" and all Gentiles to be uncircumcised before God.

[17]Tet-Lim N. Yee (*Jews, Gentiles and Ethnic Reconciliation: Paul's Jewish Identity and Ephesians*, SNTSMS 130 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 78-81) rightly notes the intimate connection between the Jewish rite of circumcision and the covenant relationship.

[18]See Thielman (*Ephesians*, 159-60) for a brief explanation of how circumcision or uncircumcision was used pejoratively between Jews and Gentiles (cf. Judg 14:3; 1 Sam 17:36; Isa 52:1).

[19]Contra E. F. Scott (*The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, MNTC [New York: Harper, 1930], 168), v. 11 does not indicate God never valued outward circumcision, for this misunderstands Paul's view of the Mosaic covenant as an interim covenant.

[20]Rightly C. Leslie. Mitton, *Ephesians*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1976), 102; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 153; contra Best, *Ephesians*, 239; Heil, *Ephesians*, 111, n. 6; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 136.

these participles are frequently used neutrally to express popular opinion (Matt 2:23; Luke 22:47), and Paul himself can use them in this way (Col 4:11).[21] However, the other two instances outside of Ephesians 2:11 where Paul uses the present passive participle from λέγω (1 Cor 8:5; 2 Thess 2:4) betray a pessimistic outlook toward the topic at hand. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 8:5, Paul relates the popular opinion in the Greco-Roman world that there are many so-called gods (λεγόμενοι θεοί). But it is clear from the context that Paul does not consider these figures to be true deities, for in 8:4 he explicitly states that "there is no god except one," and in 8:6 he contrasts Christian monotheism with the plurality of gods in 8:5 by claiming that "for us there is one God the Father . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore, it is likely that Paul used the term λεγόμενοι in 8:5 to indicate his revulsion to the pagan worldview of a plurality of gods (cf. 2 Thess 2:4). Given Paul's perspective on circumcision elsewhere (Rom 2:25-29; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 6:15; Phil 3:3; Col 3:11), it is likely that in Ephesians 2:11 he also presents a negative perspective on physical circumcision. For Paul, people from all nations, both Jews and Gentiles, have been gathered into the "one new man" in Christ (2:15), regardless of ethnicity or physical circumcision.

Second, Paul seems to view outward circumcision as irrelevant since it is "handmade in the flesh" (ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου).[22] Like λεγόμενος, the adjective

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[21]Paul can also use in a seemingly neutral way the terms περιτομή and ἀκροβυστία as a word pair to refer to Jews and Gentiles, respectively (e.g., Rom 3:30; 4:9; Col 3:11).

[22]Rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 153-54; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 186-87; Pheme Perkins, *The Letter to the Ephesians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections*, in vol. 11 of *NIB*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 396; contra Yee, *Jews, Gentiles, and Ethnic Reconciliation*, 83-87 (Thielman [*Ephesians*, 160n32] rightly says that such a point proves wrong "Yee's broader thesis that 2:11-12 is written from a Jewish rather than a Jewish-Christian perspective"). That circumcision is irrelevant would have shocking to a Jew; see the significance of circumcision to the rabbis in *Mek. Exod* 18:3: "R. Ishmael says: Great is circumcision, for thirteen covenants were made over it. R. Jose the Galilean says: Great is circumcision, for it sets aside the Sabbath, which is very important and the profanation of which is punishable by extinction. R. Joshua b. Karḥa says: Great is circumcision, for no merit of Moses could suspend the punishment for its neglect even for one hour [cf. Exod 4:24-26]. R. Nehemiah says: Great is circumcision, for it sets aside the laws concerning plagues. Rabbi says: Great is circumcision, for all the merits of Moses availed him not in the time of his trouble about it" (Jacob Z. Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi*

χειροποίητος can be used in a neutral way to indicate something made by humans (e.g., *Ant.* 4.55; *B.J.* 1.419; 7.294), although in the LXX it is only used of handmade idols[23] and in the New Testament of physical temples.[24] An analysis of the use of the term, along with its antonym ἀχειροποίητος, indicates that in religious literature it is used to depreciate a topic, for it contrasts with the supernatural.

In fact, although Paul never uses χειροποίητος elsewhere in his writings (but see Acts 17:24), he does use the antonym twice (2 Cor 5:1; Col 2:11) to describe the superior nature of something in contrast with something natural or manmade.[25] Of these, Colossians 2:11 is especially instructive for interpreting Ephesians 2:11, for it closely corresponds to Ephesians 2:11.[26] In Colossians Paul states that believers "have been circumcised with a circumcision not handmade" (περιετμήθητε περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ), and this has been achieved "in the circumcision of Christ" (ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ).[27] Such a circumcision likely refers to the circumcision of the heart, which is an inward,

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Ishmael: A Critical Edition on the Basis of the Manuscripts and Early Editions with an English Translation, Introduction and Notes [Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933], 2:169-70).

[23]See Lev 26:1, 30; Wis 14:8; Isa 2:18; DanLXX 5:4.

[24]See Mark 14:58; Acts 7:48; 17:24; Heb 9:11, 24; cf. *Sib. Or.* 14.62. Eph 2:11 is the only place χειροποίητος is used to describe circumcision (see the discussion on Col 2:11 below). For a discussion of the eternal temple as "made without hands," see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 145-53, 309-12.

[25]In 2 Cor 5:1 Paul contrasts the "earthly" (ἐπίγειος) body with the one "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (ἀχειροποίητος αἰώνιος ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς). The body described as ἀχειροποίητος is certainly the better body, as it is indestructible, heavenly, and supernatural (cf. Mark 14:58).

[26]Rightly Barth, *Ephesians*, 280-81; cautiously, Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, SP 17 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2000), 241. Muddiman (*Ephesians*, 117-18) notes the close verbal connection with Col 2:11 but denies that there is any conceptual overlap. But given the close relationship between the letters, it is difficult not to affirm significant conceptual overlap.

[27]Scholars debate the precise meaning of the phrase "the circumcision of Christ." For a good discussion of the options, see Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 197-200. In any case, the "circumcision not manmade" probably refers to the circumcision of the heart, for which ultimately Christ is responsible.

supernatural circumcision produced by the Spirit, as opposed to physical, handmade circumcision. This inward circumcision was promised and hoped for in the Old Testament (Deut 30:6; Jer 4:4)[28] and was closely associated with the coming of the eschatological Spirit and the new covenant (Jer 31:33; Ezek 11:19-20; 36:26-27; 37:13-14; *Jub.* 1:23). The fact that Paul describes this type of circumcision with the adjective ἀχειροποίητος indicates it is a supernatural circumcision, superior to the physical one performed by human hands. Given the close relationship between Ephesians and Colossians, it is likely that Ephesians 2:11 essentially indicates the same view of physical circumcision and the superior quality of the circumcision not made with hands. Paul does not emphasize circumcision of the heart in Ephesians, but the Colossians parallel confirms Paul's underlying presuppositions.[29]

If this interpretation is correct, namely, that Paul no longer considers outward circumcision to be the sign of membership within God's people, then this must mean that Paul no longer considers the covenant of which circumcision was the sign to be in effect. If the sign of the covenant is irrelevant, so is the covenant of which it was a sign. And this is precisely what Paul affirms in verse 15, where the Mosaic law-covenant has been abolished through the death of Christ.[30] In its place has been inaugurated the new covenant with its promised circumcision of the heart, to which outward circumcision had pointed. For Paul, the end of the ages had arrived in the arrival of Christ, and the Mosaic

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[28]Cf. Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.305; 1QpHab 11.13; 1QS 5.5.

[29]Contra Best (*Ephesians*, 239) who thinks the author of Ephesians "neither positively attacks circumcision . . . nor spiritualises it." But, given the Colossians parallel, Eph 2:11 fits remarkably well with other texts where Paul explains his views on outward and inward circumcision, as well as who comprises the true circumcision (e.g., Rom 2:25-29; Phil 3:2-3); rightly Abbott, *Ephesians*, 56; H. C. G. Moule, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: With Introduction and Notes*, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1888), 75-76; Stott, *Ephesians*, 94-95.

[30]Since circumcision was also the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, that covenant as well can be thought of as having been fulfilled in the inauguration of the new covenant.

law-covenant, which was an interim covenant, had come to an end.[31] Ironically, then, in a verse intended to describe the covenantal plight of the Gentiles, Paul ends up describing one of the chief signs of Israel's nearness to God as irrelevant. Jews also needed to be circumcised in their hearts and thus join the "one new man" by being reconciled to God through the death of Christ.[32]

"Strangers to the Covenants of the Promise" (2:12)

The covenantal plight of the Gentiles is also shown in 2:12, which resumes the ὅτι-clause of 2:11 and provides the true content of the imperative μνημονεύετε.[33] The verse is carefully crafted with a temporal adverb (τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ) followed by five phrases in the predicate describing the plight of the Gentiles.[34] The five phrases are structured by carefully placed asyndeton and the correlative conjunction καί. The first phrase, χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, is the first and most important phrase, indicating the main plight of the Gentiles, from which the other four phrases flow.[35] The second and third phrases are connected with καί, as are the fourth and fifth. There is asyndeton between the third and

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[31]Arnold (*Ephesians*, 154) rightly explains that "Paul's radical new outlook on circumcision can only be explained by understanding the irrelevance of this rite from the vantage point of the new covenant and new life in Christ" (so also Bruce, *Ephesians*, 292-93).

[32]Rightly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 154. Barth (*Ephesians*, 254-55) misses the eschatological thrust of the verse by claiming Paul only belittled the misuse of circumcision through Jewish boasting.

[33]Although ὅτι could be causal in v. 12, with the object of μνημονεύετε located in v. 13, such would be improbable given the distance between v. 11 and v. 13, as well as the awkward syntax that would result. So most commentators (e.g., Barth, *Ephesians*, 256; Best, *Ephesians*, 240; Charles J. Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: With a Critical and Grammatical Commentary, and a Revised Translation*, 5th ed. [London: Longmans, Green, 1884], 44; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 136).

[34]Although a few scholars see χωρὶς Χριστοῦ adverbially ("remember that at that time at which you were apart from Christ, you were alienated"; Heil, *Ephesians*, 112n8; J. Armitage Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: A Revised Text and Translation with Exposition and Notes*, 2nd ed. [London: Macmillan, 1907], 158), most rightly understand it predicatively (e.g., Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 44; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 136).

[35]So Johnson, *Semantic and Structural Analysis*, 92; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 154.

fourth phrases as well after χωρὶς Χριστοῦ. Thus, the second and third phrases are closely correlated, as are the fourth and fifth phrases. They are also parallel in that both sets of pairs begin with a periphrastic participle and conclude with a substantival adjective. In short, these sets of parallel pairs explain what χωρὶς Χριστοῦ means. The structure, then, is as follows:[36]

A χωρὶς Χριστοῦ

    B[1] ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ ᾿Ισραήλ

        B[2] καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας

    C[1] ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες

        C[2] καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ

There may be an emphasis in the B-lines on the horizontal plight of the Gentiles, for terms πολιτεία and διαθήκη possess communal overtones. In the C-lines there may be an emphasis on the vertical plight of the Gentiles, for term ἄθεος and the phrase ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχειν indicate the lack of reconciliation with God. But one should not press these emphases too far, for to be alienated from Israel and her covenants is to be without Israel's God and any hope of reconciliation.

      This list of Israel's privileges shows the dire plight of the Gentiles. First, and structurally most significant, they were separated from the hope of Israel's Messiah.[37] To be apart from Israel's Messiah meant not having a share in any of Israel's privileges. On the other hand, as Paul demonstrates in his ubiquitous "in Christ" terminology, to have a share in the inheritance of Israel's Messiah meant having a share in all of Israel's blessings.[38] The dire nature of the Gentiles apart from Israel's Messiah heightens the

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[36]This structure is similar to that supplied by Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 44.

[37]Rightly Best, *Ephesians*, 241; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 355-56; cf. *Pss. Sol.* 17:21-25. V. 12 does not say anything about a pre-incarnate Messiah dwelling with Israel (against Barth, *Ephesians*, 256).

[38]As N. T. Wright has rightly argued (*The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in*

significance of the emphatic "in Christ Jesus" in 2:13.

Second, to be apart from Israel's Messiah is to be "estranged" (ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι) from Israel as a people.[39] The term πολιτεία can indicate a way of life (2 Macc 8:17; 4 Macc 8:7), right of citizenship,[40] or commonwealth/state.[41] Certainly the notion of citizenship is picked up in 2:19, where the Gentiles are now seen as συμπολῖται. But the meanings are not mutually exclusive, and one need not choose one at the exclusion of the other, for a Jew would have considered his right of citizenship and way of life closely connected to his residence in the land.[42] The point in 2:12 is that the Gentiles at one time were not members of the people of God, having no share in the rights and privileges of Israel.

Part and parcel of estrangement from Israel is estrangement (ξένοι) from Israel's covenants. The term ξένος carries covenantal notions, for, when applied to the Gentiles, the LXX consistently uses it to refer to a person outside the covenant community of Israel.[43] Although foreigners could travel through the land of Israel, they did not possess any of the rights or privileges of the covenant community, including the inheritance of the land and the saving promises associated with Israel's covenants. Paul seems to be using ξένος similarly in 2:12, for he associates the term with being estranged

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Pauline Theology [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991], 41-55), Χριστός is not a mere proper name for Paul but the title "Messiah," intrinsic to which is the notion that Israel's king is her corporate representative (cf. 2 Sam 19:40-43).

[39]Contra Ellicott (*Ephesians*, 45), there is no hint in the term ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι of a prior unity that was lost.

[40]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 154; Best, *Ephesians*, 241; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 356-57.

[41]Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 44-45; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 137; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 189.

[42]Rightly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 155-56.

[43]Rightly Jason C. Meyer, *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology*, NACSBT 6 (Nashville: B&H, 2009), 27. This is especially clear in Ruth 2:10, where Boaz refuses to view Ruth as a ξένη because she joined herself to the covenant community when she forsook her own gods and people for Naomi's God and people in 1:16 (see 2:12; cf. 2 Sam 15:19; Isa 18:2; Lam 5:2; 2 Macc 5:9; 10:24; 3 Macc 6:3).

from "the covenants of the promise" (αἱ διαθῆκαι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας).

The plural reference to "covenants" refers to all the covenants properly associated with Israel: the Abrahamic, Sinai, Davidic, and new covenants.[44] That the Abrahamic covenant is included is suggested by the genitive τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, a term that Paul often uses in association with Abraham.[45] This is the case as well in 3:6, where Gentiles are "partakers of the promise (ἐπαγγελία) in Christ Jesus through the gospel." If this is the case, then the promise to Abraham is seen as foundational, from which Israel's other covenants flow—a notion seen in the study of the prophetic witness to the new covenant.[46] Perhaps Paul is referring to the specific promise of the Spirit, for he links the term ἐπαγγελία with the Spirit in 1:13 (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἅγιον, "the promised Holy Spirit").[47] The link between the Spirit and covenants echoes the promises in the OT that God would pour out his Spirit on his people (Isa 32:15; 44:3; Joel 3:1-2 MT [Eng.

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[44]So Arnold, *Ephesians*, 155; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 189. Neither the covenant with Adam (Mitton, *Ephesians*, 103) nor the covenant with Noah (Larry J. Kreitzer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, Epworth Commentaries [London: Epworth, 1997], 81; Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 121) are likely in view, for those covenants were not made only with Israel but with all humanity. The OT does not think of a plurality of covenants with the patriarchs (contra Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 45; S. D. F. Salmond, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, in vol. 3 of *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.], 292; cf. Sir 44:12, 18; Wis 18:22; 2 Macc 8:15), nor one Abrahamic covenant with repeated renewals (contra Best, *Ephesians*, 242), nor does it support the notion of one "covenant of grace" with many reaffirmations (contra William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967], 130; rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 358).

[45]See Rom 4:13-21; 9:8-9; 15:8; Gal 3:16-18, 29; 4:23, 28. The genitive could function either adjectivally ("promissory covenants") or epexegetically ("covenants that embody the promise"). While either is possible, the latter is more likely, given Paul's association of "the promise" with Abraham.

[46]Yoder Neufeld (*Ephesians*, 110) misses this crucial point when he states, "It is unlikely that the author has the covenant with Abraham in mind, since it is interpreted by Paul as the basis of *hope* for Gentiles, and not *exclusion* (Rom. 4:1-12; Gal. 3:8-9)" (emphasis original). The national promises for Israel are rooted in the covenant with Abraham, and the inclusion of the Gentiles, while promised to Abraham, was only to occur in Abraham's seed, namely, the Messiah (cf. Gal 3:16). While a few Gentiles became a part of Israel in the OT (e.g., Rahab, Ruth), these were the exception and not the rule.

[47]Thielman, *Ephesians*, 156. Leon Morris (*Expository Reflections on the Letter to the Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994], 62) argues it was the specific promise of the Messiah, while Moule (*Ephesians*, 77) thinks it refers to the promise of justification by faith. In Gal 3:14 the connection with Abraham is clear, for the "promise of the Spirit" is parallel with "the blessing of Abraham."

2:28-29]) and resurrect and unite them to fulfill God's commands (Ezek 11:19; 36:26-27; 37:14).

Israel's other covenants are also likely included in 2:12, including the Sinai, Davidic, and new covenants. Some scholars object to the Sinai covenant as a "covenant of the promise," especially since in 2:15 Paul describes Christ as having abolished the Sinai covenant, and it seems difficult to think of the Gentiles as no longer strangers to Sinai's promises if that covenant is no longer in effect. Further, elsewhere in Paul's writings he refrains from connecting the Abrahamic covenant's promise with the law at Sinai (Gal 3:15-22).[48] But several considerations suggest the Sinai covenant is also in view in 2:12. First, the Old Testament is clear in portraying the Sinai covenant as rooted in the Abrahamic covenant,[49] although it was indeed powerless to bring about its promises (Rom 8:3). Also, it is important to remember that Paul's view of the law was not strictly negative, for he can make positive comments regarding it (6:2-3; Rom 7:12); indeed, he lists the "giving of the law" ($\nu o \mu o \theta \varepsilon \sigma i \alpha$) as one of Israel's privileges in Romans 9:4, which in many ways parallels Ephesians 2:12 (see below).[50] Finally, it would be odd indeed in a list of Israel's covenants for Paul to omit the Sinai covenant without

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[48]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 358-59; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 156. Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 359) and Charles H. Talbert (*Ephesians and Colossians*, Paideia [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 78) wrongly impose an unconditional/conditional grid on the covenants, whereby only the unconditional covenants are seen as covenants of promise. For a response to the notion that some covenants are conditional and other unconditional, see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 608-11; Bruce K. Waltke, "The Phenomenon of Conditionality within Unconditional Covenants," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 123-39.

[49]As Gentry and Wellum (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 388) explain, the deliverance from Egypt was rooted in the Abrahamic covenant (Exod 2:24; Deut 7:7-9; 9:5; Jer 11:2-4), and the Sinai covenant was intended to be the means by which God brought the Abrahamic blessing to the nations (Exod 19:5-6).

[50]Contra Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 358), the presence of $\nu o \mu o \theta \varepsilon \sigma i \alpha$ and $\delta \iota \alpha \theta \tilde{\eta} \varkappa \alpha \iota$ in Rom 9:4 does not mean that for Paul "the covenants were different from the Mosaic law," for Paul used $\nu o \mu o \theta \varepsilon \sigma i \alpha$ to correspond to $\upsilon i o \theta \varepsilon \sigma i \alpha$. In any case, it must not be overlooked that Paul saw the giving of the law at Sinai to be in some sense a privilege for Israel.

mention!^{51}

As for the Davidic covenant, although it was made with "the house of David" as opposed to the nation as a whole, it can still be viewed as a covenant flowing from the Abrahamic covenant for the benefit of Israel, and thus it should be included in the "covenants of the promise."[52] Finally, the new covenant is to be included as well, for it was viewed within the Old Testament as the eschatological covenant for "the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Jer 31:31), at which time God would bring about all his saving promises to his people. Thus, given no mention to the contrary, as well as Paul's optimistic statements concerning the new covenant elsewhere (2 Cor 3:6), the new covenant is in view as well.[53] Thus, the Gentiles at one time were separated from the blessings associated with Israel's covenants, which were rooted in the promises to Abraham and would be fulfilled ultimately in the new covenant.

The final pair of phrases describing the Gentiles' plight shows that they were alienated from Israel's God, the one, true, and living God. They had no hope (ἐλπίς) of eternal life (cf. 1 Thess 4:13),[54] for they were "without God" (ἄθεοι).[55] The opposite of the covenant formula was true for them: God was not their God, and they were not his people. And they lived in the sphere and under the influence of the world (κόσμος) and

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[51]Meyer, *End of the Law*, 28. Intriguingly, John Calvin (*The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, trans. T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin's Commentaries* [Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965], 148) sees the "tables" of the Sinai covenant as the referent of the διαθῆκαι; but surely the Sinai covenant does not exhaust the meaning of the plural.

[52]As N. T. Wright explains (*Climax of the Covenant*, 46), "The king and the people are bound together in such a way that what is true of the one is true in principle of the other" (cf. 2 Sam 19:40-43). For an explanation of how the Davidic covenant flows from the Abrahamic covenant, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 423-27.

[53]Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 137) provides no mention of the new covenant. Best (*Ephesians*, 242) rightly argues Christians would have understood the new covenant to be a distinct covenant from the Abrahamic covenant, for the new covenant was inaugurated by Christ at his death.

[54]Similarly O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 189-90.

[55]For the irony of the term ἄθεος, see *Mart. Pol.* 9.2 (cited in Robinson, *Ephesians*, 57).

the old age associated with it (2:2).[56]

In 2:11-12, then, Paul could hardly have described a more dire predicament for the Gentiles. Their plight can be summarized in covenantal terms: they possessed neither the sign of covenant membership (v. 11) nor a share in Israel's covenant promises or covenant God (v. 12), all of which can be summed in the phrase χωρὶς Χριστοῦ.[57] However, Paul intimates that the solution for the Gentiles will not be found in adherence to the law, for the law could not circumcise Israel's hearts. The need for the new covenant is clear, not only for the Gentiles but also for the Jews.

Ephesians 2:12 and Romans 9:4-5a

A brief comparison with the list of Israel's privileges in Romans 9:4-5a confirms the covenantal nature of those privileges. As mentioned above, in many ways Romans 9:4-5a is the counterpart to Ephesians 2:12. It is true that the two texts emphasize different points: "Romans 9:4-5 lists the advantages of being an Israelite, whereas Eph 2:11-12 describes the disadvantages of being a Gentile."[58] Nevertheless, the texts are remarkably parallel and one should not exaggerate the differences,[59] for they provide a list of Israel's privileges in similar ways, and thus shed light on what Paul

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[56]The comment of Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 138) is on point: "[The Gentiles] lived in a world without true hope and without the true God, which means that their world can be said to fall into the category of what Paul described as 'this world,' or of what this writer in his earlier depiction of the Gentiles' past called 'this world-age' (2:2)."

[57]Heil (*Ephesians*, 113) rightly sums up vv. 11-12: "2:11-12 reminds the audience that before they became believers 'in Christ,' they were not part of the people who were loved by and loved God and one another within a covenantal relationship."

[58]Meyer, *The End of the Law*, 27.

[59]As do some of the commentators who consider Ephesians to be deuteropauline (e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 240, and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 137). Muddiman (*Ephesians*, 120) thinks that Paul would not have placed such a high value on Israel, who had rejected the Messiah. Ben Witherington, III (*The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 258) sees Rom 11 and Eph 2:11-22 as remarkably similar in terms of the priority of Israel.

considered were the chief privileges of Israel.

The closest points of correspondence between the texts are in their notions of christology and covenant. Both texts emphasize Israel's Messiah as the most important privilege and hope for Israel. Whereas in Ephesians the blessing of the Messiah heads the list, from which the other descriptions of the Gentiles' plight flow, in Romans the Messiah ends the list with a crescendo ("from whom is the Messiah according to the flesh"), climactically allowing Paul to end the list with a doxology to Israel's Messiah, who is in fact God over all.[60] Thus, whether in Ephesians or Romans, Paul gives Christ the place of priority among Israel's privileges, suggesting again that to be apart from Israel's Messiah is to miss out on the rest of Israel's privileges, and, conversely, to be united to Israel's Messiah is to be a recipient of Israel's privileges.

The other point of connection between Ephesians and Romans is in the area of covenant. Similar to Ephesians 2:12, Romans 9:4 mentions Israel's "covenants" (αἱ διαθῆκαι) in the plural, which correspond to the "promises" (αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι).[61] Given that

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[60]It has been much debated whether Rom 9:5 teaches the deity of Christ (e.g., Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as "God": Theos as a Christological Term in the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992], 144-72; Bruce M. Metzger, "The Punctuation of Rom. 9:5," in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973], 95-112) or not (e.g., James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, WBC, vol. 38b [Dallas: Word, 1988], 535-36; Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, EKKNT [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978-81], 2:189). For a good discussion that favors Christ as θεός in v. 5, see Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 565-68.

[61]I understand the list of six privileges in v. 4 to be based on assonance (so John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993], 21):

$B^{1\alpha}$ ἡ υἱοθεσία
  $B^{1\beta}$ καὶ ἡ δόξα
    $B^{1\gamma}$ καὶ αἱ διαθῆκαι

$B^{2\alpha}$ καὶ ἡ νομοθεσία
  $B^{2\beta}$ καὶ ἡ λατρεία
    $B^{2\gamma}$ καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι

$B^{1\alpha}$ corresponds to $B^{2\alpha}$ because of -θεσια, $B^{1\beta}$ to $B^{2\beta}$ because of -α, and $B^{1\gamma}$ to $B^{2\gamma}$ because of -αι (for the

these texts provide two of the three instances where Paul uses διαθήκη in the plural (cf. Gal 4:24), it is likely that the covenants in view are the same. Also, the term ἐπαγγελίαι probably refer to the promises to the patriarchs (οἱ πατέρες, 9:5a) although perhaps they refer to Israel's promises more broadly. If the patriarchal promises are in view, then as in Ephesians Paul connects Israel's plurality of covenants with the promises made to the patriarchs. All of Israel's covenants can be seen as flowing from or grounded in the original covenant God made with Abraham.[62]

This brief comparison between Ephesians 2:12 and Romans 9:4-5a shows that in the two places where Paul lists Israel's privileges, he emphasizes two of them: Christ and Israel's covenants, which were grounded in the promises to Abraham. In Romans, when Paul considered the privileges of Israel, or in Ephesians, when he considered the plight of the Gentiles apart from Israel, he did not think of either apart from the messianic hope and the covenant relationship. For Paul, apparently these twin notions aptly summarized Israel's privileges and in a sense encapsulated for him what it meant to be near Israel's God. To be separated from Israel's Messiah and covenants was to be far from Israel's God, but to be brought near to Israel's Messiah and covenants was to be brought near to Israel's God. And this plight has been reversed in the covenant-making, propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, by which God has brought the Gentiles near to himself, such that now he is their God, and they are his people (2:13).

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originality of the reading αἱ διαθῆκαι, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2002], 459). This indicates that sonship corresponds to the giving of the law, glory to worship, and covenants to promises.

[62]Although not central to my thesis, it should be noted that I see only one covenant with Abraham, wherein Gen 12 describes the promise, Gen 15 the inauguration, and Gen 17 the confirmation of the covenant (rightly Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 275-80; Byron Wheaton, "Focus and Structure in the Abraham Narratives," *TrinJ* 27 [2006]: 143-62; contra Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009], 102-11; Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose*, NSBT 23 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007], 84-91).

"You Have Been Brought Near by the Blood of Christ": The Solution for the Gentiles in 2:13-18

The solution for the Gentiles is found in 2:13-18, as Christ by his death brings them near to God and his people.[63] In this section I hope to show that the twofold result of Christ's death—peace with God and one another—was explicitly associated with the new covenant promised in the Old Testament (Isa 54:9-10, 13-17; 55:12; 57:19; Ezek 34:25-29; 37:26). Promised in the new covenant were the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God (Isa 55:7; Jer 31:34, 37; Ezek 16:63) and an ingathering of the nations to Israel (Isa 44:5; 49:6-7; 55:4-5; 56:3-8; Ezek 16:61). It is likely that Paul, familiar with these promises, held that Christ fulfilled them through his death. Thus, in a broad sense Ephesians 2:13-18 has the marks of the new covenant, for in this text Paul clearly outlines that both vertical and horizontal reconciliation has finally and climactically been accomplished through the death of Christ. Indeed, the frequency of the word "peace" throughout the passage reminds one of the "covenant of peace" located in the prophets (Isa 54:10; Ezek 34:25; 37:26). And the result of Christ's sacrifice is "one new man" (2:15), which is the new, worldwide humanity promised to Abraham and fulfilled in the new covenant. Thus, broadly speaking, the new covenant's promises seem to provide the fodder for Paul's language in 2:13-18.

But more specifically, Ephesians 2:13-18 appears to resonate particularly with the promise of the new covenant in Isaiah 49-57. Close verbal and conceptual correspondence is evident in 2:13-18, for Paul stitches Isaiah 52:7 and 57:19 together in Ephesians 2:17, and, like Isaiah, emphasizes that a new, worldwide humanity will enjoy peace with God and one another through the sacrifice of an individual. Such close verbal

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[63]Ellicott (*Ephesians*, 46) rightly notes the emphatic position of ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. There is ambiguity in v. 13 as to what or whom the Gentiles have been brought near, whether Judaism, the church, or God. As vv. 14-18 clarify, both horizontal and vertical elements are associated with concept of nearness, so both are likely in view in v. 13 (Abbott, *Ephesians*, 59-60; Best, *Ephesians*, 245; Hendriksen, *Ephesians*, 132). The ambiguity between nearness to Judaism and the church is clarified in vv. 14-18 as the church ("one new man"), which is defined in terms of Israel reconstituted around Christ.

and conceptual correspondence conveys the sense that Paul appropriated Isaiah's promises of salvation and peace as the solution for the Gentiles. In other words, whether or not one categorizes Paul's use of the OT here as *gezerah shewa*,[64] it seems he read Isaiah theologically, emphasizing that Isaiah's concept of eschatological peace had come to fruition through the death of Christ. If this is the case, then it is likely that the new peace Paul describes includes Isaiah's new "covenant of peace" in Isaiah 54:10, especially since in Isaiah the new covenant flows from the death of the servant. Paul grounds the solution for the Gentiles in Jesus' death as the new covenant-ratifying sacrifice promised in Isaiah, an interpretation confirmed by the Lord's Supper tradition with which Paul was familiar (1 Cor 11:25; cf. Luke 22:20).

Other Proposals for the Background of Ephesians 2:13-18

It is by no means accepted among Ephesians scholarship that 2:13-18 finds its background in Isaiah. Hence, before analyzing the text in detail and showing the connection with Isaiah, first I must critique other proposals for the background to the text. Although more could be mentioned, three proposals seem to be most prominent among Ephesians scholars.[65]

Chief among these has been the popular proposal that the text finds its source in a pre-Pauline hymn. This view states that the author of Ephesians, using an ancient

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[64]As does Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 137.

[65]One of the more idiosyncratic proposals is that of Larry J. Kreitzer ("The Messianic Man of Peace as Temple Builder: Solomonic Imagery in Ephesians 2:13-22," in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, ed. John Day [London: T&T Clark, 2005], 484-507), who argues that the language of Eph 2:13-22 shows that Jesus is the new Solomon, for, like Solomon, he unifies two groups and builds the temple. Further, Solomon's name (שְׁלֹמֹה) is similar to the Hebrew word for peace (שָׁלוֹם), which was in the author's mind when described Jesus as "our peace" (2:14). But this is a dubious reading of the text, for the Isaianic citations that frame vv. 13-18 (which Kreitzer [ibid., 500-01] recognizes), do not allude to Solomon, and it is unlikely that even the most biblically literate Jewish Christian in Ephesus would have caught the supposed hidden allusion to Solomon's name in 2:14, given that Ephesians was penned in Greek.

hymn—perhaps one about a figure overcoming the separation of heaven and earth (Col 1:20; *1 Enoch* 14:9-12)—reconstructed various elements of that hymn to write 2:14-16.[66] Arguments for this position include: the switch from the neuter τὰ ἀμφότερα (v. 14) to the masculine οἱ ἀμφότεροι (vv. 16, 18); the apparently introductory use of αὐτός (v. 14); the awkward syntax (vv. 14-15a); the use of several *hapax legomena* in Pauline literature and the entire New Testament, including the term μεσότοιχον, which may have originally described the separation between heaven and earth; the rare use of Jesus as the subject of verbs of reconciliation; and the similarity to Colossians 1:15-20.[67]

In response to this view are the following arguments: the neuter can be used for the masculine if a general quality is emphasized (1 Cor 1:26ff.);[68] sometimes αὐτός is used in ways similar to verse 14, yet without indicating the use of a source (4:10-11; 5:23, 27; 1 Cor 2:15); the awkward syntax could indicate merely the fact of Paul's oral dictation when writing letters;[69] the presence of *hapax legomena* in other sections of the text (e.g., ἄθεος, v. 12; συμπολίτης, v. 19; συνοικοδομέω, v. 22) are not understood to indicate the use of source material, so this argument is tendentious at best;[70] Paul

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[66]Occasionally scholars will include v. 17 within the reconstruction (e.g., Joachim Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, HTKNT 10/2 [Freiburg: Herder, 1971], 149) and rarely v. 18 (Gottfried Schille, *Frühchristliche Hymnen* [Berlin: Evangelische, 1965], 24-31). No scholar considers v. 13 to be a part of the reconstructed hymn.

[67]For commentators in favor of some or all of these arguments, see Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, 147-52.; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 128-30; Andreas Lindemann, *Der Epheserbrief*, ZB 8 (Zürich: Theologischer, 1985), 46-50; Schille, *Hymnen*, 24-31; Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser: Ein Kommentar*, KBANT (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1965), 125-33; Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 113-14.

[68]BDF, 76. Perhaps Thielman (*Ephesians*, 164 [following Best, *Ephesians*, 252]) is right to see the spatial imagery of v. 14 as the explanation for the neuter, for the implied antecedent would be the neuter "region" (χωρίον). In any case, there does not seem to be much difference between the gender switch (so Barth, *Ephesians*, 262-63).

[69]See especially Thielman, *Ephesians*, 167.

[70]Peter Stuhlmacher, "'He is our Peace' (Eph. 2:14): On the Exegesis and Significance of Eph. 2:14-18," in *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 185-86.

understood Jesus to act soteriologically elsewhere (Rom 5:6; Gal 1:3-4; 3:13);[71] and the Colossians parallel (1:15-20), while perhaps stemming from an ancient hymn itself, merely suggests the same hand penned both letters and certainly does not necessitate the presence of reconstructed hymnic elements in Ephesians.[72] Hence, to hypothesize about the presence of a reconstructed hymn is too speculative, evidenced by the relative disagreement among scholars as to the exact reconstructed hymnic elements. Less speculative and more sober is to focus on the text at hand, which on the face of it uses Isaianic material.[73]

Another proposed background for 2:13-18 is the *Pax Romana*.[74] The argument goes something like this: just as Caesar Augustus was seen as the "savior" of the empire and the one responsible for its widespread peace, so the author of Ephesians wanted to show that Jesus is the greater Savior and brings about an even more widespread peace. Talbert sums up this position well:

> Any Gentile in western Asia Minor, hearing this message about Christ's mission as peace-bringer, would have heard echoes of the widespread praise of Augustus and his successors for having brought peace to the world . . . . The ideal king of Ephesians—Christ, the Messiah—is set forth in this letter as superior to Caesar Augustus (cf. Luke 2).[75]

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[71]Ibid., 186. Also, in terms of discourse analysis, Jesus is the topic of the discourse, for Paul emphasizes the phrase "in Christ Jesus" in v. 13. It would be natural for the topic of the discourse to fill the subject slot of the following verbs. This is even more evident if one follows ibid., 187-93, in seeing Jesus as Isaiah's "Prince of Peace" in v. 14.

[72]For these arguments, see Best, *Ephesians*, 247-50; Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 25-29; Stuhlmacher, "'He is our Peace,'" 182-200.

[73]Rightly Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 28-29. It should be noted that even if Paul did use an ancient hymn, this would not mean that Isaiah *could* not serve as the background for vv. 13-18, for the hymn itself could have Isaianic roots or Paul could have set the hymn into an Isaianic framework.

[74]See especially Eberhard Faust, *Pax Christi et Pax Caesaris: Religiongeschichtliche, traditionsgeschichtliche und sozialgeschichtliche Studien zum Epheserbrief*, NTOA 24 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); Willard M. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 245-51. Similarly Gerhard Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, 9th ed., KEK 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2008), 206-08.

[75]Talbert, *Ephesians*, 82-83.

