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# GOD’S EVERLASTING COVENANT WITH PHINEHAS

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Theology

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by  
Tuck Seon Chung  
May 2018

**APPROVAL SHEET**

GOD'S EVERLASTING COVENANT WITH PHINEHAS

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Read and Approved by:

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Adam Joseph Howell (Chair)

Date\_\_\_\_\_

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Slavia Fifi.

Thank you for the support, encouragement, and sacrifice that made this degree possible.

In all these things we do, we are doing it all for the glory of God.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <i>Abr.</i>    | Philo, <i>De Abrahamo (On the Life of Abraham)</i>   |
| <i>ABD</i>     | David Noel Freedman, ed., <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>   |
| <i>BA</i>      | <i>The Biblical Archaeologist</i>  |
| <i>NIB</i>     | Leander E. Keck, ed., <i>The New Interpreter's Bible in Twelve Volumes</i>   |
| <i>NICNT</i>   | Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, and Gordon D. Fee, eds, <i>The New International Commentary on the New Testament</i>       |
| <i>NIDNTT</i>  | Colin Brown, ed., <i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>  |
| <i>NIDOTTE</i> | Willem A. VanGemeren, ed., <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>                      |
| <i>TDNT</i>    | Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> |
| <i>TDOT</i>    | G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds., <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>   |

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## PREFACE

This paper would have not been possible without the love and support from my wife. I must say the same to our daughter, Hannah, for being understanding and patient without demanding more time to be spent with her. I am also very thankful to Dr. Jason Motte and Dr. James Hamilton for their insightful comments made. Finally, I would like to express my deep appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Adam Howell for his supporting guidance throughout the work. His evaluation together with numerous suggestions has helped me to improve this paper in every way. It has truly been my pleasure to be able to work with him on this thesis.

Tuck Seon Chung

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2018

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

God's covenants with Israel feature prominently throughout the Old Testament. Therefore, biblical scholars over the last hundred years examined the covenants extensively debating specifically their lasting significance.<sup>1</sup> Most concluded that the Mosaic covenant became obsolete with the arrival of the new covenant in Jesus Christ. Thus, scholars determined that the Levitical priesthood, for example, is irrelevant for contemporary New Testament studies due to its bilateral nature.<sup>2</sup> In like manner, they disregarded the Phinehasian covenant as having any eternal consequence. Instead, most scholars maintained that only the Noahic, Abrahamic, and Davidic covenants remain in effect given their unilateral terms. As a result, only certain covenants have garnered scholarly attention.

This thesis will suggest that the Phinehasian covenant has been substantially neglected. The Bible reveals that God instituted a lasting priesthood when he granted the

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<sup>1</sup>The origin and significance of the Old Testament covenant traditions became a subject of interest after the publication of Julius Wellhausen's *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* in 1885 (English translation)—see Ernest W. Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3. See further discussion below. NB: The phrase בְּרִית עֹלָם is rarely given any significant treatment in typical covenant studies. In contrast, Steven D. Mason shows that בְּרִית עֹלָם “deserves special consideration because it is an important component of covenant theology in the Old Testament” [emphasis in the original]. Steven D. Mason, “Eternal Covenant” in *The Pentateuch: The Contours of an Elusive Phrase*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 494 (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 5-6.

<sup>2</sup>Dongshin Don Chang points out that scholars ignore almost entirely the levitical priesthood and covenant. This might be due to Wellhausen's negative view on the priestly sources (P) and his appraisal of prophetic institutions seems to have persisted with the later scholars. See Dongshin Don Chang, *Phinehas, The Sons of Zadok, and Melchizedek: Priestly Covenant in Late Second Temple Texts* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 4-7. Also, see below for a unilateral/bilateral discussion of the covenants. In addition, henceforth, this thesis will use interchangeably the terms “priest” or “high priest” to refer to “priesthood.”

covenant of peace with Phinehas in Numbers 25:12-13. Verse 13 describes this covenant as בְּרִית כְּהֻנָּת עוֹלָם. This language raises the question as to the exact sense of “perpetual” in the passage that brings resolution to the issue. It is curious that this specific covenant has been overlooked, because it is repeatedly and explicitly designated as “eternal” in the Old Testament, while the Mosaic covenant is not. Upon initial examination, it may appear that a consensus has been reached regarding the main meaning of “forever” in the Phinehasian covenant. This is because the covenant was given as an extension under the Mosaic covenant, and is now considered obsolete. Upon closer study, the type of covenant and the specific terms used with Phinehas are more closely associated with the Davidic covenant. In fact, most of the questions on this point still remain when comparing the Phinehasian covenant with the Davidic covenant.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to provide another perspective on the Phinehasian covenant. It will reaffirm the validity of God’s covenant with Phinehas by discussing the continuity and significance of the covenant and, therefore, clarifying the historical relationship involved. I propose that God’s everlasting covenant with Phinehas is as valid as God’s promise in the Davidic covenant. This perception towards the Phinehasian covenant was the common interpretation to the postexilic community and throughout the intertestamental period.<sup>4</sup>

### **Hypothesis**

Normally, the Phinehasian covenant is associated with the Mosaic covenant in which a Levitical priesthood is granted to the descendants of Aaron to serve under the

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<sup>3</sup>This paper refers to the “Phinehasian priesthood” to encapsulate the Levitical priesthood and the Aaronic priesthood on the basis of the Phinehasian covenant (Num 25:12-13).

<sup>4</sup>Several passages applied covenantal language to the Phinehasian priesthood. See Jer 33:21-22; Neh 13:29; Mal 2:1-9. For the intertestamental period, see Sir 45:23; 1 Macc 2:26, 54; 4 Macc 18:12. In the New Testament, John 12:34 showed that the understanding of the community toward the Messiah was from *the Law*, not the Prophets nor the Writings. Only the Phinehasian covenant matches this requirement.

conditions of the Mosaic covenant. However, this lasting priesthood covenant with Phinehas was specific and perpetual. God made it clear that this covenant was an everlasting covenant. This priesthood covenant had taken on an absolute new dimension to a unilateral and an everlasting elevation due to Phinehas's *zealousness* toward God.<sup>5</sup>

I propose that the Phinehasian covenant should not be considered as obsolete under the Mosaic covenant, but instead should be treated as the Davidic covenant, which is a direct prediction of the Messiah.<sup>6</sup> Just as the Davidic covenant is separated from the Mosaic covenant and connected to the Abrahamic covenant, likewise the Phinehasian covenant should be considered as discontinuing from the Mosaic covenant. Nevertheless, this covenant, which is parallel to the Davidic covenant, should be studied independently, in relation to the Abrahamic covenant.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Num 25:12-13; Ps 106:30-31. Phinehas' zeal was understood as "righteousness" (צִדְקָה) in Ps 106:31, the same term that was used to describe Abraham (Gen 15:6) and David (2 Sam 8:15) in the eyes of the Lord.

<sup>6</sup>While I will argue in this paper that the Phinehasian covenant is not obsolete, there is a possibility that part of the Mosaic covenant is also not obsolete. The pronouncement of "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod 19:6) under the Mosaic covenant will continue in the new covenant (Isa 66:21; 1 Pet 2:9). My argument will focus on the direct prediction of the Messiah in the Phinehasian covenant that further links Christ as the great high priest.