This view seeks to read Ephesians in light of the recent inroads among Pauline scholars to see an anti-imperial impulse within Paul.[76] It has much to commend it, for the view rightly seeks to understand the text in light of the political climate in which Ephesians was written.[77] And it is certainly true that Paul believed Jesus was Lord, not Caesar, and that such a confession had political ramifications. Indeed, even Isaiah puts forward the hope of a Davidic "Prince of Peace," whose rule will never end (9:5-6 [Eng. 9:6-7]; 55:3-5).

Nevertheless, one must distinguish between Paul's meaning and the implications of his thought.[78] In other words, just because certain implications may legitimately be derived from Paul's thought does not mean they were in mind at the time of writing. To determine Paul's meaning, one must analyze the text as it stands.[79] An analysis of Ephesians shows that, while Paul does conceive of Jesus as a king (5:5) and a savior (5:23), he does not mention Caesar, Rome, or make any specific reference to the imperial cult. Rather, the simplest explanation for 2:11-22 is that Paul wants to encourage the Gentile believers that they are part of the one people of God because they have peace with God and one another by means of the death of Christ.[80] The means by which he

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[76]For representative works exploring this topic, see Richard A Horsley, ed., *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg, PA: TPI, 2000); idem, *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (Harrisburg, PA: TPI, 2004); Klaus Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987). For an attempt to see anti-imperialism within Col, see Brian J. Walsh and Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Colossians Remixed: Subverting the Empire* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).

[77]Although the date of Ephesians is debated, the *Pax Romana* view does not depend on a particular date.

[78]Denny Burk, "Is Paul's Gospel Counterimperial? Evaluating the Prospects of the 'Fresh Perspective' for Evangelical Theology," *JETS* 51 (2008): 319-22.

[79]For a good response to the recent view that Paul wrote polemically against the imperial cult, see ibid., 309-37; Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 1-71.

[80]Rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 158.

achieves his goal is to describe the blessings associated with the people of God and then to remind the Gentiles that they have experienced and are full heirs of these blessings. This method of encouragement, then, naturally leads Paul to write with the Old Testament in mind. In a span of just a few verses are references to circumcision, Israel's covenants, blood sacrifice, the Mosaic law-covenant, saints, the house of God, and the new temple. In the midst of these terms come allusions to Isaiah 52:7 and 57:19, which happen to provide the OT link to the pervasive idea of peace in 2:13-18. Thus, it is not that the *Pax Romana* proposal is antithetical or mutually exclusive to seeing Isaiah's influence in the text, but that it is not the most likely background to Paul's declaration of peace, given the Jewish character of the passage and its lack of imperial references.

The third proposed background for 2:13-18 is that the "far/near" terminology of the passage is rooted in Jewish proselyte language rather than in Isaiah.[81] Andrew Lincoln has been the chief proponent of this view, arguing that the author's use of the OT in 2:11-22 is "incidental" and that it "does not form the basis and dominant mode of expression for the theology of Ephesians 2:11-22."[82] His argument, instead, is that the author used typical Jewish proselyte terminology in 2:13, although he radically broke from rabbinic tradition by asserting that Gentiles need not become proselytes to Judaism in order to be members of the people of God.[83] The use of typical proselyte terms in 2:13 then reminded the author of the terminology in Isaiah 57:19, which he only cites in brief

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[81]See, e.g., Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 126-27, 138; idem, "The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians," *JSNT* 14 (1982): 25-30; G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon), in the Revised Standard Version: Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 56-57.

[82]Lincoln, "Use of the Old Testament," 30.

[83]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 139 (similarly O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 191). Of the rabbinic texts Lincoln ("Use of the Old Testament," 27-28) cites, not all are clear reference to Jewish proselytes. Sometimes the "far off" are Jewish sinners (*b. Ber. 34b*; *Num. Rab.* 11.7; *Mek. Exod.* 20.25) and sometimes proselytes (*Mek. Exod.* 18:5; *Midr. Sam.* 28:6; *Num. Rab.* 8:4). The literature at Qumran confirms that to "draw near" (קרב) meant joining the community (1QS 6.15-16; cf. 6.19, 22; 7.21; 8.18; 9.15; 1QH\u1d43 14.14).

in 2:17. The author did not seem to be concerned with Isaiah's meaning, for in Isaiah those who are near and far are Jews living in or out of the land, respectively, whereas the author of Ephesians applied the citation to Jews, who were "near," and Gentiles, who were "far." In no way, then, is 2:13-18 a Christian exegesis of Isaiah.[84]

In response to this view, one should note that there is much that is helpful in it. It is true that "far/near" terminology was associated with proselytism among the rabbis and at Qumran, which suggests that Paul may very well have been familiar with such language (cf. Acts 2:39; 22:21). Nevertheless, as Lincoln recognizes, the rabbinic sources he cites are themselves interpretations of Isaiah 57:19.[85] Hence, it is possible that as early as Ephesians 2:13, Paul already had Isaiah 57:19 in mind and was offering his own interpretation of it in 2:13-18, as opposed to using merely stock Jewish proselyte terminology. Indeed, it is more likely that Paul had Isaiah in mind even in verse 13.[86] (1) The fact that he alludes to Isaiah 52:7 in 2:17 indicates that his use of Isaiah 57:19 was neither "incidental" nor arbitrary but intentional.[87] That Paul chose to fit together two relatively close Isaianic texts strongly suggests that he considered that section of Isaiah to be of great significance in explicating the eschatological peace fulfilled in Christ for Jews and Gentiles. (2) Evidence elsewhere in Ephesians indicates that Paul knew Isaiah well and considered it important to unpack his gospel (6:14-17). Even if one considers Ephesians to have been written by a Pauline disciple, the fact that Isaiah plays a large role in some of the undisputed Pauline letters suggests it would be no surprise to find a

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[84]Lincoln, "Use of the Old Testament," 26-27.

[85]Ibid., 27.

[86]So Arnold, *Ephesians*, 156; Barth, *Ephesians*, 267; Best, *Ephesians*, 245; Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 45-48; Robinson, *Ephesians*, 58; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 158.

[87]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 157.

similarly heightened role for Isaiah within Ephesians.[88] (3) Even if Paul did not use Isaiah 57:19 according to Isaiah's meaning, this does not indicate that he did not have Isaiah in mind at all. Rather, it is possible that Paul was thinking of Isaiah's broad emphasis on a worldwide people in the new creation, and appropriated the language of 57:19 to describe this greater reality.[89] More likely, Isaiah 57:19 itself may refer to the whole people of God without reference to ethnicity.[90] Isaiah redefines the boundaries of the people of God such that unrepentant Jews, along with the nations, have no just expectation of salvation. On the other hand, anyone, even the Gentile, who repents and receives God's universal offer of grace, will be forgiven and accepted as a member of the everlasting covenant of peace (54:1-55:13). Thus, even within Isaiah, the people of God are being redefined according to their relationship to the servant. If this reading of Isaiah is correct, then there is no reason to think Paul was not appropriating Isaiah's meaning throughout Ephesians 2:13-18.

In short, the best approach to the background of 2:13-18 is to recognize the influence of Isaiah on Paul's thought. This approach best explains the data actually found in the text and is the least speculative approach. While it is possible that Paul utilized hymnic elements, or that he intended to write a polemic against the imperial cult, such views are too speculative to warrant acceptance. The same is true of the "proselyte terminology" view, for it does not adequately take into account the influence of Isaiah on Paul or the Isaianic terminology throughout 2:13-18. While the view is right in what it

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[88]For a study showing the influence of Isaiah in Romans, see J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "in Concert" in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[89]Thielman, *Ephesians*, 174n33. Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 140) says that it is possible vv. 14-16 could be taken by a Jew to refer to the OT's eschatological promises of peace, but that the writer of Ephesians was not consciously alluding to such promises. But many of those commentators (including Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 136) who hold that a Pauline disciple wrote Ephesians understand the writer to have been a Jewish Christian, rendering it likely that the OT background of peace would not have been lost on the writer (rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 156-57).

[90]Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 32-34.

affirms, namely, that Paul could have known of and used proselyte terminology, it is wrong in what it denies. Best says it well: "While it is true Jewish proselyte terminology used the terms ["far" and "near"] it is difficult to believe in light of verse 17 that [the author of Ephesians] had not the Isaiah passage in mind."[91] Finally, even if Paul did rework hymnic elements into this text or consciously used proselyte terminology, it is clear that he did so to fit his own purposes in Ephesians 2:13-18. The various proposed backgrounds, then, do not mitigate the possibility that Paul appropriated Isaiah's text and meaning. Indeed, the close verbal and conceptual parallels between Isaiah and 2:13-18 render such a connection probable.

**Verbal Parallels between
Isaiah and Ephesians 2:13-18**

That Paul quoted from or alluded to Isaiah 52:7 and 57:19 in Ephesians 2:17 is a commonplace observation among Ephesians scholars.[92] But to many it is not clear that Paul intended to appropriate Isaiah's message,[93] although some have argued that Paul likely had Isaiah's context in mind.[94] In fact, even among those who show more sensitivity to Isaiah's context, there are relatively few who adequately connect the new

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[91]Best, *Ephesians*, 245.

[92]E.g., Arnold, *Ephesians*, 166; Best, *Ephesians*, 270; Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 137; Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 110, 122-23. Perkins (*Ephesians*, 400) mentions the "allusion" to Isa 57:19 but does not comment at all on the import of this allusion. Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 365, 386-87) is hesitant about 57:19 and does not mention 52:7 at all. He summarizes his viewpoint (ibid., 387) in this way: "It can only be surmised that Paul may have used the imagery of the Isaiah passage, but we cannot dogmatically presume he implements its meaning." Ellicott (*Ephesians*, 50) fails to reference Isaiah at all.

[93]Best (*Ephesians*, 270) thinks the addition of ὑμῖν means "he is not interested here in the fulfilment of OT promises." Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 365) thinks vv. 14-18 are "possibly based on" Isa 57:19. Thomas B. Slater (*Ephesians*, SHBC, vol. 27a [Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2012], 72) says the writer was not attempting to interpret Isaiah as much as to utilize the words of an authoritative text.

[94]E.g., Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 23-55; Stuhlmacher, "'He is our Peace,'" 182-200; Swartley, *Covenant of Peace*, 199-201; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 173-74; Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 110-11.

covenant of peace in Isaiah with the vertical and horizontal peace in Ephesians.[95]

Thus, to demonstrate that Paul understood Isaiah's promises as fulfilled in Christ in 2:13-18, I will analyze the close verbal and conceptual connections between Isaiah and Ephesians 2:13-18. If verbal parallels are present, then it is at least possible that Paul was using Isaiah. Further, if conceptual parallels are present as well, then it becomes even more likely that Paul was appropriating Isaiah's meaning, and that the citations are windows through which one may view Paul's broader hermeneutic of Isaiah and the fulfillment of his promises in Christ.

The verbal links are striking. I have provided the relevant phrases, underlining the words or phrases in question.

Ephesians 2:13   ὑμεῖς οἵ ποτε ὄντες <u>μακρὰν</u> ἐγενήθητε <u>ἐγγὺς</u> ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ

Ephesians 2:17   καὶ ἐλθὼν <u>εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην</u> ὑμῖν <u>τοῖς μακρὰν</u> καὶ <u>εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς</u>

Isaiah 52:7[96]   רַגְלֵי מְבַשֵּׂר מַשְׁמִיעַ שָׁלוֹם מְבַשֵּׂר טוֹב מַשְׁמִיעַ יְשׁוּעָה (MT)

ὡς πόδες <u>εὐαγγελιζομένου</u> ἀκοὴν <u>εἰρήνης</u>, ὡς <u>εὐαγγελιζόμενος</u> ἀγαθά (LXX)

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[95]The best discussion on Paul's appropriation of Isaiah's context is found in Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 23-55, although he does not connect Paul's notion of peace with the new covenant. Arnold (*Ephesians*, 166) mentions in passing "the new covenant blessing of peace" in relation to Eph 2:17 but does not cite Isa 54:10. Scott (*Ephesians*, 170) says, "The whole passage 13-18 consists of an exposition in a Christian sense of [Isaiah 57:19]" (so Beare, *Ephesians*, 654), but he fails to mention Isaiah's new covenant. Theologically intriguing is the argument of Andrew Mark Stirling ("Transformation and Growth: The Davidic Temple Builder in Ephesians" [Ph.D. diss., University of St. Andrews, 2012]), which suggests Paul appropriated the context of Isaiah and Zech 6:12-15 to emphasize Jesus as the Davidic temple builder. While my agreement with Stirling is substantive, I remain more hesitant to interpret Eph 2:11-22 through the lens of Zech 6:12-15. Since Paul cites Isaiah, it seems more plausible and less speculative to suggest that both Paul and Zechariah used Isaiah and thus shared a common eschatological perspective. Further, Stirling does not emphasize the new covenant connections in Isa 49-57 as I do.

[96]Isa 52:7 is similar to Nah 2:1 (Eng. 1:15), so one might conclude Paul alluded to Nahum's text instead of Isaiah's. But since Paul stitched this allusion to Isa 57:19, probably the allusion comes from Isa 52:7.

Isaiah 57:19   שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם לָרָחוֹק וְלַקָּרוֹב (MT)

<u>εἰρήνην</u> ἐπ' <u>εἰρήνην</u> <u>τοῖς μακρὰν</u> καὶ <u>τοῖς ἐγγὺς</u> οὖσι (LXX)

The similarity between Isaiah 57:19 and Ephesians 2:17 is clear. Both texts include a distinctive proclamation of a twofold שָׁלוֹם/εἰρήνη, and both issue this proclamation to the "far" (μακράν) and the "near" (ἐγγύς). An exhaustive search of the terms for "peace," "far," and "near" within the Hebrew and Greek OT resulted in the discovery that nowhere else in the OT is found such a distinct proclamation. Hence, if Paul indeed is citing the OT, he must be citing Isaiah 57:19.

The possibility of an allusion to Isaiah 52:7 is less clear yet still demonstrable. The only two places in the MT/LXX where someone heralds the good news (בשׂר/εὐαγγελίζειν) of peace (שָׁלוֹם/εἰρήνη) is found in Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 2:1 (Eng. 1:15). That Isaiah 52:7 is in mind as opposed to Nahum 2:1 is likely because of the former's proximity to Isaiah 57:19, as well as the fact of Isaiah's centrality in the early church.[97] While it is possible that Paul was not citing 52:7, since nothing is mentioned there about the far and the near, the close conceptual correspondence with Isaiah's message surrounding 52:7 tips the balance in favor of a citation. Isaiah 52:7 emphasizes the good news that Yahweh, Israel's God and king, has come to save and redeem his people (cf. 40:9; 52:7). The proximity of Isaiah 52:7 to the Fourth Servant Song (52:13-53:12) indicates that it is particularly by the death of the servant that the saving and ruling peace of Yahweh arrives. And, significant for Ephesians 2:17, it is also the servant who proclaims the good news (εὐαγγελίζειν) of redemption to the poor (61:1). One might respond that even if Isaiah 52:7 is alluded to in 2:17, it does not mean Paul appropriated Isaiah's meaning. However, given the christological significance of Isaiah 52:7 in the early church, and the fact that Paul alludes to it again similarly in 6:15 (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς

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[97]Rightly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 173.

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εἰρήνης),[98] it is likely that the text held great import for him as a summary of the coming of the kingdom of God in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

Hence, given the precise verbal links between Ephesians 2:17 and Isaiah 52:7 and (especially) 57:19, it seems likely that these Isaianic texts provided the source for Paul's citation.[99] And given that Ephesians 2:17 likely derives from Isaiah, it is probable that the adverbs μακράν and ἐγγύς in 2:13 also link to Isaiah's message, creating an inclusio around 2:14-16.[100] If this approach is correct, then one would expect to see close conceptual parallels with Isaiah as well in 2:13-18.

Conceptual Parallels between Isaiah and Ephesians 2:13-18

The conceptual links between Isaiah 49-57 and Ephesians 2:13-18 are strong as well, for both texts emphasize the vertical and horizontal peace brought about by the death of an individual. In Isaiah, it is the servant who creates peace with God for sinful humanity, and whose death results in a worldwide invitation to join the covenant community. In Ephesians, it is Christ who reconciles both Jews and Gentiles to God through his death, and by this single reconciling act he unifies Jews and Gentiles into one, new people of God. In fact, peace with God and one another is the main motif of Ephesians 2:13-18,[101] and it is arguably the main motif of Isaiah 48:22-57:19. In Ephesians, the nearness of 2:13 is explained in in vertical and horizontal ways by the term εἰρήνη, which occurs in verses 14a, 15b, and 17 (twice).[102] In Isaiah, the term שָׁלוֹם is

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[98]Cf. Luke 2:14; Acts 10:36; Rom 10:15; Eph 1:13; 3:6.

[99]So many commentators, e.g., Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 147-48.

[100]So Arnold, *Ephesians*, 156; Barth, *Ephesians*, 267; Best, *Ephesians*, 245; Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 45-48; Robinson, *Ephesians*, 58; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 158; contra Caird, *Paul's Letters*, 56-57; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 126-27, 138.

[101]So Best, *Ephesians*, 250; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 193.

[102]Arnold (*Ephesians*, 152) notes that the structure of vv. 14-17 "stresses the new covenant

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connected to the peacemaking death of the servant (53:5) and is Isaiah's preferred term to describe the result of the new covenant (54:9-10; cf. 52:7; 54:13; 55:12). Furthermore 48:22-57:21 is bracketed by the refrain, "There is no peace for the wicked," thus framing the problem and its solution in terms of peace. Hence, at the outset Paul's emphasis on horizontal and vertical elements of peace in 2:13-18 seems to coalesce with Isaiah's message of peace. What remains is to analyze 2:13-18 in detail to see if indeed such an emphasis is to be maintained.

Horizontal Peace:
One New Man (2:14-15)

The horizontal element of peace in Ephesians is emphasized primarily in 2:14-15. Verse 14 grounds (γάρ) nearness to God (v. 13) with a statement that Jesus is "our peace." It is possible, perhaps even likely on account of the Isaianic citation in 2:17, that this is a veiled reference to Jesus as Isaiah's "Prince of Peace" in Isaiah 9:5 (LXX).[103] If such is in view, then Jesus is seen as the future king who sits on David's throne and brings about everlasting peace, having defeated all his enemies. With Ephesians' emphasis on Christ's victorious exaltation over all powers and authorities, perhaps such a ruling notion is in mind.

The abolition of the law. In particular, though, the peace achieved by Christ is defined in 2:14b-15 as a horizontal peace between Jews and Gentiles. The syntax of this

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blessing of peace." Even though v. 16 does not use εἰρήνη, its antonym ἔχθρα occurs as that which Christ killed (ἀποκτείνω) through his death (v. 14b).

[103]The verbal links with Isa 9:5-6 LXX (Eng. 9:6-7) are far from certain, for the only clear verbal parallel is the word εἰρήνη. Nevertheless, since 9:5-6 was interpreted messianically (Luke 1:32-33), it is not implausible that Paul was alluding to this text (so Arnold, *Ephesians*, 158; Best, *Ephesians*, 251; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 47; Ulrich Mauser, *The Gospel of Peace: A Scriptural Message for Today's World*, Studies in Peace and Scripture 1 [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992], 152-53; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 194; contra Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 127). Stuhlmacher ("'He is our Peace,'" 182-200) and Rudolf Schnackenburg (*Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. H. Heron [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991], 112) argue forcefully that Isa 9:5-6 is the source for v. 14a (cf. Mic 5:4 [Eng. 5:5]).

section is difficult, particularly the phrase τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ (v. 14). Where does this phrase fit in the argument, and which participle does it modify? The first point to note is that the definite article that renders ποιήσας substantival also governs λύσας, making it substantival as well. Thus, Jesus has two functions in 2:14b, which are not really different but two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, he joins two groups (τὰ ἀμφότερα)—Jews and Gentiles—together, and on the other, he tears down the wall between them.[104] The first participle describes his actions positively, and the second negatively. Thus, 2:14 appears to be carefully constructed, with the substantival participles serving as brackets and being joined with the correlative conjunction καί.

At this point Paul inserts the phrase τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ.[105] The phrase τὴν ἔχθραν could be in apposition to τὸ μεσότοιχον, clarifying that the dividing wall should be understood in terms of enmity. Or τὴν ἔχθραν could be the direct object of καταργήσας (cf. 1 Cor 15:26), with τὸν νόμον in apposition explaining that the enmity is the law. The former is more likely, for clearly the phrase τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ has a metaphorical sense and thus would more likely need an explanatory comment. As for the phrase ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ, it most likely refers to the death of Christ and not merely to his incarnation, for the context emphasizes his death as the means by which he accomplished peace (v. 13, "by the blood of Christ"; v. 16, "through the cross").[106] But whether it

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[104]The neuter of ἀμφότερος is used in v. 14, with the masculine found in vv. 16, 18, although there does not seem to be much of a difference in this switch (so Barth, *Ephesians*, 262-63). Perhaps Thielman (*Ephesians*, 164 [following Best, *Ephesians*, 252]) is right to see the spatial imagery of v. 14 as the explanation for the neuter, for the implied antecedent would be the neuter "region" (χωρίον). It is too speculative to posit, as do Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 128-30) and Yoder Neufeld (*Ephesians*, 113-14), that the neuter owes its existence to original hymnic material concerning the cosmic reconciliation of the heavens and earth.

[105]For a good discussion of the interpretive options, see Best, *Ephesians*, 257-58.

[106]So most commentators, e.g., Barth, *Ephesians*, 302-04; contra Mitton, *Ephesians*, 107; Robinson, *Ephesians*, 63-64. Also, the parallel text in Col 1:22 affirms that Christ reconciled believers ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου (cf. Col 2:11).

modifies λύσας ("he tore down the wall in his flesh") or καταργήσας ("he abolished the law in his flesh") is a difficult decision. Perhaps there is a sense in which it modifies both, for both are true.[107] It was through his death that Jesus tore down the dividing wall of enmity *and* abolished the Mosaic law-covenant.

The precise referent of the dividing wall is debated.[108] The term μεσότοιχον is infrequent in Greek literature and has the basic meaning of a partition, whether in a house or a temple complex. The term φραγμός was a fence or a protective hedge, perhaps around a garden or vineyard (Isa 5:2; Mark 12:1; Matt 21:33). The goal of a φραγμός was to keep out people or animals from entering a certain area. Here φραγμός is likely a genitive of apposition,[109] explaining that what Christ tore down is not only a dividing wall but also a protective fence.[110] In light of the context of Ephesians, this wall must have divided Jews from Gentiles (τὸ μεσότοιχον) and kept the Gentiles out of the people of God (τοῦ φραγμοῦ).[111]

But what is the specific referent of the wall? Some have held that Paul was alluding to a balustrade in Herod's temple that separated the court of the Gentiles from the area where only ethnic Jews could enter (Acts 21:26-31; *Ant.* 15.11; *B.J.* 5.193-94).[112] While this interpretation, which has a long history, is attractive, it must remain

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[107]So Arnold, *Ephesians*, 161-62. Sometimes adverbial modifiers are placed between verbals as a way to modify both (e.g., 1 Thess 1:2). If one was pressed to decide which participle the phrase modifies, perhaps it would be λύσας, for the parallel phrase τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ in v. 16 suggests the prepositional phrase should stay with τὴν ἔχθραν (Thielman, *Ephesians*, 168). Best (*Ephesians*, 258) suggests it is parenthetical.

[108]For an exhaustive list of possibilities, see Barth, *Ephesians*, 283-87.

[109]So Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 369.

[110]So Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 141.

[111]However, given the parallel emphasis in the context on the need for reconciliation with God (vv. 11-12, 16, 18), the wall also can be seen as dividing humanity from God and keeping humanity out of a covenant relationship with him (so Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 48).

[112]E.g., Arnold, *Ephesians*, 159-60; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 37.

speculative, for there is no other record that Paul considered this wall important enough to mention it in his teaching.[113] Another view is that the wall refers to the curtain separating the Holy Place of the temple from the Holy of Holies, which was torn asunder at the death of Jesus (Mark 15:38). While this is an attractive position, given Paul's view that Jesus' death provided access to God (Eph 2:18), it is not likely correct, for the wall in Ephesians 2:14 not only separates humanity from God but also Jews from Gentiles, something the curtain in the temple did not do.[114] And Paul would probably not have described this curtain as a τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ but as a καταπέτασμα (Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45; Heb 10:20). More likely, the wall is a way of referring to the Mosaic law-covenant.[115] This is the least speculative option and best explains the immediate context. In 2:14b, Paul explains that Jesus came to tear down a certain wall that was divisive and fenced people from God and his people. Paul then clarifies that the wall is to be understood metaphorically, namely, in terms of enmity (τὴν ἔχθραν), and that

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[113]Further, the inscription on this balustrade to which Josephus alludes (*B.J.* 5.193-94) calls it a δρύφακτος, not a μεσότοιχον or φραγμός. Some scholars do not think a reference to the balustrade is in view because it is unlikely the Ephesian believers would have had such intimate knowledge of the architecture in Jerusalem (e.g., O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 195; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 165), but this argument does not hold weight if Paul thought that knowing the architectural structure of Herod's temple was significant for early Christians. Arnold (*Ephesians*, 160) says it is possible the Gentiles would have heard of such a wall, a possibility Walter L. Liefeld (*Ephesians*, IVP New Testament Commentary 10 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997], 71-72) thinks likely, given Paul's experience in Acts 21:26-31. One must be cautious not to assert dogmatically whether or not Paul's audience would have known of these details, for such arguments are speculative. The best interpretation will pay close attention to the text itself.

[114]Rightly Abbott, *Ephesians*, 61; Barth, *Ephesians*, 284.

[115]See Gen 17:9-14; Exod 31:16-17; Lev 20:24-26; Deut 23:3-4; Neh 13:3; Dan 1:8-16; *Jub.* 22:16; 1 Macc 1:60-63; *Jos. Asen.* 7:1; *Mos.* 1.278; *Let. Aris.* 139-142; *m. 'Abod. Zar.* 5.5, *m. Ṭohar.* 7.6; *m. Dem.* 3.4. So Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 141; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 166-67; Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 259-60. See the oft-quoted *Ep. Arist.* 139, 142: "Now our Lawgiver, being a wise man and specially endowed by God to understand all things, took a comprehensive view of each particular detail, and fenced us round [περιφράσσω] with impregnable ramparts and walls [τεῖχος] of iron, that we might not mingle at all with any of the other nations . . . . He hedged us round [περιφράσσω] on all sides by rules of purity." For the law as a fence, see also *1 Enoch* 93:6; 89:2; Prov LXX 28:4; Philo, *Virt.* 186; *m. 'Abot* 3.18. In *m. 'Abot* 1.1, oral tradition has become the fence around Israel that the law once was (rightly O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 196). Best (*Ephesians*, 256-57) and Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 370-71) contend the wall is merely a metaphor.

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this enmity was destroyed in the death of Christ. At the outset of 2:15, Paul finally and clearly explains what this wall of enmity is and what Jesus did to it: the wall of enmity is the Mosaic law-covenant, and Jesus has abolished it through his death. In other words, there is a trajectory from verse 14b to 15a wherein Paul clarifies in greater degrees the metaphor of the wall.[116] Verse 14b, then, parallels 2:15a in that the latter repeats and explains the former: Jesus' act of tearing down the wall of enmity (v. 14b) is to be understood in terms of his abolition of the entire Mosaic law-covenant (v. 15a).[117]

Some in the history of interpretation have contended that Christ did not abolish the entire law but only its ceremonial aspects,[118] a legalistic use of it,[119] or its divisive character.[120] But it is far from clear that the Mosaic law-covenant can be divided into different aspects like this,[121] and the phrase τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν itself does not admit of any distinctions but describes the whole Mosaic law-covenant in a plenary fashion typical of the literary style of Ephesians.[122] While one may rightly see the emphasis in 2:11-22 on those aspects of the law that divided Jews from Gentiles (e.g.,

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[116]Barth, *Ephesians*, 283, refers to this trajectory as having an "escalating effect" (similarly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 175).

[117]Thus, the adverbial participle καταργήσας probably indicates the means by which v. 14b occurs (so many commentators, e.g., Arnold, *Ephesians*, 161).

[118]Peter Balla, "Is the Law Abolished According to Eph. 2:15?" *EuroJTh* 3 (1994): 9-16; Calvin, *Ephesians*, 150-51; Hendriksen, *Ephesians*, 135; Arthur G. Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, NIBCNT 10 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 195; Stott, *Ephesians*, 100-01; Theodoret (Mark J. Edwards, ed., *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, ACCSNT 8 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999], 139).

[119]Schlier, *Epheser*, 125-26.

[120]Barth, *Ephesians*, 287-91; Liefeld, *Ephesians*, 73.

[121]Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 355.

[122]So Arnold, *Ephesians*, 163; Best, *Ephesians*, 260; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 142; MacDonald, *Ephesians*, 245 (cf. 1:17; 2:7). That ἐν δόγμασιν is original to Ephesians and not a scribal addition is supported by the weight of external evidence (although 𝔓[46] omits it) as well as the possibility that a scribe would have omitted due to its perceived redundancy (contra Calvin J. Roetzel, "Jewish Christian – Gentile Christian Relations: A Discussion of Ephesians 2:15a," *ZNW* 74 [1983]: 86).

circumcision, Sabbath-keeping, adherence to Jewish food laws), for these in particular

needed to be removed so that the Gentiles could join the people of God *as Gentiles*, it is

clear that such aspects do not exhaust for Paul the law's "commands" (ἐντολαί),

especially since later in the letter (6:2) Paul can use ἐντολή to describe the command to

honor one's father and mother—a command that does not clearly demarcate Jews from

Gentiles. Nor does the phrase ἐν δόγμασιν narrow the type of commands in view,[123] since

all the commands of the law come from God in the form of precepts or ordinances.[124]

Further, the term νόμος itself, regardless of whether it is the best translation for תּוֹרָה, is

the preferred term in the LXX to refer to the commands of the entire Mosaic law-

covenant,[125] and it is likely that Paul, familiar as he was with the LXX, would have used

the term νόμος in the same way. Hence, without mention to the contrary, it is more likely

that Paul teaches in 2:15 that Christ abolished the whole law.[126] This does not mean the

notion of covenant had become inconsequential for Paul, but only that the old covenant

had been abrogated, since it was powerless to bring about what it called for and thus

served as a barrier to the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham.[127]

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[123]For example, Westcott (*Ephesians*, 37) contends that ἐν δόγμασιν refers to "the commandments as specific, rigid, and outward, fulfilled in external obedience" (similarly Robinson, *Ephesians*, 64). Theodoret (Edwards, *Ephesians*, 139) wrongly thinks of the δόγματα as teachings of Christ by which the law was abolished.

[124]Rightly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 48-49. The term δόγμα is used in the NT to describe the precepts or decrees laid down by Caesar (Luke 2:1; Acts 17:7) or the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts 16:4). In Col 2:14 (cf. Col 2:20) it refers to the precepts of the law.

[125]See Exod 24:12; Lev 26:46; Deut 1:5; 4:8, 44; 27:3, 26; 28:58, 61; 31:9.

[126]This interpretation is corroborated by Col 2:14 (rightly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 48-49; contra Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 132), which describes God destroying in the cross of Christ τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῖν ("the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands" [ESV]). This most likely refers to the Mosaic law as the "thing handwritten," for Paul spoke of the old covenant in 2 Cor 3 as associated with the "letter" (γράμμα, v. 6), and "written . . . on stony tablets" (ἐγγεγραμμένη . . . ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις, v. 3).

[127]However, it is not as if God's righteousness, which was expressed in the law code of Moses, has changed, but only that the stipulations of the old covenant do not apply to New Testament believers *as stipulations from that law-covenant*, for believers now are under the new covenant. In other words, the

Thus, the main point of 2:14b-15a is that through his death Christ abolished the Mosaic law-covenant, which was a source of division and enmity between Jews and Gentiles as well as between God and humanity. But why was the Mosaic law-covenant such a source of division and enmity? Scholars associated with the "New Perspective on Paul" have rightly emphasized that the law was tied to ethnicity, for Israelites who were born into the covenant were circumcised on the eighth day and were members of the covenant community. Foreigners who desired entrance into the community were expected to be circumcised and adhere to the Jewish food laws and religious festivals, including the Sabbath. As these scholars have explained, these three areas in particular (circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath) marked out who the people of God were and defined the customs of Jewish life. The Gentiles, then, were excluded from the people of God unless they were willing to submit to these boundary-marking strictures of the Mosaic law-covenant.[128] As seen in 2:11, this is why the Gentiles were called "the uncircumcision," for they by virtue of their ethnicity were outside the covenant community. In this sense, the law was a wall dividing Jews from Gentiles. If Gentiles were to be full and equal members of the people of God without submitting to the strictures of the old covenant, the old covenant would have to be abolished.

But the law was also a wall dividing humanity from God, for it did not provide the power to overcome sin, which separated people from God.[129] In Ephesians 2 the problem of sin is presented in stark terms. All humanity, including Jews, exists as

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remarkable similarity between the instruction of Moses and that of Jesus is explained precisely because God does not change (rightly Abbott, *Ephesians*, 64-65; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 162; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 376-77; Douglas J. Moo, "The Law of Christ as the Fulfillment of the Law of Moses: A Modified Lutheran View," in *The Law, the Gospel, and the Modern Christian: Five Views*, ed. Wayne G. Strickland [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993], 319-76; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 198-99; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 169-70).

[128]See, e.g., James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays*, WUNT 185 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); N. T. Wright, "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith," *TynBul* 29 (1978): 61-88.

[129]So Chrysostom (Edwards, *Ephesians*, 139); Stuhlmacher, "'He is our Peace,'" 189-90.

"children of wrath" prior to God's salvation by grace through faith in Christ (2:3; cf. 2:1-10). Salvation from these transgressions would be found by faith and not by "works," even if the works were associated with the law, so that no one would boast before God (2:8-9; cf. Rom 3:27-28).[130] Ephesians 2:11-22 also presents humanity as in need of reconciliation with God. As mentioned already, the Gentiles apart from Christ are seen as "having no hope and without God in the world" (2:12), and they are "far off" (2:13, 17; cf. 4:17-19; 5:3-5). The Jews are also included in the plight of 2:11-22, for Paul does not consider their outward circumcision as salvific (2:11). They too are in need of peace with God, for Christ proclaims his saving peace not only to the Gentiles but also "to the near" (2:17). The fact that it is both Jews and Gentiles who are in need of reconciliation indicates that the problem of sin is significant and not tangential to the plight and solution in 2:11-22. Hence, the plight of Ephesians 2:11-22 is not merely horizontal but also vertical; it is not merely ecclesiological but also soteriological.

That Paul thought the real culprit for humanity's alienation from God was sin is confirmed by other Pauline texts.[131] Sin used the law for its own sinful purposes (Rom 7:8, 11), so that "[t]he very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me" (Rom 7:10, ESV). The Mosaic law-covenant, which was "holy and righteous and good" (Rom 7:12), came under the power of sin (1 Cor 15:56) because it was unable to overcome the depth of depravity (Rom 8:3). Thus, even Israel, the people of the covenant who were "near" God in a sense (Rom 3:2; 9:4-5; Eph 2:12), were under the power of sin and needed justifying righteousness, for the law only gave them knowledge of their sin

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[130]The typically Pauline phrase ἔργα νόμου is lacking in 2:9, where only ἔργα occurs as the counterpart to πίστις. But the similarity of 2:9 to such texts as Rom 3:27-28 indicates that Paul reflects on similar ideas. Indeed, the fact that ἔργα is used by itself as opposed to ἔργα νόμου suggests that Paul is referring to works in general and not merely boundary markers. I owe this insight to Thomas R. Schreiner (personal communication, dated 15 October 2013).

[131]Similarly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 170.

and increased their transgression (Rom 3:19-20; 5:20; Gal 3:19).

Furthermore, that the law would one day be abolished through the Messiah accords with Paul's view toward the law elsewhere. In Galatians 3:15-4:7 this is especially clear, as the law was intended to last only until the coming of the Messiah (3:19). It functioned as a pedagogue (παιδαγωγός) until the new era began in Christ (3:23-25), an era that is marked by maturity, freedom, and sonship (3:26-4:7; cf. Rom 10:4; 2 Cor 3:1-18).[132] The law's connection with the old age is seen even in Ephesians, for the law is abolished so that there might be "one new [καινός] man" in Christ (4:22-24). Reconciliation through the death of Christ is the property of the new creation (vv. 15-18; cf. 2 Cor 5:17-21).

Thus, even though Paul does not elaborate in 2:15 on his view of the Mosaic law-covenant, other texts clarify that his negative views towards the law are explained by its inability to overcome the ubiquitous power of sin and its temporal function in salvation history. And while Paul certainly can show a positive attitude toward the law, even in Ephesians (6:2-3), such a positive appraisal would not have been germane to the purpose of 2:11-22, which was to show that believing Gentiles are full members of the eschatological people of God by virtue of their union with Christ. The Mosaic law-covenant could not solve the problem of sin; if it could, it is hard to imagine why Paul would have denounced it as producing an "enmity" that Christ "killed" by his death (vv. 14, 16; cf. Gal 2:21). Indeed, Paul needed to show that the ecclesiological and soteriological solution for the Gentiles' plight could never have come through the law. Again, Paul does not denigrate the covenant ideal as a solution for the Gentiles. Rather,

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[132]Meyer, *End of the Law*, 34-61; Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 123-36. I understand τέλος to indicate both "goal" and "end" in Rom 10:4. The two translations are compatible and not mutually exclusive if understood salvation-historically, for if the goal of the law was to last for a time until the Messiah came, then when the Messiah arrived, he was also the end of the law (cf. Meyer, *End of the Law*, 210-16).

he does not locate the solution for the Gentiles in the Mosaic law-covenant, for on account of sin it ironically served as a barrier to the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham covenant. A new covenant was needed, one that would never be broken but bring about what was promised to Abraham: a worldwide people at peace with God and one another (vv. 15b-18).[133]

"One new man." The first result of Jesus' abolition of the law is peace with one another (v. 15b). The unity mentioned in 2:14 is now described as "one new man" (ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον).[134] This unified people of God, then, is a new people—indeed, a new humanity—and a new creation (v. 15b; cf. 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Isa 65:17-18). The people of God now are not merely a continuation of the historical Israel but are something new.[135] Jesus created (κτίζω) them, and they are now "in him" (ἐν αὐτῷ).[136]

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[133]Similarly, Arnold, *Ephesians*, 163, 177-78. Yoder Neufeld (*Ephesians*, 118-19) rightly connects new creation and new covenant in v. 15 and argues that such a connection was an expectation of the prophet Jeremiah.

[134]The language of unity in vv. 14-18 is hard to miss: Jews and Gentiles are two groups that comprise humanity ("the both" in vv. 14, 16, 18, and "the two" in v. 15), with the Jews as "those who are near" (v. 17) and the Gentiles as "you who are far off" (vv. 13, 17). But in Christ they become one: Jesus made the two one (ἕν, v. 14), created them in himself into one new man (ἕνα, v. 15), reconciled them to God in one body (ἑνί, v. 16), and provided access to the father in one spirit (ἑνί, v. 18).

[135]Throughout church history the church has been understood as a *tertium genus*, a "third race," distinct from unbelieving Jews and Gentiles (*Strom.* 6.5.41.6; *Diogn.* 1.1; Aristides, *Apol.* 2.1; *Nat.* 1.8; *Scorp.* 10; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 168; Best, *Ephesians*, 267-69; Chrysostom [Edwards, *Ephesians*, 140]; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 378-80; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 134; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 194-95). Barth (*Ephesians*, 309-11) contends that there are still two groups in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, and that there is no *tertium genus* (cf. James D. G. Dunn, "Anti-Semitism in the Deutero-Pauline Literature," in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner, [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 159; apparently Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 130). To be sure, the promises God made to Israel's patriarchs support the Gentiles' inclusion (Rom 11:17-18), but what Barth and others underestimate is the newness and eschatological character of the church (1 Cor 10:32), with Jesus as the last Adam and head of the new humanity. For a helpful way of explaining the relationship between Israel, Christ, and the church, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 683-703. Moule (*Ephesians*, 78, 81) and Slater (*Ephesians*, 69) call the church the "new Israel" (similarly Abbott, *Ephesians*, 69; Salmond, *Ephesians*, 298-99).

[136]Some manuscripts read ἑαυτῷ (ℵ [second corrector], D, G, Ψ, Latin tradition), but ἐν αὐτῷ is the superior reading on external grounds (𝔓⁴⁶, ℵ [original reading], A, B, F, P, 33, 1175, 1739, 1881; contra

The purpose of Christ's creative work was so that Jews and Gentiles might become "one new man" (ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον), and the result of the creation is peace between Jews and Gentiles.[137]

The language of "one new man" shows that this unified people of God is a new humanity, for it carries adamic overtones.[138] Paul does not refer to a "new man" anywhere else other than Ephesians 4:24, where the new man is clearly tied to creation imagery, for it is "created according to God" (τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα; see chapter 5). But other Pauline texts are similar to 2:15, particularly Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49. In Romans 5:12-19 Paul refers to Adam as the "one man" (ὁ εἷς ἄνθρωπος, v. 19) who is the head of humanity, through whom sin came into the world (v. 12) and death reigned (v. 17). In contrast, Jesus, the antitype of Adam (v. 14), is the "one man" (ὁ εἷς ἄνθρωπος, v. 15) by whom the grace of God abounded to the many (v. 15) and through whom the many will reign in life (v. 17) and be accounted as righteous (v. 19). The contrast between Adam and Jesus indicates that they are the heads of their respective groups of people, with Adam as the head of the old humanity ("all men," vv. 12, 18; "the many," vv. 15, 19) and Jesus as the head of the new humanity ("all men," v. 18; "the many," vv. 15, 19). The verbal similarity between Romans and Ephesians is located in the singularity of the reference to Jesus as the "one man."

Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 377n2). Internal evidence also favors ἐν αὐτῷ, for a scribe would have attempted to clarify the reflexive nature of the pronoun. For other examples of this scribal tendency in Ephesians, see 1:4, 9.

[137]Often present participles following the main verb indicate result (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 380; Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed., Biblical Languages: Greek 2 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 188; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 171; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 638). Contra Best (*Ephesians*, 263) who maintains the participle indicates simultaneous action in 2:15.

[138]So Caird, *Paul's Letters*, 59; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 143; MacDonald, *Ephesians*, 245; Moule, *Ephesians*, 80; Peter S. Williamson, *Ephesians*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 74; Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 119, 130-31. The phrase "one new man" would not necessarily have conjured up images of baptism (contra MacDonald, *Ephesians*, 245-46; Patzia, *Ephesians*, 198-99; rightly Perkins, *Ephesians*, 400).

First Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49 is another parallel text to Ephesians 2:15. Similar to Romans 5:12-19, 1 Corinthians 15 contrasts Adam and Jesus, affirming that death came through Adam but resurrection life through Jesus (vv. 21-22). Again, they are the heads of their respective humanities, for their actions affect everyone under their headship ("all die/all are made alive," v. 22; "those of dust/those of heaven," v. 48). First Corinthians 15 is different from Romans 5, though, in that it does not emphasize the singularity of Adam and Jesus as does Romans 5—note the anarthrous δι' ἀνθρώπου in 15:21—but focuses more on Jesus as the *eschatological* man. Adam is understood to be "the first man" (vv. 45, 47), but Jesus is the "last Adam" (v. 45), the "second man" (v. 47), and the "heavenly man" (vv. 48-49). Jesus is the "last Adam" inasmuch as there are no future heads of humanity, the "second man" inasmuch as he is the head of the new creation, and the "heavenly man" inasmuch as the new age has dawned in him.[139] In 1 Corinthians 15, then, eschatology and new creation themes are drawn together in describing Jesus.

Although Romans and 1 Corinthians do not use the phrase "one new man," there are enough parallels to suggest that they are referring to the same reality. Like Romans 5, Ephesians 2:15 emphasizes the singularity of the "one man." Ephesians does not contrast Adam and Jesus as does Romans, but the emphatic nature of "one man" in both texts seems to indicate similar ideas. If this is the case, then Jesus as the "one man" in Ephesians is seen as the head of a humanity, which is consonant with the notion that all believers are blessed "in him" (1:3-14). Like 1 Corinthians 15, Ephesians emphasizes the eschatological and new creational nature of this man as the "new man." Even though 1 Corinthians does not use the adjectives παλαιός/ἀρχαῖος or καινός to describe Adam and Jesus, the way they are described in eschatological terms indicates that Adam is the head

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[139]Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 228n6.

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of the *old* humanity and Jesus of the *new*, for the new age has dawned in Jesus as the "last Adam," the "second man," and the "heavenly man." So even though Paul uses a different adjective in Ephesians 2:15 (καινός), the meaning is the same, for Paul can use καινός to describe the eschatological new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15), which, given the verb κτίζω, is likely present in 2:15 as well.[140] Thus, like Romans and 1 Corinthians, Ephesians 2:15 describes Jesus as the creator of the eschatological new creation (cf. 2:10) and the head of the new, eschatological humanity.[141]

The fact that in Christ Gentiles are full and equal members of the people of God explains the content of the Ephesian "mystery of Christ" (3:4). This mystery was not known to other generations but was "revealed" to the apostles and New Testament prophets (3:5). The content of the mystery Paul clarifies in 3:6: the Gentiles are "fellow heirs and fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." As has been shown, the promise of the Gentiles joining the one people of God was not unknown in the Old Testament but was a key promise of the new covenant. The newness of Paul's mystery is that Gentile inclusion as full members of the people of God was not as clear in the Old Testament as was revealed in the apostles.[142] At times in the Old Testament the ingathered Gentiles seem subservient to the nation of Israel as opposed to equal members with Israel (e.g., Ezek 16:61), while at other times their full membership is more clearly indicated (e.g., Isa 19:24-25).

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[140]So Barth, *Ephesians*, 308-09.

[141]Eph 2:15 differs from Romans and 1 Corinthians in that in Ephesians the "one new man" primarily refers to the new people of God, whereas the other texts consider Jesus as the new man. But one should not exaggerate the differences, for even in Ephesians it is clear that the new people of God are only newly constituted inasmuch as they are united to Christ by faith. Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 380n2) wrongly divorces Jesus as the new Adam from the church as the new humanity.

[142]Thus, the ὡς particle in 3:5 to indicate degree. The term μυστήριον for Paul need not indicate that the concept of Gentile inclusion as equal members of the people of God was unknown previously, for he roots it in the OT. Rather, μυστήριον can merely indicate that what was revealed was greater insight into this theme.

To this point in the analysis of 2:13-18 it has been noted that verses 14-15 emphasize a new people of God created by the death of Christ and who no longer are under the Mosaic law-covenant. As suggested above, this emphasis parallels remarkably Isaiah's new covenant promises. As shown in chapter 2, Isaiah 49-57 indicates that the entire covenant community comprises not only Israel but the nations as well. This is hinted at in 54:2-3, for Zion would need to expand her tent, and it is made explicit in 56:3-8, where even the foreigner and the eunuch would join themselves to the people of God and be accepted as ministers in the temple, rendering the temple "a house of prayer for all peoples" (56:7). Indeed, the invitation to repent and trust in Yahweh to be included in the "everlasting covenant" is sent out to "everyone who thirsts" (55:1). Thus, when the twofold proclamation of peace goes out "to the far and to the near" in 57:19, one should see this as indicating that peace is for not only ethnic Jews scattered abroad, but also anyone among the nations who will join themselves to the people of God. Further, the people in Isaiah's new creation—"the offspring of the blessed of Yahweh" (65:23)—should be seen as coextensive with this worldwide people.[143] Thus, even in Isaiah there are indications that the new covenant community is a worldwide community in the new creation, and that this entire community experiences peace with one another.

Furthermore, Isaiah makes it clear that the unity among God's worldwide people will be achieved by a single individual: the servant of Yahweh, the Davidic scion. He is the greater David whose faithful obedience issues in a worldwide gathering and invitation (55:3-5). He is the Spirit-anointed figure who brings about a unity among God's people, which is based upon adherence to God's words (59:21). It is not insignificant, then, that Paul often calls Jesus by his messianic title, "Christ," for such a title carries with it images of a Spirit-anointed, Davidic ruler who would bring to fruition

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[143]Similarly Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 467. For Isaiah's message of a coming new creation for the new people of God, see 43:19; 62:2; 65:15, 17; 66:22.

God's saving promises (Ezek 34:23-24; 37:22ff.).[144] And even though it was not as clear within the Old Testament that this figure would suffer and die to bring about these promises (hence Paul's "mystery" terminology), such promises can still be found deeply embedded within Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song (52:13-53:12).

Hence, given (1) the Isaianic emphasis on a worldwide people at peace with one another based on the atoning work of the servant, (2) Paul's emphasis on a new people of Jews and Gentiles at peace with one another, having been newly created by Christ through his death, and (3) Paul's use of Isaiah 52:7 and 57:19 in Ephesians 2:13, 17, it seems likely that Paul considered Jesus to have brought to fulfillment Isaiah's promises of a new worldwide people in the new creation. Paul interpreted "the far and the near" of Isaiah 57:19 in the context of Isaiah's worldwide message.[145] And since the peace within Isaiah's worldwide community is the peace of the everlasting covenant achieved by the death of the servant (53:5; 54:10; 55:3), it is likely that Paul thought that Jesus had fulfilled these prophetic promises through his death and thus had inaugurated this new and everlasting covenant of peace.[146]

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[144]Similarly Barth, *Ephesians*, 293.

[145]Rightly Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 23-55.

[146]Even if one did not grant that Paul had Isaiah's covenant of peace in mind, it would still be likely that he had the new covenant in mind, for part and parcel of the new covenant's promises were promises of a worldwide people in the new creation (see chapter 2). For instance, in Jeremiah the walls of Jerusalem would extend further than in former days, suggesting an expansive people (31:38-40). In Ezekiel Sodom and Samaria were joined to Jerusalem as one people (16:61), indicating that the people of God would include non-Israelites. The people would be so numerous that they would be as numerous as the flocks of Jerusalem at the time of her appointed feasts (36:37-38). As God promised Abraham, they would be a multiplied people (37:26). Like Isaiah, Ezekiel promises this people would be in the new creation, for God would plant them in the land that is "like the garden of Eden" (36:35; cf. 34:25-29). Finally, the new people would be completely unified, for no more would there be two nations or two kingdoms but one nation with one king (37:22), and they would be united in fearing and obeying Yahweh (11:19-20; cf. Jer 32:39). Like Paul notes in Eph 2:18, the promise of unity in the new covenant would come when God would by his spirit give his people a "new spirit" to love and fear him (11:19-20; 36:26-27). Given the consistency with which these new covenant promises include a newly-created, unified, worldwide people under the reign of a future David, it is likely that Paul would have recognized this and seen their fulfillment in Christ, wherein the new people of God are reconstituted by faith in him. Robert H. Suh ("The Use of Ezekiel 37 in Ephesians 2," *JETS* 50 [2007]: 726-28) and Talbert (*Ephesians*, 81) rightly argue for an

Vertical Peace: Peace with God (2:16-18)

Peace with God is the main theme of 2:16-18. If the emphasis in 2:13-18 is on peace between Jews and Gentiles, then the more fundamental peace described in 2:16-18 is peace between God and humanity.

The significance of peace with God is evident even from 2:13, where the Gentiles are brought near by the blood of Christ. After having described the plight of the Gentiles in verse 12 in both horizontal and vertical terms, Paul immediately summarizes the solution in verse 13: they have been brought near by the blood of Christ. That there is no qualification to the adverb ἐγγύς indicates that the solution covers both the horizontal and vertical aspects of their plight. God has brought near the Gentiles to himself and his people by the death of Christ.

The need for peace with God is heightened by the likelihood that Christ's "blood" (αἷμα) in 2:13 indicates that Jesus' death was a sacrifice.[147] Given that the blood of Jesus is the means by which people are brought near to God (2:18), the term αἷμα likely carries cultic connotations and hearkens back to the sacrificial system in the Old Testament, where the blood of the animals would be poured out as a sacrifice for the sins of the people.[148] Paul likewise refers to the blood of Christ in sacrificial contexts, suggesting that it is through his sacrifice that God's wrath is propitiated (Rom 3:25), and people are justified, reconciled to God (Rom 5:9; Col 1:20), and forgiven (Eph 1:7). Such sacrificial notions indicate primarily that enmity with God is the plight solved by the

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allusion to Ezekiel's covenant of peace (37:26) in Eph 2:14ff. Although Robinson (*Ephesians*, 65-66) rightly sees the unity between Jews and Gentiles as a reality promised in the new covenant, he does not indicate which texts promise such unity.

[147]Barth, *Ephesians*, 299; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 363; Stott, *Ephesians*, 98. There is no difference between διὰ τοῦ αἵματος (1:7) and ἐν τῷ αἵματι (rightly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 46). The reference to circumcision in 2:11 does not mean that Christ's blood in v. 13 is the blood of his circumcision (contra Ralph P. Martin, *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology*, New Foundations Theological Library [Atlanta: John Knox, 1981], 192; rightly Best, *Ephesians*, 246-47; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 363; Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 111).

[148]See especially Lev 1:5; 4:7-35; 16:14-19.

death of Christ.

More specifically, because of 1:7, it is likely that the reference to Jesus' blood in 2:13 indicates that the Gentiles have received the new covenant promise of the forgiveness of sins.[149] As seen in chapter 3, Paul's reference to Jesus' blood in 1:7 must be understood in light of the Lord's Supper tradition and thus was a death that enacted the new covenant and its redemptive promise of forgiveness of sins.[150] Given the rarity with which Paul refers to Jesus' sacrificial blood,[151] the frequency with which he roots Jesus' blood in the Lord's Supper tradition (1 Cor 10:16; 11:25, 27), and the definition of Jesus' death in 1:7 as the means of redemption and forgiveness of sins, then 2:13 also must be read against the backdrop of the Lord's Supper tradition and sacrifice for sins. The solution for the Gentiles fundamentally is that they have become members of the new covenant community, for they are recipients of the new covenant's promise of the forgiveness of sins by the death of Christ (1 Cor 11:25). Jesus' death inaugurated a new covenant, and this new covenant, not the Mosaic law-covenant (Eph 2:15), is the basis for the Gentiles' peace with God.

That covenantal language is associated with Jesus' blood in 2:13 fits well with the idea of the Gentiles being "brought near," for to draw near to God and his people was a common way of referring to a person joining himself to the covenant.[152] For instance,

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[149]Moule (*Ephesians*, 78), Robinson (*Ephesians*, 62-63), and Westcott (*Ephesians*, 36) rightly say this is the blood of the new covenant (similarly Barth, *Ephesians*, 299; Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 259). Although Talbert (*Ephesians*, 78) rightly sees Jesus' death as inaugurating the new covenant, he wrongly suggests this means Jesus' death was not a propitiatory sacrifice.

[150]See Jer 31:34; Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25.

[151]See Rom 3:25; 5:9; 1 Cor 10:16; 11:25, 27; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Col 1:20.

[152]That Lincoln ("Use of the Old Testament," 27-28) does not see Isaiah as the background of Eph 2:13 does not mean he is wrong to see proselyte terminology in use. Perhaps also R. J. McKelvey (*The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament*, Oxford Theological Monographs [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969], 111-12) is correct in seeing temple notions here, for being far or near frequently refers to the people's relationship to Zion. The far/near language in 2:13 and 17 is not owing to a real or foreseen anti-Semitism that Paul wishes to fight (contra Barth, *Ephesians*, 278).

the Passover regulations mandated that a foreigner be circumcised so that he may "draw near" [קרב] to keep the Passover (Exod 12:48). Those who forsake the covenant are "far off" [רחק] from God (Ps 73:27),[153] but those who are in the covenant are "near" [קרב] (Exod 16:9).[154] That "drawing near" is synonymous with joining the covenant community is especially clear in the Qumran literature. For instance, commands are given for the criteria by which a man may be accepted into the covenant community. When the man stands in front of the council, "they shall be questioned, all of them, concerning his duties. And depending on the outcome of the lot in the council of the Many he shall be included [קרב] or excluded [רחק]" (1QS 6.15-16).[155] Those who are in the covenant are the ones who have "drawn near." Similarly, in Ephesians 2:13, Paul reminds the Gentiles that it was the atoning death of Christ that was the means by which God inaugurated a new covenant relationship with the Gentiles.

The idea that Christ's death was a sacrifice is also found in Ephesians 5:2, where the love of Christ is expressed by laying down his life for believers as a pleasing offering and sacrifice to God. The background to Paul's language likewise is the OT's sacrificial system, where a variety of offerings resulted in a pleasing aroma to God (Lev 1:9; 2:2; 3:5; 4:31).[156] Jesus' sacrificial death is also connected to the forgiveness of sins in 4:32-5:2, for the pattern for believers to follow in forgiving others is expressed in God's forgiveness in Christ (4:32). Thus, 5:2 is another indication that Paul considered Jesus' death to be a sacrifice, and that his sacrifice was pleasing to God and resulted in

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[153]Cf. Ps 109:17; Isa 29:13; 46:12; 59:9, 11, 14; Jer 2:5; Ezek 44:10.

[154]Cf. Lev 9:5; Deut 4:11; 5:23, 27.

[155]Translation from Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 10. Cf. 1QS 6.19, 22; 7.21; 8.18; 9.15. For parallels in the rabbinic literature, see *Mek. Exod.* 18:5; *Midr. Sam.* 28:6; *Num. Rab.* 8:4.

[156]O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 355.

forgiveness of sins (cf. 5:25-27; 1 Cor 5:7; Heb 10:10, 14). Similarly, 2:13 shows that Jesus' death was a sacrifice that brought Gentiles peace and nearness to God.[157]

Another place where Paul emphasizes that peace with God is the solution for the Gentiles is in 2:16 where Jesus "reconciles" (ἀποκαταλλάσσω) both Jews and Gentiles to God through his work on the cross. There are still overtones of horizontal peace with one another here, as the phrases "both" and "in one body" suggest.[158] Nevertheless, that Paul emphasizes reconciliation *to God* shows that mere horizontal reconciliation is not the focus of the phrase but vertical reconciliation. Further, it is not only the Gentiles but also the Jews who are seen as in need of being reconciled to God, for it is "both groups" (οἱ ἀμφότεροι) that Jesus reconciled to God through the cross.[159]

Including the verbal noun καταλλαγή, Paul uses the (ἀπο)καταλλάσσω word group only a few times,[160] and with the exception of 1 Corinthians 7:11, where a wife is urged to "be reconciled" to her husband, connects reconciliation to what Christ accomplished on the cross.[161] The assumption behind the term is that humanity

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[157]Barth (*Ephesians*, 301) says, "Ephesians may well contain a summary and application of the Pauline doctrine on the sacrifice of Christ."

[158]With most commentators (e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 265-66; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 49-50; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 382; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 172), "in one body" refers to the church, not the actual body of Christ (contra Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 135; Stuhlmacher, "'He is our Peace,'" 190; Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 120), although the words of Theodoret (Edwards, *Ephesians*, 140) are still memorable: "He has reconciled both, that is, those from Gentile and from Jewish backgrounds, in the one body that was offered on behalf of all, so that they may at last be made one body."

[159]So Calvin, *Ephesians*, 152; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 203.

[160]See Rom 5:10-11; 11:15; 1 Cor 7:11; 2 Cor 5:18-20; Eph 2:16; Col 1:20, 22.

[161]There is probably no difference between the compound and double compound forms. If a difference is sought, it likely is an intensification of the compound form, which was common in Hellenistic Greek (Thielman, *Ephesians*, 171; Witherington [*Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 261] suggests translating it "might reconcile thoroughly"), and does not indicate a regaining of a lost unity (rightly Best, *Ephesians*, 264; contra Calvin, *Ephesians*, 152; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 49; Salmond, *Ephesians*, 296). For a cautious and sober treatment of the use of prepositions in the Greek New Testament, see Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012). For a good study of the term καταλλάσσω in Paul's literature, see Stanley E. Porter, Καταλλάσσω *in Ancient Greek Literature, with Reference to the Pauline Writings*, Estudios de Filología

fundamentally is at enmity with God because of sin and needs to be reconciled to him. Indeed, that it is "both groups" that needed to be reconciled to God shows that even the Jews were considered God's enemies without Christ, for they, along with the rest of humanity, were "children of wrath" (2:1-3). The enmity of 2:16, then, as opposed to the primary thrust of 2:14-15, is vertical and includes Jews and Gentiles.[162] And ironically, it was through Jesus' own death that he "killed the enmity in himself."[163]

The reoccurrence of the term ἔχθρα in 2:16 provides a link back to the enmity associated with the Mosaic law-covenant in 2:14-15. But if the enmity of verse 16 is primarily vertical, then the enmity produced by the law in verse 16 did not flow from its "boundary markers" that separated Jews from Gentiles but from its inability to overcome sin, even within the Jewish people. Rather than providing a lasting solution for sin, it only served to separate people from God (Isa 59:2) and reveal to people their own sin (Rom 3:20). Thielman's explanation of how the law produced enmity deserves mention:

> The Mosaic law was as tightly bound to the enmity between God and all humanity as it was to the enmity between Jews and Gentiles. When its holy, righteous, and good "decrees" encountered a humanity under the power of the world, the devil, and the flesh, they served only to reveal the depth of humanity's rebellion against God and the gravity of the penalty for that rebellion. When Christ died on the cross, he set the law aside, and in so doing, he not only created a new people unified across ethnic barriers but also removed the case against all humanity codified in the Mosaic law. When Christ set aside the law through his death on the cross, therefore, he reconciled to God all who believed the gospel, whether Jew or Gentile.[164]

Neotestamentaria 5 (Córdoba, Spain: Ediciones el Almendro, 1994).

[162]Contra Calvin (*Ephesians*, 152) and Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 146), both of whom see the enmity as horizontal. While Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 146) argues based on the aorist tense of the participle ἀποκτείνας, participles retain relative time and can in post-verbal position describe action coincidental or even subsequent to the verb (rightly O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 205; cf. Porter, *Idioms*, 188).

[163]Probably ἀποκτείνας is an adverbial participle of means (so Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 384; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 172n30). Also, ἐν αὐτῷ probably refers to Christ, not τοῦ σταυροῦ (rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 166; Heil, *Ephesians*, 123; contra Best, *Ephesians*, 266; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 384), for a reflexive use of the personal pronoun occurred in v. 15, and the variants extant in the manuscript tradition, while clearly secondary, reveal a reflexive interpretation (i.e., ἐν ἑαυτῷ).

[164]*Ephesians*, 173.

That the Mosaic law-covenant is to be associated with the vertical enmity of 2:16 is validated by the parallel text in Colossians 2:14, where Jesus wiped away the "record of debt in regulations" that stood against believers by nailing it to the cross.[165] Given the parallel with Ephesians 2:15, it is likely that the phrase τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν refers to the Mosaic law-covenant, which Christ destroyed at the cross. In Colossians, though, the problem with the law is clearly not horizontal but vertical (Col 2:13). Humanity has accrued a sin-debt against God by failing to live in accordance with his righteous standards outlined in the Mosaic law-covenant. The law, then, served to demonstrate the deep depravity and rebellion of humanity. The Colossians parallel validates the interpretation of Ephesians 2:16 that the law is linked to humanity's enmity against God—not merely the enmity between Jews and Gentiles. The conclusion is that in no way are reconciliation and forgiveness for both Jews and Gentiles based on the old covenant but on the substitutionary death of Christ and the new covenant inaugurated by that death.

Yet another aspect of peace with God is found in 2:18, where Paul explains that the reason Jesus is a peace-preacher in 2:17 is because (ὅτι)[166] it is through him that both Jews and Gentiles have access to God the father.[167] There is still present Paul's desire to show unity among Jews and Gentiles, for he continues to describe humanity as

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[165]Rightly ibid., 173.

[166]While some commentators think ὅτι sums up the previous verses (Best, *Ephesians*, 273) or even indicates result (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 388), it can retain its causal force in 2:18 (rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 167; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 174).

[167]One need not decide the particular time of Jesus' proclamation in 2:17. For a discussion of the many interpretations of ἐλθών, see Best (*Ephesians*, 271-73) who thinks the "least objectionable" option is Christ's preaching either during his earthly ministry (so Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 137; John 20:19-21; Acts 10:36-38) or in those who preach the gospel now (so Stott, *Ephesians*, 103). It could refer to the period of apostolic preaching (Arnold, *Ephesians*, 166; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 50; and Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 384-85). Moritz (*Profound Mystery*, 43-45) is likely correct that the point seems to be not one of time as much as Christ's fulfillment of Isaiah's expectation that a messenger will come proclaiming the salvation of Yahweh.

two groups becoming one, yet the emphasis again falls on the new relationship with God for Jews and Gentiles alike.

This new relationship is described in terms of the new "access" (προσαγωγή) believers have with the father (3:12; Rom 5:1-2; Heb 4:16). Given the sacrificial context of 2:13-18 as well as the new temple imagery in 2:20-22, it is likely the term προσαγωγή has cultic—not political—connotations. The verb προσάγω is most often used in the LXX in Leviticus to describe the act of offering a sacrifice (e.g., Lev 1:3; 3:3; 4:14), which means that it most often is related to the duties and responsibilities of priests.[168] Given the cultic connotations associated with the word προσαγωγή, as well as Paul's interest in drawing connections with the temple nearby (vv. 20-22), the access to the father in 2:18 likely is to be associated with access to the very presence of God in his temple.[169]

Such access was limited in the OT, being available only to priests, and that at specific times. Such access was hardly free for even the faithful within the covenant community. Indeed, members of Israel in the OT were not able to draw near to God (Lev 17:5 [Eng. 16:40]; Num 18:3-4, 22). At the inauguration of the Sinai covenant, only Moses was allowed to draw near to Yahweh, while the people were instructed to remain away from the mountain, and both the elders of Israel and Aaron and his sons were to worship from afar (Exod 24:1-2; cf. 20:18-21; 33:7; Deut 5:22-28). During the ministry of Joshua, the people likewise were to remain far from the presence of God residing in the ark of the covenant (Josh 3:4). Even from among the priests, who were allowed

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[168]Here I am indebted to the comments of Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 149 (cf. Barth, *Ephesians*, 268; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 209). For an argument that προσαγωγή is a political term, see Caird, *Paul's Letters*, 70; Perkins, *Ephesians*, 401. Whether προσαγωγή is to be read intransitively ("access"; Salmond, *Ephesians*, 298) or transitively ("entrance into"; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 51) is not significant, for Paul would have affirmed both.

[169]Rightly Beale, *Temple and Church's Mission*, 260; McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 112; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 343.

greater access into God's presence (Exod 40:32; Lev 9:7-8; 21:17-18; Ezek 44:15-16), no one with a defect was allowed to approach Yahweh on account of his holiness (Lev 21:16-24; 22:3), and every priest was to wear holy attire (Ezek 42:14). The penalty for attempting to approach God without regard for his holiness and glory was death, as Nadab and Abihu discovered (Lev 10:1-3; 16:1). It is no wonder, then, that Israel was fearful to draw near to God under the administration of the old covenant (Num 17:28 [Eng. 17:13]; 18:3; Deut 5:22-27; Heb 12:18-21).

But now in the new covenant both Jews and Gentiles have free access through Christ into the presence of God. The access into the temple once available to a select few now has been open, the veil has been torn (Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45; Heb 10:19-20), and everyone in the covenant community has freedom to approach God without the fear of condemnation and death.[170] What this suggests is that through the priesthood of Christ everyone in the new covenant is a priest, for everyone shares a freedom of access into God's presence not even possessed by the sons of Aaron in the old covenant.[171] The democratizing of the priesthood was, of course, the ideal enshrined within the old covenant (Exod 19:6), yet it was not achieved on account of sin. But in the new covenant, every member of the covenant community knows God and has direct access to God (Isa 56:7; 61:6; Jer 31:29-30, 34; cf. 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6).

Especially striking in 2:18 is the notion that not only Jews but also Gentiles have priestly access to God, for it is "both groups" (οἱ ἀμφότεροι) who are included in the new covenant's blessings. Such a notion would have been shocking to a first-century

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[170]Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 149) notes that even Jews did not experience such access to God. As Arnold (*Ephesians*, 167), notes, v. 18 only makes sense if Jesus' offering was effective.

[171]Even in Ezekiel's vision of the new temple, only priests are allowed to minister at the table (44:15-16), suggesting that even during the exile the eschatological expectation was that access into God's presence was to be restricted to priests. Although Barth (*Ephesians*, 266-68) rightly sees Jesus as a priest in v. 18 (contra Best, *Ephesians*, 274), his proclamation of peace in v. 17 is not a priestly blessing, for Isa 52:7 does not present the messenger as a priest.

Jew, who would have been well aware that the Gentiles did not share the same temple privileges as the Jews, for they were warned by threat of death not to enter the Court of Jews but to remain in the Court of Gentiles.[172] But now in Christ, the "one new man" (v. 15), the Gentiles have as much access into the presence of God as do the Jews, and God is as much their father (πατήρ) as he is the Jews'. In other words, Isaiah's vision of Gentiles serving as priests in the temple (56:6-7) was coming to pass in Christ. Furthermore, since only those who donned holy garments were allowed temple access (Exod 28:1-43; Ezek 42:14), the implication of 2:18 is that through Christ the new people of God are "holy and blameless before him in love" (1:4; cf. 5:27)

A final indicator of the striking newness of 2:18 is that the access for Jewish and Gentile believers is "in one Spirit" (ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι). Far from being an anthropological reference to a particular aspect of the person, i.e., one's own spirit, the reference to the unifying πνεῦμα is the Spirit of God, who, as noted in previous chapters, is the sign of the inbreaking of the new age and the inauguration of the new covenant.[173] Unlike in the old covenant, when only a select few possessed the Spirit,[174] in the new covenant there would be a unified people of God who without exception are endowed with and indwelt by the Spirit.[175] Every believer has the Spirit, for in the new community

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[172]In 1871 an inscription was discovered on the outer wall of the temple that read: "No foreigner is to enter within the balustrade and enclosure around the temple area. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his death which will follow." For an image of this inscription, see Talbert, *Ephesians*, 79.

[173]Rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 163. Scott (*Ephesians*, 175) misses the Trinitarian character of 2:18 by claiming the spirit is Paul's way of speaking of the unity of will and new attitude of worship among the believers.

[174]See Exod 28:3; 31:3; Num 11:17, 25; Judg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 1 Chr 12:18; 28:12; Zech 7:12.

[175]See Isa 59:21; Ezek 11:19-20; 36:26-27; 37:14, 22-24. James M. Hamilton, Jr. (*God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments*, NACSBT 1 [Nashville: B&H, 2006]) distinguishes between regeneration by and indwelling of the Spirit, the former of which was the experience of the old covenant remnant but not the latter.

the Spirit has been poured out from on high upon, even upon the Gentiles.[176] As seen in Isaiah 59:21, everyone connected to Christ, the servant of Yahweh, receives his Spirit, who empowers God's people to obey God's words. Evidently Paul affirmed that this promised Spirit had come, for everyone in the church, both Jew and Gentile alike, has the Spirit, and their unity is grounded in their common experience of the one Spirit of God (4:4).

Hence, 2:18 describes a new relationship with God for both Jews and Gentiles. This notion actually parallels 2:13, which like a banner over 2:14-18 emphasizes that in Christ believers have been drawn near to God. Just as the Gentiles are brought near to God in 2:13, so in 2:18 they are granted free access into his presence.[177] The fact that nearness to God is emphasized at the beginning and end of the section show that, while 2:11-22 have the horizontal in view more often, the vertical is never out of sight and grounds the horizontal. The horizontal is necessary but is rooted in the vertical, for there is no peace with one another without antecedent peace with God.[178] For Paul, when people came near to God by the blood of Christ, they also came near to one another, for coming to God through Jesus meant being joined into the "one new man" (2:15).[179] As

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[176]See Acts 2:4, 17-18; 38-39; 10:44-45; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13. Thus, "in one Spirit" probably does not indicate the means by which believers gained access to God but the unity between the Jewish and Gentile believers (rightly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 51; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 175).

[177]Vv. 13 and 18 are also parallel lexically: in the LXX the verb προσάγω most often translates the Hiphil of קרב, which, if the "near/far" distinction in v. 13 is drawn from Isa 57:19 LXX, is also the parent text of ἐγγύς in v. 13. Hence, vv. 13 and 18 both emphasize nearness to God, behind which is the root קרב.

[178]Rightly Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 121.

[179]The fact that the horizontal elements of peace precede the vertical is no argument for "ecclesiology absorbing soteriology" in Ephesians, as suggested by Helmut Merklein (*Christus und die Kirche: Die theologische Grundstruktur des Epheserbriefes nach 2,11-18*, SBS 66 [Stuttgart: KBW, 1973], 62-71) and Helmut Merkel ("καταλλάσσω," in *EDNT*, ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 2:263; rightly Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 144; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 202). If an argument for priority is to be made it is that 2:1-10 comes first in Ephesians to provide the general, soteriological principle and 2:11-22 follows, in applying this principle soteriologically and

verses 16 and 18 showed, it is when God solves the vertical problem of humanity's sin by creating access into his presence through Christ that the horizontal enmity is thereby destroyed. It is as the "two groups" are reconciled to God that they find unity "in one body."

Such peace with God in 2:16-18 fulfills the accomplishment and proclamation of peace with God in Isaiah 49-57. As has been demonstrated in detail in chapter 2, Isaiah 48:22 and 57:21 resemble a tolling bell constantly reminding the people of their lack of peace with God: "There is no peace for the wicked." Between these constant reminders is Yahweh's message of how Israel would attain peace. Like Ephesians 2:13-18, peace in Isaiah would come only through the sacrificial death of an individual (53:5).[180] Like Ephesians, peace in Isaiah meant that reconciliation with God had taken place, for through the death of the servant God would institute a new "covenant of peace" for Zion (54:9-10).[181] The death of the servant and the resultant new covenant of peace are the fundamental solution to Israel's plight, for such would be the means by which Yahweh would no longer be angry with Israel for her sin (54:7-8). Indeed, like Ephesians, to have peace with God would indicate that the sins of God's people, which at one time raised a barrier between God and his people (59:2; cf. Eph 2:1, 5, 14), would be healed and forgiven (53:5; 57:18).[182] This new covenant would be an "everlasting covenant" that

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ecclesiologically to the Gentiles.