<sup>7</sup>Instead of the Mosaic covenant, I am proposing that the Phinehasian covenant is under the expansion of the Abrahamic covenant to fill the gap of the "blessing" element in Abrahamic covenant. Refer to appendix 1.

Philo suggested this covenant is linked with Exod 19:6, which describes Abraham's descendants as "the nation dearest of all to God, which, as I hold, has received priesthood and prophecy on behalf of all mankind." From Philo, *Abr.* 98, quoted in John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19.6* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 185. Moor also observed that there may be a connection between the Phinehasian covenant and Exod 19:6, but he did not develop his observation further. Johannes C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism* (Leuven: University Press, 1997), 254.

McComiskey observed the striking similarity between the Abrahamic and the Davidic covenants, but the only element of the Abrahamic covenant which seems lacking in the Davidic covenant is the extension of divine blessing to Gentiles. See Thomas Edward McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 21.

## **Presupposition**

My analogy of hypothesis for the interpretation of the Phinehasian covenant came from the following presuppositions.

### **God's Faithfulness and Fulfillment in Christ**

God is ever faithful to his covenants and God will keep his covenants until they are completely fulfilled. This truth makes the covenant with Phinehas everlasting because, no matter how long it takes or what occurs along the way, God is reliable and able to fulfill it, for he who promised is faithful (Heb 10:23). The promise does not depend on human obedience, but on God's character and God's sovereignty.

### **No Human Obligation Needed in the Covenant**

God made several distinct covenants in the Old Testament. Some covenants require human participation in order to maintain them.<sup>8</sup> The Old Testament covenants are all in the grant form of treaty except the Mosaic covenant, which requires obedience in order to keep the covenant.<sup>9</sup> In fact, God is the one who maintains the covenants that he has made with each individual.

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<sup>8</sup>The term "Old Testament" may imply that the thirty-nine books of Old Testament are all under one covenant, which leads to the suggestion that the Old Testament was made obsolete and replaced by the "New." This may perpetuate a widespread misunderstanding of the nature of the two Testaments, which leads to the obsolete view of the Phinehasian covenant. The prophets and apostles never referred to the Testament either as Old or New. In the New Testament, the "Old" Testament was designated as "the Writings" or "the Scripture," or more specifically, as the "Mosaic Law" (2 Cor 3:14). In other words, the terms Old Testament and New Testament are later titles that do not bear apostolic authority. The two divisions of Scripture may also reflect the erroneous notion that the New Testament is a book of grace and truth superseding the Old Testament, and thus the Old Testament has no relevance for us. David H. Roper, *The New Covenant in the Old Testament* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976), 10-11.

<sup>9</sup>In the ancient Near East, the covenants in the Old Testament are known in two major categories: the Suzerian-Vassal as the conditional promise which depended on obedience to specific terms, and the Royal Grant as the unconditional promise which required no action from the beneficiary. David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:1180-92.

## Methodology

In my research, I will take a theological approach toward the covenant. I will justify my hypothesis by utilizing Scripture as the primary source and intertestamental literature as secondary sources. In order to establish my thesis, I will first highlight why the Phinehasian covenant remains valid, and then demonstrate that it was not viewed as obsolete during its interpretive history. The underlying presupposition is that God is always faithful to the promises he makes, and there is no human obligation in the grant covenant to God. The first point of this argument will be based on the exploration of the Phinehasian covenant as described in unconditional terms. The features of this covenant will be examined in reference to other covenants which are regarded as grant-type.<sup>10</sup> These covenants are considered divine grants from God. Because the texts present a unified picture of the covenant made toward an individual recipient, I will propose the Phinehasian covenant should be categorized as a unilateral, unconditional covenant.

Then, in chapter 3, I will continue to argue my second point of unilaterality of the covenant from God's redemptive plan and a parallel comparison with the Davidic covenant. Both covenants appearing parallel in Scripture suggest that these two covenants are closely connected, and their similarities will be examined. Interestingly, the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel both mentioned these covenants together when they prophesied the restoration of Israel under the Messiah. Additionally, I will examine two specific terms regarding the ideology surrounding "perpetuity." The "covenant of peace" (בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם)

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<sup>10</sup>The Abrahamic covenant and the Davidic covenant are clearly examples of the grant-type covenant. Some may see the Davidic covenant was an extension and adaption of the Mosaic covenant (1 Kgs 2:4; 11:11), but Mendenhall and Clements suggest that the Davidic covenant was fashioned on the basis of the Abrahamic covenant. See George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 17, no. 3 (1954): 72, and Ronald E. Clements, *Abraham and David: Genesis 15 and Its Meaning for Israelite Tradition*, Studies in Biblical Theology, 2<sup>nd</sup> series 5 (London: SCM Press, 1967), 53-55. Others suggest the same for a grant-type covenant. See McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise*, 63-66; Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (London: Yale University Press, 2009), 168-211.

and the “covenant of salt” (בְּרִית מֶלַח) will be examined to demonstrate the special relationship between the covenant with Phinehas and the covenant with David.

I will justify my hypothesis in chapter 4 by addressing the historical interpretation of the Phinehasian covenant through canonical reading from the Scripture. Then, I will follow with a non-canonical reading of the ancient texts to examine how the postexilic community understood this covenant. It will be shown that the Phinehasian covenant should be seen as equally important as the Davidic covenant.

To conclude, in chapter 5, I will address the theological significance and its implications through reading of the Gospels and the Hebrews. I will suggest that my hypothesis reasonably fits the explanation of God’s promise with Phinehas as well as God’s salvation plan for Israel. This is important because the progression of covenants with Israel displays a succession of the priesthood in an eschatological context. Furthermore, in the immediate context of prophecy fulfillment, this lasting covenant will be crucial to understanding the Messianic Priest-King figure.<sup>11</sup> While this thesis will not interpret the Phinehasian covenant from the whole interpretation history due to the length limit, it will provide insight into a different perspective on the covenant.

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<sup>11</sup>The awaiting of a Messianic king is tied together with the expectation of a priest because a Levitical priest is expected to validate the Torah during the entire reign of the king (Deut 17:18). Also, the Branch that carries the role of priesthood and kingship will harmonize the two offices of high priest and king (Zech 6:12-13).

## CHAPTER 2

### SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW

The Hebrew word בְּרִית is used to describe agreements in the Old Testament. Although the origin of the word has been debated, the most common meaning is a promise to two or more parties bound together. In the Bible, there are six covenants between God and man (see table 1).<sup>1</sup>

Although the covenant was the focus of Old Testament scholarship, the phrase בְּרִית עֹלָם is rarely given any significant treatment, especially the covenant with Phinehas, in typical covenant studies.<sup>2</sup> Generally, there are two views of the Phinehasian covenant: abolished or irrevocable.<sup>3</sup> The view of this covenant as obsolete stems from the

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<sup>1</sup>Classification of covenants varies depending on scholars' viewpoints. Some may include Adam in the covenant tradition although the term "covenant" is absent from the text. This inclusion is because a relationship was established between God and Adam, and the Noahic covenant was seen as the continuation of God's command to "be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth" (Gen 9:1) in Gen 1:28. Also, some may exclude Phinehas from the covenant because it was regarded as subsidiary to the Mosaic covenant. For details of the arguments, see Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 1:531-35; Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 138-39, 181.