[180]That the servant's death is a sacrifice is clear from 52:15, where the servant "sprinkles many nations" (reading the Hiphil of נָזָה; so Peter J. Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song [Isaiah 52:13-53:12]," *SBJT* 11, no. 2 [2007]: 27), and 53:10-12, where he makes his soul a "guilt offering" (אָשָׁם) and "bears" (נָשָׂא) the sin of his people (for the use of נָשָׂא in sacrificial contexts, see Lev 10:17; 16:22).

[181]Hence, the peace in Isaiah and Ephesians is not a mere cessation of hostilities but a full restoration of harmony, love, and loyalty between God and humanity. This is noticeable inasmuch as the promises of the new covenant entail forgiveness and healing (cf. Ps 103:3-5; Isa 53:5; 57:18-19; Jer 33:6-9; Hos 14:3-8 [Eng. 14:2-7]).

[182]Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 30, 41. The promised healing (רָפָא) in Isa 57:18 is understood in

would flow from the covenant faithfulness of a future David (55:3), and the result would be that peace would be experienced by the entire covenant community (54:13; 55:12).[183] This peace would be proclaimed to the entire world (52:7; 55:1-13), for both Jews and Gentiles alike have access as priests before God in his temple (56:3-8; cf. Eph 2:21).[184]

The co-emphasis on the fundamental significance of peace with God in Ephesians 2:13-18 and Isaiah 49-57 corroborates the indications of the verbal parallels that Paul likely used Isaiah in Ephesians 2:13-18. The emphasis on peace with God is arguably the main idea in Isaiah 49-57, since it brackets that text and permeates it throughout. Such an emphasis is also central to Ephesians 2:13-18, where peace with God is fundamental to the horizontal peace between Jews and Gentiles. This conceptual parallel does not prove that Paul used Isaiah 49-57, but, along with the verbal parallels, corroborates such a suggestion.

Conclusion

In this section I have attempted to demonstrate the close verbal and conceptual parallels between Isaiah 49-57 and Ephesians 2:13-18. That such close verbal links are present in Ephesians 2:13 and 17 indicates that the most appropriate background for 2:13-18 is Isaiah. Further, the corresponding conceptual parallels heighten the connection with Isaiah, suggesting that Paul appropriated Isaiah's eschatological promises and applied them christologically. The citations of Isaiah, then, open new vistas to discover Paul's interpretation of Isaiah, and given the prominence of Paul's and Isaiah's language of peace and reconciliation, these vistas interpret 2:13-18 in light of Isaiah's new covenant

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53:5 (רָפָא) as achieved through the death of the servant.

[183]Although one should not press the point, it is likely that Paul considered the title Χριστός to be a Davidic title. If this is the case, then such is another indication that Paul considered Jesus to be Isaiah's future David who by his faithfulness and death would bring about the everlasting covenant.

[184]Similarly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 174n33.

of peace inaugurated through the death of Christ.

While it is true that there are differences between Isaiah and Ephesians,[185] these should not overshadow the remarkable similarities between them. Further, Paul's emphasis on Isaiah does not mitigate the possibility that he was considering other new covenant texts as well, particularly those that connect the new covenant with peace, a future Davidic king, and a future ingathering of Gentiles.[186] Indeed, that such themes are prominent in the OT heighten the likelihood that Paul would emphasize their fulfillment in Christ.[187] Nevertheless, given the Isaianic citations in 2:17 and likely allusion in 2:13, Isaiah 48:22-57:21 must remain the most significant—as well as least speculative— source for Paul in describing the christological solution for the Gentiles in 2:13-18. Recognizing the Isaianic background of 2:13-18 enables one to see the fundamental significance of the new covenant for Paul: the reason the Gentiles are no longer "strangers to the covenants of the promise" (v. 12) is because through the death of Christ they have become members of the new covenant, which, unlike the Mosaic law-covenant, brings about lasting peace with God and one another.

"You Are No Longer Strangers and Aliens": The New Status for the Gentiles in 2:19-22

Verses 19-22 conclude by emphatically stating that the Gentiles are full and equal members of the people of God. The phrase ἄρα οὖν[188] in 2:19 shows that 2:19-22 is

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[185]For instance, Isaiah does not emphasize the abolition of the law to the same extent as Paul.

[186]See Ezek 34:23-31; 37:24-26; Hos 2:18-25 (Eng. 2:16-23); Mic 5:1-5 (Eng. 5:2-6); Zech 6:12-15. For a sustained argument that Paul also used Zech 6:12-15 in Eph 2:11-22, see Stirling, "Transformation and Growth." Although he overemphasizes Paul's use of Ezek 37 to the neglect of Isa 49-57, still helpful is Suh, "Use of Ezekiel 37," 715-33.

[187]Further, Bernard F. Batto ("The Covenant of Peace: A Neglected Ancient Near Eastern Motif," *CBQ* 49 [1987]: 187-211) shows that peace in the ANE is the result of a covenant. While it would be speculative to suggest that Paul intimately knew the background of ANE covenants, his emphasis on peace as a result of Christ's sacrifice fits with the notion that Christ's sacrifice inaugurated a covenant.

[188]Although a few significant manuscripts omit οὖν (𝔓[46] [apparently], F, G, Ψ, 1739, 1881), it

the inference or result from 2:13-18. If it is true that by means of the sacrificial death of Christ the Gentiles have peace with ethnic Jews and peace with God, then it follows that they are members of the new community of Christ. This section provides the impetus or goal of Paul in 2:11-22, for it is here that Paul unequivocally affirms the full membership of the Gentiles into the people of God.[189] Paul describes this new status for the Gentiles in two ways: (1) the Gentiles are full members of the community, as the plight of 2:11-12 is fully reversed (v. 19), and (2) the Gentiles along with the Jews comprise God's new temple (vv. 20-22). These twin descriptions of the Gentiles' new status indicate that they have been brought into the new covenant community.

Full Members of the Community (2:19)

Verse 19 is a carefully structured verse that consists of two parallel clauses:

οὐκέτι	ἐστὲ	ξένοι καὶ	πάροικοι
ἀλλὰ	ἐστὲ[190]	συμπολῖται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ	οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ

As my diagram attempts to show, ξένοι is parallel with συμπολῖται τῶν ἁγίων, and πάροικοι matches οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ. The terms ξένος and πάροικος in the Greco-Roman world typically were contrasted with πολῖται and οἰκεῖοι to indicate those who were not citizens with full rights and privileges.[191] Yet these terms also find their background in

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is likely original, for it is the *lectio difficilior*. Given ἄρα, a scribe would have been more likely to perceive οὖν as redundant, or perhaps could have omitted it by way of parablepsis due to homoeoarcton with οὐκέτι. The phrase ἄρα οὖν is typical of Paul; e.g., Rom 5:18; 7:3, 25; 8:12; 9:16, 18; 14:12, 19; Gal 6:10; 1 Thess 5:6; 2 Thess 2:15.

[189]Best (*Ephesians*, 276) says these verses are the "climax" of 2:11-22.

[190]Manuscripts 1739 and 1881 read καί instead of ἐστε, while others omit ἐστε altogether (D [first corrector], Ψ, 𝔐, Jerome). But external evidence strongly favors reading ἐστε, and a scribe would more likely emend or omit it due to perceived redundancy with the ἐστε of the first clause. Its inclusion preserves the parallel structure of the clauses.

[191]Thielman, *Ephesians*, 178.

the OT.[192] As in 2:12, the ξένος was a stranger and an outsider to the covenant community of Israel (see above). The πάροικος in the LXX almost always translates גֵּר (e.g., Gen 15:13; 23:4; Deut 14:21) or תּוֹשָׁב (e.g., Lev 22:10; Num 35:15), who were those without a permanent dwelling place. The πάροικος is also seen as an outsider, for, although he is to be cared for and protected by the community (Lev 25:6; Num 35:15), he does not share the rights of the community to property (Gen 23:4), nor is he put under the obligations of the community's covenant stipulations (Exod 12:45; Deut 14:21). He is not seen as one who is devoted (ἅγιος) to the Lord and thus is allowed to eat what is forbidden for Israel (Deut 14:21), and forbidden to eat what is allowed for Israel (Exod 12:45) or the priests (Lev 22:10). Both ξένος and πάροικος, then, are communal terms, and in the Old Testament they describe someone outside the covenant community.[193]

But Paul encourages the Gentiles that they are no longer outsiders in the eyes of God. The death of Christ rendered the Gentiles no longer as strangers or aliens but as members of the community (συμπολῖται τῶν ἁγίων) and even of God's own household (οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ). Instead of being ξένοι, the Gentiles are συμπολῖται τῶν ἁγίων. To be a πολίτης was to have full rights of membership in a community.[194] The prefixed preposition συμ- emphasizes the equality of the Gentiles within the people of God. Further, Paul clarifies that they are joining God's holy community, for they are called "saints" (ἅγιοι).[195] This term recalls the OT notion of God's holy people, which is

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[192]Barth (*Ephesians*, 269) rightly says, "The two nouns form a hendiadys to suggest all members of an out-group who were formerly segregated from a compact in-group." Best (*Ephesians*, 277) does not recognize the Old Testament background.

[193]Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 391-92) does not adequately consider the Old Testament's covenantal and communal background to these terms.

[194]LSJ, s.v. "πολιτεύω."

[195]Who the ἅγιοι are has been the subject of much debate. Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 150) provides the following views: the ἅγιοι are Jews, Jewish Christians (Caird, *Paul's Letters*, 60; Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 261), the first generation of Christians (Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 140), all Christians, or angels/glorified believers. Paul does not consider anyone outside of Christ to be holy, so the

intimately connected with the covenant he makes with them: God chose his people out of all the nations on the earth to be a holy people to himself (Exod 19:6; Lev 11:44-45; Deut 7:1-6; 14:2; 1 Pet 2:9). When Yahweh "cut a covenant" with Israel at Sinai, he rendered Israel holy to himself. To be "holy to Yahweh your God" was another way of saying that one had entered into a covenant with God (Deut 14:2). This background to the term ἅγιος indicates that Paul understood the Gentiles to have joined the one holy community of God, and that this new Jew-Gentile community was founded upon a covenant with God. Like at Sinai, God had chosen his people from before the foundation of the world in order that they should be a holy people before him (1:4; 5:26-27). By the death of Christ God had "cut a covenant" with the new humanity, and now all those in Christ—even ethnic Gentiles—form the holy covenant community.

The Gentiles are also seen as members of God's household (οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ). As mentioned above, there is a wordplay between πάροικοι and οἰκεῖοι, for they both employ the οἰκ- word group. At one time the Gentiles were outsiders, possessing no rights, privileges, or responsibilities within the covenant. But in Christ they became God's own family members. When used of persons, the term οἰκεῖος is used throughout Greek literature to refer to one's close relatives.[196] In the Old Testament it mostly

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ἅγιοι cannot be all Jews. Further, Paul's use of ἅγιοι throughout his letters and in Ephesians shows that he most often uses ἅγιοι with reference to all Christians (see Eph 1:1, 15, 18; 3:18; 4:12; esp. 5:3; 6:18; so Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 52; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 392-93; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 211; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 179). Finally, in the context of 2:11-22, most likely the ἅγιοι in v. 19 comprise the "one new man" of Jews and Gentiles in Christ in v. 15. Thus, the ἅγιοι are all believers (so Abbott, *Ephesians*, 69; contra Best, *Ephesians*, 277-78). Francis Foulkes (*The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., TNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989], 93) says it well: "Probably [Paul] thought of all who in any sense could be called the people of God" (cf. Westcott, *Ephesians*, 40: "the spiritual Israel"). Kreitzer (*Ephesians*, 93) speculates too much when he suggests the "fellow citizens" are members of the church at Hierapolis and the "saints" members of the church of Colossae (cf. Larry J. Kreitzer, "Hierapolis in the Heavens: A New Proposal for Reading the Letter to the Ephesians," in *Hierapolis in the Heavens: Studies in the Letter to the Ephesians*, LNTS 368 [London: T&T Clark, 2007], 1-28).

[196]LSJ, s.v. "οἰκεῖος."

translates שְׁאֵר, which signifies one's own flesh and blood, one's living relations,[197] and דּוֹד, which can refer to one's uncle (1 Sam 10:14-16; 14:50; Amos 6:10). This means that in Ephesians 2:19 the Gentiles are full members of God's own family, who dwell in his presence![198] Just as Israel was his firstborn son (Exod 4:22-23; Deut 14:1), so God adopted the Gentiles into his family as his children through his beloved son (Eph 1:5-6; 5:1).

Thus, 2:19 describes the Gentiles' new status as full and equal members of the people of God.[199] A comparison between verses 12 and 19 shows that the plight of verse 12 has been completely reversed in verse 19.[200] At one time they were "alienated from the commonwealth (πολιτεία) of Israel," but now they are "fellow citizens" (συμπολῖται) with God's one holy covenant community. At one time they were "strangers (ξένοι) to the covenants of the promise," but now they are no longer "strangers (ξένοι)."[201] Given their estrangement from the covenants in 2:12, their new status must mean that they are no longer strangers to those same covenants but have become heirs and recipients of Israel's covenantal promises in Christ.[202] As the survey in chapter 2 indicated, Israel's covenants

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[197]*HALOT*, s.v. "שְׁאֵר" (see Lev 18:6, 12-13, 17; 25:49; Num 27:11).

[198]Given how Paul develops the οἰκ- word group in vv. 20-22 in temple language, probably there are temple connotations already in the term οἰκεῖοι (contra Lincoln [*Ephesians*, 152] who pits being a member of God's family with being a dweller in the temple).

[199]So Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 261.

[200]That v. 19 is the opposite of v. 12 is recognized by many commentators; e.g., Arnold, *Ephesians*, 168; Best, *Ephesians*, 277; Heil, *Ephesians*, 126; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 394-95; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 125.

[201]*Diogn.* 5:5 provides a helpful parallel to Eph 2:19. Here is the text is cited in full: πατρίδας οἰκοῦσιν ἰδίας, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς πάροικοι· μετέχουσι πάντων ὡς πολῖται, καὶ πάνθ᾽ ὑπομένουσιν ὡς ξένοι· πᾶσα ξένη πατρίς ἐστιν αὐτῶν, καὶ πᾶσα πατρὶς ξένη (text from Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 702). This shows that, as Paul has done in Eph 2:19, the terms ξένος and πάροικος are the natural opposites of πολίτης and the οἰκ* word group, respectively. Further, this means that to be a sojourner is to dwell in another's country, not one's own, and that to be a stranger is to have no permanent possession or ownership.

[202]Contra Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 163.

find their fulfillment in the new covenant, which climactically brings to fruition the entire scope of God's saving promises to Abraham, Israel, and David. Hence, to no longer be strangers to Israel's covenants does not signify the ongoing validity of Israel's covenants (2:15), but that their promises have been fulfilled in the climactic new covenant, of which the Gentiles are heirs. They have been grafted into "the house (בַּיִת; οἶκος) of Israel and the house (בַּיִת; οἶκος) of Judah" (Jer 31:31 [LXX 38:31]) by virtue of their faith union with Christ the true Israel (Eph 1:6), and thus they are legitimate members of God's house (οἰκεῖοι).[203] Thus, in 2:19 Paul reverses the Gentiles' covenantal plight in 2:12 by affirming that they are full and equal recipients of God's saving promises, which climactically find their fulfillment in the new covenant.

God's New Temple (2:20-22)

Paul continues the household metaphor in 2:20-22, where the οἰκ- word group dominates, appearing in each verse and providing further details as to what kind of divine house the Gentiles have joined.[204] This house is composed of people (v. 20) and is a new kind of temple where God dwells (vv. 21-22).

The foundation for the house is composed of the apostles and the New

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[203]Cf. Hos 2:1 (Eng. 1:10); 2:25 (Eng. 2:23); Rom 9:25-26. Rightly Bruce, *Ephesians*, 302-03. That the church is a *tertium genus*, a "new humanity," does not preclude its eschatological character as the "true Israel." Commentators can at times emphasize one to the exclusion of the other, either by emphasizing the church's newness (e.g., Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 395-96) or the church as the continuation of Israel (e.g., Markus Barth, *The Broken Wall: A Study of the Epistle to the Ephesians* [Chicago: Judson, 1959], 123-36). A middle position would seem to affirm both as true: the church is new in the sense that it is an eschatological community, fundamentally distinct from anything before (evidenced, e.g., by the end-time presence of the Spirit); and yet the church is the continuation of Israel in the sense that it is the heir of Israel's promises inasmuch as it has a share in Israel's Messiah (contra Perkins, *Ephesians*, 403). Thielman (*Ephesians*, 152) is helpful on this point: "In 2:11-13 Paul walks the tightrope of both affirming that all who have believed the gospel are indebted to Judaism and, at the same time, insisting that believers are now part of a new people not limited by ethnic boundaries" (similarly N. T. Wright, *The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon*, Paul for Everyone [London: SPCK; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004], 26-27, 29).

[204]Probably ἐποικοδομηθέντες is causal, providing the reason why Gentiles are now seen as part of God's family (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 397; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 179).

Testament prophets (v. 20a).[205] The reason why these two groups[206] are the foundation is because they provide the divine revelation needed for the church to be built up in faith and practice. They were those in the early church to whom God had revealed the "mystery of Christ" (3:4-5) and thus were foundational to the church's faith.[207] The cornerstone for the building is Christ himself (v. 20b), which indicates that he is the most important stone in the building, and without him the building would fall (cf. Isa 28:16; Ps 118:22 [LXX 117:22]).[208] In fact, the ἐν ᾧ relative pronoun clauses that follow in 2:21-22 clarify it is only as the church is connected to Christ by faith that she is the dwelling place of God.

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[205]So Barth, *Ephesians*, 314-15. Ἀποστόλων and προφητῶν are genitives of apposition (so Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 398-99), not subjective genitives (Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 53).

[206]Wayne Grudem (*The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, rev. ed. [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000], 329-46) argues that the article modifies both apostles and prophets, suggesting that they are one and the same group (i.e., "apostles who are also prophets"; cf. 3:5; *Did.* 11:3; similarly Ralph P. Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, IBC [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991], 38). While possible grammatically, this view is not likely, for in 4:11 they are clearly different groups. It is hardly likely that Paul distinguished between a special group of prophets in 2:20 and 3:5 and a broad group of prophets in 4:11, especially since he does not qualify 2:20 or 3:5 in any way (rightly Best, *Ephesians*, 281, and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 153). For a convincing response to Grudem's argument, see R. Fowler White, "Gaffin and Grudem on Eph 2:20: In Defense of Gaffin's Cessationist Exegesis," *WTJ* 54 (1992): 303-20. Westcott (*Ephesians*, 40) correctly explains that the single article unites the two groups in their "divine authority to found and to instruct the Church" (similarly Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost: Studies in New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979], 93-95).

[207]Rightly Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 94; Stott, *Ephesians*, 107. Thus, ἀπόστολος does not refer to the first missionaries to share the gospel with the Gentiles (contra Robinson, *Ephesians*, 69; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 180) but to those with divine authority in the early church, of which Paul was the last (1 Cor 15:8; rightly Liefeld, *Ephesians*, 75; Schreiner, *Apostle of God's Glory*, 368-69; similarly Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 125-26). Further, the prophets are not likely the OT prophets (contra Origen and Ambrosiaster [Edwards, *Ephesians*, 143]; Calvin, *Ephesians*, 154-55), for Paul would not put them second in the list (so most commentators); this fits with the likely mention of NT prophets in 4:11. For an extended discussion on these issues, see Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 397-403; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 214-16.

[208]Following the programmatic work of Joachim Jeremias ("κεφαλὴ γωνίας—Ἀκρογωνιαῖος," *ZNW* 29 [1930]: 264-80), Barth (*Ephesians*, 317-19) and Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 154-56) view it as a keystone used to complete an arch, which fits with Paul's emphasis on Christ as the head of the church. Arnold (*Ephesians*, 170-71), Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 404-07), and O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 216-18) see it as a building's cornerstone. Best (*Ephesians*, 284-86) prefers the neutral translation "angle-stone." Thielman (*Ephesians*, 182) suggests Paul may have chosen the term ἀκρογωνιαῖος because of its ambiguity in order to show that Jesus is both the cornerstone and the capstone.

In 2:21-22 Paul continues to encourage the Gentiles that they are full members of God's people by emphasizing the same point in both verses.[209] Placing them adjacent to one another shows the parallel pattern:[210]

21 ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη αὔξει εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ

22 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κατοικητήριον ἐν πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ

Both verses begin with the relative pronoun clauses ἐν ᾧ and are followed by three grammatical constituents: subject, verb, and prepositional phrase with εἰς. The subject of 2:21 should be translated "all that is built" (πᾶσα οἰκοδομή), for this translation best accords with the anarthrous use of πᾶς and rightly emphasizes that every believing Jew and Gentiles legitimately are joined together to become the one temple of God.[211] The subject of 2:22 is the emphatic ὑμεῖς, which, with the adverbial use of καί, includes the Ephesian Gentiles in the true people of God. Although the verbs in 2:21-22 are different,

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[209]Similarly Best, *Ephesians*, 286; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 218n264. Note the terms with the σύν prefix: συναρμολογουμένη, συνοικοδομεῖσθε.

[210]Similarly McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 116; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 183n15.

[211]The variant reading πᾶσα ἡ οἰκοδομή (א [first corrector], A, C, P, 1881) is secondary, for the NA[27] reading is superior on external (א [original reading], B, D, F, G, Ψ, 33, 1739 [original reading], 𝔐) and internal grounds, with a scribe being more likely to insert the article to clarify the meaning of the phrase. Most translations opt for the translation "the whole building/structure" (ESV, NAS, NIV) on contextual grounds, intending to communicate the universality of the church as opposed to its individual expressions (so, e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 286; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 54; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 407-08; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 156; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 218-19; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 183). But the grammatical rule with πᾶς is that when it precedes an anarthrous substantive, it means "every/any" and does not mean "the whole," unless it modifies a proper noun or possibly an abstract substantive (A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed. [Nashville: Broadman, 1934], 771-72; Herbert Weir Smyth, *A Greek Grammar for Colleges* [New York: American, 1920], 296; cf. Luke 4:13; Rom 3:19; Eph 3:15). The context indeed does not support the idea of multiple churches, although Paul does think of each church as a legitimate expression of the new covenant community. Nevertheless, v. 21 does indicate a building that is still in the process of being built, for the structure is "being joined together" (συναρμολογουμένη) and "is growing" (αὔξει). Hence, similar to a mosaic, Paul emphasizes both the individual components as well as the whole, wherein "all that is built" is being joined together and is becoming part of the one temple of God. Every believing Jew and Gentile is built into the one church of God (similarly Abbott, *Ephesians*, 72-75; Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 95; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 115; Salmond, *Ephesians*, 300; Scott, *Ephesians*, 178; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 41). Beare (*Ephesians*, 662) probably reads too much into the phrase when he translates it in light of 1:10: "all that God is shaping to his purpose."

they provide parallel images of an interconnected (συναρμολογουμένη) building growing upwards (cf. 4:15-16).[212] Finally, the prepositional phrases are also parallel, with the "holy temple"[213] understood as "the dwelling place of God,"[214] the former being "in the Lord,"[215] and the latter being "in the Spirit."[216] In other words, the meaning of 2:21-22 is virtually synonymous: every believer, including the predominantly Gentile believers in Ephesus and the surrounding regions, is a part of the one true and universal church of God, which is his temple where he dwells in the Spirit of Christ (cf. 3:16-17). The reason for the parallel verses is so that Paul could set the stage in 2:21 for the eschatological blessing of the new temple and then in 2:22 include the Gentile believers in that blessing.[217]

As seen in 2:18, the newness of 2:20-22 is hard to overstate.[218] The blessing of

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[212]Thus, συνοικοδομεῖσθε is not an imperative (contra Calvin, *Ephesians*, 156), for it parallels the indicative αὔξει.

[213]Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 410) rightly notes that the terms ἱερόν and ναός are not necessarily synonymous, with the former describing the entire temple complex (Matt 21:12) and the latter the holy place and the holy of holies (Matt 27:51; so Arnold, *Ephesians*, 172). It was the ναός especially that described the dwelling place of God (Acts 17:24).

[214]Thielman (*Ephesians*, 185n21) persuasively notes that the term κατοικητήριον is never used outside biblical literature to refer to a deity's temple; hence, Paul must have in mind the biblical temple. See LXX 3 Kgdms 8:39, 43, 49; 2 Chr 6:30, 33, 39; 30:27; 3 Macc 2:15.

[215]Ἐν κυρίῳ, then, is nominal, not adverbial (contra Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 157; rightly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 55; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 411). It refers to Jesus as the Lord, not the Father (contra McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 117), for the term κύριος elsewhere in Ephesians explicitly refers to Jesus (1:2, 3, 15, 17; 3:11; 4:5; 5:20, 22; 6:7, 23, 24) and never explicitly describes the Father. The redundancy in 2:22, then, is explained in the interests of preserving the parallel construction of the verse, as well as in the tendency for repetition in Ephesians.

[216]Ἐν πνεύματι likely describes the means or manner in which God dwells among his people (rightly Hoehner [*Ephesians*, 414] and Thielman [*Ephesians*, 185], both of whom note the parallel with ἐν κυρίῳ).

[217]Similarly Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 158.

[218]Best (*Ephesians*, 281) rightly notes the newness of v. 20: "We might have expected [the author of Ephesians] to say that the foundation of the church was Israel rather than the apostles and prophets; in not doing so he indicates that the church is not just a simple continuation of Israel." Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 415) rightly notes the newness of the temple, although he does not emphasize the fulfillment of

a new temple was a promise rooted in the Old Testament and was intimately connected with the coming of the new covenant.[219] This is hinted at in Isaiah and Jeremiah, and is emphasized in Ezekiel. In Isaiah 56:3-8, the eunuch and the foreigner are invited to join themselves to God's people in a covenant relationship and are made priests and ministers at God's "holy mountain" and his "house [οἶκος] of prayer" (v. 7), clear references to the temple (cf. Zech 6:15; Matt 21:13 par.).[220] The eschatological focus of Isaiah at this point in his book suggests that the covenant to which the eunuch and foreigner hold fast is the everlasting covenant of peace (54:10; 55:3; 59:21; 61:8). A similar promise is found in 61:6, where God's people will be priests and ministers as a part of the everlasting covenant (61:8). The priestly ministry of God's people indicates that a new temple is present. Likewise, Jeremiah 31:40, which I argued in chapter 2 is part of the new covenant pericope in Jeremiah 31, says the entire expanded city is "sacred to Yahweh" (קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה; LXX 38:40 ἁγίασμα τῷ κυρίῳ), showing part of the new covenant's promises is that there will be a new temple, and that it will be coextensive with the new city. Thus, in the new temple/city, the covenant ideal will be realized, where God will dwell in and among his people.

Ezekiel's entire eschatological program can be viewed as Yahweh overcoming his people's sin and providing the means by which he can dwell among them in the new temple.[221] Because of the people's sin, Yahweh's glory exited Jerusalem. A small but comforting promise was made in 11:16, where he promises his people that he will be a

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God's promises to the degree I do.

[219]So O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 212-13, 220) and Thielman (*Ephesians*, 184), although they do not link the temple with the new covenant. Arnold (*Ephesians*, 173) and Caird (*Paul's Letters*, 61) rightly connect 2:22 with the new covenant. See *1 Enoch* 90.29-36; *Sib. Or.* 3.741-84; Tob 14:5-7.

[220]So Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 132.

[221]Suh ("Use of Ezekiel 37," 729-30) rightly emphasizes the centrality of Ezekiel's temple prophecies for Eph 2:19-22.

"sanctuary for a little while" (מִקְדָּשׁ מְעַט; LXX ἁγίασμα μικρόν). But such a promise was not a permanent solution to Judah's plight. The permanent solution comes in 37:26-28, where, in contrast to the temporary sanctuary of 11:16, Yahweh promises to have his sanctuary be among his people forever (vv. 26, 28, מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתוֹכָם לְעוֹלָם; LXX τὰ ἅγιά μου ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). As seen in chapter 2, the promise of Yahweh's everlasting presence means that the everlasting covenant of peace has been inaugurated (v. 26) and the covenant formula realized (v. 27). Further, the connection with the new temple in Ezekiel is clear, for after the climactic battle of Ezekiel 38-39 is a detailed description in Ezekiel 40-48 of what the new temple will be like in the new city, which is called "Yahweh Is There" (יְהוָה שָׁמָּה).[222] In other words, the eschatological temple of Ezekiel could not exist without the new covenant, which would cleanse them from their sins and ensure their everlasting holiness in his presence. God's everlasting presence signified an everlasting covenant relationship with his people.[223]

Given the prophetic expectation of a new and everlasting temple, it is likely that in Ephesians 2:21-22 Paul considered the church to be the fulfillment of that expectation, for the everlasting covenant had arrived in the death of Christ.[224] Isaiah's vision of foreigners ministering in the eschatological temple was fulfilled in the inclusion of the Gentiles within the temple (cf. Zech 6:12-15). Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's emphasis that the new temple would be holy to the Lord was fulfilled in Paul's emphasis on the

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[222]Beale (*Temple and Church's Mission*, 367) rightly notes that Ezek 40-48 expands on the temple promise of 37:26-28.

[223]For other texts that show the close relationship between God's presence among his people as an expression of his covenant with them, see Exod 29:44-45; Lev 26:11-12. This relationship is particularly clear in Lev 26:11, where codices Alexandrinus and Vaticanus (et al.) translate מִשְׁכָּן with διαθήκη (I owe this reference to Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament*, SNTSMS 1 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965], 53).

[224]Beale (*Temple and Church's Mission*, 259-60) rightly argues that the church is not a mere analogy to the OT temple but its fulfillment.

holiness of the new humanity in 2:19-22 (ἅγιοι, v. 19; ναὸς ἅγιος, v. 21). Further, the newness of this temple is clear in that it is not connected with the physical temple in Jerusalem but with Jesus, for it is located "in the Lord" (v. 21; cf. John 2:21) and "in the Spirit" (v. 22). Wherever Jesus was, that was where God had chosen for his name to dwell (cf. Eph 3:17). And thus, all those connected by faith to Christ were part of the new dwelling place of God (cf. Ign. *Eph.* 9:1; Ign. *Magn.* 7:2). Moreover, that God dwells among his people through his Spirit indicates that Ezekiel's new age has dawned when God's people will not worship him in one place but "in the Spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). Thus, the new covenant of the prophets had been inaugurated, for the dwelling place of God could now be found legitimately and climactically in Paul's churches.[225] The covenant formula's promise, which ultimately included the promise that God would dwell with his people in an unbreakable relationship of love and loyalty, had come to fruition in that the church was now the place where God had chosen to make his name to dwell.

That such a reading of Ephesians 2:20-22 is likely can be confirmed by a brief analysis of similar temple expectations at Qumran, where, in a manner strikingly similar to Paul, the new temple is rooted in the inauguration of a renewed covenant.[226] These documents reveal that the communities who produced them expected a new temple in the eschaton, replete with an Aaronic priesthood and sacrifices.[227] Especially of interest is 1QS 8.4-10, where the community expects that in the "Endtime" there would be a temple

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[225]*Barn*. 6:14-15 understands the new covenant's promise of a new heart (Ezek 11:19; 36:26-27) to be the prerequisite for Christ dwelling (τὸ κατοικητήριον) in believer's hearts, which are seen as a "holy temple . . . in the Lord" (ναὸς ἅγιος . . . τῷ κυρίῳ; cf. 16:6-10).

[226]For a helpful development of the similarities between temple theology in Qumran literature and Eph 2:19-22, see Gärtner, *Temple and the Community*, 60-66.

[227]See 1QS 5.5-6; 8.4-10; 9.5-6; 11.8; 4QFlor 1.6-7.

with the Holy of Holies.[228] Like Paul does, 1QS 8.7-8 applies the language of Isaiah 28:16 to this eschatological temple, the foundation and precious cornerstone of which consist of people (cf. 4QpIsa[d]).[229] The members of the community form the basis for the new temple by their holiness and faithfulness to the covenant (8.9-10). It was precisely when the covenant relationship was restored and maintained that the new temple would arrive in its fullness. Further, in CD-A 6.19 and CD-B 20.12, the "new covenant" (הברית החדשה) means that the new age has begun (see "end of days," 6.11) amidst the "time of wickedness" (6.14). Associated with wickedness was the old temple in Jerusalem that had been profaned in the time of the Seleucids.[230] Thus, the new covenant was an indicator of the new temple (cf. 11QT[a] 29.7-10). Hence, although there are some significant differences between Paul's temple expectations and those at Qumran,[231] the similarities are striking enough to confirm that around the time of the first-century part and parcel of Jewish eschatology included that God would finally and climactically restore his covenant relationship with his people and dwell among them forever in a new temple.[232]

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[228]"Endtime" is Charlesworth's suggested translation of the singular העת in 8.4; 9.14, 18 (James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Rule of the Community and Related Documents*, vol. 1 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994], 35, 41).

[229]Rightly Gärtner, *Temple and the Community*, 27. Salient is his explanation (ibid., 16-46) in what sense the Qumran community was the temple and why having the temple was so significant (so Albert L. A. Hogeterp, *Paul and God's Temple: A Historical Interpretation of Cultic Imagery in the Corinthian Correspondence*, Biblical Tools and Studies 2 [Leuven: Peeters, 2006], 105-08).

[230]Hogeterp, *Paul and God's Temple*, 92.

[231]The differences are significant: 1QS 8 includes the whole community as the foundation and cornerstone, whereas the foundation of the eschatological temple for Paul is the apostles and prophets, with Jesus himself being the cornerstone. Moreover, how the community at Qumran serves as a foundation for the temple is by the covenant faithfulness of the members, whereas in Ephesians it is in Christ alone that the temple stands or falls, and it is only by faith union with him that the community becomes the temple. Also, the apostles and prophets serve as the foundation of the church only inasmuch as they transmit the teachings of Christ. See Gärtner, *Temple and the Community*, 101-05.

[232]That there were a variety of eschatological temple expectations among Jews does not mitigate this general principle. Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 156-57) reminds that Jewish and (specifically) rabbinic literature included expectations of a cosmic or heavenly temple (Wis 9:8; *1 Enoch* 90.29; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 4.2-

In other words, temple and covenant go together in Jewish and Pauline eschatology.

Another text where Paul emphasizes the church as the temple is 2 Corinthians 6:16, "For what concord is there between the temple (ναός) of God and idols? For we are the temple (ναός) of the living God; as God said, 'I will dwell (ἐνοικέω) and walk among them, and I will be their God and they will be my people.'" As Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers not to join themselves with unbelievers and idols, but to cleanse themselves from that which is defiling and to walk in holiness (6:14-7:1), he names the church in Corinth the temple (ναός) of God (1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19); they should not have anything to do with idols, who are not gods at all (1 Cor 8:4-6). Paul roots (καθώς, v. 16) the idea that the church is God's temple in Old Testament covenantal texts (Lev 26:11-12; 2 Sam 7:8, 14; Ezek 37:27). In Leviticus 26, God promises that if Israel obeys, his "dwelling" (מִשְׁכָּן) will be among his people (v. 11), which is defined in 26:12 by the covenant formula: "I will be your God, and you will be my people." God's presence among his people seems, therefore, to have been the goal of the Sinai covenant, which, although Israel failed to achieve it eschatologically, was promised anew in the new covenant (Ezek 37:26-28).[233] That Paul sees the church at Corinth as the legitimate place of God's presence suggests that Paul considered the promise of the new covenant to have arrived through his ministry (2 Cor 3:1-18). The members of the church at Corinth were the true temple of God because they were legitimate members of the new covenant

6; *T. Dan.* 5.12, 13; *Ascen. Isa.* 7.10; *b. Yoma 54b*; *Gen. Rab.* 4.2; 68.12 on Gen. 28:12; *Yal. Gen.* 120 on Gen. 28:22; *Pirqe R. El.* 32.35; *Num. Rab.* 12.4). It is possible that Paul also emphasizes such expectations, for in Ephesians he describes Jesus as filling all things; nevertheless, one should not highlight such a reading, for Paul does not give any indications of cosmic temple imagery in the immediate context of 2:11-22.

[233]Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 420, notes that Ezek 37:26-27 "bears a striking resemblance to Lev. 26:1-13." This suggests that the covenant promises made at Sinai had not been finally cast aside, although the covenant itself was broken and a new covenant was needed.

community.[234] This brief analysis of 6:16 confirms the reading of Ephesians 2:20-22 that the presence of the new temple entails the fulfillment of the new covenant.

Conclusion

In Ephesians 2:19-22, Paul encourages his Gentile readers that they are legitimate members of the people of God. The way he achieves this is by describing them in Old Testament communal terminology. They were no longer outside the covenant community as "strangers and aliens," but they were part of the holy family of God (v. 19). Moreover, Paul encourages them by reminding them they each experience God's eschatological presence, for they are all constituent elements of the very temple of God. This is God's true temple, for it is founded upon Christ, who is the cornerstone of the temple presumably because he founded the new community on the basis of his death and resurrection. They are also legitimate members of this community because they are built on the apostles and prophets, who by their teaching form the basis for the new covenant community's faith and practice. Paul saw this as the eschatological temple promised in the Old Testament, and, in a manner similar to other Jews of his day, he saw the temple as the goal of the new covenant, for it was the expression of the realized covenant relationship (cf. 2 Cor 6:16). Hence, the way Paul encourages the Gentiles in 2:19-22 makes best sense if he thought that in Christ the new covenant had been inaugurated.

<center>**Conclusion**</center>

As I have shown in this chapter, Paul frames the plight, solution, and new status of the Gentiles in covenantal terms. In terms of their plight, the Gentiles lacked circumcision, the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, and were strangers to Israel's covenants (vv. 11-12). Intriguingly, in 2:11 Paul seems to include Israel as having a

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[234]A Johannine text supporting the close relationship between temple and covenant is Rev 21:3, which links the presence of God (ἡ σκηνή/σκηνόω) with the realization of the covenant formula.

covenantal plight of their own, for, although Israel's privileges were real and significant prior to the coming of Christ, their circumcision was merely physical and did not include heart circumcision, which the old covenant had commanded but failed to provide (Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4). Only in the new covenant would the promised circumcision of the heart be realized (Deut 30:6; Jer 31:33). Hence, the subtle inclusion of Israel within a description of the Gentiles' plight suggests that the solution for the Gentiles would also be the solution for Israel, and that the solution would be found in the new covenant, not the old—a point made clear in the abolition of the law in 2:15.

The solution for the Gentiles in 2:13-18 correspondingly emphasizes the new covenant, wherein God brought them near to himself and his people by the death of Christ. The death of Christ is central for Paul's understanding of reconciliation, which is understood in both vertical and horizontal terms—that is, between God and humanity, and between Jew and Gentile. Crucially for Paul, the way in which Christ accomplished this twofold reconciliation was by abolishing the old covenant (vv. 14b-15a), which apparently served as a barrier to lasting peace. Nevertheless, Paul does not envision this new peace outside the context of another (new) covenant, for he frames the discussion of Christ's death—and thus interprets it—in light of Isaiah's eschatological promises of a worldwide people drawing near to Zion on account of the death of the servant (vv. 13, 17; cf. Isa 49-57). As seen in chapter 2, at the heart of Isaiah 49-57 is the new "covenant of peace" (Isa 54:10; cf. 55:3) enacted for the world on the basis of the servant's death. Given the verbal and conceptual parallels between Isaiah 49-57 and Ephesians 2:13-18, it is likely that Paul formulated 2:13-18 with Isaiah's eschatological and covenantal promises in mind.

Finally, the resultant status for the Gentiles in 2:19-22 confirms the importance of the new covenant for Paul. Once alienated from Israel and her covenants, now in Christ the Gentiles are full and equal members of the one people of God. The fact that

Paul framed their plight in terms of covenant estrangement (vv. 11-12) suggests that their new status would include covenant membership (v. 19). But the covenant in which they have been included is new, for they, founded upon Christ and his apostles and prophets, form the new temple of God, and he dwells among them (vv. 20-22). While such a relationship was the goal of the old covenant (Exod 19:5-6; Lev 26:11-12), the prophets recognized that only when God inaugurated a new covenant would he dwell among them forever (Ezek 37:26-28), for only when God would totally be reconciled to his people (Jer 31:34) would he dwell with them forever. The presence of the new temple, then, indicates that in Christ the new covenant has been realized, of which believing Gentiles are now full members.

Hence, whereas the term διαθήκη only occurs in 2:12, the textual and theological indicators in 2:11-22 suggest that the new covenant was a prominent theological category for Paul. The rich promises the Gentiles have become partakers of are in fact the promises of the new covenant, and that, given the way Paul framed the Gentiles' plight, solution, and new status in these terms, the new covenant must be seen at the heart of Paul's soteriological and ecclesiological framework in Ephesians 2:11-22.

CHAPTER 5

EPHESIANS 4:17-5:2

In the previous two chapters I have shown how Paul appropriates the promises of the new covenant and applies them to the Ephesian believers. The implication of the analysis thus far is that for Paul the new covenant was a prominent soteriological and ecclesiological concept, for it provided a theological construct/framework broad enough to explain what God in Christ had accomplished in the salvation and formation of one new humanity. In 1:3-14 the blessing of salvation in all of its variety spanned from eternity past to eternity future and was centered on Christ. Paul praised God for election, adoption, forgiveness, redemption, the revelation of God's cosmic plan in Christ, the guaranteed inheritance, and the Spirit. In this way Paul appropriated primarily the soteriological promises of the new covenant. On the other hand, in 2:11-22 Paul emphasized not only the vertical but also the horizontal ramifications of the new covenant. The Gentiles were not only estranged from God; they were also estranged from Israel and the covenants. Their salvation in Christ, then, meant reconciliation with God and God's people, as Christ through his sacrificial death created one new humanity. Hence, in 2:11-22 the promises of the new covenant were broad enough for Paul to explicate the soteriological and ecclesiological aspects of his gospel.

But soteriology and ecclesiology do not exhaust Pauline theology. Indeed, a large swath of his letters deals with ethical concerns, i.e., how believers should now live in light of their new salvation and status as members of the people of God. While the new covenant played a prominent role in Paul's conception of soteriology and ecclesiology, it is possible the concept was largely absent in his conception of Christian ethics/morality.

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Therefore, it remains to analyze one of the pericopes in the ethical section of the letter to determine whether or not Paul relied on the covenant concept to formulate his ethical framework. In this chapter I will analyze 4:17-5:2, which provides an apt test case for the way Paul constructs paraenesis, since in 4:17-5:2 there are general and specific instructions for the Ephesians, as well as a summary of how they should live. As will be demonstrated, the ethical obligations of the section are framed in the light of the new covenant.

Structure of Ephesians 4:17-5:2

The structure of Ephesians is widely recognized as having two sections: 1:1-3:21 and 4:1-6:24. While it would be an overstatement to suggest there is no ethical instruction in 1:1-3:21 or no theological formulation in 4:1-6:24, the first half of the letter does emphasize orthodoxy and the second half orthopraxy. The first half of the letter concludes with a Pauline prayer for the Ephesians (3:14-19) and a doxology (3:20-21). The second half of the letter begins with a note of exhortation: "Therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge ($\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\omega$) you to walk in a manner worthy of your calling" (4:1). In the rest of the letter he explains in some detail what it means to walk in a worthy manner.

The structure of 4:1-6:24 is determined in large part by the programmatic term $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\pi\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omega$, which occurs six times in the section (4:1, 17 [twice]; 5:2, 8, 15).[1] Its programmatic character is evident from its appearance in 4:1, which is the heading for

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[1]Rightly Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 581; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 274-75; Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 194. The term also occurs twice in 1:1-3:21, both in 2:1-10 (vv. 2, 10), where it also appears to have a structuring function, for it forms an *inclusio* around 2:1-10. In 2:10 God prepares in advance that believers will walk ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\pi\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omega$) in good works, which anticipates the second half of the letter. Many commentators (e.g., Charles H. Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, Paideia [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 120; Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, Believers Church Bible Commentary [Waterloo, ON: Herald, 2002], 199) suggest 4:1-5:21 is best interpreted through the lens of the "Two Ways" form of instruction, which was prevalent throughout the ancient Mediterranean world.

4:1-16 as well as the entire ethical section. In 4:17 Paul begins a new section by highlighting the need to walk in a way different from unbelieving Gentiles: "Therefore, this I say and testify in the Lord." Further, 5:1-2 transitions from one set of specific commands and prohibitions (4:25-32) to another (5:3-14).[2] After another occurrence of περιπατέω in 5:8, Paul begins yet another section in 5:15 with an exhortation that believers be careful how they walk. At this point Paul moves into the "household code," wherein he explicates in a variety of situations (husband/wife, parent/child, master/slave) what walking wisely and being filled with the Spirit entail (5:15-6:9). Hence, the term περιπατέω is a structural marker for much of the second half of the letter.[3]

In 4:17, then, Paul begins a new section. Coming on the heels of 4:1-16, which urges the Ephesians to guard eagerly the unity of the Spirit (vv. 1-6) and recognize the variety of gifts in the church for the purpose of growth in Christ (vv. 7-16), in 4:17 he returns to exhorting believers to walk in a manner worthy of their calling. Verses 17-32 are divided into two subsections: (1) verses 17-24 provide general instructions on how to avoid living like unbelieving Gentiles (vv. 17-19) and how to live instead as members of

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[2]Commentators are divided over where to place 5:1-2 in the outline of Ephesians. Some view it as the conclusion to 4:17-32 or 4:25-32 (T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1897], 146; Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 298; Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998], 443; Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* [New York: R. Carter and Brothers, 1856; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954], 247; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 294; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 335n262; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. H. Heron [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991], 192-93, 204; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 248; Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010], 292-93), whereas others view it as the introduction to the next section (Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, AB, vol. 34 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974], 555; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 643; Brooke Foss Westcott, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: The Greek Text with Notes and Addenda* [London: Macmillan, 1906], 75). In a sense both views are true, for 5:1-2 is a transition from 4:17-32 to 5:3-14. Retrospectively, it summarizes 4:17-32, and prospectively, it summarizes 5:3-14. Since it summarizes Paul's new covenant ethics, it is appropriate to consider it here. John Muddiman (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, BNTC [London: Continuum, 2001], 223-24) thinks 4:25-5:5 is a unit because 5:6 is asyndetic, but asyndeton does not typically have a macrosyntactical function in Pauline paraenesis (cf. 4:28-29, 31; Rom 12:14-21).

[3]So John Paul Heil, *Ephesians: Empowerment to Walk in Love for the Unity of All in Christ*, SBLSBL 13 (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 2.

the new humanity (vv. 20-24);[4] and (2) verses 25-32 provide specific instructions on how to live on the basis of their new life in Christ. Finally, in 5:1-2 Paul summarizes the general and specific instructions of 4:17-32 by calling the Ephesians to imitate God and walk in love. Thus, the structure of 4:17-5:2 is as follows:

General instructions (4:17-24)

    Do not live like the Gentiles (vv. 17-19)

    Live as the image of God (vv. 20-24)

Specific instructions (4:25-32)

Summary: imitate God and walk in love (5:1-2)

General Instructions (4:17-24)

In 4:17-19 Paul, resuming the exhortation he began in 4:1-3,[5] urges the Ephesian believers not to walk as the Gentiles. The description of their old way of life is lengthy and sobering in 4:17-19, as Paul moves from a description of the Gentiles' futile mindset to their state of alientation from God and their wilful entrance into a life of sin. On the other hand, in 4:20-24 he reminds them that they had learned a new way of life at their conversion—indeed, the way of truth they learned in Christ. Even though they had already put off this old of way of life and put on the new at their conversion, in 4:22-24 Paul urges them to continue to put of the old and put on the new.

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[4]Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 275) thinks vv. 17-24 are, along with 4:1-16, the basis for the rest of the ethical section of the letter.

[5]Abbott, *Ephesians*, 127-28; Best, *Ephesians*, 414-15; Charles J. Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: With a Critical and Grammatical Commentary, and a Revised Translation*, 5th ed. (London: Longmans, Green, 1884), 96; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 582; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 276; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 319; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 291; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 65. Contra Leon Morris, *Expository Reflections on the Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 133. Steven E. Runge (*Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*, Lexham Bible Reference [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010], 43-48) shows οὖν can resume a topic and often is used to do so at the macrosyntactical level. Also, 4:1 is markedly similar to 4:17, for both utilize περιπατέω, ἐν κυρίῳ, and a verb of exhortation (παρακαλέω, v. 1; λέγω/μαρτύρομαι, v. 17).

There is no doubt concerning how strongly Paul feels about the way believers live. Three elements of 4:17a demonstrate the solemnity with which Paul issues these general instructions: (1) the forward-pointing demonstrative τοῦτο highlights what is about to be said;[6] (2) the verb μαρτύρομαι, along with its cognates, is a term of solemn truthtelling;[7] and (3) the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ, which is here adverbial, suggests Paul speaks with the authority of Jesus as Lord.[8] These elements in 4:17a are Paul's way of highlighting the significance of his instructions to the Ephesians.[9]

Do Not Live like the Gentiles (4:17-19)

The content of Paul's instruction is in 4:17b-19.[10] The Ephesians should no longer live in the way they used to live. One might gather from the present tense of the infinitive (περιπατεῖν) and the adverb μηκέτι that the Ephesians were currently still living according to their former manner of life. One must be careful here, for tense is not grammaticalized outside the indicative mood, and the imperfective aspect of περιπατεῖν fits well with the durative *Aktionsart* of the lexeme. Nevertheless, μηκέτι does suggest

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[6]Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 66-68.

[7]See Acts 20:26; Rom 9:1; 1 Cor 15:15; 2 Cor 1:23; Gal 5:3; 1 Thess 2:12; 1 Tim 5:21; 2 Tim 4:1; Titus 1:13. Probably μαρτύρομαι does not connote a formal oath here (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 276; contra Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 212).

[8]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 281; Barth, *Ephesians*, 499; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 276; C. Leslie Mitton, *Ephesians*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1976), 159; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 319; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 296 (contra Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 96). The phrase ἐν κυρίῳ is similar to Paul's ἐν Χριστῷ formula and thus means "in the sphere of the lordship of Christ" (Eph 2:21; 4:1; 5:8; 6:1, 10, 21; cf. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 582). Abbott (*Ephesians*, 128) sees dependence on the Lord in view. Probably "in the Lord" does not merely mean Paul is a Christian giving commands to Christians (contra G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison [Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon], in the Revised Standard Version: Introduction and Commentary* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976], 79; Francis Foulkes, *The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., TNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989], 134).

[9]V. 17a is an example of what Runge (*Discourse Grammar*, 101-24) calls a "metacomment," where an author suspends the discourse to make a comment on what is about to be said, thus attracting extra attention to its importance.

[10]Περιπατεῖν is a substantival infinitive in apposition to τοῦτο, which conveys Paul's solemn instruction.

that Paul was concerned that the Ephesians not lapse into their pre-conversion state but grow in faith and love (cf. 4:14-16).[11] They must not forget but remember that they had become members of the "one new man" in Christ (2:15) and their lives should reflect this new status. In fact, Paul subtly reminds them of their new identity in 4:17 by refusing to label them as "Gentiles" (τὰ ἔθνη).[12] Of course, in an ethnic sense they were Gentiles, which Paul recognized (2:11; 3:1). But the fact that he urges them to live no longer like the Gentiles is best explained if he no longer considers them to be Gentiles. Put another way, they are no longer to live as Gentiles precisely because they are no longer Gentiles. In Christ they have a new and more fundamental identity as members of the new humanity.[13]

Paul reminds them of their former way of life in four phrases.[14] First, the Gentiles walk "in the futility of their minds" (v. 17b).[15] The term ματαιότης, which in the LXX often translates הֶבֶל (Eccl 1:2, 14; 2:1; 12:8), means emptiness, purposelessness, or

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[11]Best (*Ephesians*, 417) considers μηκέτι in 4:14 to support that in 4:17 the Ephesians had not yet completely put away their former way of life.

[12]That he no longer considered his audience to be Gentiles was shocking enough to cause the rise of the variant reading τὰ λοιπὰ ἔθνη, which is supported by many later manuscripts (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2002], 537).

[13]Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 134; H. C. G. Moule, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: With Introduction and Notes*, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1888), 115; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 296; Peter S. Williamson, *Ephesians*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 126. Abbott (*Ephesians*, 129) rightly says, "They were ἔθνη only ἐν σαρκί, but were members of the true commonwealth of Israel." Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 276) says, "This underscores the 'third race' mentality of this writer, which emerged from 2:11-22 where the Church was depicted as a new creation, as one new person replacing the two old ethnic entitites of Israel and the Gentiles."

[14]The following description of the Gentiles is in line with traditional Jewish apologetic (Wis 12:1-15:19; 18:10-19; *Ep. Arist.* 140, 277-78; *Sib. Or.* 3.220-36; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 277; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 320). The fourfold description appears to move from the mindset of the Gentiles to their actions (cf. 4:23-24; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 277; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 320).

[15]Τοῦ νοός is an attributed genitive (see Arnold, *Ephesians*, 281; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 89-91), which means it is the noun being described by ματαιότητι ("their futile minds"). It refers not merely to one's intellectual faculties but also includes one's affections (Hodge, *Ephesians*, 250).

futility (Rom 8:20; 1 Cor 15:17). In the LXX the term is associated with idolatry, since idols are seen as worthless and futile for security.[16] Accordingly, it is linked with falsehood, since idolaters worship what is false, for they do not know or serve the one true God.[17] Hence, that in Ephesians 4:17 the Gentiles have a futile or empty mind is a way of saying that they do not know or appreciate the truth, which, as Paul will make clear in 4:21, is found ultimately in Jesus. The Ephesians should recognize and reject this fruitless way of thinking about God and his world, which is called "the lie" (τὸ ψεῦδος) in 4:25 (cf. Rom 1:25).[18]

Second, the Gentiles are "darkened in their understanding" (v. 18a).[19] The perfect participle ἐσκοτωμένοι ("darkened") is not to be read as if the Gentiles were once in the light and then were "darkened."[20] Rather, the perfect tense describes the current state of affairs for the Gentiles as a state of darkness (cf. Rom 1:21).[21] The Gentiles did not perceive the light of the truth of God, nor did they experience the light of life (cf. 5:14). They lived in the darkness and bore the "unfruitful works of the darkness" (5:11)

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[16]See Isa 2:20; 44:9; Jer 2:5; 8:19; 10:3-5; Ezek 8:10; Ps 31:7 (Eng. 31:6; LXX 30:7).

[17]See Ps 144:8, 11 (LXX 143:8, 11); Ezek 13:6-9, 19; 22:28. Similarly Barth, *Ephesians*, 526-27; Best, *Ephesians*, 418; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 66; contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 129.

[18]Schnackenburg (*Ephesians*, 196) labels their mindset "existential unresponsiveness."

[19]The term διάνοια is not to be much distinguished from νοῦς in the previous clause but is synonymous to describe the whole psychosomatic individual (contra Hodge, *Ephesians*, 251-52).

[20]Rightly Barth, *Ephesians*, 500; Best, *Ephesians*, 419; contra Moule, *Ephesians*, 115. The variant reading ἐσκοτισμένοι is not well supported by the external evidence and does not alter the meaning. Perhaps a scribe, recognizing the similarities between Eph 4:17-19 and Rom 1:18ff., wished to harmonize Eph 4:18 to ἐσκοτίσθη in Rom 1:21. Contra Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 584n3.

[21]Rightly Abbott, *Ephesians*, 130; Best, *Ephesians*, 418; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 97; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 321n194. Although his three "planes of discourse" theory is not the best model for describing the aspectual value of the Greek verb, Stanley E. Porter (*Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2ⁿᵈ ed., Biblical Languages: Greek 2 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 21-22) rightly argues that the perfect and pluperfect tense forms convey stative aspect. Even if one does not understand the perfect in this way, for Porter's view is debated, the point stands that the Gentiles were in a state of darkness and alienation.

under the influence of the rulers of the darkness (6:12). On the other hand, the Ephesians, who were once members of the realm of darkness (5:8), now had been awakened and were "light in the Lord" (5:8; cf. 1:18). Therefore, they were to bear the "fruit of light" (5:9) and reprove the works of darkness rather than fellowship with them (5:11-14).

Third, the Gentiles were "alienated from the life of God" (v. 18b).[22] Whereas the previous perfect participle described the Gentiles' inability to perceive the light of truth and life, the perfect participle ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι describes their state of estrangement from God (cf. 2:12; Col 1:21).[23] Earlier in Ephesians 2:12, the Gentiles were seen as estranged from Israel and Israel's covenants, but in 4:18 Paul emphasizes the vertical dimension of their estrangement as an estrangement from the life that comes from God.[24] The Gentiles were dead in their sins, being willfully enslaved to the present evil age and its ruler, and had no hope for life but only the expectation of wrath (2:1-3). On the other hand, God had given the Ephesians life with Christ so that they were no longer enslaved to sin and the devil but were now seated with Christ in the heavenly places (2:4-7; 5:14). Having at one time been separated from Christ (2:12), now they were in Christ, who was their life (Gal 2:20; Col 3:4). Hence, they were not to live as if they were still dead in their sins but as those who had been raised from the dead.

Before the final phrase in 4:19 describing the Gentiles' way of life, Paul first

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[22]Of the two participles ἐσκοτωμένοι and ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι, the participle ὄντες certainly modifies the former (Hodge, *Ephesians*, 253-54; S. D. F. Salmond, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, in vol. 3 of *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.], 339; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 297n2), although more probably both (Arnold, *Ephesians*, 282).

[23]"Loss of light can now be seen to amount to the same thing as loss of life" (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 278; cf. Best, *Ephesians*, 420).

[24]Thielman (*Ephesians*, 298) rightly reminds that the promise of life was God's promise to his covenant people (Deut 30:15-20). Τοῦ θεοῦ is a genitive of source (similarly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 282; Best, *Ephesians*, 420; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 586). Stephen E. Fowl (*Ephesians: A Commentary*, NTL [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012], 148) argues for a possessive sense in which believers come to share in God's own life (cf. 2 Pet 1:4).

explains in 4:18 that they were darkened and alienated because of their "ignorance" (ἄγνοια) and "hardness of heart" (ἡ πώρωσις τῆς καρδίας).[25] The two διά causal clauses are likely coordinate and carry the same meaning.[26] As already noted, the Gentiles lacked true knowledge of God, which led them to dishonor him. Thus, ἄγνοια is not a morally neutral term—in the LXX it is frequently parallel with ἁμαρτία[27]—but an indictment against the Gentiles' alienation from God (Hos 4:6).[28] Moreover, the Gentiles are stubborn and unwilling to repent on account of their hard hearts.[29] Although neither πώρωσις nor πωρόω occur often in the LXX or NT,[30] hardness of heart is common concept in the OT to describe the stubborn disposition toward God among Israel and the nations.[31] In Isaiah 63:17 Israel's hardness of heart meant Israel did not walk in God's

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[25]Probably the two διά phrases in 4:18 modify the two previous participles, ἐσκοτωμένοι and ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι (similarly Best, *Ephesians*, 418; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 98; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 197). This interpretation observes the parallel structure of 4:18, with the coordinate participles grounded by the coordinate causal phrases. The perceived difficulty in ignorance as the cause of a darkened mind (see Abbott, *Ephesians*, 130-31) and not the other way around is answered if Paul's point in 4:17-19 is to show the culpability of the Gentiles; it was for their own rejection of God that they were handed over to futility and darkness (cf. Rom 1:18-32). Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 588-89) interprets vv. 17-18 as a series of cause and effect statements, with "hardness of heart" being the most fundamental reason for the Gentiles' plight (similarly Mitton, *Ephesians*, 160; John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today [Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1979], 177-78). But this fails to recognize the careful coordination of participles and causal phrases with διά.

[26]Best, *Ephesians*, 420; Moule, *Ephesians*, 116; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 298. Thus, the second διά clause is not subordinate to the first (rightly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 98; contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 130-31; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 283; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 587; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 278; Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, SP 17 [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2000], 302; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 322; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 230), with the phrase ἐν αὐτοῖς ("within them," not "among them"; contra Caird, *Paul's Letters*, 79) coordinate with καρδίας.

[27]See 2 Chr 28:13; Ps 25:7 (LXX 24:7); DanLXX 4:30; 6:4, 22; 9:16; Sir 23:3.

[28]O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 321) recognizes that Paul is using terminology according to the usage in the OT.

[29]Τῆς καρδίας is an attributed genitive, where the head noun describes the genitive noun (i.e., "hard hearts"; cf. Rom 6:4).

[30]See Mark 3:5; 6:52; 8:17; John 12:40; Rom 11:7, 25; 2 Cor 3:14.

[31]See Exod 4:21; 7:3; 9:35; 14:4; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut 2:30; 9:6, 13, 27; 31:27; 2 Chr 36:13; Neh 9:16-17, 29; Ps 95:8; Isa 48:4; 63:17; Jer 7:26; 17:23; 19:15; Sir 16:10; Bar 2:30.

ways or fear him.[32] In the same way, the Gentiles in Ephesians 4:18 were stubborn and resistant toward God and his ways, keeping them from light and life.

Fourth, the depth of the Gentiles' depravity is portrayed in 4:19, in which the Gentiles hand themselves over to sin.[33] The participle ἀπηλγηκότες could describe the Gentiles' despondency for their condition or their callousness to it.[34] The verb ἀλγέω means "to feel bodily pain, suffer"[35] and with the ἀπό prefix "put away sorrow."[36] Hence, to "put away sorrow" can describe a condition in which the individual is numb with sorrow (i.e., despair) or the lack of pain a person feels towards others or the results of one's actions (i.e., hardness or callousness). Although the first makes sense, the second meaning is more likely because of contextual factors.[37] The emphasis thus far in Paul's description of the Gentiles is not one of psychological fragility but of willful stubbornness toward God. The parallel in Ephesians 2:12, which some have argued supports the meaning of "despondency" in 4:19 because it describes the Gentiles as "having no hope," is not descriptive of the Gentiles' subjective feelings of hopelessness

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[32]In 1QS "to walk in the stubbornness of one's heart" (ללכת בשרירות לב) is a common way of describing the way a person acts outside the covenant community before becoming a "son of light" by entrance into the community (cf. 1.6; 2.14; 5.4). Contra J. Armitage Robinson (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: A Revised Text and Translation with Exposition and Notes*, 2nd ed. [London: Macmillan, 1907], 264-74), πώρωσις signifies obstinacy rather than blindness (rightly Best, *Ephesians*, 420-21; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 588; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 278).

[33]V. 19 probably does not give another reason for the state of the Gentiles but a further description of it (so Best, *Ephesians*, 421; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 198).

[34]The textual variant ἀπηλπικότες (from ἀπελπίζω, "to despair") is not well supported by the manuscript evidence (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 537), although it varies little in meaning from ἀπηλγηκότες, if the latter indicates the Gentiles' despondency.

[35]LSJ, s.v. "ἀλγέω."

[36]LSJ, s.v. "ἀπαλγέω."

[37]Best, *Ephesians*, 421; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 98; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 589; Jerome (Ronald E. Heine, *The Commentaries of Origen and Jerome on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, Oxford Early Christian Studies [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], 183-84); Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 278-79; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 160-61; Origen (Heine, *Origen and Jerome*, 183). Contra Thielman, *Ephesians*, 299.

but their objective lack of hope for messianic salvation, which Israel possessed. Therefore, in 4:19 the Gentiles are described as callous or hardened toward the nature and consequences of their sin. They feel no remorse or sense of guilt for sin, nor do they consider its outcome. On account of their callousness, they give themselves over to sin.[38]

The depth of their depravity is demonstrated in the following ways: (1) that they give themselves over, (2) how they give themselves over, and (3) to what they give themselves over. First, the verb παραδίδωμι conveys the Gentiles' interest and full involvement in their sin. Echoed here is Romans 1:18-32 where God hands people over to their evil desires (Rom 1:24, 26, 28).[39] One of the main differences between Romans 1 and Ephesians 4:19 is that in the former it is God who gives them over to sin whereas in the in the latter the Gentiles give themselves over. Although there is tension regarding the interplay between God's sovereignty and human responsibility, Paul affirms both, with neither swallowing up or rendering void the other.[40] In Ephesians 4:19, the emphasis is on the agency of the Gentiles, who are willing partners in their sin and thus culpable for their actions.[41]

Their culpability is heightened by the manner in which they give themselves over to sin. The term τῇ ἀσελγείᾳ probably does not describe the sin itself but the manner

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[38]Thus, ἀπηλγηκότες is an adverbial-causal participle (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 590).

[39]Many commentators (e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 418; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 273; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 159; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 194; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 65) have noted the parallels Eph 4:17-19 has with Rom 1:18-32: Gentile futility (ματαιόω, Rom 1:21; ματαιότης, Eph 4:17), darkness (σκοτίζω, Rom 1:21; σκοτόω, Eph 4:18), the indefinite relative pronoun οἵτινες (Rom 1:25, 32; Eph 4:19), the concept of "handing over" (παραδίδωμι, Rom 1:24, 26, 28; Eph 4:19), rejection of the knowledge of God (Rom 1:19-21, 28, 32; Eph 4:17-18), ἀκαθαρσία (Rom 1:24; Eph 4:19), πλεονεξία (Rom 1:29; Eph 4:19), truth/falsehood (Rom 1:18, 25; Eph 4:21, 24-25), and worshipping the creation/living in the image of the creator (Rom 1:25; Eph 4:24).

[40]Rightly O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 323.

[41]Mitton (*Ephesians*, 161), who does not hold to Pauline authorship of Ephesians, thinks the author was hesitant to ascribe to God the act of handing the Gentiles over on account of its perceived harshness. But Paul would affirm the truth of both sides, and the emphasis of one truth is not a denial of the other.

in which they give themselves.[42] While παραδίδωμι uses the dative case for a personal indirect object (Acts 16:4; Eph 5:2; 1 Pet 2:23), it regularly describes the action of what a person is handed over to do either with εἰς + accusative (Acts 14:26; Rom 1:24, 26, 28) or with εἰς + infinitive (Matt 20:19; 26:2). Hence, τῇ ἀσελγείᾳ probably indicates the way in which the Gentiles gave themselves to sin, the sin being "the working of impurity" (εἰς ἐργασίαν ἀκαθαρσίας). Ἀσέλγεια is defined as the "lack of self-constraint which involves one in conduct that violates all bounds of what is socially acceptable,"[43] and is frequently linked with sexual sin (Rom 13:13; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19).[44] Thus, with this phrase Paul highlights that the depravity of the Gentiles, for they gave themselves over "without restraint."

What they give themselves over to do is the "working of every kind of impurity." They are actively involved (ἐργασία) in the sin of impurity (ἀκαθαρσία),[45] which, like ἀσέλγεια, is often linked with sexual sin (5:3, 5; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Col 3:5), but here is used more broadly to describe "every kind of" (πάσης) immorality.[46] The manner in which they accomplish this is "with greed" (ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ; cf. Luke 12:15), which modifies the more proximate ἐργασίαν instead of the more remote παρέδωκαν.[47]

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[42]Most commentators view ἀσέλγεια as one of the vices catalogued (e.g., Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 590; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 279).

[43]BDAG, 141.

[44]Best (*Ephesians*, 422) is probably correct in defining ἀσέλγεια in v. 19 as "undisciplined behaviour especially, though not exclusively, of a sexual nature." Mitton (*Ephesians*, 161-62, 177-78) thinks all the vices in v. 19 have to do with sexual immorality, and that the reason Paul emphasized these may be because of an incipient Gnosticism in the church. But this theory is based on such scant evidence that it must be rejected.

[45]Abbott (*Ephesians*, 132) memorably states, "ἐργασία suggests the idea that they made a business of ἀκαθαρσία."

[46]Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 99; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 591; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 279; contra Thielman, *Ephesians*, 299-300. On account of the parallel with 1 Thess 4:3-8 Origen (Heine, *Origen and Jerome*, 184) interprets "impurity with covetousness" as adultery.

[47]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 592. The preposition ἐν can describe the manner in which an action is

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Paul links the sin of greed or covetousness with idolatry in 5:5 (cf. Col 3:5), which on the whole fits his indictment of the Gentiles in 4:17-19.[48] Therefore, in 4:19 Paul concludes with a staggering description of the Gentiles' depravity: they are individuals who have become so callous toward God and his truth that they fling themselves with abandon to carry out with an insatiable desire every kind of immorality.

As he had done earlier in the letter (2:1-3, 11-12), Paul enters in 4:17-19 into the lengthy description of the Gentiles' depravity in order to remind the Ephesian believers of the horror of their previous plight.[49] At one time they too had walked in this way, rejecting God in enjoyment of darkness and death. But no longer were they to live like the Gentiles, for they had been made new.

While more will be said below, for now the implication of Paul's call to live no longer as the Gentiles is based on his conviction that what was once true of the Ephesians

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carried out (BDAG, 330; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 299n11). The variant καὶ πλεονεξίας in place of ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ, supported by scant manuscript evidence, is an attempt to make πλεονεξία parallel with ἀκαθαρσία (cf. 5:3, 5). Many commentators (e.g., Best, *Ephesians*, 423; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 271; Ralph P. Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, IBC [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991], 60; Morris, *Expository Reflections*, 138; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 198n14) view πλεονεξία as coordinate with the other sins, the preposition ἐν having a Semitic quality. Abbott (*Ephesians*, 132-34) contends that covetousness cannot be in view in 4:19 since it is not a gross sin and thus would be out of place in the current description of the Gentiles' depravity; but this severely underestimates the heinous nature of covetousness, which its inclusion in the Decalogue indicates.

[48]For a good discussion of how the phrase "greed is idolatry" is an apt metaphor for a person's love, trust, and service to anything other than God, see Brian S. Rosner, *Greed as Idolatry: The Origin and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

[49]Best (*Ephesians*, 424-25) thinks the description in vv. 17-19 was not fair to or even true about the morals of the Gentiles. To be sure, the Gentiles were not as evil as they could conceivably be, and Paul did see reality through the lens of his theology. But 4:17-19 came from a man who with the authority of the Lord Jesus (4:17; cf. 3:1; 6:20) gave the authoritative interpretation of reality for Christians. Hence, although from the vantage point of humanity some Gentiles were fairly moral, yet from God's perspective they were in a horrific situation, for they were outside of Christ and the life that comes from God (see Arnold, *Ephesians*, 281, 291-92; John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, trans. T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin's Commentaries* [Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965], 186-87; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 236-37). As Thielman (*Ephesians*, 294) says, "Paul probably linked the futility of the Gentiles' way of thinking to their failure to worship the true God." Hence, while MacDonald (*Ephesians*, 323-24) is right to emphasize the sociological, boundary-marking function of the descriptions of the Gentiles, they are also profoundly theological, encouraging believers to remain faithful to God.

is no longer true of them; and conversely, what was once not true of them now is true. In other words, the implication of Paul's exhortation in 4:17-19 is that the transformation promised in the new covenant had transpired in the experience of the Ephesian believers. Whereas at one time they were estranged from God, now they were his people and he was their God. Whereas at one time they lacked a true and intimate knowledge of God, now they knew the Lord intimately along with all the people of God (Isa 54:13; Jer 31:34). Whereas at one time their hearts had been hard and calloused toward God, now their hearts had been circumcised to love God and obey him.[50] Whereas at one time they had given themselves over to sin, now God had cleansed them from their idolatry and given them hearts to love, serve, and fear God, and to walk in his ways.[51] The depravity within them (i.e., νοῦς, διάνοια, καρδία) had been transformed according to the promise of the new covenant: δώσω νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν γράψω αὐτούς (LXX Jer 38:33). In short, Paul's description of the Gentiles' existence in Ephesians 4:17-19 implies that the Ephesian believers, of whom this description no longer applied, were recipients of the new covenant's promises of transformation. Indeed, such transformation could never have come through the ministry of the old covenant, which was impotent to remove hardness of heart (2 Cor 3:14-15). Paul's concern, then, is that the Ephesians remember their true identity—they are no longer fundamentally Gentiles (4:17)—and live in accord with this new identity as members of God's new covenant community.

Live as the Image of God (4:20-24)

Although in 4:20-24 Paul does not shift topics—οὕτως is retrospective in

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[50]See Deut 30:6; *Jub*. 1.23; Rom 2:28-29; 2 Cor 3:3, 14-16.

[51]See Isa 59:21; Jer 32:39-40; Ezek 11:19-20; 36:25-27; 1 Thess 1:9.

4:20—he does shift the focus from the depraved Gentiles to the Ephesian believers.[52]

After reminding them in 4:17-19 of what they once were, in 4:20-24 he reminds them of what they now are and how they now should live. In contrast to their old manner of life, they had come into an intimate knowledge of Christ (v. 20), who through the apostles had taught them how to live as the image of God (vv. 21-24).