Table 1 is based on the summary as classified in the recent work of Martin H. Manser et al., *The Complete Topical Guide to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2017), 61-63.

<sup>2</sup>For the exhaustive investigation, refer to the bibliography provided by Mason, "Eternal Covenant," 4n12.

<sup>3</sup>There are two major tracks of evangelism: the "covenant theology" and "dispensationalism." Both agree that the Phinehasian covenant was obsolete and was not a major covenant. For a survey of the concept of the abolished view on the Phinehasian covenant (commonly referred to Levitical priesthood), see John Goldingay, "Covenant, OT and NT," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 1, ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 770-76; Hal Harless, *How Firm a Foundation: The Dispensations in the Light of the Divine Covenants*, Studies in Biblical Literature 63 (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 40, 79, 207.

Others who subscribe to the source criticism, like Martin Noth and Timothy Ashley, believe that the covenant which legitimizes the descendants of Phinehas as the true heirs of Aaronite priesthood has already been fulfilled. See Martin Noth, *Numbers*, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), 199; Timothy R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, The New International

interpretation that it was broken. This contradicts the view that it remains effective and is irrevocable. Both views will now be examined in detail.

Table 1. Major covenants in the Bible

| Covenants in the Bible  | Scriptures | Promises                                |
|-------------------------|------------|---|
| 1. Noahic covenant      | Gen 9      | Never again destroyed by a flood.       |
| 2. Abrahamic covenant   | Gen 12     | Land; great nation; blessing to others. |
| 3. Mosaic covenant      | Exod 19-20 | Blessings that related to Mosaic law.   |
| 4. Phinehasian covenant | Num 25     | Everlasting priesthood.                 |
| 5. Davidic covenant     | 2 Sam 7    | Everlasting kingship.                   |
| 6. New covenant         | Jer 31     | A new relationship with God.            |

### View 1: The Phinehasian Covenant Is Abolished

The Phinehasian covenant has been neglected in covenantal discussions in the past. The dominant opinion is that this covenant has been abolished and replaced by the Melchizedekian priesthood order.<sup>4</sup> The dominant view in the Old Testament scholarship suggests that the covenant with Phinehas is obsolete for two reasons. First, Malachi 2:8 states, “the priests have *violated* the covenant with Levi.” According to Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum, the priests failed to meet the requirements of this covenant; therefore it was broken.<sup>5</sup> John Goldingay suggests that the unbreakable condition must “presuppose

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Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 514-15. For similar thoughts regarding the idea of a priestly dynasty already fulfilled by the covenant, see Roy E. Gane, “Numbers,” in *The Baker Illustrated Bible Commentary*, ed. Gary M. Burge and Andrew E. Hill (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 139.

<sup>4</sup>For example, Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 527; Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Purpose* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2007), 105-6.

<sup>5</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 527. The word “violate” (שָׁחַת) was understood as “broken” and led to the conclusion of the obsolete view. The Piel form points to human beings as subjects who are responsible for their actions. Jena Conrod, “שָׁחַת šāhat,” in *TDOT* (Grand

the unstated assumption” that the priests would need to remain faithful to the covenant.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Paul Williamson suggests that this covenant parallels the Mosaic covenant and failed to maintain the relationship between God and Israel.<sup>7</sup>

Another reason that scholars disregard this promise is because of its association with the abolished Mosaic covenant. The Phinehasian covenant was seen as the priestly legislation given to Moses, and as administration of the Tabernacle service. Major scholarship supports this understanding because the Phinehasian covenant was understood as an extension of the Mosaic covenant.<sup>8</sup> Scholars unanimously recognize the same obligations in both the Phinehasian and Mosaic covenants. Greg Nichols saw the “ordinances of religious service” in Hebrews 9:1 as proof of the priestly covenant associated with the Mosaic covenant, similarly, John Walton, Victor Matthews, and Mark Chavalas saw it as a common treaty agreement similar to the Mesopotamian treaty texts.<sup>9</sup> Because of this generalization, the Phinehasian covenant is viewed, like the Mosaic covenant, as conditional. This resulted in the invalidation of the priestly promise, just as the office of priesthood under the Mosaic covenant has become invalid.<sup>10</sup> Regardless of whether the scholars appropriately interpret the broken covenant or the royal priesthood

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Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2004), 14:585, 588.

<sup>6</sup>Goldingay, “Covenant, OT and NT,” 776.

<sup>7</sup>Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 105-6.

<sup>8</sup>For instance, Nichols, Walton, Matthews and Chavalas.

<sup>9</sup>Nichols acknowledged that God perpetuated the Phinehasian priesthood while also abolishing the Mosaic covenant. He agreed Phinehas’ descendants continued to serve as priests until Ezra (Ezra 7:1-5), and God transformed the priesthood when Christ came (Heb 7:11-12). Greg Nichols, *Covenant Theology: A Reformed and Baptist Perspective on God’s Covenants* (Vestavia Hills, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2011), 120, 219-22. John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 163.

<sup>10</sup>Freedman’s article mentioned only covenants with Noah, Abraham, and David, without any emphasis on the covenant with Phinehas. See Freedman, *ABD*, 1:1188-90. The Phinehasian covenant seems neglected. For examples, see Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 84-134, and Henry W. Holloman, *Kregel Dictionary of the Bible and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 86-87.

under the Mosaic covenant, the covenant with Phinehas has been neglected and marginalized because it was considered obsolete.<sup>11</sup>

### **View 2: The Phinehasian covenant Is Irrevocable**

Recent scholarship has begun to recognize the Phinehasian covenant as a lasting covenant extended from the priestly service in Numbers 18:19.<sup>23</sup> The divine speech in Numbers 25:12-13 affirms the importance of the Phinehasian covenant by promising that Phinehas's descendants would be priests forever. Ronald B. Allen acknowledges that this covenant is lasting since it is God's doing and it will be fulfilled by Phinehas's "seed."<sup>24</sup>

Similar positions are expressed by Thomas B. Dozeman, Richard Mayhue, Thomas Ice, and Scott W. Hahn; they state that this promise is identical to the Davidic covenant which is both unconditional and permanent.<sup>25</sup> This irrevocable quality illustrates God's faithfulness in individual promises, as in the Noahic and Abrahamic covenants. The focus of this eternal covenant with Phinehas is the inheritance of the high priest post.<sup>26</sup>

However, there is no further investigation into the Phinehasian covenant as it relates to the Mosaic covenant or Davidic covenant. No study has been conducted on how

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<sup>11</sup>The Phinehasian covenant was not considered as a primary covenant in the Bible. See O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1980), 27.

<sup>23</sup>As Jacob Milgrom suggests, this grant of priesthood includes the prerequisites of the priestly office, which is exclusive to the line of Phinehas and later reflected to the Zadokites as officiating priests. Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, The JPS Torah Commentary, ed. Nahum M. Sarna (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 216-17, 479.

<sup>24</sup>Ronald B. Allen, "Numbers," in *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, ed. Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 219.

<sup>25</sup>Thomas B. Dozeman, "Numbers," in *NIB* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 2: 200; Richard Mayhue and Thomas Ice, "Covenants," in *The Popular Encyclopedia of Bible Prophecy*, ed. Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2004), 61; Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 158-60.

<sup>26</sup>Milgrom, "Numbers," 216-17, 479.

the Phinehasian covenant could be an independent covenant without being negatively affected by the prior Mosaic covenant. There is also no study examining its relationship with the Davidic covenant, particularly in relation to the Messianic prophecy.

### Why Not the Obsolete View

Before moving to the irrevocable view, we will address two reasons why the Phinehasian covenant remains relevant. The obsolete view fails to convince because the covenant is not broken, according to Malachi 2:8. The word **שָׁחַת** does not strictly mean “corrupt,” “destroy” or “broken.”<sup>27</sup> In addition, **שָׁחַת** in this context could refer to preserving the priesthood, instead of literal translation. In Malachi 3:11, the same word was used to describe Yahweh preventing the pests from destroying the fruits; this message was preservation instead of destruction.<sup>28</sup> In the same way, “destroy” should be understood to mean “preserve” because it directly follows the warning in verse 4 and the reminder of God’s covenant in verse 5. The unbroken covenant is further confirmed in Malachi 3:2-6, when the priests are promised by the Lord that he does not change.<sup>29</sup>

In this instance, **שָׁחַת** is a corrective penalty—a warning against violating the contract—instead of termination of the covenant.<sup>30</sup> John Davies counters the broken view

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<sup>27</sup>Although **שָׁחַת** occurs 165 times in Hebrew, the conditions of the text do not always allow a reliable interpretation. The general meaning seems to be “destroy, ruin,” however, one can also deduce a meaning of “cast off, corrupt.” Jena Conrod, “**שָׁחַת** *šāhat*,” in *TDOT* 14:583-92.

<sup>28</sup>Especially in view of Isa 65:8, Yahweh will preserve only those who remained faithful to him, and thus Yahweh will not destroy all the priests nor consider the covenant as broken. Conrod, “**שָׁחַת** *šāhat*,” 14:592.

<sup>29</sup>Also in v.6, Weinfeld notices the actions of “Levi” are compared with those of Abraham and David. Descriptions of the loyalty and devotion of Levi are similar in phraseology to descriptions of the loyalty of Abraham and David. The high priest “walked with me in peace and uprightness.” Moshe Weinfeld, *The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 263.

<sup>30</sup>Hugenberger provides a statistic that recognized **בְּרִית** as meaning more than “relationship,” such as in Ezra 10:3, 2 Kgs 11:4, and Jer 34:8-10, where instead of affecting a relationship (such as termination), a covenant stipulates a course of action. The making of a covenant seems to presuppose an existing relationship, like in the Abrahamic covenant. For a more exhaustive grammatical treatment of **בְּרִית**, see Gordon. P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from*

argument, where the consequence of the priests' failure to "listen to" (שָׁמַעַ, v. 2; cf. Exod 19:5 "obey") God is punishable by the reversal of the Abrahamic blessing.<sup>31</sup> Davies concludes, "the object of the admonition is not the annulment of the covenant, but its preservation."<sup>32</sup> Malachi's fervent rejection of the priestly administration does not suggest rejection of the priestly covenant. The Lord's desire is not to terminate the priesthood covenant, but "that my covenant with Levi *may continue*" (v. 4).<sup>33</sup> To an extent, if the priests must be disciplined or removed, Mark J. Boda still sees the covenant with Levi as secure.<sup>34</sup> Particularly, based on similarities in language and construction, Beth Glazier-McDonald associates the Levitical covenant in Malachi 2:4-5 with the Phinehasian covenant, and states that the covenant in Malachi 2:8 is unbroken.<sup>35</sup>

Even if the priests had "destroyed" the covenant, this does not guarantee that the covenant is "broken."<sup>36</sup> Normally, a covenant would be considered broken if either party breached it. This thesis argues that this is not true for a grant-type covenant with

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*Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 169.

<sup>31</sup>Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 186.

<sup>32</sup>Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 185.

<sup>33</sup>The italics are mine, to highlight the idea of succession of priesthood and the continuity of the covenant.

<sup>34</sup>Mark J. Boda, "Figuring the Future: The Prophets and Messiah," in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 66.

<sup>35</sup>Beth Glazier-McDonald found that the vocabulary of Mal 2:4-5 is based upon Num 25:12-13. See details in Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi: The Divine Messenger*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 98 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 79-80. Interestingly, the two practices that Phinehas is combatting (sexual relationships and worship of other gods) are the same issues which Malachi condemns in Mal 2:10-16. In addition to Glazier-McDonald, both Hugenberger and O'Brien also affirm that the "covenant with Levi" in Mal 2:4-7 is linked with Num 25:11-13, in which Phinehas is rewarded with a covenant of perpetual priesthood. See Hugenberger, *Marriage as Covenant*, 157, and Julia M. O'Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 121 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 40, 105.

<sup>36</sup>For instance, Walter Kaiser acknowledges that Phinehas and his descendants would enjoy the eternal possession of the priesthood, but he sees it last only until 586 BC. He does not explain why the priesthood still exists after the return from exile. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *More Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 104.

God: the covenant was unilateral and thus does not require any obligation from the priests. In comparison, the “violation” of the Davidic covenant by the kings did not terminate the Davidic covenant.<sup>37</sup> The monarchy can be removed, but the role of kingship could still be available.<sup>38</sup> In the same way, it is illogical to consider the Phinehasian covenant broken, for there is no human effort required to continue the Phinehasian covenant.<sup>39</sup> In addition, just as the Davidic covenant could not be annulled under the Mosaic covenant, the Phinehasian covenant cannot be annulled by disobedience to the Mosaic covenant. The failure of priests does not negate the covenant. There is no evidence in Scripture which suggests this covenant with Phinehas is broken.

### **Why an Irrevocable View**

Perhaps the argument within the obsolete view is whether the Phinehasian covenant was broken directly by the priests, or through attachment to the Mosaic covenant. Regardless, there is no reasonable explanation which justifies the obsolete view. I would suggest an irrevocable view as the alternative—and more accurate—approach. However, as mentioned earlier, there is no study or further investigation on this covenant which acknowledges its perpetuity (עולם).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Violation of the Davidic covenant will impact the individual king’s continuation on the throne and the survival of monarchy, since all of Israel is linked to the Mosaic covenant. The continuation of monarchy is directly dependent on the obedience of the Mosaic covenant, but this violation will not change God’s promised covenant because God upholds this covenant and human effort is not involved.

<sup>38</sup>An inherited priesthood office can be removed, but the role of priesthood would remain. Just like Samuel’s taking over Eli’s priesthood office in 1 Sam 2, the priesthood office was removed but the priesthood role remained.

<sup>39</sup>Even if the Mosaic covenant was broken, John H. Walton did not see it as null and void. He suggests an ineffectual view in terms of its intended purpose. He justified with Scripture in Lev 26:43-45, Judg 2:1, and Jer 14:19-21, that the elements of the Mosaic covenant cannot be jeopardized. John H. Walton, *Covenant: God’s Purpose, God’s Plan* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 95-97.