The statement "you learned Christ" (ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν, v. 20) is unusual.[53] Typically μανθάνειν + accusative describes what a person learns, not whom. For instance, in Romans 16:17, Paul refers to the teaching "which you learned" (ἥν ὑμεῖς ἐμάθετε; cf. 1 Cor 14:35; Phil 4:9). On the other hand, when a writer wishes to describe the teacher "from whom" an individual learns, μανθάνειν is used with either παρά τινος (2 Tim 3:14; Philo, *Deus* 1.4) or ἀπό τινος (Matt 11:29; Col 1:7; *Barn.* 9.9). This difficulty is alleviated by recognizing that μανθάνειν + accusative can describe not only the acquisition of facts but also a greater or more intimate understanding of someone.[54] A clear example of this meaning is found in Euripides' *Bacchae*, in which Dionysus ceases to disguise himself as a mortal and unveils himself as a god to Cadmus. With dismay for having wronged a god unknowingly, Cadmus expresses great remorse, to which Dionysus replies: ὄψ᾽ ἐμάθεθ᾽ ἡμᾶς ("late did you learn us").[55] In other words, Cadmus did not truly recognize or understand who Dionysus was until that moment (cf. Chion of Heraclea, *Epistula* 16.8; Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 9.3). To "learn a person," then, means to gain a greater

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[52]The presence of ὑμεῖς, which is unnecessary since the subject is already morphologically encoded in the verb ἐμάθετε, does not mark emphasis (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 593) but rather a participant shift from the Gentiles to the Ephesian Christians. The emphasis in 4:20, rather, is on the new information in the phrase "did not learn Christ in this way." For a good discussion of topical frames in discourse, see Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 210-16.

[53]But it is not without precedent, as some commentators suggest (e.g., Fowl, *Ephesians*, 150).

[54]LSJ, s.v. "μανθάνω."

[55]The text is from *Euripides: Baccae, Iphigenia at Aulis, Rhesus*, vol. 6 of *Euripides*, ed. and trans. David Kovacs, LCL 495 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 146-47 (my translation).

understanding and more intimate knowledge of that person. Hence, in Ephesians 4:20, Paul is reminding the Ephesians that they truly and intimately came to know Christ at their conversion,[56] and that this new knowledge did not lead them to a life of sin.[57] Lincoln puts it well:

> Just as a Jew learned Torah, so now a Christian can be said to learn Christ. But the personal object in the latter case does make a difference. Since Christians believed that Christ was a living person whose presence was mediated by the proclamation and teaching about him, learning Christ involved not only learning about, but also being shaped by, the risen Christ who was the source of a new way of life as well as of a new relationship with God.[58]

The Ephesians also had been instructed by Christ how to live (vv. 21-24). Paul, assuming his audience already knows Christ (εἴ γε; cf. 1:13), reminds them that the one whom they "learned" (v. 20) is their instructor and teacher, for they "heard him and were taught in him" (v. 21).[59] How the Ephesians "heard him" (αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε) is difficult to interpret, for the construction ἀκούειν + personal object in the accusative is found

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[56]Probably Paul is thinking primarily of the time when they were converted, for this seems to be the time when they would have "heard" Christ in 4:21 (cf. 1:13; so Abbott, *Ephesians*, 134; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 594). This is not, of course, to deny that since their conversion they had grown even more in their knowledge of Christ, something Paul hopes will continue to occur as the church grows (4:13).

[57]Thus, Paul is not asserting that believers learned christology per se (rightly Abbott, *Ephesians*, 134). Abbott (*Ephesians*, 134-35) and Ellicott (*Ephesians*, 99-100) see Christ as the content of Paul's preaching, which is not much different than my interpretation although it may not emphasize as should be the living Christ speaking through Paul.

[58]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 280. Similarly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 284; Best, *Ephesians*, 426-27; Hodge, *Ephesians*, 256; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 594; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 324; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 300. Hence, Witherington's view (Ben Witherington, III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 297) that "learning Christ" means Jesus is a model for Christians to follow is true insofar as it goes but incomplete.

[59]The conditional clause of 4:21 is not intended to convey a sense of doubt over the believers' knowledge of Jesus any more than 3:2 conveyed doubt about Paul's mission to the Gentiles (similarly Barth, *Ephesians*, 504; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 280). Nevertheless, the particle γέ, without suggesting irony (contra Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 216), intensifies the conditional element (Gal 3:4; 2 Cor 5:3; Col 1:23), suggesting Paul is somewhat removed from the believers, since he had not been in Ephesus for several years. The particle may indicate Paul's confidence that they were believers ("if indeed," "assuming," "certainly"; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 594-95; Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 298).

nowhere else in the NT.[60] The verb ἀκούω takes its direct object in either the genitive or accusative cases. In Classical Greek, the genitive is used for the person heard and the accusative for what the person says.[61] The difficulty with Ephesians 4:21, then, is that the object of ἀκούω is a person in the accusative case. Although it is true that the classical distinction is progressively obscured in the Hellenistic period (Matt 26:65; John 3:8; 2 Pet 1:18), which cautions against applying the distinction too rigidly, Paul's phrase is still unusual.[62] The two main options appearing in translations are "heard him" or "heard about him." In favor of the latter, the NT is fairly consistent in using the genitive for a personal direct object of ἀκούω.[63] Also, since Jesus did not physically preach the gospel to the Ephesians, it seems most natural to say that they "heard about him." Finally, even though there is no construction akin to 4:21 in the NT, the NT often uses the accusative for impersonal direct objects of ἀκούω, some of which mean "to hear about something."[64] On the other hand, in favor of the reading "heard him," the NT elsewhere generally uses περί + genitive with ἀκούω to mean "hear about someone."[65] Indeed, in Romans 10:14 Paul uses the genitive to argue that people cannot believe in the one "about whom they

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[60]Occasionally the NT will use a personal direct object with a supplementary participle to indicate what is heard (2 Thess 3:11; 3 John 4), but this is not the construction in Eph 4:21.

[61]More specifically, Herbert Weir Smyth (*A Greek Grammar for Colleges* [New York: American, 1920], 323-24) states that ἀκούειν + genitive means to hear with the senses a person or thing, whereas ἀκούειν + accusative means to hear what the person or thing is saying.

[62]After analyzing every instance of ἀκούω in the NT, I am persuaded that only Luke discernibly retains the distinction (Luke 15:25; Acts 9:7; 22:7, 9). Contra BDF, 95, Classical Greek would use the genitive to indicate hearing *about* a person as well as hearing *from* a person (rightly LSJ, s.v. "ἀκούω"; Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 324). The confusion supported by BDF causes some commentators to think the construction is common (e.g., Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 280).

[63]See Matt 2:9; Luke 2:46-47; 10:16; John 10:8, 20; Acts 3:22-23; 4:19; 1 Tim 4:16; 1 John 4:5-6; 5:14-15.

[64]See Gal 1:13; Eph 1:15; 3:2; Col 1:4; 2 Thess 3:11; Phlm 5.

[65]See Mark 5:27; 7:25; Luke 7:3; 9:9; 16:2; 23:8.

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have not heard" (οὗ οὐκ ἤκουσαν).[66] Hence, both translations are not without difficulties.

Probably the distinctiveness of the phrase owes to the distinctiveness of Paul's gospel, in which both the content and the goal was Christ.[67] In parallel texts describing Paul's ministry and aims, he can say that he preaches Christ (κηρύσσομεν Χριστόν, 1 Cor 1:23-24; cf. 2 Cor 11:4; Phil 1:15-17), gospels Christ (εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτόν, Gal 1:16; cf. Acts 5:42), gains Christ (Χριστὸν κερδήσω, Phil 3:8), knows nothing but Christ (1 Cor 2:2), and knows Christ in a new way (2 Cor 5:16). Similarly, believers learn Christ (ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν, Eph 4:20), receive Christ (παρελάβετε τὸν Χριστόν, Col 2:6), put on Christ (Rom 13:14), and have Christ dwell in their hearts through faith (Eph 3:17). These parallel constructions show that in Paul's ministry he did not present his gospel only as facts about Christ but as the beginning of a new relationship with Christ. For Paul, then, Christ was both the content and the goal of the gospel. Thus, in Ephesians 4:21 to "hear Christ" not only meant to "hear about Christ"[68] but also to enter into a relationship with Christ as Lord and teacher. Just as on the road to Damascus Paul had heard the audible voice of the resurrected Jesus, so through the apostolic message the Ephesians had not only "heard about" but also "heard" and encountered the same living Lord through the ministry of the apostles.[69]

That Jesus was the Ephesians' Lord and teacher is evident also because they "were taught in him" (v. 21b).[70] Although the Ephesians had been taught the gospel by

[66]It is possible Paul is using the genitive according to the classical rule, which would mean people need to "hear him" to believe.

[67]Similarly Best, *Ephesians*, 427; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 67.

[68]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 595; Moule, *Ephesians*, 117; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 325.

[69]Similarly Best, *Ephesians*, 427; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 300-01. Barth (*Ephesians*, 530) puts it memorably: "Jesus Christ is the headmaster, the teaching matter, the method, the curriculum, and the academy."

[70]Some commentators (e.g., Abbott, *Ephesians*, 135) argue that the Ephesians "heard" Christ at their conversion and subsequently and progressively "were taught in him," and that both verbs comprehend

Paul and his coworkers (Acts 19:1-41; 20:18-35), ἐδιδάχθητε probably is a divine passive, emphasizing the divine source for their instruction. The phrase ἐν αὐτῷ refers to Christ and thus is a parallel to the "in Christ" formula throughout the letter.[71] Hence, their divine instruction came to them inasmuch as they were united to Christ by faith; and there was no divine instruction for those outside of Christ.

This is so because "the truth is in Jesus" (v. 21c).[72] Although the Greek could be interpreted to mean "he (i.e., Christ) is the truth in Jesus"[73] or "there is truth in Jesus,"[74] the most natural understanding is that "the truth is in Jesus."[75] Since there is no predicate nominative, there is no need for the subject nominative to be articular (ἀλήθεια), and abstract nouns are frequently anarthrous (John 8:44).[76] Fascinatingly, this is the only time in the letter when Paul uses the name "Jesus" by itself, which probably means the focus is on the historical life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, whose teachings contained the truth of the gospel and whose way of life was truthful.[77] Specifically, when

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what it means for them to "learn" Christ. However, the verbs in 4:20-21 probably collectively refer to the conversion of the Ephesians (Best, *Ephesians*, 427-28), although there is no reason to deny this is the only time they learned, heard, and were taught in him.

[71]Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 100; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 595.

[72]Καθώς is probably causal (Best, *Ephesians*, 429), although a comparative meaning yields the same sense. It modifies ἐδιδάχθητε, not ἐμάθετε, since the former yields a natural sense and καθώς is too removed from the latter. Contra Barth (*Ephesians*, 505), it does not introduce a quotation continuing through 4:24.

[73]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 596-98; Ignace de la Potterie, "Jésus et la Vérité D'Après Eph 4,21," in *Studiorum Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicus 1961: Simul Secundus Congressus Internationalis Catholicus de Re Biblica*, AnBib 18 (Rome: Pontifico Instituto Biblico, 1963), 48. With Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 281), it is quite difficult to even know what such a phrase would mean.

[74]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 285; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 67.

[75]Best, *Ephesians*, 429; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 280-81; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 301-02.

[76]BDF, 134-35; Best, *Ephesians*, 429; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 325-26; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 302; contra Caird, *Paul's Letters*, 80.

[77]Similarly Mitton, *Ephesians*, 163. Best (*Ephesians*, 429-30) clarifies that this need not mean Jesus literally taught vv. 22ff. in his earthly ministry. That Paul rarely uses the name "Jesus" by itself argues against merely stylistic variation (contra Fowl, *Ephesians*, 151n6; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 281-82). For a range or interpretive options for v. 21c, see Barth, *Ephesians*, 533-36. There may also be a hint that God's

the Ephesians came to know Christ, they were freed from their false worship and purposeless existence—from the "lie" (4:25)—and were granted to know and worship the one true God and to live in truthful ways toward one another (cf. 4:15, 25). The locus of their enlightenment was in Christ, for it was when they learned him, heard him, and were taught in him that they saw the truth of the gospel (cf. 1:13).[78]

Indeed, in 4:20-21 Paul highlights Jesus as the Ephesians' teacher.[79] As the risen Lord and head of all things, Jesus was no mere rabbi, but his authority transcended all human authority (4:17; cf. Matt 7:29; Mark 1:22). In this way, Jesus is presented as a kind of new Moses, for the teacher to whom the Ephesians should look for instruction is not Moses—the law was abolished in Christ (2:15)—but Jesus himself. It is the instruction of Jesus, then, that forms the content of the new covenant, and it is as individuals "learn," "hear," and "are taught" in him that the new covenant promise of Isaiah 54:13 comes to fruition: "All your children shall be taught of Yahweh" (cf. John 6:45).

The content of Christ's instruction is found in 4:22-24. The three infinitives that modify ἐδιδάχθητε—ἀποθέσθαι, ἀνανεοῦσθαι, ἐνδύσασθαι—are infinitives of indirect discourse, giving the content of Christ's teaching.[80] Even though there is no record of

saving promises came to pass in Jesus, who is God's "yes" and through whom believers say "the Amen" (2 Cor 1:19-20). Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 281-82), O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 326), and Schnackenburg (*Ephesians*, 199) rightly reject a polemic here against a Gnostic tendency to separate the heavenly Christ from the earthly Jesus (contra Joachim Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief*, HTKNT 10/2 [Freiburg: Herder, 1971], 228; de la Potterie, "Jésus et la Vérité," 53; Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser: Ein Kommentar*, KBANT [Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1965], 217), since there are no indications elsewhere in Ephesians that Paul is fighting Gnosticism. Martin Dibelius and Heinrich Greeven (*An die Kolosser, Epheser, an Philemon*, 3rd ed., HNT 12 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1953], 86) suggest Paul utilizes mystery terminology at this point, but this also has little to support it. Arnold (*Ephesians*, 285) notes that the emphasis on the historical Jesus "is thus a strong endorsement of the Jesus tradition that is being passed on in the churches."

[78]Similarly Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 282-83.

[79]Notice that in 4:21 both αὐτόν and ἐν αὐτῷ are in a marked (i.e., pre-verb) position, highlighting the centrality of Jesus as instructor.

[80]Best, *Ephesians*, 430-31; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 598; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 283-84. They are neither imperatival infinitives (contra Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 217) nor the subject of ἐστίν in 4:21, which

Christ specifically instructing his disciples using these words, 4:22-24 summarizes Paul's ethical instruction to the Ephesians. As an apostle, ambassador, and prisoner of Christ (1:1; 3:1; 6:20), Paul spoke with the authority of Christ and thus accurately transmitted Christ's instruction for the Ephesians.

Paul reminded the Ephesians that Christ had taught them to put off their sinful way of life, be renewed by the Spirit, and put on the new way of life in God's image.[81] He is not reminding them that they *already* put off the old life and *already* put on the new. While this is true, the three infinitives in 4:22-24 express the ongoing instruction of Christ for believers.[82] The time that believers put off the old and put on the new is complex in Paul's theology. In Romans 6:6, he emphasizes that believers have already put off the old man (ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος) because they have died to sin when they were united to Christ in his death. Similarly, in Galatians 3:27 all believers, defined as those who have been baptized into Christ, have already put on (ἐνδύω) Christ and belong to him. Again, in Colossians 3:9-10 Paul urges believers not to sin because they have already cut off the old man (ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος) and have already put on (ἐνδύω) the new

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much more naturally has ἀλήθεια as its subject (contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 135).

[81]The terminology of putting off and putting on derives from putting off and putting on clothing. While Paul links baptism with putting on Christ (Gal 3:27), any emphasis on baptism in 4:22-24 is muted (rightly Barth, *Ephesians*, 506-07; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 303; contra Jung Hoon Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, JSNTSup 268 [London: T&T Clark, 2004], 175-91; MacDonald, *Ephesians*, 304-05; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 199-201; Williamson, *Ephesians*, 128; Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 206). As Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 284-85) and Best (*Ephesians*, 431) rightly caution, vv. 22-24 cannot be limited to baptism since believers are to put off the old and put on the new throughout their lives.

[82]Rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 286; Best, *Ephesians*, 430-31; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 357-58; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 284. Contra Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 600-02; Moule, *Ephesians*, 118; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 326-27; Stott, *Ephesians*, 180-81. O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 327) recognizes that the context seems to require an imperatival sense, "not in the sense that the readers are to repeat the event of putting off the old person and putting on the new, but in terms of their continuing to live out the implications of their mighty break with the past." However one answers the question of the infinitives as carrying an indicative or imperative sense, Thielman (*Ephesians*, 303) says, "The passage has an imperatival intent."

which is renewed (ἀνακαινόω) in God's image.[83] Nevertheless, Paul also teaches that believers must still put off the old and put on the new. In Romans 13:11-14, believers are called to put on (ἐνδύω) Christ and not give in to sinful desires because the end is near. Hence, in Paul's thought believers have already put off the old man and put on Christ, yet they must continue to put off the old and put on the new. Even though the old man is no longer master over them, they still live in the world and the consummation is still future. Even though they have been freed from sin's power, they must continue to fight sin in their lives.[84] While complex, this "already/not yet" framework is key for understanding Paul's theology.

In Ephesians 4:22-24, the "not yet" is in view, since in the context Paul is urging the believers no longer to walk in their old manner of life (vv. 17-19), which is in contrast with the new manner of life they learned from Christ.[85] Although Paul roots the imperative in the indicative, the presence of διό in 4:25 signifies that Christ's specific instruction (vv. 25-32) is rooted in the general (vv. 17-24) and thus does not mean 4:22-24 is indicative.[86] Further, that ἀποθέμενοι (v. 25) is aorist does not necessarily signify the time at conversion when believers put off the old man.[87] Similarly, that ἀποθέσθαι and ἐνδύσασθαι (vv. 22, 24) are aorist says nothing of the time of the action, since time is relativized outside the indicative mood; rather, the action of putting off and putting on are

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[83]The aorist participles ἀπεκδυσάμενοι and ἐνδυσάμενοι are causal.

[84]Similarly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 286-87; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 285-86.

[85]Similarly Barth, *Ephesians*, 544-45.

[86]Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 601) and Stott (*Ephesians*, 180) argue that vv. 22-24 must describe what has already happened, for otherwise vv. 25-32 are "redundant." But vv. 25-32 are only "redundant" inasmuch as they spell out more clearly and are based on what is inherent in the more general instructions of vv. 22-24.

[87]Contra Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 601.

seen from an outside perspective that sees the whole (i.e., perfective aspect).[88] On the other hand, ἀνανεοῦσθαι (v. 23) uses imperfective aspect, in which the activity of renewal is portrayed from within, i.e., an ongoing process. Finally, the variant readings ἀνανεοῦσθε and ἐνδύσασθε in place of ἀνανεοῦσθαι and ἐνδύσασθαι, respectively (vv. 23-24), shows that many scribes understood the text to be imperatival.[89]

The contrast in 4:22-24 is between old and new "Adams" and old and new creations. (1) The "old man" is in stark contrast to the "new man" in 4:24, which as defended in 2:15 describes Christ as the new man in contrast to Adam (cf. Rom 5:12-19; 6:6; 1 Cor 15:21-22, 45-49). The "new man" is Christ inasmuch as in parallel texts believers are urged to "put on" Christ (Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27; Col 1:15 with 3:10).[90] (2) Just as mankind's first sin was characterized by deception and corruption, so the "old man" is characterized by deception (ἀπάτη) and corruption (φθείρω).[91] Echoing the language of the Genesis story (Gen 3:13), Paul often links deception with mankind's first sin. First Timothy 2:14 describes how Eve was deceived (ἐξαπατάω) and became a transgressor. In 2 Corinthians 11:3 he says that he is concerned that the Corinthians' thoughts will be corrupted (φθείρω) just as the serpent deceived (ἐξαπατάω) Eve.

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[88]Rightly Best, *Ephesians*, 433. Contra Morris (*Expository Reflections*, 140) and Westcott (*Ephesians*, 67) who see the action of putting off and putting on as "once for all."

[89]While ἀνανεοῦσθε could be a present indicative or imperative, it is imperative because its parallel ἐνδύσασθε can only be imperative.

[90]Rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 287, 290; Barth, *Ephesians*, 539; Calvin, *Ephesians*, 190-91; Martin, *Ephesians*, 58-59; Moule, *Ephesians*, 119-20; Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 219; Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 207; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 234; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 68. Contra Best, *Ephesians*, 440; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 103; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 328. Although the fact that the new man is created appears to be an argument against Christ as the new man, 2:15 clarifies that while the new humanity is that which is created, with Christ himself as the creator, it is created "in him," such that the new humanity cannot be seen apart from Christ, the new man (see Robinson, *Ephesians*, 109).

[91]Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 219. Ellicott (*Ephesians*, 101) rightly notes the old man refers to the unregenerate state, yet misses the adamic connections. Best (*Ephesians*, 434) sees the present φθειρόμενον as suggesting unbelievers are not inherently corrupt but continuously create corruption within themselves, and thus 4:22 is inconsistent with 2:1. But this is an overreading of the imperfective aspect of the participle, which says nothing for or against inherent corruption but only that it is ongoing.

Similarly, in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 Paul describes the eschatological activity of Satan as deceiving (ἀπάτη) those who are perishing (cf. 2 Thess 2:3). In the same way, the "old man that is corrupted according to deceitful desires" (Eph 4:22) appears to be one of Paul's ways of describing humanity's life in Adam, which, despite the dawning of the new age in Christ, continues in its corruption and which believers must always fight to put off.[92] (3) The call to "be renewed" (ἀνανεοῦσθαι) in the Spirit (v. 23) reflects the OT promise that the Spirit would be the agent of the new creation (Isa 32:15; 44:3-4).[93] (4) Finally, the new man in 4:24 is "created according to God" (τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα), which is a way of describing creation in God's image. The preposition κατά + accusative indicates a relationship of correspondence between two nouns,[94] so "created according to God" must mean that the new man is "created like God" or "created in the image of God."[95] This interpretation is confirmed by the parallel text in Colossians 3:10, which says that believers put on that which is renewed "according to the image of its creator" (κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν).[96]

What these observations indicate is that Christ is both the new man and head of the new humanity, having created it in himself (2:15; 4:13; Col 1:15, 18), and that all those in Christ are sharers in the new creation order begun by Christ (2 Cor 5:17; Gal

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[92]In the phrase τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης, ἀπάτης is an attributive genitive ("deceitful desires"; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 235), although perhaps it is a subjective genitive or genitive of source in view of its contrast with τῆς ἀληθείας in v. 24 (Arnold, *Ephesians*, 288; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 606; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 271).

[93]Hence ἀνανεοῦσθαι is a divine passive (rightly Abbott, *Ephesians*, 137; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 102). With Barth (*Ephesians*, 508) and Best (*Ephesians*, 435), the prefix ἀνά need not imply restoration to a prior state, for the new creation goes beyond even the blessed quality of the first creation.

[94]LSJ, s.v. "κατά."

[95]Best, *Ephesians*, 437; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 287-88. The view of Abbott (*Ephesians*, 138) and Fowl (*Ephesians*, 153) that Paul does not have the image of God in view but only creation "according to the will or plan of God" does not allow for the variety of ways one can describe creation in God's image (cf. Col 3:10; rightly Barth, *Ephesians*, 509).

[96]Thielman, *Ephesians*, 306.

6:15). Since they are no longer members of the old humanity but members of the new, Paul urges the Ephesians in 4:22-24 to live in accord with their new identity in Christ.[97]

That the new creation has dawned in Christ reflects that the fulfillment of the new covenant's promises. The promise in the OT that God would recreate his people along with the cosmos (Isa 65:17ff.) coalesced with the promise that God would renew his relationship with his people. As seen in chapter 2, Ezekiel especially juxtaposes the promises of the new covenant with those of the new creation. For instance, in 34:25-31 the new covenant of peace would mean that the land and animals would be transformed into a new, peaceful creation. In 36:33-36 the Spirit-cleansed people of the new covenant live in a land "like the garden of Eden." Moreover, the resurrection of God's people by his Spirit in 37:1-14 is juxtaposed with the promise of an everlasting covenant of peace with God's people in the land in 37:15-28. Hence, the presence of the new creation in Christ implies that the promises of the new covenant have also been fulfilled through him.

The presence of the new covenant is confirmed by the internal transformation of God's people (4:23). The phrase τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν is difficult, since it is unclear whether the πνεῦμα refers to God's Spirit who renews believers' minds, or to the spirit of a person.[98] The term πνεῦμα in Paul's literature most often refers to God's Spirit, although Paul can refer to the inward aspect of an individual that is distinguishable from the body.[99] Indeed, of the 13 other occurrences of πνεῦμα in Ephesians, it refers to God's

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[97]The clothing metaphor in vv. 22-24 aptly describes a person's identity, since clothing was and continues to be a symbol for one's identity or status (Barth, *Ephesians*, 540-41; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 285).

[98]Foreign to the text and Paul's anthropology in general is the view of Abbott (*Ephesians*, 138) that the πνεῦμα refers to "the higher principle of life." Nor does Paul elsewhere use πνεῦμα to refer to one's tenor or disposition (contra Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 298).

[99]See Rom 8:16; 1 Cor 2:11; 16:18; 2 Cor 7:13; Gal 6:18; Phil 4:23; 1 Thess 5:23; Phlm 25.

Spirit 12 times and once to another spiritual being (2:2). Given the emphasis on new creation and renewal in 4:23-24, it would be natural for πνεῦμα to be God's Spirit, the agent of renewal.[100]

Nevertheless, πνεῦμα probably is anthropological on account of the genitive phrase τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν.[101] If God's Spirit were in view, the genitive phrase would most naturally connote possession, yet it would be odd indeed for Paul to describe the Spirit of God as belonging to a believer's mind.[102] Further, while this phrase is unique in the Pauline corpus, it fits well within the stylistic tendency in Ephesians for redundancy. In other words, "the spirit of your mind" is a plenary description of the inward aspect of the believer. Hence, while the Spirit of God is the agent of new creation and renews God's people, the emphasis in 4:23 is on the inward renewal of the believer.[103] This emphasis accords with the new covenant's promises of inward transformation, a transformation demonstrating that the Ephesians were members of the new covenant and no longer possessed "futile minds" (4:17).

Yet another confirmation that the new covenant is in view in 4:23-24 comes from the ethical terms δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης, which combine to express the outworking of the renewed covenant relationship and image of God.[104] Sourced in the truth (τῆς

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[100]Arnold, *Ephesians*, 288-89; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 103; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 200.

[101]Barth, *Ephesians*, 508-09; Best, *Ephesians*, 436; Hodge, *Ephesians*, 263-64; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 608; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 287; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 165; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 330; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 306; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 68.

[102]If God's Spirit is in view, then νοός must be a genitive either of place ("within your mind"; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 608-09) or of reference ("with respect to your mind"), but neither of these options naturally translates the genitive. Arnold's suggestion (*Ephesians*, 289) that νοός is a subjective genitive misconstrues the syntax, for the subject of the infinitive would be in the accusative case.

[103]Yoder Neufeld (*Ephesians*, 208-09) thinks both the anthropological and theological elements should be kept in tension. The insertion of the preposition ἐν before τῷ πνεύματι (𝔓[49], B, 33, 1739, 1881) does not alter the interpretation suggested here.

[104]With regard to Eph 4:24 and Col 3:10, Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway,

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ἀληθείας) that comes from Christ,[105] these terms together define right behavior toward God and one another in a covenant relationship (1 Thess 2:10; Titus 1:8).[106] The evidence of the LXX suggests that the ὅσιος word group is often used to describe covenant faithfulness. In 1 Kings 9:4 Solomon is urged to walk before God like David did, "in holiness (ὁσιότης) of heart and in uprightness," which is then defined as obedience to God's commands. Also, already seen in chapter 2 that the everlasting covenant in Isaiah 55:3 is defined as the "faithful kindnesses of David" (חַסְדֵי דָוִד הַנֶּאֱמָנִים, τὰ ὅσια Δαυιδ τὰ πιστά), which according to Luke Paul applied to Jesus (Acts 13:34-35; cf. Acts 2:27). Further, in the LXX ὅσιος is the preferred translation for חָסִיד, the individual who shows covenant faithfulness (חֶסֶד). For instance, in Deuteronomy 33:8-9 the חָסִיד is defined as the one who observes God's word and keeps the covenant (בְּרִית). The same definition is applied in Psalm 50:5 (LXX 49:5) when God commands Israel, "Gather to me my holy ones (חֲסִידַי, οἱ ὅσιοι), who cut a covenant with me by sacrifice." The חֲסִידִים are defined as those who are faithful to the Lord and who draw near to him (Pss 4:4 [LXX/Eng. 4:3]; 86:2 [LXX 85:2]; 148:14). As I will show below, it appears that Paul used some of the terminology in Psalm 4 to describe the depravity of the Gentiles in Ephesians 4:17 and 4:25 and to instruct believers on how to live in 4:26. If this is the case, then the "godly

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2012], 202) explain well the covenantal nature of the image of God: "Paul mentions holiness, knowledge, and righteousness, not because one can identify ethical or mental or spiritual qualities as *elements* of the divine image, but because these terms are *covenantal* and describe a covenant relationship" (emphasis original; contra Hodge, *Ephesians*, 266-67). Similarly, Calvin (*Ephesians*, 191) sees in these two terms a summary of the Decalogue.

[105]Τῆς ἀληθείας is a genitive of source and is in contrast with τῆς ἀπάτης in v. 22 (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 613; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 288-89; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 333; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 201; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 307). The variant καὶ ἀληθείᾳ has little external support and is an attempt to smooth out the syntax or make the text conform to 5:9.

[106]Although Philo (*Abr.* 1.208) defines ὁσιότης with relation to God and διακαιοσύνη with relation to man, probably both terms here describe right living toward God and one another (rightly Best, *Ephesians*, 437; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 288; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 236; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 306; contra Calvin, *Ephesians*, 191; Hodge, *Ephesians*, 265). The ethical sense of righteousness does not argue against Pauline authorship of Ephesians, for in the undisputed epistles this sense is found (Rom 6:13, 16, 18-20; 14:17; 2 Cor 6:7, 14; 9:10; Barth, *Ephesians*, 510-11).

one" (ὁ ὅσιος) in Psalm 4:4 (Eng. 4:3) is descriptive of the Ephesians' status as covenant members. Hence, the LXX identifies the ὅσιος word group with covenant faithfulness.

This is also evident in Luke 1:75, which is only other place in the NT where ὁσιότης occurs, and like Ephesians 4:24, it occurs with δικαιοσύνη.[107] Here Zechariah blesses God for fulfilling his covenant promises: "to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness (ἐν ὁσιότητι καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ) before him all our days" (vv. 72-75, ESV). The content, then, of God's oath to Abraham was that his people might serve him in his presence without fear and in holiness and righteousness. This oath portrays the covenant ideal with God's people living before him in right ways. Thus, the content of the oath is also its goal, which Zechariah affirms has been set in motion with the arrival of John the Baptist. In the same way, in Ephesians 4:24 the terms δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης together describe the goal of the covenant relationship, as the Ephesians, in putting on Christ, walk as members of the new creation order in right ways before God and one another (cf. Wis 9.1-3).[108]

Conclusion

In conclusion, Paul's general instructions for the Ephesians in 4:17-24 show that the new covenant has arrived in Christ. The Ephesian believers, whom Paul no longer considers Gentiles (4:17), have experienced the transformation of God's Spirit, as promised in the new covenant. Their minds, which once were futile, now are renewed

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[107]In Luke 1:75 the order of the two is reversed, but the meaning is not altered.

[108]Hence, while it is true that in 4:24 Paul summarizes Christian virtue in these terms and that they are a typical word pair in secular literature describing personal piety (e.g., Abbott, *Ephesians*, 138-39; Barth, *Ephesians*, 510; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 288; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 332-33), one must not overlook the covenantal background of these terms in the LXX.

(4:17, 23). Their hearts, which once were hard and calloused toward God, have been circumcised to live in ways commensurate with the image of God. Their rejection of God and idolatrous desires have been replaced by an intimate knowledge of and relationship with God in Christ, a relationship that fulfills the covenant ideal. The promised internalization of the Torah has come to pass as Christ, who is their teacher, instructs them in the way they should go. Finally, the promises of the new creation have coalesced with the new covenant, as Christ, who is the last Adam and second Man, creates a new humanity in whom the image of God is restored. Now that the power of the old man has been broken, they are to put off the old and put on the new with vigilance, so that in fulfillment of the covenant ideal they can live in right ways toward God and one another.

Specific Instructions (4:25-32)

Paul's general instructions in 4:17-24 are applied in specific ways to the Ephesians in 4:25-32. Because they are members of the new covenant community and the new creation order established by Christ (4:20-24), "therefore" (διό, 4:25) they should live in ways commensurate with their new status in Christ.[109] Just as evidence was not lacking in 4:17-24 that the Ephesians were members of the new covenant community, so in 4:25-32 the instructions are best understood as the covenant instruction of Christ. This is evident from (1) the structure of 4:25-32, (2) the similarities between Christ's instruction and the Ten Commandments, (3) the likelihood that the programmatic command in 4:25 is rooted in the covenantal ethics of Zechariah 8, and (4) an exegetical survey of 4:26-32.

The Structure of 4:25-32

The structure of 4:25-32 consists of five sections featuring positive and

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[109]The omission of διό ($\mathfrak{P}^{46}$) is not supported by the external evidence. That διό looks back to vv. 20-24 is the majority view of commentators (e.g., Barth, *Ephesians*, 511).

negative commands. Each section has a negative and a positive command followed by a causal or purpose clause that provides motivation for the command. The negative commands in 4:26b-27 probably explain the command of 4:26a and thus should be linked within one section.[110] Also, even though the command against grieving the Holy Spirit could be interpreted as an individual section, it is closely linked with the previous section by the correlative conjunction καί; hence it should be seen as an expansion of the section in 4:29.[111] This structure is portrayed in Table 4.

Table 4: The structure of Ephesians 4:25-32

Verse	Negative/Positive	Stipulations	Reason/Purpose
25	− +	Put off what is false Speak truth to your neighbor	Because members of one another
26-27	+ −	Be angry Do not sin: do not be angry long	To not give the devil an opportunity
28	− +	Do not steal Work with your hands	To share with those in need
29-30	− +	Do not speak rotten words Speak words that edify	To give grace to those who hear
	−	Do not grieve the Spirit	Because you were sealed for the last day
31-32	− +	Put away various kinds of anger Be compassionate towards one another	Because God has forgiven you

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[110]Rightly Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 207.

[111]Rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 631; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 307-08; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 204-05; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 317; Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 300. Arnold (*Ephesians*, 305-06) sees v. 30 as linked syntactically with v. 29 but then suggests a broader application of v. 30 to the other commands. Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 308) and O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 345) note the parallel between the additional motivations not to give an opportunity to the devil (v. 27) and not to grieve the Spirit (v. 30), which supports viewing v. 30 as an additional motivation to v. 29. Best (*Ephesians*, 460) thinks v. 30 is rather general and serves as a "bridge" from vv. 25-29 to vv. 31-32 (similarly Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 229), while Mitton (*Ephesians*, 172) argues v. 30 should be linked with v. 31. Snodgrass (*Ephesians*, 249) argues v. 30 is the most important motivation in 4:25-5:2. Heil's attempt (*Ephesians*, 199-201) to make vv. 30-32 serve as the chiastic mirror of vv. 17-19 is forced, with only a repetition of the terms θεός and πᾶς.

Several observations should be noted from the structure. First, the most important command in the list has the place of priority in 4:25, where believers are enjoined to speak truth to one another. The participle ἀποθέμενοι is utilized probably not because paraenesis typically begins with participles but to show subordination to λαλεῖτε as the main imperative in the verse. Attendant circumstantial participles such as ἀποθέμενοι derive their modality from the main verb of the clause while remaining subordinate to it.[112] What this entails is that Paul commands his audience to put away what is false and, most significantly, to speak truth to one another. Since this command is at the head of the list, it sets the tone for the remaining commands.[113]

Second, the content of the commands pertain to life in the community.[114] Each command and prohibition cannot be kept by oneself, including the warning against grieving the Holy Spirit (v. 30), which is linked to speaking words that edify (v. 29; see below). The motivations given in several of the sections confirm the significance of this point, for believers are seen as members of one another (v. 25) and thus they are to work toward sharing with one another (v. 28) and building one another up in grace (v. 29).

Finally, one should observe that the commands do not merit God's acceptance or serve as "works righteousness," for they are embedded within the framework of grace. Believers are not enjoined to earn their acceptance before God or enter into the community by their obedience. Rather, they are already full and equal members of the

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[112]See Constantine R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs: Further Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament*, Studies in Biblical Greek, vol. 15 (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 19-22 (similarly Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 206). This explanation provides a better paradigm than the category of imperatival participle (e.g., Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 300). Similarly Best, *Ephesians*, 445; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 249. The participle thus is not causal (contra Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 615; Morris, *Expository Reflections*, 142; Moule, *Ephesians*, 121; Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 209).

[113]This is also evident from the term τὸ ψεῦδος, which is in stark contrast to the emphasis on truth in vv. 20-24 (Barth, *Ephesians*, 511).

[114]Barth (*Ephesians*, 525) says it well: "Ecclesiology is ethics, and ethics is ecclesiology."

people of God and sharers of God's saving blessings in Christ (1:3-14; 2:11-3:6). They are already members of one another under the headship of Christ (4:25), and they have already been sealed with the Spirit (1:13; 4:30) and been forgiven in Christ (4:32). Paul's call to obedience, then, is an exhortation to live in ways toward God (4:30) and one another (4:25-29, 31-32) commensurate with their already-existing status in Christ.

Hence, the structure of 4:25-32 indicates the primacy of acting truthfully toward God and one another in a community. While this does not necessitate a covenant relationship, the concept concept is the most likely explanation for the instructions of Christ.

Similarities with the "Ten Words"

The summary of the old covenant is found in what is commonly called the Ten Commandments, or better, the "Ten Words" (עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים, Exod 34:28; Deut 4:13; 10:4). In Exodus 19-24 God made a covenant with Israel at Sinai, and although the content of the covenant is found in Exodus 20-23, the "Ten Words" in 20:1-17 form the sum and substance of the covenant instruction, with the "Judgments" (הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים, 21:1) in 20:22-23:33 forming specific applications of the "Ten Words" to Israel's society (Deut 5:1-21). The instruction of the "Ten Words" consists of how to live before God (Exod 20:3-11) and others in the covenant community (Exod 20:12-17). Toward one another, Israelites were to honor their parents and uphold the rights of others in the community by preserving their life (no murder), their family (no adultery), their property (no stealing), and their reputation (no false witness), nor were they to covet what was properly the possession of others.[115]

Although there are some differences, Ephesians 4:25-32 and its near context

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[115]For a good discussion of the form and intent of the commandments, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 327-45.

contain some similarities to the covenant instruction at Sinai.[116] For instance, just as Israel was not to steal from one another, so Paul urges the thief to steal no longer from others but to work for the benefit of others (4:28).[117] Further, Paul's call for believers in 4:25 to put away what is false (τὸ ψεῦδος) and speak truth with one another (λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ) owes to the same covenant ideal of truthfulness as is expressed in the old covenant's injunction against bearing false witness against one's neighbor (οὐ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις κατὰ τοῦ πλησίον σου μαρτυρίαν ψευδῆ, LXX Exod 20:16). Moreover, although the term for adultery (μοιχεία) does not occur in Ephesians, Paul does exhort the believers to put away sexual immorality and impurity (πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία; 4:19; 5:3; cf. 5:5). Coveting or greed is linked with idolatry in 5:5 (cf. 4:19), which well expresses the intent of its prohibition in the old covenant. Finally, Paul explicitly refers to the Sinai command to honor one's parents in 6:2-3, which is the basis for his instruction to children to obey their parents in 6:1. Such similarity between the "Ten Words" and Paul's instruction in Ephesians suggests that the latter is best interpreted as covenantal instruction.[118]

The Use of Zechariah 8 in Ephesians 4:25

As mentioned earlier, the instruction in 4:25 should be seen as programmatic

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[116]Rightly Barth (*Ephesians*, 548), who sees v. 30 as summing up the so-called "First Table" of the Ten Words, since it is a sin against God (cf. Best, *Ephesians*, 460). Arnold (*Ephesians*, 295) sees the OT background to 4:25-5:2 as one of the key distinctives of the text in contrast with Stoic paraenesis (cf. Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 225).

[117]Arnold (*Ephesians*, 304) and Caird (*Paul's Letters*, 82) note that 4:28 goes beyond the explicit prohibition of the Decalogue. More correctly, 4:28 renders explicit the intent of the Decalogue's prohibition against stealing.

[118]This, of course, is not to argue that 4:25ff. has no similarities to the types of moral exhortations of Hellenistic moral philosophers (see Abraham J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation, A Greco-Roman Sourcebook*, Library of Early Christianity 4 [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986], 124-29). Rather, the ethical overlap between the old covenant and Paul's exhortations as well as the fact that Paul roots his instruction in the OT (Ps 4; Isa 63:10; Zech 8:16) suggests a close link with the ethical stipulations of the Sinai covenant.

for the rest of the commands in 4:26-32 since it is the first command listed and the circumstantial participle ἀποθέμενοι draws attention to the main imperative to speak truth. The rest of the commands demonstrate and explain further how to act truthfully toward one another. Yet another reason why 4:25 is programmatic is because it is rooted in the ethics of the new covenant in Zechariah 8.[119]

Zechariah 8 is a restoration oracle that envisions a time after the exile when God will return to Jerusalem and gather his people in a renewed covenant relationship. Unlike Zechariah 7, which described the fasting of God's people on account of their sin, in Zechariah 8 there will feasting in celebration of God's salvation (8:19). The reason God will again dwell in Jerusalem is because he will establish the covenant ideal with his people. In 8:8 the covenant formula appears: "They will be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness." Since God will save them from his anger that was stirred up against them for their sin (7:12-14; 8:7, 13-14), their relationship with him is mended and their sin atoned for. The significance of this new covenant relationship has been convincingly demonstrated by Mike Butterworth, who has shown that Zechariah 7-8 forms a chiasm, the center of which is the covenant formula in 8:8.[120]

The result of the formation of the new relationship is that God's people would now act truthfully towards one another. The covenantal ethic prior to Israel's exile is described in 7:9-10, "Judge with the judgment of truth (אֱמֶת); do steadfast love and compassion, each man his brother; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the sojourner, or the poor; do not devise in your hearts evil against each man his brother" (cf. Isa 1:16-

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[119]For a good argument that Paul had Zech 8:16 in mind in Eph 4:25ff., see J. Paul Sampley, "Scripture and Tradition in the Community as Seen in Ephesians 4:25ff.," *Studia theologica* 26 (1972): 101-09. With Best (*Ephesians*, 444), however, the form of Zech 8:16-17 did not dictate the structure of Eph 4:25-32 (contra Sampley, "Scripture and Tradition," 107-08).

[120]Mike Butterworth, *Structure and the Book of Zechariah*, JSOTSup 130 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 149-165 (esp. 163). See also Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 574-76.

17). Although Israel rebelled against God and hardened their hearts against his words (7:12-13), when God returned to dwell in Zion Jerusalem would be called "a city of truth" (עִיר־הָאֱמֶת, πόλις ἡ ἀληθινή; 8:3), and the covenant relationship would be characterized "by truth and righteousness" (בֶּאֱמֶת וּבִצְדָקָה, ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ; 8:8). The result of the established covenant relationship is found in 8:16-17, "These are the things you should do: Speak truth, each man to his neighbor (דַּבְּרוּ אֱמֶת אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ, λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ); judge with truth (אֱמֶת) and the judgment of peace in your gates; do not devise in your hearts evil, each man against his neighbor (אִישׁ . . . רֵעֵהוּ, ἕκαστος . . . τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ); and do not love a false oath (שְׁבֻעַת שֶׁקֶר, ὅρκον ψευδῆ)." Now that the time for feasting has arrived, Israel is to "love truth and peace" (הָאֱמֶת וְהַשָּׁלוֹם, τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ τὴν εἰρήνην; 8:19). Hence, the mirror image of 7:9-10, the ethic of the Sinai covenant, is 8:16-17, the ethic of the new covenant—essentially the same call for justice and truth characterizes both texts.[121] The difference between the mirror images, then, is the inauguration of the new covenant relationship in 8:8. Whereas Israel failed to live up to the ethic of the Sinai covenant and experienced the covenant curses as a result, in the new covenant God promised to transform his people: Jerusalem will be a "city of truth, the mountain of Yahweh of armies, a holy mountain" (8:3). God will ensure that truth, justice, and faithfulness to him will be the characteristics of his people.

But such a promise does not render meaningless the call for ethical instruction. Rather, God's new covenant instruction in 8:16-17 arises out of and is based on his promise. The repetition of the phrase "each man his neighbor" (7:9-10; 8:16-17; cf. 8:10) indicates that each individual in the community was responsible to act in ways toward

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[121]This point does not necessitate that the new covenant in 8:8 is a mere renewal of the Sinai covenant but that the righteous and holy character of God does not change and will be evident in any covenant relationship he establishes.

one another. The significance of the call for truthful behavior is evidenced by the attention-getting initial phrase in 8:16, "These are the things you should do." The call to "speak truth" was not limited to the words a person speaks, although these were certainly to be included. Rather, the call was for a truthful disposition toward one another, a commitment to the welfare of others in the community based on love and loyalty. This is why the call to "speak truth" in verse 16 is expanded in verse 17 with the prohibition against devising evil in one's heart against one's neighbor. A person's thoughts and attitude toward others in the community are in view here. This call for truthful behavior, then, encapsulates well the intent of the Sinai stipulation not to bear false witness against one's neighbor, as well as the command to love one's neighbor as oneself.[122] Hence, the command to "speak truth, each man to his neighbor" in 8:16 is at the heart of the covenant ethic.

In Ephesians 4:25 Paul quotes from Zechariah 8:16.[123] Whereas the LXX, which is a faithful rendering of the Hebrew, uses πρός + accusative for the phrase "with his neighbor, Paul uses μετά + genitive, but this variation is of little significance.[124] Hence, he draws upon Zechariah's terminology to describe the need for truthfulness in

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[122]This is why the call for truthful behavior—often found in the word pair אֱמֶת/חֶסֶד—is not limited to Zechariah but is found throughout the Hebrew Bible (esp. Isaiah), as Gentry and Wellum (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 576-82) ably show.

[123]So Arnold, *Ephesians*, 300; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 616-17; Thorsten Moritz, *A Profound Mystery: The Use of the OT in Ephesians*, NovTSup, vol. 85 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 88-89; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 337-38; Origen (Heine, *Origen and Jerome*, 192); Sampley, "Scripture and Tradition," 101-09; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 311-12; contra Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 300. Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 300) sustains that the context of Zech 8 is not in Paul's purview because in Jewish tradition the language of Zech 8 was already in use (*T. Dan* 5.2; *T. Benj*. 10.3), but this is a non sequitur. Even if Paul knew he was in line with Jewish ethical tradition, this does not mean he was unaware of the biblical text out of which the tradition arose (rightly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 312).

[124]Contra Foulkes (*Ephesians*, 140) who contends μετά emphasizes inter-personal relationships. Perhaps the variation indicates Paul quoted from the Hebrew or was free in his quotation of the LXX, but the meaning is the same in any case.

the community. But he also appears to appropriate Zechariah's meaning.[125] Not only does Paul highlight the need for truthfulness by placing it first in his specific instruction, he also specifies in 4:26-32 the nature of truthful behavior in the community.[126] Like Zechariah, Paul focuses almost exclusively on the welfare of the community. Since believers are "members of one another" under the headship of Christ (4:25), they should work for one another's growth and edification in Christ and put away every kind of evil against one another (1:22-23; 4:11-16). Each believer is responsible to ensure the growth of the others in the community (4:7, 16).

Also, like Zechariah Paul emphasizes the concept of truth in the immediate context. In 4:20-21 Jesus is portrayed as the teacher for believers, and "the truth is in Jesus" (v. 21). As the model for truthful behavior, having never deceived them or treated them unjustly, Jesus teaches believers how to put off deceptive desires (v. 22) and to live truthfully toward God and one another (4:24).[127]

This concept of truth is also prominent in 4:15 and 6:14. In 4:15 believers are to grow in Christ by "acting truthfully with love" (ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ) toward one another. The usual translation "speaking the truth in love" does not adequately capture the meaning in this phrase, since the verb ἀληθεύω means more broadly "to be truthful" (cf. Gal 4:16).[128] Certainly ἀληθεύω includes but is not limited to telling the truth; it also

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[125]See especially O'Brien (*Ephesians*, 337-38) for a good explanation of the typological connections Paul employs from Zech 8. Thielman (*Ephesians*, 312) suggests Paul was aware of the theological implications of his use of Zech 8 but did not require his readers to detect the allusion in order to understand the sense of v. 25.

[126]Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 616) mentions that the first instruction in Zechariah and Eph 4:25-32 has to do with speaking truth, but he makes nothing of it.

[127]Contra Arnold (*Ephesians*, 300) and Best (*Ephesians*, 445), then, what is forbidden (τὸ ψεῦδος) in v. 25 is not merely lying to one another but acting falsely towards one another (similarly Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 210).

[128]BDAG, 43. Gentry and Wellum (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 571-72) rightly note that since verbs ending in -ευω mean "to act in a certain capacity or role" (citing MHT 2:398-400), then ἀληθεύω must mean "to act truthfully."

includes truthful attitudes and actions toward another person.[129] The phrase ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπη describes the primary means by which believers build up one another. Ephesians 4:11-16 comprises one long sentence, where Christ gives leaders to the church in order to equip believers for the ministry of edification (vv. 11-12). The goal of this is the unity of believers in their faith and knowledge (v. 13), which is described as a process of maturation, in which believers cease to be infants in the faith and grow up to Christ (vv. 14-16). The only way this growth will occur is if each individual in the community acts truthfully in love toward one another. There are three adverbial participles of means in 4:14-15: κλυδωνιζόμενοι, περιφερόμενοι, and ἀληθεύοντες. The first two explain how believers are infants, whereas ἀληθεύοντες in contrast (δέ) describes how believers grow into maturity in Christ. Thus, Paul highlights truthfulness as the means for growth in Christ. As they were for Zechariah, truthful attitudes and actions were crucial for the Paul's community.[130]

Similarly, in 6:14 Paul uses imagery from Isaiah to show how believers can be strong in the Lord. In verse 14 Paul, following Isaiah 11:5 (cf. Isa 59:17), uses ἀλήθεια with δικαιοσύνη to describe living in right ways in the community. In Isaiah 11:5 the Spirit-anointed Davidic king girds himself with truth (אֱמוּנָה, ἀλήθεια) and righteousness, which means he will reign justly (vv. 3-4).[131] Isaiah's priority of truthfulness, exemplified by the king in the new creation (vv. 5-9), is precisely what is found in Zechariah 8 and Ephesians 4. Like Isaiah's figure, the Ephesian believers were to act truthfully. And

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[129]On 4:25 Barth (*Ephesians*, 512) says: "The command to 'speak the truth' includes and expresses the responsibility to be a witness to revelation, to follow Christ who gave his life for saving sinners, to show unselfish love, and to build up the fellow man to his best."

[130]The link between 4:15 and 4:25 is heightened because both refer to the church as the body of Christ (Thielman, *Ephesians*, 313).

[131]See Thomas L. Leclerc (*Yahweh Is Exalted in Justice: Solidarity and Conflict in Isaiah* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001]) for an analysis of justice and righteousness in Isaiah (cf. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 580-81).

similar to Ephesians 4:15, 6:14 describes acting truthfully as the means by which believers stand firm in the Lord.[132] It appears, then, that Paul's emphasis on truthfulness, especially in the second half of Ephesians, matches that of Zechariah.

These strands of evidence combine to indicate that Paul appropriated Zechariah's meaning in Ephesians 4:25. Just as the call for truthful behavior in Zechariah 8:16 aptly summarized the ethics of the new covenant, so Paul's exhortation to speak truth to one another is at the heart of Christ's new covenant instruction. Zechariah's promise of God dwelling once more with his people (8:3, 8) had come to fruition in Christ, for the people were the temple of the Lord (Eph 2:21-22). As members of the new covenant community, the Ephesians were called to the same covenant ethic that Zechariah urged, yet the difference between the old covenant community and the new was that the Ephesians' once hard hearts had been removed and they had been given hearts to obey. Accordingly, Paul urges them to fulfill the new covenant ethic of truthfulness.

Exegesis of Ephesians 4:26-32

Since it has been demonstrated that 4:25-32 is to be understood as the covenant instruction of Christ, what are Christ's specific stipulations? First, Paul exhorts the believers to be angry and not to sin (4:26-27). The language of 4:26a exactly matches that of Psalm 4:5 (Eng. 4:4), but it is difficult to ascertain to what extent and in what manner Paul was using the psalm's meaning.[133] In Psalm 4 David the king calls those high in

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[132]As in 4:15, the participles περιζωσάμενοι and ἐνδυσάμενοι indicate the means by which believers stand (στῆτε). Again, this is not "works righteousness," for believers stand and are strong "in the Lord." The Isaianic background helps at this point, for it shows that only when believers are united to Christ—the king who reigns justly (cf. Eph 5:5)—are they empowered to live like him. The call to put on the armor of God is similar, then, to the call to put on the new man in 4:24, for both the armor of God and new creation life are found in Christ alone.

[133]Best (*Ephesians*, 448-49) thinks v. 26 flows from Jewish ethical tradition linking lying with anger and that the context of Ps 4 was not in view. Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 620) considers the possibility that

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society stop trusting in their idols for a good harvest and to start trusting in the Lord. The idolatry of these men is expressed in 4:3 (Eng. 4:2) as their love for what is vain (LXX ματαιότης) and false (LXX ψεῦδος), words linked to the Ephesians' old way of life (Eph 4:17, 25). In response, David reminds them in 4:4 (Eng. 4:3) that God works for the good and answers the call of "the godly one" (חָסִיד, ὁ ὅσιος)—the covenant member—which also recalls the Ephesians' new way of life (ὁσιότης, Eph 4:24). David goes on by commanding them to tremble (רָגַז, ὀργίζω) and not to sin, which provides the substance of Paul's command in Ephesians 4:26a. The verb רָגַז that the LXX translates with ὀργίζω ("be angry") can mean to tremble with awe or fear (Exod 15:14; Hab 3:16), with joy (Jer 33:9), or with sadness (2 Sam 19:1). The related noun רֹגֶז describes God's anger in Habakkuk 3:2, which indicates that if Psalm 4 describes a trembling with anger, as the LXX intimates, it is not necessarily sinful anger. If this is correct, then perhaps David would be calling the idolaters to be angry for their sin of idolatry and to stop participating in it. Instead, they should meditate long and hard on who is worthy of their trust and choose to trust in the Lord (4:5b-6 [Eng. 4:4b-5]). If this interpretation is correct, then it may explain Paul's meaning quite well, for Paul also would be urging the Ephesians to be angry for their sin of idolatry and repentant of it. They should decide not to participate in it again but choose to be faithful to the Lord.

The difficulty with this interpretation of Ephesians 4:26a is that it does not fit well with 4:26b-27, in which Paul clarifies with two negative imperatives that believers should not hold onto their anger for long or the devil will have an opportunity to snare them in sin.[134] This proverbial wisdom suggests that the emphasis in 4:26-27 is on

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Ps 4:5 (Eng. 4:4) had become proverbial.

[134]Sunset was seen as the end of the day, so v. 26b means one must deal with anger by the end of the day (Barth, *Ephesians*, 513-14; Best, *Ephesians*, 450). The term διάβολος is not a mere metaphor for evil (Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 207-08) nor a human enemy but Satan, who is the evil ruler of the air in 2:2 (cf. 6:11-12; Barth, *Ephesians*, 514-15). The parallel "Give a place (τόπος) to wrath" (Rom 12:19) shows that τόπος is metaphorical and indicates an "opportunity" for the devil, not a "place" in believers for

ensuring that one does not sin when anger arises but finds a quick resolution to it (cf. Deut 21:23; 24:13, 15).[135] Paul can hardly be saying in his use of Psalm 4 that believers should only be angry for their sin of idolatry for a short while.[136] A better explanation of 4:26a is that Paul wanted to prevent the Ephesians from sinful anger and to ground his exhortation in the language of Scripture. Since the emphasis in 4:25-32 is on covenant ethics, Psalm 4 provided an especially fruitful text to this purpose, since it is an exhortation to covenant faithfulness against the backdrop of idolatry, something Paul was eager to address. Therefore, even though it is difficult to decipher precisely how Paul is utilizing Psalm 4, at the very least the fact that Ephesians 4:26a derives from Psalm 4 shows that Paul's exhortation is couched in terms of covenant ethics and faithfulness to the Lord in all situations. Whereas in Psalm 4 David addressed those tempted to sacrifice to Baal for rain, in Ephesians 4:26-27 Paul addressed those who may have been tempted to give rise to sinful expressions of anger. Just like David urged his hearers to trust in the Lord for his provision of rain, so Paul urged the Ephesians to put their trust in the Lord when anger arises by dealing with it quickly and not allowing it to fester.

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him to dwell (contra Arnold, *Ephesians*, 302-03).

[135]Thielman, *Ephesians*, 313-14. Since the subsequent three imperatives show the emphasis is not on the initial imperative (rightly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 105; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 313), the sense of ὀργίζεσθε is permissive or conditional ("when/if you are angry"; Barth, *Ephesians*, 513; Best, *Ephesians*, 449; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 301; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 168; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 207; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 313; Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 299). Although there may be a hint that Christian anger may be valid in some situations, v. 26 should not be read as a command to be angry (contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 140; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 301-02; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 620; Salmond, *Ephesians*, 345-46; Daniel B. Wallace, "Ὀργίζεσθε in Ephesians 4:26: Command or Condition?" *Criswell Theological Review* 3 [1989]: 353-72). Despite the parallel in Pol. *Phil.* 12.1, Wallace ("Ὀργίζεσθε in Ephesians 4:26," 372) demands too much of the text by suggesting Paul is commanding "a righteous indignation which culminates in church discipline." Schnackenburg (*Ephesians*, 206) rightly says the similarities between 4:25-32 with Col 3:8ff. suggest the exhortations form a part of general Christian paraenesis and thus do not shed light on a particular problem at Ephesus (so O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 336; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 247-48). Of vv. 17-24 but still applicable to vv. 25-32, Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 275) rightly says, "It is somewhat hazardous, therefore, to use the more general part of what is already a fairly general letter . . . to draw very specific conclusions about the situation of the addressees."

[136]Similarly, Arnold (*Ephesians*, 301) suggests the anger perhaps is (righteously) directed towards any idolatrous compromises of others in the believing community.

In 4:28 Paul urges the believers no longer to steal but to work so that they can share with those in need.[137] This command, which as noted earlier is similar to the covenant instruction at Sinai, is rooted in the notion that believers, who do not live alone but are members of a believing community, should work for the benefit (τὸ ἀγαθόν) of others in the community and should preserve their rights to personal property.[138] Believers were to be neither idle (2 Thess 3:6-12) nor too arrogant to work hard "with their own hands," which as a probable reference to manual labor may have been perceived as base and menial (1 Cor 4:12; 1 Thess 4:11).[139] Rather than the object of hard work being the accumulation of one's own possessions, they were to work hard and accumulate possessions in order to (ἵνα) be able to give generously of their possessions to those in need (Rom 12:13; Gal 6:9-10; Titus 3:14).[140] This radical reorientation of the value of personal possessions—the Ephesians were characterized by "greed" (πλεονεξία) in 4:19 (cf. 5:3, 5)—demonstrates that the Ephesian believers were part of the new

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[137]The imperfective aspect of the participle κλέπτων need not indicate time prior to the main verb ("he who used to steal"; contra Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 142; Hodge, *Ephesians*, 271-72) or that believers were still stealing (contra Morris, *Expository Reflections*, 145; Moule, *Ephesians*, 123). Rather, the article substantivizes the participle so that the action is nominalized ("thief"; rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 303-04; Best, *Ephesians*, 453; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 624; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 303; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 342). Contra Best (*Ephesians*, 454), v. 28 has implications for all the members of the community, not merely those who were thieves. Muddiman's suggestion (*Ephesians*, 226-28) that vv. 26-28 derive from Paul's relationship with Philemon and Onesimus is too speculative.

[138]Similarly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 626; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 343. "The good," then, is more than mere honest gain (contra Moule, *Ephesians*, 123).

[139]The phrase ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν has a variety of readings in the manuscripts, both in the sequence of the words and in the possible omission of ἰδίαις (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 537-38). Probably the sequence in which τὸ ἀγαθόν concludes the phrase is correct, for a scribe would more naturally place the direct object immediately following the participle ἐργαζόμενος. Further, ἰδίαις may be a harmonization to 1 Cor 4:12 (cf. 1 Thess 4:11) or it may have been omitted due to parablepsis (ΤΑΙΣΙΔΙΑΙΣΧΕΡΣΙΝ); both readings have early evidence. Although a decision is difficult, the former is slightly more likely because of 1 Cor 4:12 and it is difficult to override the early evidence as found in 𝔓⁴⁶, 𝔓⁴⁹, and B. Hence, ἰδίαις should be omitted (contra Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 538).

[140]Although Paul urged caring for the poor in general (Gal 6:10), the needy in 4:28 is not Paul himself (contra Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 228) but other believers since the other commands have the covenant community in mind (contra Barth, *Ephesians*, 518).

creation order, in which the "former things" of self-aggrandizement and self-promotion were being transformed into love and loyalty to Christ and others.

The priority of caring for the poor in the covenant community also is to be seen as covenant instruction, for such was a significant element of the old covenant. In Deuteronomy 15:7-11, Moses called on those in the community to share willingly and not grudgingly with any "brother" who happens to become poor and not to use the sabbatical year as an excuse to withhold from them. Nevertheless, this ideal did not obtain within the old covenant community, for not only did Israel consistently fail to care for the poor, but they even used the laws of the land to justify robbing them.[141] In the new covenant the command to care for the poor within the church continues to be a priority, for it is rooted in Jesus' teaching (Luke 12:33-34; 14:13-14; Acts 20:33-35) and is a tangible way to love God and one another (1 John 3:17). But unlike those under the old covenant, those under the new covenant fulfill this covenant ethic, as evidenced within the early church (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; *Did*. 4.5-8) and Paul's own ministry (Rom 15:25-28; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8:1-9:15).

In 4:29 Paul urges the believers not to harm one another with their words but to build one another up in God's grace. The adjective σαπρός means "rotten" or "putrid" and can describe fish (Matt 13:48), trees (Matt 7:17; 12:33; Luke 6:43), and fruit (Matt 12:33; Luke 6:43). Used metaphorically as in 4:29, it can mean "bad" or "unwholesome."[142] Since it is opposite what is "good" (ἀγαθός) and what is meant for "building up" (οἰκοδομή), Paul is prohibiting speech that is specifically harmful to a fellow believer's growth in Christ. The kind of words Paul has in mind should not be limited to sexually crude speech, which Paul addresses in 5:4, but "any kind of harmful speech" (πᾶς λόγος

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[141]See Isa 3:14-15; 5:8; Amos 2:6-7; 3:10; 4:1; 5:11-12; 8:4-6; Rom 2:21.

[142]BDAG, 913.

σαπρός).

As seen in 4:28, the priority for believers should be edifying one another. Whereas the "need" (χρεία) in 4:28 was financial or material, the "need" (χρεία) in 4:29 concerns growth in grace,[143] for the motivation to speak edifying words is to give grace to one another.[144] The phrase "to give grace to someone" in Greek literature often means "to do someone a favor,"[145] but χάρις is a weighty term for Paul, describing God's grace that forgives sin and empowers believers for righteousness. Elsewhere in Ephesians χάρις appears eleven times, all referring to God's rich grace that characterizes his blessings (1:6-7), saves sinners (2:5, 7-8), commissions Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles (3:2, 7-8), and equips saints with spiritual gifts (4:7). The significance of grace is shown in that Paul begins and ends the letter with a prayer wish for God's grace to be with all believers (1:2; 6:24). Hence, in 4:29 χάρις likely does not describe the favors or benefits believers confer on one another but God's grace needed to function appropriately within the body of Christ (cf. 4:7-16).[146] Nevertheless, what is stunning in 4:29 is that God's grace is mediated through the speech of believers.[147] In other words, believers are the conduits of God's grace to one another when they speak words that build one another up. Not only are believers in need of God's grace, but they are also in need of one another to channel

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[143]A few manuscripts read πίστεως instead of χρείας, probably because it was felt unnatural to "build up" someone's need (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 538). Probably χρείας is an objective genitive ("build up what is needed"; Abbott, *Ephesians*, 143; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 305; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 630; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 317), not a genitive of quality ("build up as the need arises"; Barth, *Ephesians*, 519; Best, *Ephesians*, 456; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 108; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 306) or attributive genitive ("necessary edification"; Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 228).

[144]Barth (*Ephesians*, 519) and Best (*Ephesians*, 457) rightly clarify that all kinds of speech are in view, not merely public preaching. Witty speech is not in view (contra Findlay) but all kinds of speech that edify believers (rightly Fowl, *Ephesians*, 155).

[145]LSJ, s.v. "χάρις."

[146]Best, *Ephesians*, 457; MacDonald, *Ephesians*, 308; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 317. Contra Hodge, *Ephesians*, 273; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 306.

[147]Rightly Westcott, *Ephesians*, 74.

God's grace to one another. Again, there is no hint that believers can function appropriately within the body of Christ apart from other believers in the church. As members of the new community of Christ, believers are intimately linked under the headship of Christ (4:15-16) and need one another to "speak the truth" for growth in grace.

The brief command in 4:30 not to grieve the Holy Spirit provides another motivation for avoiding harmful speech.[148] Verses 29-30 are linked by καί, which closely correlates the commands (cf. 4:26).[149] The closest OT text to Paul's concept of grieving the Holy Spirit is Isaiah 63:10, which states that Israel "rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit," a likely reference to the sin of the wilderness generation (cf. *T. Isaac* 4.40). Since Paul uses a different verb (λυπέω) than the LXX (παροξύνω), he either translated directly from the Hebrew or paraphrased the text.[150] In any case, it appears he had Isaiah 63 in mind, which mentions the Spirit's relationship to Israel several times (63:10-11, 14).[151] In order to understand Paul's command, though, one must observe that Isaiah 63:7-14, like numerous OT texts (e.g., Pss 78; 105; 106; Acts 7:2-53), is itself recounting and interpreting the history of God's dealings with the wilderness generation.[152] God had brought Israel out of Egypt and yet Israel had rebelled against him often in their forty years of wandering. They rebelled by questioning God's commitment and ability to bring

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[148]Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 109; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 73-74. Barth (*Ephesians*, 548-49) argues that v. 30 is a motivation for all the specific instructions of vv. 25-32 (similarly Fowl, *Ephesians*, 158).

[149]For a close link between sins of speech and the Spirit, see 5:18-19; 1 Thess 5:18-19; CD 5.11-12.

[150]Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 306) notes 4:30 is closer to the MT (עצב) than the LXX. Best (*Ephesians*, 457) does not think it likely the author of Ephesians knew or used the MT anywhere in Ephesians.

[151]Contra Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 109. Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 632) recognizes that Eph 4:30 is "similar" to Isa 63:10.

[152]See especially the good discussion of Paul's use of Isa 63:10 in O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 346-48.

them safely through the wilderness and give them the good life in the land he had promised them. In fact, the history of Israel's experience in the wilderness could be summarized as a history of them questioning and rebelling against God.[153] Indeed, even Moses rebelled against God's word, resulting in his death outside the promised land (Num 20:10-13; Deut 32:51). What is significant for interpreting Ephesians 4:30 is to observe that the OT regularly interprets the rebellion in the wilderness as a failure to recognize and trust in God's holy character. In other words, when Israel called into question God's commitment and ability to care for them in the wilderness, they were calling into question his holiness.[154] This is especially clear in Numbers 20:2-13, where at the waters of Meribah Moses disobeyed God's word and struck the rock twice. God interprets Moses' sin in terms of God's holiness: "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy (לְהַקְדִּישֵׁנִי) in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them" (20:12, ESV; cf. 20:13; 27:14; Deut 32:51). Similarly, in Asaph's history of the wilderness generation in Psalm 78, he interprets their sin as a failure to recognize God's holiness: "How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert! They tested God again and again and provoked the Holy One of Israel" (ESV). Finally, as already noted, in Isaiah 63:10 the wilderness generation grieved "his Holy Spirit" (רוּחַ קָדְשׁוֹ; cf. Ps 106:33).

Hence, if Paul's command in 4:30 is against the backdrop of Israel's failure in the wilderness—as the link with Isaiah 63 suggests—then Paul is urging the Ephesians not to grieve God's Spirit by calling into question his holiness but to remain faithful to

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[153]See Exod 15:24; 16:1-12; 17:1-7; Num 11:1-15; 14:1-45; 16:1-50; 20:2-13.

[154]For a helpful volume unpacking the definition of holiness in terms of devotion or consecration, see Claude-Bernard Costecalde, *Aux origines du sacré biblique* (Paris: Letouzey and Ané, 1986); cf. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 324-25.

the Lord.[155] They were not to grumble and rebel against the Lord lest they perish like those of the wilderness generation or like Ananias and Sapphira in the early church (Acts 5:1-11). The reason they should not doubt God's goodness or power is because with his Spirit he had already sealed the believers for the day of redemption, language recalling his earlier description of the Ephesians' conversion experience (1:13-14).[156] By sealing them God had promised that they were his people and would bring them safely into his heavenly kingdom. Hence, the Ephesians should take him at his word and not return to their idolatrous ways (4:17-19) or look to other gods such as Artemis for security and protection. Even more specifically, given the close connection with the command concerning speech in 4:29, one way to grieve God's Spirit would be by speaking harmful words to one another about God's holy character, i.e., his ability to do what he promises. Like Israel's grumbling in the wilderness, such words sowing seeds of doubt would tear down a person's faith instead of building it up and would grieve the Spirit. Rather, believers should strive to build one another up with words that encourage one another to remain faithful to the Lord.[157]

The implication of Paul's appropriation of the wilderness narrative for the Ephesians is that the Ephesian believers are seen as God's covenant community analogous to Israel.[158] Just as Israel was called within the old covenant to remain faithful

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[155]Hence, τὸ ἅγιον in 4:30 is not just a proper name for God's Spirit but a description of the Spirit's character (rightly Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 144; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 307). The Spirit is seen as a person here (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 632; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 171; cautiously Best, *Ephesians*, 458).

[156]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 307.

[157]While v. 30, then, is a warning against falling away, this says nothing of the possibility of apostasy for true believers; rather, the sealing of the Spirit signifies God's eternal preservation of his own (rightly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 306-07; E. F. Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, MNTC [New York: Harper, 1930], 224; contra Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 300-02). For a good discussion of how the warning passages in the NT function, see Thomas R. Schreiner and Ardel B. Caneday, *The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001).

[158]Rightly O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 348; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 318.

to the Lord by trusting him for his provision, so the Ephesians as God's new covenant community were to remain faithful in the Lord by refusing to call into question God's holy character. The difference between Israel and the Ephesians, though, is stark: whereas—in the words of Stephen—Israel "resisted the Holy Spirit" because they were "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in their hearts and ears" (Acts 7:51), the Ephesians had received the life-giving Spirit at conversion and thus no longer had hard hearts (Eph 1:13; 4:19).[159] Having been sealed with the Spirit, they were now freed from sin's power and freed for faithfulness. Remarkably, in the midst of Israel's grumbling in the wilderness (Num 11:1-30), Moses had wished for a day when all God's people might have the Spirit (Num 11:29). Perhaps he was merely expressing a desire for assistance in leading the people, but in the context of Numbers 11 the implication is that if all God's people had the Spirit, they would know the Lord intimately and not grumble anymore but remain faithful to him.[160] Moses' wish was granted at Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out on all God's people (Acts 2:16-21; cf. Isa 59:21; Joel 2:28-29), including the first Ephesian believers (Acts 19:1-7). Hence, in Ephesians 4:30 Paul combines the ethic of the old covenant—defined as faithfulness to the Lord—with the framework of the new.[161]

In 4:31-32 Paul urges the Ephesians to be kind and compassionate towards one another instead of destroying one another with various forms of anger.[162] The five negative nouns in verse 31 (πικρία, θυμός, ὀργή, κραυγή, βλασφημία) are bordering on

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[159]Abbott (*Ephesians*, 144) rightly notes the Spirit's indwelling presence is implied in 4:30.

[160]Rightly R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, NAC, vol. 3b (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000), 195-96. The presence of the new covenant does not mean Paul no longer exhorts and admonishes believers. But it gives him confidence that his warnings will be largely heeded.

[161]Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 307) rightly notes that although the future is in view in v. 30 ("day of redemption"), the emphasis is on believers' present possession of the Spirit.

[162]Barth (*Ephesians*, 522) sums up vv. 31-32 with the phrase, "Live as people who are forgiven!" That anger is being addressed is supported by the central place of ὀργή in the list (so Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 210).

synonymous and are all ways of describing a mean-spirited disposition towards others.[163] The sequence of the nouns does not suggest a sequence in expressions of anger but is a typical Pauline vice list that describes many manifestations of wickedness.[164] The anarthrous construction with πᾶς at the beginning, which governs the whole five-member compound subject, as well as at the end (σὺν πάσῃ κακίᾳ), suggests that in 4:31 Paul wants to give a kaleidoscopic description of strife and enmity within the church.[165] Whether it is expressed through bitterness of heart (Col 3:19; Heb 12:15), anger (2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20), screaming (κραυγή), or slander (βλασφημία; Titus 3:2), such an attack on others in the community is self-seeking and only serves to destroy one another. The opposite of love and generosity of spirit, this attitude within the church does not evidence trust in the Lord, for it seeks to take matters into its own hands instead of allowing God to exact vengeance at the right time (Rom 12:19).