<sup>40</sup>No further elaboration on this everlasting covenant upon realizing the “covenant of priesthood forever.” For example, Ronald B. Allen, *Numbers*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Numbers-Ruth*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 345-46; *ABD*, 5:346-47; Jason R. Tatlock, *Phinehas*, in vol. 4 of *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), 4:516; *NIB*, 2:

Hahn recognizes that the grant of priesthood, first to Aaron and then to Phinehas was expressed in the terms of a covenant.<sup>41</sup> He further explains that this grant-type covenant “discloses the inner logic of salvation history in terms of Israel’s primogeniture and royal priestly vocation.”<sup>42</sup> Davies draw the same conclusion, that this promise of priesthood was initiated based on God’s covenant grant treaty. As Davies observes, the eternal priesthood covenant which was granted to Aaron and his sons was a “grant” (Num 18:7 interpreted מִתְּנָה as “gift”) as in the form of grant treaty.<sup>43</sup>

Because the Mosaic covenant is broken (Jer 11:10), every descendant of Phinehas and David must face the consequences. However, these conditions did not affect the Lord’s initial promise with Phinehas.<sup>44</sup> The Mosaic covenant and the Phinehasian covenant differ in many ways. There is clear separation between the covenants in terms of forms and sacrifices involved.<sup>45</sup>

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199-200; Steven L. McKenzie, *Covenant* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 5.

<sup>41</sup>Hahn recognizes the covenant with Aaron was a manifestation of the grant-type covenant. Although the term בְּרִית is absent from the golden calf narrative and from the ceremony when the Levites replace the first-born sons (Num 3:5-51; 8:15-19), the term is employed elsewhere in the prophetic tradition. With reference to J. Barr’s work in “Some Semantic Notes on the Covenant” and P. J. Naylor’s dissertation on “The Language of Covenant. A Structural Analysis of the Semantic Field of בְּרִית in Biblical Hebrew,” Hahn concludes there is a “word-thing fallacy” error in denying the presence of a covenant just because בְּרִית is not explicitly stated. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 155-58n90. Milgrom suggests Aaron’s בְּרִית עֹלָם is overshadowed by Phinehas. This Phinehasian covenant is the promise of dynasties to Phinehas that constitutes another royal gift bestowed upon the High Priest, who, like the king, wears special robes and is anointed (Lev 8:12; 2 Kgs 11:12). Milgrom, *Numbers*, 217.

<sup>42</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 173.

<sup>43</sup>Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 185.

<sup>44</sup>Just as God did not enter a covenant with Israel in order to save them, God did not enter a covenant with Phinehas in order to have his descendants work for cultic services only. The covenant was a result of election, with Israel and with descendants of Aaron.

<sup>45</sup>The Mosaic covenant is a blood covenant (Exod 24:8). The term דָּם־הַבְּרִית is a specific term which states that blood was involved in making this covenant. No blood ceremony was involved in the Phinehasian covenant. H. Clay Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant: A Primitive Rite and Its Bearings on Scripture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Kirkwood, MO: Impact Books, 1975), 238.

Furthermore, there is a clear difference between the tasks of priesthood under the Mosaic ritual and the identity of the priesthood under the grant-election of God.<sup>46</sup> The tasks of priesthood involved cultic ceremony and teaching of the law (Num 18), whereas, the priesthood, as God's elected servants were to be the mediators between God and his people. Separation of the priesthood's tasks from the priesthood's identity is necessary. The violation of the Mosaic covenant will not negate the fact that God will always have a mediator, Phinehas's high priest and a Davidic ruler in service.<sup>47</sup> The priesthood role will always remain. For example, although the Mosaic covenant had been terminated, Nehemiah and the postexilic community continued to follow the Phinehasian covenant after returning from exile (Neh 13:29). There was no reason for Nehemiah to uphold the covenant by building the Temple, if he understood the Phinehasian covenant to be broken.

The Phinehasian covenant is still intact in the New Testament era, when Zechariah receives a direct vision from an angel (Luke 1:5-12). God still preserves the priesthood role, allowing him to "communicate" with his people during the 400 years of

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<sup>46</sup>Walton proposed that covenant should be seen as God's plan to reveal God. Seock-Tae Sohn also suggested the purpose for the divine election of Israel was revelatory. Walton, *Covenant*, 24-29; Seock-Tae Sohn, *The Divine Election of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 196-97. Both views show some similarities to my argument that election is a significant aspect of the covenant. As elected by God, the priesthood had a very important role in addition to carrying out the cultic ceremony—to reveal God, by becoming the mediators between God and human.

<sup>47</sup>Jer 33:20-22. The most powerful confirmation from the Lord repeating this promise before Israelite deported. However, it would be presumptuous to read Jeremiah as if he is only drawing attention to the descendant of David, without considering the second part of the Scripture—the descendant of "the Levites."

For better justification, I suggest a parallel reading between priesthood and kingship to compare the similarity of both covenants. As the "ruler" (in ceremonial and custom), both were chosen by God (1 Sam 2:28). Chapter 3 discusses this issue in more detail.

silence.<sup>48</sup> In addition, the role of priesthood is a divine grant (Num 16:5, 7; 17:20; 18:7) and one of the three offices anointed by God through election.<sup>49</sup>

Most importantly, the role of priesthood is irrevocable because the priest serves an atonement role between man and God. This atonement role is clearly reflected in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Matt 27:51) as God's plan for forgiveness, and this truth is the foundational element which distinguishes Christianity from all other religions.

To summarize, perception of the Phinehasian covenant as obsolete is not dependent upon its attachment to the Mosaic covenant or upon its obligation to maintain. The greatest difference between the obsolete view and irrevocable view is awareness of God's faithful promise. Just as the descendants of David were required to meet the strict conditions of the Mosaic covenant to remain on the throne, the priests would face the conditions of the Mosaic covenant to remain in the priesthood. However, these conditions did not affect God's initial promise to Phinehas. Therefore, an irrevocable view of this covenant is supported by the evidence.

### **Implications of Obsolete View**

Supporters of this view argue that the Phinehasian covenant is categorized as conditional under the Mosaic covenant and will become obsolete. If the obsolete view is correct, can it withstand the question of God's faithfulness in this promise? Often the argument becomes simplified under the Mosaic covenant; it simply denies God's faithfulness to his promise. This tension causes debate regarding God's nature and

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<sup>48</sup>The Jewish people who had no direct revelation during the intertestamental period could still distinguish the real revelation from God and look forward to God's message. I suggest the priests would carry out the role as messenger since there are no prophets available; in 1 Macc 4:46, they wait "until here should come a prophet to tell what to do with" the defiled stones. The high priest carried the prophesying role in the eye of New Testament author (John 11:51).

<sup>49</sup>Priesthood and election are closely intertwined concepts. The other two offices were prophets and kings. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 155.

characteristics. So far, no solid proposal has been offered to explain whether the covenant with Phinehas is unilateral.

In order to understand the significance of this covenant, I believe an irrevocable view is appropriate because God used the word “eternal” to describe this covenant. There is also no obligation for the descendants of Phinehas in order to keep the covenant intact. More importantly, the obsolete view should not be acceptable because the following implications lurk behind this view.

### **Obviating the Role of the Law and the Authority of the Old Testament**

Following the obsolete view of the Phinehasian covenant inevitably leads scholars to despise the validity and significance of the law. This is because the Law of Moses places priesthood and the sacrificial customs at the heart of worship.<sup>50</sup> The old *covenant* (Mosaic) is obsolete, but this is not true for the law nor the covenant with Phinehas.<sup>51</sup> The Mosaic covenant, the Law, and the Phinehasian covenant are interconnected—but they are not bound together.<sup>52</sup> The question is often raised as to

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<sup>50</sup>Thielman thinks that not only the portion of the law which regulates the priesthood and the sacrifices, but the entire law has been made obsolete. Frank Thielman, *The Law and The New Testament: The Question of Continuity* (New York: The Crossroad, 1999), 130-31.

<sup>51</sup>Ellingworth concludes that the law should be viewed as “change,” not of the total “removal” altogether with priesthood in view of Heb 7:12. The change does not indicate a state of lawlessness nor particular laws, but the entire legal system that introduces stricter obligations and stricter penalties. Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 374.

<sup>52</sup>According to Barry Joslin, the issue which clouds the discussion on what role Mosaic law played in the New Testament is the close relationship between νόμος and διαθήκη in Hebrews. If one concludes that the law and covenant are synonyms, then both have been cancelled and abrogated. Barry C. Joslin, *Hebrews, Christ, and the Law: The Theology of the Mosaic Law in Hebrews 7:1-10:18* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 159-62. See also Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 133-34, who suggests the law and covenant is the same because covenant loyalty means keeping the laws.

There have been alternatives to suggest the two are radically different. The covenant is the broader “agreement” and law is the instructions in the covenant. For detailed definitions of each term, see Gordon J. McConville, “בְּרִית,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 1:747-54, and Johannes Behm, “διαθήκη,” in *TDNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 2:106-8. For further discussion, see Joachim Guhr, “Covenant,” “διαθήκη,” in *NIDNTT* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan,

whether Mosaic law became obsolete when the Mosaic covenant was broken. If caution is not taken, one might repeat the same mistake as Marcionites who rejected the authority of the Old Testament.<sup>53</sup> The old covenant has been replaced by the new covenant, but that does not necessarily mean that the law is obsolete, nor imply that the Old *Testament* has been replaced.

One may argue the law does become obsolete, since Christ is the *τέλος* of the law (Rom 10:4) and everything is ended in Christ.<sup>54</sup> But as Jesus mentioned, he will accomplish the purpose of the law and the law will not disappear until its purpose is achieved (Matt 5:17).<sup>55</sup> Has the purpose been achieved, or is the law still needed?<sup>56</sup> Before we conclude that the law is obsolete, we must evaluate the purpose of the law.

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1975), 1:365-72, and H. Esser, “Law,” “νόμος,” in *NIDNTT*, 2:438-51.

<sup>53</sup>Strawn’s survey describes the concern that the use of the Old Testament is limited to choice verses and popular passages. Most people do not regard the Old Testament in the same way (or as highly) as the New Testament. Brent A. Strawn, *The Old Testament is Dying: A Diagnosis and Recommended Treatment* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 5.

<sup>54</sup>A full discussion of the details and theological implications of this topic is beyond the purpose of this work. In brief, Thomas R. Schreiner provides a summary on various views on the validity of the Old Testament law, whether the Law is abolished, whether Christ ends the age of Law, or whether Law has ended as a way of salvation. For details, see Thomas R. Schreiner, “Paul’s view of the Law in Romans 10:4-5,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 55 (1993): 113-35.

<sup>55</sup>Jesus’s interpretation of the law is superimposed on and identified with the law of Moses. He does not nullify or supersede the law, for the law remains as before and only written on hearts. It is not within the scope of this paper to treat the continuity of the law in the New Testament. N. T. Wright has offered a good explanation of the law in view of Rom 10:4. N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 241. I agree with Rosner’s summary on Paul’s view in keeping the law of God, where “a motif of replacement with respect to the law is in fact deeply embedded. . . shifts the focus from the law to something else by using the same words and concepts: believers do not rely on the law, but on Christ; do not boast in the law, but in God through Christ . . . are not obliged to obey the law, but rather apostolic instruction.” Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 113.

<sup>56</sup>If the law served as a “tutor” (*παιδαγωγός*) until Christ came (Gal 3:24), there is no longer any need for a “tutor” since Christ has come and we are granted full sonship. But the law is not only accorded the pedagogical function of preparing men’s minds for the gospel; it also reveals by contrast the riches of God’s grace. David Roper suggests Law and grace (synonym with New Testament) are not distinct periods running consecutively, but instead running parallel from Genesis all the way through Revelation. Roper, *New Covenant*, 12-13.

First, Paul suggests that the law still serves its purpose, and that “through the law we become conscious of our sin” (Rom 3:20). The law is to let “sin be recognized as sin” (Rom 7:13). Paul further answers this question by explaining the function of the law in Galatians 3:21: the law has been given to show people their sin and “impart life.”<sup>57</sup> It aligns with what Paul mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:16, that all Scripture—in this case, the Old Testament—“is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” Paul also stressed that the Old Testament and its laws make Timothy “wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (v. 15). In other words, the law is still needed until the second coming of the Messiah, which will complete the plan of salvation.<sup>58</sup>

Second, the law was never intended to provide salvation; thus, there could never be an end to the law.<sup>59</sup> Moses’s own explanation of the law, beginning in Deuteronomy 1:5, includes a long recital of conquests (2:1-3:20) and eventually reached the event at Baal Peor (4:3-4). Moses concludes that the law is “to show your wisdom and understanding to the nations” (v. 6). The explanation that involves recital of historical events indicates that the failure of the people was due to their lack of faith, not due to their disobedience of the law.<sup>60</sup> The Israelites are not saved by obedience to the law, for obedience is the result of redemption. It was faith that led them into the covenant and to

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<sup>57</sup>Though not under the Mosaic law, Paul did not live outside the law of Christ (1 Cor 9:21).

<sup>58</sup>The law, as in a general term for rules and regulations, is part of the Mosaic law.

<sup>59</sup>Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 83. The law could not save people and had no power to give new life. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 521. Nevertheless, the law is not the covenant. The law could not be ended by the new covenant, because the law is the conditions under which the promise could be maintained. McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise*, 73.

<sup>60</sup>Moses refers to the failure at Baal Peor to highlight the function of the law, which was not to grant inheritance. Obedience prevented the dissolution of the entire nation at the hand of an angry God and thereby insured the continuation of the nation and perpetuated the promise. McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise*, 74-75.

obey the terms. From Moses's explanation of the function of the law, it is clear that the terms of the promise were not realized through legal obedience. In a way, covenantal salvation occurred through the Israelite's faith, not law.<sup>61</sup> This concept of law and promise is also evident when Paul explains the followers of circumcision were counted as righteous even before the law was implemented (Rom 4:13). In addition to the new covenant promise, Jeremiah may have been referring to the old covenant law when he described the law being written on the hearts and minds (Jer 31: 31-34).<sup>62</sup> The old covenant laws were given by God and still valid in Jeremiah's day. Also, it is important to distinguish between laws and covenants. The Old Testament clearly separated the two when the Israelites affirm their covenant with the Lord by agreeing to obey specific laws recorded in the Book of the Covenant (Exod 24:3-7). Hence, there is a subtle distinction whereby the law (specific requirements) is what one obeyed, and the covenant (larger agreement) is the relationship entered.