In its place, Paul urges kindness and compassion toward one another in 4:32.[166] The term χρηστός ("kind") is a common term in the LXX—especially the Psalms—to describe God's character,[167] and is especially descriptive of his covenant faithfulness (חֶסֶד).[168] In Jeremiah 33:11 (LXX 40:11), for instance, the restoration of God's people is

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[163]Best (*Ephesians*, 460) notes the possible influence of Stoicism on Paul's choice of vices in v. 31.

[164]Rightly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 319. Contra Arnold, *Ephesians*, 307; Barth, *Ephesians*, 521; Best, *Ephesians*, 461; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 211; Westcott, *Ephesians*, 74. The pairing of θυμός with ὀργή occurs twice elsewhere in Paul's writings in a reverse order (Rom 2:8; Col 3:8), which suggests Paul is not emphasizing a particular sequence of expressions of anger.

[165]Similarly Barth, *Ephesians*, 522-23; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 633-34, 637; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 350.

[166]A few early manuscipts omit δέ in v. 32, but the external evidence and the parallels in 4:28-29 suggest its inclusion. Schnackenburg (*Ephesians*, 211) presses too hard in seeing a sequential intensification of virtues in v. 32.

[167]See Pss 25:8 (LXX 24:8); 34:9 (LXX 33:9; Eng. 34:8); 145:9 (LXX 144:9); Nah 1:7; 2 Macc 1:24; *Pss. Sol.* 10:2.

[168]See Pss 100:5 (LXX 99:5); 106:1 (LXX 105:1); 107:1 (LXX 106:1); 136:1 (LXX 135:1).

seen as a function of God's kindness (χρηστός) and his steadfast love (*Pss. Sol.* 5:2, 12; 10:7). In Psalm 86:5 (LXX 85:5) God is described in a way similar to his self-revelation in Exodus 34:6-7 as Israel's covenant-keeping God, which is echoed later in the psalm (v. 15; cf. Wis. 15:1; *Pss. Sol.* 2:36). In *Psalms of Solomon* 5, a meditation on God's χρηστότης, God's kindness is compared to that of man's. On the one hand, man rarely bestows kindness, and it is shocking if he shows kindness more than once without grumbling (v. 13). On the other hand, God never lacks in showing kindness, which, along with his steadfast love, is spread over the whole earth (vv. 14-15). Thus, Paul's encouragement to the Ephesians to be "kind" is a command to imitate their covenant-keeping God. Just as God showed and will show the riches of his kindness to the Ephesians (Eph 2:7; cf. Titus 3:4), they should imitate him by being generous-hearted toward one another (2 Cor 6:6; Gal 5:22; Col 3:12).

Further, they should be compassionate toward one another. The term εὔσπλαγχνος—indeed, the σπλαγχνίζομαι word group as a whole—is infrequent in the LXX but occurs throughout the NT, often referring to one's genuine affection and compassion for someone. Like χρηστός, it is used of God's compassion and steadfast love for his people (Luke 1:78), but mainly it describes Jesus' compassion for others, which results in some kind of miracle. For instance, when Jesus had compassion on the crowds, he healed them (Matt 14:14), fed them (Matt 15:32; Mark 8:2), and taught them (Mark 6:34). When he had compassion on two blind men and a leper, he healed them (Matt 20:34; Mark 1:41), and when confronted with a widow about to bury her only son, he had compassion on her and raised her son from the dead (Luke 7:13). In all these examples Jesus is seen as the quintessential figure with compassion. Further, in three of Jesus' parables compassion plays a large role: in Matthew 18:27, the master, representing God, had compassion on the servant debtor and forgave him his debt; in Luke 10:33 the good Samaritan had compassion on the man robbed and beaten, and ensured that the man

would be nursed back to health, thus loving his neighbor as himself; and in Luke 15:20, the father of the prodigal son, who also represents God, had compassion on his repentant son, and accepted and forgave him for his folly. Hence, as with the term χρηστός, Paul's call for believers to be compassionate essentially is a call to imitate God in Christ, which never is defined as a mere feeling of affection for others but always results in tender care and acts of kindness toward one another.[169]

Finally, believers should forgive one another.[170] Although χαρίζομαι can mean "give" or "bestow on" someone, Paul uses it here to describe forgiveness.[171] The motivation (καθώς) for forgiveness is that God has forgiven believers for their sins on account of the cross of Christ (v. 32).[172] As noted in chapter 2, the promise of forgiveness of sins was foundational to the new covenant (Isa 55:7; Jer 31:34), and through his sacrificial death Christ paid the penalty for sins such that those who are united to Christ by faith are fully forgiven for their sins and are justified before God (1:7; 2:13; cf. Rom 8:32; Col 2:13). Such full forgiveness was evidence that the new covenant had arrived in Christ, yet as 4:32 shows, this did not give believers license to sin but freed them to forgive their offenders instead of exacting retribution (Rom 6:1ff.; 2 Cor 2:5-11). Hence, in 4:32 Paul is calling the Ephesians to imitate God: just as God shows covenant-keeping

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[169]See 2 Cor 6:12; 7:15; Phil 2:1; Col 3:12; 1 John 3:17. Thielman (*Ephesians*, 319-20) rightly notes, "By the vocabulary he chose at the beginning of this admonition, then, Paul already hinted that he wanted his audience to imitate the character of the God whose graciousness to sinners he has described in 2:1-10."

[170]There is probably no difference between the pronouns ἀλλήλους and ἑαυτοῖς in v. 32 (Barth, *Ephesians*, 524; Best, *Ephesians*, 463; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 309).

[171]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 309 (cf. 2 Cor 2:7, 10; 12:13; Col 2:13; 3:13). Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 640) translates it "being gracious to one another" because graciousness is a more fitting anithesis to the anger of v. 31 (similarly Witherington, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 302). But the term χαρίζομαι typically means forgiveness in Paul's literature (2 Cor 2:7, 10; 12:13; Col 2:13; 3:13), and this meaning fits well in v. 32 (rightly Calvin, *Ephesians*, 195).

[172]Hence, καθώς is the norm and the ground of the believer's forgiveness of others (Best, *Ephesians*, 464; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 310).

kindness (χρηστός), is compassionate (εὔσπλαγχνος), and forgives (χαρίζομαι) his enemies, so the Ephesians are to lay aside their designs on anger, resentment, revenge and hostility toward one another, and are to imitate God in forgiving as they have been forgiven. In the new covenant community, such acts of love fulfill the ethic of the covenant instruction of Christ.

Conclusion

The specific instructions of 4:25-32 unfold the ethical stipulations of the new covenant. Rooted in the presence of the new creation and new covenant as expressed in 4:20-24, the instructions of 4:25-32 come to believers as new covenant teaching from Christ. The covenantal nature of these commands is suggested by the similarity of Paul's commands to the "Ten Words" of the Sinai covenant (Eph 4:17-5:14; 6:2-3). Further, the command to "speak truth" to one's neighbor derives from the new covenant instruction of Zechariah 8:16, which summarizes the way believers should live in the new community. The importance of acting truthfully was demonstrated not only in that 4:25 programmatically begins its pericope but also because Paul emphasizes it elsewhere in the second half of Ephesians (4:15, 21-24; 6:14). Finally, an exegetical survey of 4:26-32 confirmed the covenantal nature of the pericope, as Paul repeatedly urged the Ephesians to care for one another and remain faithful to the Lord. They were to deal with sin quickly (vv. 26-27), provide for one another's material needs (v. 28), speak words that bestow grace instead of doubt to edify believers and not grieve God's Spirit (vv. 29-30), and imitate their covenant-keeping God by being generous-hearted and forgiving toward one another (vv. 31-32). These specific instructions in 4:25-32 were not wholly dissimilar to the ethical demands of the old covenant but fulfilled their intent. However, unlike the old covenant community with uncircumcised hearts, the Ephesians were members of the new creation order and new covenant community, empowered by God's Spirit to fulfill the law of Christ.

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Summary: Imitate God and Walk in Love (5:1-2)

The general and specific instructions in 4:17-32 are summarized in 5:1-2, which calls for believers to imitate their heavenly Father and love one another.[173] While verses 1-2 continue the sequence of imperatives begun in 4:25, the conjunction οὖν summarizes and draws to a conclusion 4:17-32 as it transitions into the next section of specific instructions (5:3-14).[174] The point of the varied instructions of 4:25-32 is to imitate God and walk in love.

In Greek literature the concept of imitating God was common, especially in the Platonic tradition, whereas the phrase "imitators of God" occurs nowhere else in the Bible.[175] Perhaps the phrase μιμηταί τοῦ θεοῦ would have initially suggested Platonic notions to the Ephesians,[176] but more likely Paul coopted Greek philosophical terminology and used it in service of his teaching on the image of God.[177] Paul already has magnified the new creation within the letter, with the people of God as "one new man" created in Christ (2:15). In 4:24 the image of God is explicit, for the image has

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[173]Similarly Best, *Ephesians*, 471; Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 146.

[174]See Runge (*Discourse Grammar*, 43-48) for an analysis of the discourse function for οὖν. Probably 5:1-2 looks back to 4:17-32 or 4:25-32, not merely 4:32 (rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 643-44; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 352; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 293, 320; contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 146; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 111; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 310; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 212). Thielman (*Ephesians*, 321) summarizes it well: "In a way similar to the movement from 2:1-3 to 2:10, Paul has taken his audience from the futility, darkness, estrangement, ignorance, hard-heartedness, and despair of Gentile life apart from Christ (4:17-19) to a life of kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and love in Christ (4:32-5:2)."

[175]Believers are imitators of God in Ign. *Trall*. 1.2 (cf. Ign. *Rom*. 6.3), and Christ imitates his Father in Ign. *Phld*. 7.2. Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 310-11; cf. O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 353) provides citations for imitating God in Hellenistic Jewish writings (*T. Ash*. 4.3; *T. Benj*. 3.1; 4.1; Philo, *Sacr*. 68; *Spec*. 4.73, 187-88) as well as Greco-Roman literature (Sen., *Epp*. 6.5, 6; 11.9, 10; 95.72; Pliny, *Ep*. 8.13). The evidence from Hellenistic Judaism leads Arnold (*Ephesians*, 310) to conclude, "A first-century Jew could use the language of imitation to describe the concept of following the ways of God in the OT." See the discussion of the variegated Greek understanding of imitation in Barth, *Ephesians*, 589-91.

[176]For a good discussion concerning the use of imitation in Plato and Plato's influence on Philo, see W. Michaelis, "μιμέομαι, μιμητής, συμμιμητής," in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel; trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:661-66.

[177]Rightly Thielman, *Ephesians*, 323-24. Schnackenburg (*Ephesians*, 212-13) restricts the background of imitating God too much by suggesting it derives only from early Christian proclamation.

been restored in believers, who live in right ways toward God and others (cf. Col 3:10).

Even in 5:1 the image of God is in view on account of believers as "beloved children"

(τέκνα ἀγαπητά), for to be a child of God is to be in his image. Since Adam was created

in God's likeness and image because he was God's son (Gen 5:1-3; Luke 3:38), so also

every believer has had the image of God restored in him because he is God's child. As

God's children (John 1:12-13; 1 John 5:1), believers have been recreated in Christ, the

last Adam in God's image (Col 1:15), and thus are remade in God's image. Even in 5:1,

then, Paul reminds the Ephesians that their relationship to God as children means they are

in his image, and thus they should act like their Father precisely because they are *his*

children (cf. Matt 5:48; Luke 6:35-36).[178]

In light of this, it is not surprising that even though the term μιμητής does not

occur in the OT, Israel was to imitate God precisely because Israel was God's son (Exod

4:22) and the seed of Abraham in whom God would restore his image throughout the

world. Thus, as a function of their covenant relationship with their God as God's son,

Israel is called to "be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44; cf. 11:45; 19:2; 20:26).[179] The

same covenant relationship of sonship Paul had already confirmed the Ephesians

possessed, since they had been adopted into God's family in Jesus, the beloved son (Eph

1:5-6). They had received the merciful love of God (2:4), climactically shown in the

sacrificial death of Christ on their behalf (3:17, 29; 5:2, 25). Now in 5:1 he reaffirms their

status as beloved children and reminds them to imitate their Father, in whose image they

had been recreated.

Imitating God means believers "walk in love" (περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ) as Christ

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[178]For a good discussion of the image of God as indicating sonship, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 191-202. Arnold (*Ephesians*, 310) rightly detects that the new relationship between God and his children is a sign of the presence of the new covenant.

[179]Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 252.

did (5:2).[180] The notion of love is a theme throughout the letter and occurs in prominent places. It is near the beginning of the opening benediction (1:4) and thanksgiving section (1:15),[181] locates the reason for the Ephesians' salvation in the love of God (2:4), summarizes the way believers should live toward one another (4:15-16; 5:2)—particularly husbands toward their wives (5:25-33)—and concludes the letter with a redefinition of the covenant community around those who love Christ (6:24).[182] The prominence of love is not surprising, since it summarizes the obligations of the new covenant. In the old covenant love for God and others were the two greatest commandments (Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5). Gentry and Wellum show that Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is at the center of Deuteronomy:

> When the book of Deuteronomy is considered from the perspective of the form of the suzerain-vassal treaty, the command in 6:5 ("you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your strength") is placed *immediately after* the Preamble and Historical Prologue in the section providing the General Stipulations of the covenant. Within this section, it is, in fact, the *first* command given after material *repeated* from Exodus 19-24 and it is also the *greatest* command among all the covenant stipulations: to be completely devoted and loyal to Yahweh. This command is the foundation to all the requirements and stipulations of the covenant. In the section Deuteronomy 4:45-11:32, Moses is concerned to expound *this one requirement* as fully as possible.[183]

Given Deuteronomy's prominence within the OT as the climax of the Pentateuch and restatement of the Sinai covenant, as well as the fact that Deuteronomy is for the basis for Israel's history and the prophets' calls for repentance, one may say that in a sense

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[180]Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 112. Hodge (*Ephesians*, 277) puts it well: "We should be like Christ, which is being like God, for Christ is God." Contra Barth (*Ephesians*, 557), καθώς by itself typically does not introduce a quote in Paul's literature or in 5:2.

[181]While external evidence suggests the omission of the words τὴν ἀγάπην in 1:15, internal evidence is weightier, supporting its inclusion due to parablepsis (τήν . . . τήν; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 533).

[182]Heil (*Ephesians*, 208) recognizes well the prominence of love throughout Ephesians.

[183]Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 365 (emphasis original).

Deuteronomy is the center of the OT, with Deuteronomy 6:4-5 at the center of Deuteronomy. Hence, love and loyalty summarized Israel's covenant obligation, first to God and then to one another.

Jesus echoed the centrality of love for God and others as well. Not only did he affirm these as the greatest commandments in the old covenant (Matt 22:37-40), but also his own "new commandment" was the command to love one another (John 13:34; 15:12; cf. John 14:15).[184] As John notes, this command is not really new in one sense, and yet since it came afresh from Jesus, it is new (1 John 2:7-8).

Paul also viewed love as the summary of the law. In Romans 13:8-10 Paul lists some of the "Ten Words" and affirms that they are "summarized" (ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται) in the command to love one's neighbor as oneself. Indeed, "love is the fulfillment of the law" (13:10). In Galatians 5:14 he expresses the same notion to encourage the Galatians to love one another: "The whole law is fulfilled (πεπλήρωται) in one word, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Hence, both Jesus and Paul affirm the centrality of love within the old and new covenants. In Ephesians 5:2 the same priority is given to love as Paul unpacks the stipulations of Christ's covenant instruction. Just as the command to "speak truth" was a sort of summary of the specific instructions of 4:25-32, so the love command summarizes the ethic of the new covenant, as believers imitate God in expressing the covenant relationship with love and loyalty.

In putting Jesus forward as the model of love in 5:2, Paul clarifies that the love command is not merely a call for right feelings or emotions—although this is certainly included (Deut 6:5)—but is also a call for self-sacrifice for the sake of others (1 Cor 13:4-7). Jesus loved believers by giving himself for them (παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν) as a

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[184]Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 646) notes the similarity between Jesus' new commandment and Paul's command to love.

sacrifice (cf. 5:25).[185] Jesus' death on the cross is not seen at this point as a passive reception of the Jews' hatred but as a purposeful choice to hand himself over to be crucified for the sake of believers.[186] Such a sacrifice was pleasing to God, for it resulted in a "sweet smell of fragrance" (ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας), language deriving from God's pleasure in various OT sacrifices.[187] As a sacrifice that God accepts, Jesus' death stands in stark contrast to the idolatrous sacrifices in Israel that led to their exile, with which God was not pleased (Ezek 6:13; 20:28).

Similarly, believers are enjoined to love God and one another like Jesus: in a tangible and self-sacrificial manner. For the Ephesians, loving one another meant speaking the truth to one another, dealing with anger quickly, sharing with and speaking edifying words to one another, and forgiving one another. Like the parable of the Good Samaritan showed, loving one's neighbor meant caring in every way for one another to ensure one another's growth in grace. They were to look to Christ for the quintessential model for covenant love, and as they imitated him, the image of God, they would imitate God himself and fulfill the essence and goal of Christ's covenant instruction. That God would be pleased with such sacrifices of love suggests that God was fulfilling his promise through Ezekiel to remove idolatry from his people and once more accept their sacrifices as a pleasing aroma (Ezek 20:40-41; cf. Mal 3:3-4; Phil 4:18).[188]

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[185]The object complements προσφοράν and θυσίαν are not to be much distinguished and may form a hendiadys for a full description of Jesus' death as a sacrifice (Arnold, *Ephesians*, 311; Barth, *Ephesians*, 558; Best, *Ephesians*, 470; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 312). For texts where the two terms appear in parallel, see Ps 40:7 (LXX 39:7; Eng. 40:6); *Odes Sol.* 7:38; DanLXX 3:38; 4:37 (similarly Sir 34:18-19; 35:1). Hoehner (*Ephesians*, 649) rightly says the implication of 5:2 is that Jesus' death fulfills all the sacrifices in the OT.

[186]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 648.

[187]See Gen 8:21; Exod 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 3:5, 11, 16; Num 28:2, 6, 8, 13, 24, 27. Εὐωδίας is an attributive genitive ("fragrant aroma"; Best, *Ephesians*, 471). Probably τῷ θεῷ modifies θυσίαν instead of εἰς ὀσμήν given its placement in the clause (rightly Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 650; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 355; contra Best, *Ephesians*, 471; Hodge, *Ephesians*, 279-80).

[188]Similarly Fowl, *Ephesians*, 161-62.

However, in 5:2 Paul subtlely reminds the Ephesians that they cannot obey the love command in their own strength or use their obedience as the basis for their acceptance in the covenant community. When he refers to Jesus' act of "handing himself over for us," Paul was tapping into the way early Christians described the events surrounding the death of Christ. Especially found in the passion narratives, the verb παραδίδωμι described what transpired in the night Jesus was betrayed ("handed over," 1 Cor 11:23), arrested, and "handed over" to be crucified. Significantly, the Gospel writers place on Jesus' own lips this term to describe his own impending arrest and crucifixion: the Son of Man would be "handed over" into "the hands of men" (Matt 17:22; Mark 9:31; Luke 9:44), "the Gentiles" (Matt 20:19; Mark 10:33; Luke 18:32), and "the hands of sinners" (Matt 26:45; Mark 14:41; Luke 24:7). Two observations follow from Jesus' description of these events. First, Isaiah 53 looms large in the background, since παραδίδωμι is used three times in the song (LXX 53:6, 12 [twice]) to interpret the meaning of the servant's death as a "handing over" of a righteous man to death in order to bear the sins of others. Given the uniqueness of Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song, it is unlikely Jesus missed the implications of his choice of wording. Second, Jesus' descriptions of the people into whose hands Jesus would be handed over recall the descriptions of those in the OT into whose hands God's people were handed over *on account of their sin*. In other words, in the OT God judged his people for their sin by handing them over into the hands of their enemies.[189] In Leviticus 26:25 one of the curses for covenant unfaithfulness is that God would hand over his people into the hands of their enemies. Hence, Jesus' description of those into whose hands he would be handed over appears to interpret his death in light of God's judgment against sin. Although he was innocent, the holy one of God would be "handed over" into the hands of God's

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[189]See Deut 32:30; Isa 64:6; 65:12; Jer 15:4; 21:10; 22:25; 24:8; 32:4 (LXX 39:4); Ezek 7:21; 11:9; 16:27.

enemies—that is, he would receive on the cross the just judgment of God for the sins of God's people. To put it another way, in being "handed over" Jesus bore the curse of the covenant to bring people to God (cf. Gal 3:13).

The early Christians continued to describe the events surrounding Jesus' death in terms of his being "handed over" (Acts 3:13), especially since such language was intricately connected with the Lord's Supper and passion narrative (Matt 26:20-25; Mark 14:17-21; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Cor 11:23). Paul himself is familiar with this tradition, for he says twice that Jesus "was handed over" (Rom 4:25; 8:32) and three times that Jesus "handed himself over" (Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2, 25; cf. 1 Tim 2:6). That παραδίδωμι continued to be used in the apostolic kerygma in these ways suggests that the early church was familiar with and employed Jesus' own description and interpretation of his death. Particularly the phrase "for us" (ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν), which Paul uses with παραδίδωμι (Rom 8:32; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2; cf. Eph 5:25), suggests an interpretation of Jesus' death in light of Jesus' own interpretation as well as in light of Isaiah 53.[190] For Paul, when Jesus handed himself over to death, then, it was not merely a model of self-sacrificial love but also the sin-bearing sacrifice of the innocent and exalted servant of Isaiah 53.[191] Or as he puts it elsewhere, Jesus "redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Gal 3:13). Hence, in Ephesians 5:2 the fact that Paul describes Jesus' act of "handing himself over for us" suggests that Paul has in mind Jesus' death as a *substitutionary*

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[190]For a defense of Jesus' death as the fulfillment of Isa 53 as well as ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν meaning substitution ("in our place"), see John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 145-49 (similarly Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 112; Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 147; Hodge, *Ephesians*, 278-79; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 354-55; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 321-22; contra Caird [*Paul's Letters*, 83] who states, "[Paul] has no sacrificial doctrine of the atonement"; Moule, *Ephesians*, 127; Scott, *Ephesians*, 225). That Isa 53 is alluded to is supported by Barth, *Ephesians*, 557 (contra Best, *Ephesians*, 470). See Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 648.

[191]Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 253.

sacrifice wherein he received the wrath of God believers deserved (cf. Eph 2:3; 5:6).[192]

Therefore, while Paul calls the Ephesians to imitate God in Christ by walking in self-sacrificial love, they must remember that they are only in Isaiah 54's covenant of peace with God by virtue of Isaiah 53's sin-bearing servant. Their sins have been taken away in the death of Christ and the result is full and final forgiveness of sins, the very foundation of the new covenant (Jer 31:34). Hence, their new covenant peace with God is grounded in Jesus' sacrifice for them, not on their acts of self-sacrifice for one another in imitation of Christ's sacrifice. The new covenant shatters any prideful attempts to obey its ethical demands, for it is grounded in the forgiveness of sins, and the power for obedience flows from the Spirit's circumcision of the heart. Not only are believers enjoined to love *like* Christ but they are also reminded to love *because of* Christ (Eph 4:32).[193]

In conclusion, in 5:1-2 Paul summarizes the covenant stipulations of the new covenant. As God's children in whom the image of God has been restored, believers are to imitate their Father. Essentially this means their lifestyle should be characterized by love for God and others, which fulfilled the ethic of the old covenant and fulfills the ethic of the new. In order to love as they ought, they should look to the example of Christ, who loved them through his self-sacrificial death on the cross, with which God was pleased. They should also remember that his sacrifice, unlike theirs, is the basis for their new covenant relationship with God and frees them for the self-sacrificial love that fulfills the

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[192]Abbott (*Ephesians*, 146) argues that the link between 4:32 and 5:1 and the call to imitate God in 5:1 "is a decisive proof that St. Paul did not view the Atonement in the light of payment of a debt or endurance of a penalty demanded by Divine justice." But the call to imitate God does not mean that believers are like God *in every respect*. This is clear from Rom 12:19, where believers are enjoined not to take revenge because God will mete out vengeance in due time. Hence, in 5:1-2 believers are to imitate Christ's self-giving act of love in many ways (4:25-32), but this does not entail that believers die for the sins of others or that Christ did not die as a substitionary sacrifice (rightly Barth, *Ephesians*, 558-59; Best, *Ephesians*, 468).

[193]Similarly Arnold, *Ephesians*, 310-12.

ethics of the new covenant.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have surveyed Ephesians 4:17-5:2 to examine the extent to which Paul drew from the new covenant in his ethics. In the general instructions of 4:17-24, Paul addressed the Ephesians as those who had already been transformed and renewed by the Spirit. In this new creational sense they were no longer even to be considered as Gentiles, for they were part of the one new humanity in Christ (2:15). Their once futile minds had been made new, their once calloused harts circumcised, and their old and corrupted man replaced with the new man and last Adam, Christ. Further, from the time of their conversion Christ had become their teacher, for they had learned him, heard him, and were taught in him (vv. 20-21). This radical transformation of the Ephesians demonstrated that the new covenant had arrived in Christ, for inward transformation of the Spirit had occurred (Isa 59:21; Ezek 36:26-27) and they all had an intimate knowledge of and relationship with Christ (Isa 54:13; Jer 31:33-34). Now that they were members of the new covenant, Christ through Paul instructed the Ephesians not to live any longer according to their old way of life but to live in right ways toward God and one another in accord with their new status.

In 4:25-32 are Christ's specific instructions of 4:25-32. Similar to the "Ten Words" of the Sinai covenant, Christ's instructions illustrate how believers should live in their new covenant relationship. Particularly noteworthy was the command to "speak truth" with one's neighbor in 4:25, not only since it introduced the section but also because it was based on the new covenant ethics of Zechariah 8 (cf. Eph 4:15; 6:14). The covenantal and communal nature of Christ's instruction was evident in that each command and motivation assumed life within the covenant community.

Finally, in 5:1-2 Paul summarized the ethics of the new covenant by urging the believers to imitate God and walk in love. Just as Adam and Israel had been given a

commission to live in light of their identity as sons in God's image, so the Ephesians were adopted children of God and were to imitate their Father. What this meant was they were to fulfill the covenant stipulations by loving God and others. Since love was at the heart of the old and new covenants, Paul's programmatic call to love in 5:2 indicates that the Ephesians were fulfilling the Torah of Christ when they walked in love. In order to fulfill the love command, they were to look to Christ's example of self-sacrificial love on the cross, as well as trust in his substitutionary sacrifice for their acceptance before God.

In conclusion, the way Paul constructs his paraenesis in 4:17-5:2 strongly implies that the new covenant was a significant element in his thought. On the one hand, the ethical demands are not utterly different than what is found in the old covenant. The goal and intent of the demands of the Sinai covenant appear to be matched in the new. This does not mean the specific instructions are the same, as is clear, for example, from the lack of Jewish dietary regulations in Paul's ethics. But the similarities outweigh the differences, as the command to love God and others within the covenant relationship retains its priority in Jesus' instruction.

On the other hand, the Spirit-renewed hearts of the Ephesians stand in stark contrast to the hard hearts of Israel in the old covenant. It is difficult to overemphasize the role of the Spirit for Paul at this point, for the new covenant promise of the Spirit was that he would transform the hard hearts of the people of God so that they would be able and willing to love and obey their king. Paul could hardly feel optimistic about his exhortations landing on receptive hearts if he did not assume the power of the Spirit had been unleashed in the hearts of his audience. Hence, whereas Moses lamented over the hardness of Israel's hearts (Num 11:10-15; Deut 31:26-29), Paul can give thanks to God for the faith in Christ and the love for others he has heard about in the Ephesians (1:15-16). In short, this analysis of Ephesians 4:17-5:2 suggests that the new covenant played a

significant role for Paul's ethical framework, both in its content and in its assumptions.[194]

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[194]While he does not emphasize the new covenant, Lincoln (*Ephesians*, 315) rightly notes that Paul's ethical framework is to be distinguished from other ancient paraenesis on account of God's power in believers enabling obedience.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to demonstrate that the new covenant was a significant soteriological, ecclesiological, and ethical category for Paul. The new covenant is not necessarily the central element of his theology, for other concepts in Ephesians, such as new creation or union with Christ, are crucial as well. But in the complex matrix of Pauline soteriology, ecclesiology, and ethics, the new covenant proved to be a sufficiently broad conceptual framework with robust explanatory power.

Initially, chapter 2 explored the new covenant in the OT. It was demonstrated that within the eschatological perspective of the OT itself, the new covenant was crucial in unpacking the prophetic vision of restoration. Indeed, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel foresaw a day when God would fulfill all his saving promises, and even though these men described that day in various ways and with distinctive nuances, their message was fundamentally the same: one day God would inaugurate a new covenant with his people, which would mean the final defeat of their enemies, long life in the land, and most importantly, total eradication of sin. The reason why Israel did not experience the covenant blessings of Sinai in full, the reason why they were sent into exile, was because of their sin and unfaithfulness to Yahweh. The new covenant, however, would signify a new day had dawned, for it was grounded in God's promise to remember their sin no more through the sacrifice of an individual and to create within them willing and obedient hearts. Part and parcel of this covenant was the presence of God's Spirit in all of his people, which meant that the people would no longer need to urge one another to know Yahweh intimately, for they would all know him. This would lead to inward unity as the

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people loved God with all their hearts, and outward unity as they lived under the kingship of a new Davidic king. And in fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, this king would be the ruler of the entire world, his people comprising those from every nation. Hence, it is difficult to undestimate the significance of the new covenant in the OT, for it brings to fulfillment all of Israel's prior covenants, inluding the Abrahamic, Sinai, and Davidic covenants. As an everlasting covenant of peace, the new covenant meant that God would forever dwell with his people.

Chapters 3-5 then focused on the new covenant in Ephesians, particularly Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:11-22; and 4:17-5:2. In Ephesians 1:3-14, the Abrahamic character of God's blessings in Christ was evident even within the heading (1:3), as Paul described God's blessings as characterized by the Spirit (Isa 44:1-5). Further, just as God had elected Israel to be in a covenant relationship with him, so God had elected believers in Christ to be his sons. The goal of the Sinai covenant was fulfilled, for God's people are holy and blameless and have a guaranteed share in the allotment as heirs (1:4-5, 11). Further, they have experienced the promised second exodus and redemption (1:7), since their sins are forgiven by the sacrificial death of Christ, which according to the Lord's Supper tradition inaugurated the new covenant. As in the new covenant, believers have the Spirit within them marking them as God's own treasured possession and protecting them for redemption at the last day (1:13-14). The eschatological perspective of 1:3-14 is certain, for believers live in the last days, "the fullness of time," when all God's saving promises are coming to fruition in Christ who is the source and goal of all created things (1:9-10). Indeed, Christ is the source and means of all the blessings believers possess, for as their king and head he embodies and incorporates them by union with himself. Thus, the soteriology of Ephesians 1:3-14 is cast in the light of the fulfillment of the new covenant's promises of salvation.

In Ephesians 2:11-22 Paul framed the plight, solution, and new status of the

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Gentiles in covenantal terms. Their covenantal plight (2:11-12) was evident in that they lacked circumcision, the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, and were strangers to Israel's covenants. Ironically and subtlely, Paul also included the Jews within this covenantal plight by denying any covenantal value to physical circumcision if heart circumcision did not accompany it. This subtle indictment hinted that Paul saw the solution for both Jews and Gentiles in the fulfillment of the new covenant's promise of circumcision of the heart. The solution for the Gentiles (2:13-18) also was framed in covenantal terms, for reconciliation with both God and one another was envisioned through the death of Christ. Such reconciliation would not be found in the old covenant, though, which only produced enmity with God and one another, and therefore which Christ abolished. The new peace achieved by Christ was portrayed as the fulfillment of Isaiah's promises that God would enact a new covenant of peace through the death of the servant and thereby create a new, worldwide humanity. Finally, the Gentiles' new status (2:19-22) confirmed their new covenant membership. Whereas they were once strangers to Israel's covenants, in Christ they had become members of God's people. The newness of God's people is evident, for they are founded not upon the patriarchs or Moses but upon Christ and his apostles and prophets. Further, they are now the new temple, for in fulfillment of the old covenant God dwells among them in Christ by his Spirit. Hence, the rich soteriology and ecclesiology in 2:11-22 is framed against the backdrop of the inauguration of the new covenant in Christ.

Finally, in Ephesians 4:17-5:2 Paul not only taught the ethical instruction of the new covenant but also assumed its reality in his audience. His general instructions (4:17-24) were portrayed as the instructions of Christ who is the teacher of believers. As the new man, Christ taught them how to live in right ways toward God and one another in the new creation order. Empowered by the Spirit within them who renews their minds and softens their hearts, believers have an intimate knowledge of God as promised in the

new covenant. Christ's specific instructions (4:25-32) also bear the stamp of the new covenant, for they are rooted in the new covenant ethics of Zechariah 8 and resemble the "Ten Words" of the Sinai covenant. The ethical call of the new covenant is summarized by the call to imitate God as his children and to love God and one another. The love command forms the heart of and fulfills the new covenant's ethics. Hence, Ephesians 4:17-5:2 is also firmly grounded in the new covenant.

In conclusion, did the new covenant form a significant element in Paul's theology? Did it provide a robust framework for Paul as he constructed his soteriology, ecclesiology, and ethics? Given the way Paul utilizes new covenant texts and assumes the presence of new covenant promises in the texts surveyed in Ephesians, it is too simplistic to argue that Paul's attitude toward the covenant concept in general or the new covenant in particular was one of "ambivalence."[1] A simple word study of διαθήκη, while a good starting point, is just that—a starting point. If one is to grasp the significance of the new covenant in Paul, one must grasp Paul's conceptual world and take into account his assumptions, even if they are not always expressed clearly. Indeed, when the significance of the new covenant in the OT itself is grasped, and how it unpacks God's saving promises to his people, it would be surprising if Paul constructed his soteriology, ecclesiology, and ethics apart from the framework of the new covenant.

Hence, future studies on the place of covenant or the new covenant in Paul's thought should go beyond where the lexicon can lead and should grapple with the assumptions hinted at in the Pauline corpus. Of course, one must be faithful to the text at hand so as to be free of eisogesis; and yet, as seen, there is much more to glean from the letters of Paul than a mere surface reading of the text will provide. A fresh approach is

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[1]James D. G. Dunn, "Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology? Reflections on Romans 9:4 and 11:27," in *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo, SupJSJ 71 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 288.

needed in which the interpreter links Paul's promise-fulfillment motif with the background of the OT. What is being advocated here is not the type of narratival approach to reading Paul that lends itself toward insensitivity to the exegetical minutia of the OT. Rather, Pauline scholarship should adopt a rigorous exegetical method that is sensitive both to the OT as well as to the notion that Paul, a first-century Jew, had come to believe that the "fullness of the times"—the epoch promised in the OT—had arrived in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. Such sensitivity will enable Paul's interpreters to understand his theology with greater precision and care.

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ABSTRACT

THE NEW COVENANT IN EPHESIANS

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This dissertation maintains that the new covenant was a significant soteriological, ecclesiological, and ethical category in Paul's theology. Using Ephesians as a test case, it analyzes the relevant texts where Paul seems to appropriate the Old Testament's promises specifically linked with the new covenant. Chapter 1 surveys and assesses various views on the significance of the new covenant to Paul, and offers a way forward in the debate.

Chapter 2 surveys the new covenant in the Old Testament. Included is exegesis of the most relevant prophetic texts that point to a day when God would usher in a new covenant with his people. A summary of these texts shows a list of major themes most often associated with the new covenant.

Chapter 3 analyzes the blessings of the new covenant in Ephesians 1:3-14. Themes such as election, sonship, forgiveness of sins, and the Spirit indicate the prevalence of the new covenant's promises in Pauline thought. These promises are rooted in the promises to Abraham.

Chapter 4 analyzes the new covenant in Ephesians 2:11-22. Paul frames the plight, solution, and new status of the Gentiles in covenantal terms. Peace with God and one another through the death of Christ is at the center of the text and is especially rooted in the promises of Isaiah. The new status for believing Gentiles includes membership within the true people of God, who, fulfilling the covenant ideal in Christ, dwells with his people.

Chapter 5 suggests that some of the ethical commands of Ephesians 4:17-5:5 find their background in the ethic of the new covenant. Speaking the truth in love and walking in love summarize the ethic of the new covenant. Included in this chapter is an excursus on the structural similarities between Deuteronomy and Ephesians, which indicates the covenantal framework of Paul's ethics.

Chapter 6 summarizes the thesis by comparing the nature of the new covenant in chapter 3 with the findings of chapters 3-5. That many of the promises of the new covenant are found to be present in various texts in Ephesians suggests the prevalence of the concept to Paul as he formulated his soteriology, ecclesiology, and ethics. These conclusions are then set within the context of the broader scholarly discussion concerning Paul's view of the new covenant.

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