Third, the New Testament still cites the law as a reference. The Decalogue is quoted in Ephesians 6:2 and expanded as "the first commandment with a promise." In other instances, Jesus keeps the law and affirms the function of the temple as "my father's house" while he is on earth (Luke 2:49; John 2:16). Jesus is called "Rabbi" and recognized by his disciples as one who teaches Jewish law (John 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8). It is therefore likely that Jesus would dismiss the law if it were almost obsolete. The clearest proof that the Old Testament law remains valid is when Jesus quotes Deuteronomy during his temptation in wilderness (Matt 4:1-10). This message was passed down through generations. Although the new covenant has replaced the old, it is logical to suggest the possibility of νόμος continuing in the new covenant.<sup>63</sup> In this way,

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<sup>61</sup>McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise*, 74.

<sup>62</sup>Walton, *Covenant*, 74.

<sup>63</sup>Joslin, *Hebrews*, 163. As in Heb 7:12, the law is not obsolete but changed.

the exhortation to read Psalm 1 and Psalm 119:97 remains meaningful to Christians today. The Law and the authority of the Old Testament are still relevant.

### **Neglecting the Specific Role of Israel in the Salvation Plan of God**

Another major defect of the obsolete view is its teaching that the national people of “Israel” had been dismissed. For example, the Abrahamic covenant which promised land to Israel was terminated. Israel no longer exists or holds no place in God’s plan, because “what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear” (Heb 8:8-13). The new covenant indicates that the church alone inherits the promise, because the church is now identified as the “new Israel.”<sup>64</sup>

While the interpretation of the Supersessionists towards national Israel has considerable support, there is also a significant disagreement to be considered.<sup>65</sup> Israel does have a specific role in God’s salvific plan and does have a future in the plan of God, for the Old Testament traces the unfolding relationship of Israel under the old covenant, and the new covenant was mediated for Israel through Christ. Besides, the Scriptures repeatedly mention the restoration of Israel as a nation, and the difference between Israel and the church is clearly taught in the New Testament (Isa 59:21; Jer 31:31-34; Rom 11:27).<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, the new covenant is made distinctively to Israel—with the people

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<sup>64</sup>Rom 2:28-29; 9:6; Gal 6:16; 1 Pet 2:9-10. The discussion regarding whether the church replaced the nation of Israel is based on the understanding that Israel had failed just like Adam. Since Jesus is identified as the new Adam, the church is also identified with Jesus as the true Israel. The church is seen not merely as similar to Israel, but actually as Israel. G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 653.

Supersessionism argues that the church permanently supersedes national Israel as God’s people since the national Israel has been permanently rejected (Matt 21:43). In interpreting the future of Israel, the supersessionists believe “all Israel” in Romans 11:26 refers to all the elect, including believing Jews and Gentiles. Some supersessionists also hold that Paul is speaking of a future large-scale conversion of Jews into the Christian church. Michael J. Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?* (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 123, 137, 139.

<sup>65</sup>For further evaluation on the Scripture that supersessionists employ to argue for the permanent rejection of national Israel, see Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?*, 141-64.

<sup>66</sup>Especially in Rom 11:17-24, which stresses the believing Gentiles are “grafted in” among the

of *Israel* and with the people of *Judah* indicating ultimately that “all Israel will be saved.”<sup>67</sup>

The replacement analogy may lead a scholar to the conclusion that the church replaced Israel, or baptism replaced circumcision. The great nuance about Israel and the church is that “the Gentile did not incorporate into Israel, but a new sharing in Israel’s prior covenants and promise.”<sup>68</sup> Even Paul did not use these two terms interchangeably in Ephesians 2:14.<sup>69</sup> Thus, one must not ignore the specific role of Israel, or this *mystery* (Rom 11:25) may not be conceived since the kingdom of God was taken from the current unbelieving Israel and given to the future believing Israel.<sup>70</sup>

### **Neglecting the Continuation of the Old Testament Promises**

The priesthood order of Jesus that follows the order of Melchizedek is incomplete if it ignores the order of Phinehas that established the concept of atonement from a covenantal perspective.<sup>71</sup> To a greater extent, the divine expectations in the Old

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Israelites and now benefiting from the Abrahamic covenant, Gal 3:7-9.

<sup>67</sup>This phrase, “with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah” was mentioned both in Jeremiah 31:31 and Hebrews 8:8, specifically pointing to the descendants of Jacob. Also, Rom 11:26 directly references “all Israel” to Jacob.

<sup>68</sup>Carl B. Hoch, Jr., “The New Man of Ephesians 2,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 108.

<sup>69</sup>Paul could have said that believing Gentiles were now part of Israel, but he did not. He carefully avoids the title “Israel.” Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?*, 152.

<sup>70</sup>As Fruchtenbaum observes, “The point is that the kingdom, while taken from the present Jewish generation, will be given to a future generation of Israel.” A. G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1989), 405. This is also the view of A. J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH, 1959), 296-97, and Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?*, 142.

<sup>71</sup>Most surprisingly, there was no *high priest* role in the Melchizedek order. Melchizedek was only presented as the Priest-King figure in Gen 14. I am going to argue that the Phinehasian covenant was the missing link in Hebrews, since there was an absence of atonement role in the Melchizedek order. The scholars have often failed to observe the covenant concept as to understand atonement, which was an important theology of the Torah and in covenant concept (Jer 31:31-34; Isa 52:13-53:12). See Ronald B.

Testament priesthood—atonement—provide a vivid meaning in Christ’s crucifixion as something that the order of Melchizedek could not have produced without the Phinehasian covenant.<sup>72</sup> Jesus’s words at the last supper which announce his broken body and shed blood as redemptive (Luke 22:19, 22), affirm the Old Testament promise that he was the sacrifice and the high priest to bring perfect atonement between God and mankind.<sup>73</sup>

Another question with respect to the obsolete view in relation to the new covenant, is that the foreshadowing role of the Old Testament priesthood seems disconnected from Jesus Christ.<sup>74</sup> There will be no succession of priesthood *role* from Old Testament to New Testament if the Phinehasian covenant is ignored.<sup>75</sup> Meanwhile, the understanding of the term “anointed” would be incomplete if priesthood service is obsolete. The word “anointed” was typically used with respect to “the anointed priest” and several times to refer to kings.<sup>76</sup> It is notable that the historical preparation of

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Allen, “Numbers,” 346; R. Larry Shelton, *Cross and Covenant: Interpreting the Atonement for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mission* (Tyrone, GA: Paternoster, 2006), 75-79.

<sup>72</sup>The terms and concepts used in Hebrews are based on the idea of Phinehasian priesthood. For example, Christ as the mediator of the new covenant enters the Most Holy Place once for all, and the blood of Christ cleanses our consciences. See Heb 2:17; 4:14-15; 7:27; 9:11-15.

<sup>73</sup> Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 43.

<sup>74</sup>In Zech 3:8, the high priest Joshua is from the Levitical priesthood line and was announced as the Branch that connected to Jesus. The description of the “associates” with Joshua provides no clue to their identity. Most scholars identify them as the Levitical priests. See H. G. Mitchell, “A Commentary on Haggai and Zechariah,” in *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Jonah*, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), 155, and J. C. VanderKam, “Joshua the High Priest and the Interpretation of Zechariah 3,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 53 (1991): 560.

<sup>75</sup>Knowing that the Mosaic covenant is already obsolete, there must be a reason why God restated the priesthood upon return from Babylonian exile. This thesis suggests it is to preserve the priesthood role.

<sup>76</sup>The New Testament seems to view kingship as the culmination of the anointed one instead of priesthood. This perception is due to the fact that the Jews are more eager to search for a king than a priest, even though the Messiah carries the priesthood role and kingly figure at the same time (Hos 1:11). As Tremper Longman III concludes, only the priest who is described as anointed in the search of anointing in

priesthood in Israel shaped the understanding of the New Testament for the coming Messiah.<sup>77</sup> Additionally, it is unnecessary to trace the high priest genealogy in Scripture if the succession of priesthood is not important. The succession of high priests is important because there was an expectation among the Jews of a high priest-king figure Messiah (Zech 6:11-13) upon returning from exile.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, if the covenant with Phinehas is obsolete, this eliminates the expectation of a continuation of high priests and the broader concept of priest-king rulership of the coming Messiah.

Thirdly, if the Phinehasian covenant was annulled with the Mosaic covenant, the blessings of the Phinehasian covenant would cease.<sup>79</sup> In Numbers 6:24-26, the priests serve as a channel for God's radiant blessings and influence into the world (Exod 19:6). In this account, the priests acted as the means of God's blessing to deliver grace and peace to the people, including the Gentiles. This priestly blessing was uninterrupted during exile and could continue to function although the physical Temple was not present. Unlike the Mosaic custom law which was discontinued, the succession of

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the Pentateuch. I suggest the idea of anointed should come from the priesthood. Tremper Longman III, "The Messiah: Explorations in the Law and Writings," in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2007), 15. The throne was discontinued for more than 500 years after the fall of Jerusalem while the priesthood office is still in place. Priesthood is, therefore the main contributor which keeps the concept of "anointed" alive and practical during the intertestamental period. In another view, scholars argue that the Davidic hope is shifted in a priestly direction with the failure of Zerubbabel to take the throne during the Babylonian exile. Mitchell suggests the high priest had become the head of the entire community, because neither Zerubbabel nor any descendant of David ever again ruled as king in Jerusalem. Mitchell, "A Commentary on Haggai and Zechariah," 186. Stuhlmuehler has argued that the high priest Joshua is given as "the Branch," a title formerly reserved for the Davidic royalty (Zech 3:8). C. Stuhlmuehler, *Rebuilding with Hope* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 79.

<sup>77</sup>William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, and Frederic Wm. Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1996), 689.

<sup>78</sup>In the eschatological view, Joshua, the high priest, was seen as the Branch that sat on the throne not only as a king, but as a priest as well. The two offices of king and high priest are harmonized by the coming Messiah (Zech 4:14).

<sup>79</sup>The blessing of land and the blessing of the Mosaic covenant in Deut 30:1-10 will be fulfilled by a new covenant in an eschatological way. But the blessing of the Phinehasian covenant will be suspended for 400 years, until the fulfillment by Christ.

priesthood continued until the New Testament era presented the opportunity for Gentiles to know God. Gentiles would not have this opportunity if the mediator role did not exist.

I would like to propose my last approach, that, in the context of priesthood succession, the one-to-one personal faith-relationship in the new covenant may be realized. If the Phinehasian covenant was obsolete, the individuality for Gentiles to embrace salvation would be difficult to define.<sup>80</sup> As Harrison indicates, there exists a tension between the corporality in the old covenant versus the individuality in the new covenant.<sup>81</sup> How could individuality be possible, if Gentile do not become Jews and, therefore, enter a new covenant meant for the “house of Israel and house of Judah”? I believe the Phinehasian covenant is still in effect, and will become the bridge for corporality and individuality. The Mosaic covenant was an agreement with God’s people as a corporate entity. Yet the sacrifices for individual sin were not conducted in a tribal format similar to the previous practices in Numbers 7. Rather, they were handled individually. The covenant which promised a “lasting ordinance” for the descendants of Phinehas involved a sacrificial system under Mosaic covenant.<sup>82</sup> When the old covenant was made obsolete, the sacrificial system was no longer necessary but the sacrificial *concept* still applies for purification of sin (Num 19: 9), which “will be a lasting

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<sup>80</sup>The Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) decided that the New Testament Gentiles were no longer required to become Jews, compared to the Old Testament requirement to become part of the ethnic group at a corporate level.

<sup>81</sup>The new covenant that Jeremiah proclaimed to the Israelites would not be restricted to them, but would ultimately be operative for any willing person. It changed the older concept of a corporate relationship by substituting the individual for the nation as a whole. R. K. Harrison, *Jeremiah and Lamentations: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 21 (repr., Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 142. Robertson provides the answer of “biblical corporateness” in identification of “Israel.” Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 286-90.

<sup>82</sup>There are 25 occurrences of “lasting ordinance” (עֲוֹן תָּקִיָּה) in the Old Testament. Apart from the Passover celebration which is typologically fulfilled by the Last Supper, the others all relate to Levitical priestly services. For example, Lev 3:17; Num 10:8; 15:15; 18:23; 19:10, 21; 2 Chr 2:4; Ezek 46:14. Levine states that this term has less technical meaning and simply means the use of certain instruments in sacrificial custom was to be a permanent feature of the cult. Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 306.

ordinance both for the Israelites and for the foreigners” (v. 10). The priests who allowed people to sacrifice animals individually observed the same principles which apply to the new covenant. This was further actualized in the new covenant when the Forever Priest fulfilled this Phinehasian covenant.

In summary, an obsolete view may lead to a debatable conclusion if one does not carefully interpret the Scripture. Apart from obviating the possibility of the continuity of the law in the New Testament, this view also neglects the role of historical Israel and the continuity of Old Testament promises which influence the New Testament. More importantly, Jewish believers who read the Hebrew Bible during the first century would not accept the high priest role—which should be the culmination of Christ’s crucifixion—if the Phinehasian covenant is considered obsolete. Therefore, the irrevocable view should be taken into consideration. The arguments to suggest an irrevocable view will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

### CHAPTER 3

## UNILATERALITY OF THE PHINEHASIAN COVENANT

As discussed in the previous chapter, there is no explicit evidence saying that the Phinehasian covenant is obsolete because there is no obvious term used to describe the covenant as obsolete nor was the Phinehasian covenant tied as an adjunct to the Mosaic covenant.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the Phinehasian covenant is unilateral because it was part of God's redemptive plan to have the priesthood serve in this capacity until Jesus came to fulfill his salvific plan.<sup>2</sup> God's election was unilateral and unconditional for the individual that he chooses. Throughout the entire patriarchal history, this theme of election for priestly service was never dismissed. In a way, there is no discontinuation of the priestly *role* since the creation until the time of Jesus because it represents how human relationship with God is maintained.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It is hardly convincing when scholars suggest that the Phinehasian covenant was made obsolete based on its being an adjunct to the Mosaic Covenant or the outcome of the rebellious acts of the priests.

<sup>2</sup>Walton proposed to see God's covenant as revelatory of God that serves as a mechanism for God's self-revelation instead of taking the relationship element as the essence of the covenant's goal. His suggested view on covenants, with which I agree, sees the development of every covenant as the continuity of God's revelation driving the connection between the Phinehasian covenant to Jesus Christ. See John H. Walton, *Covenant: God's Purpose, God's Plan* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 24-29. His suggestion is worth noting because the traditional view believes the need for a new covenant is for restoration of an existing relationship (a renewed covenant for Israel) rather than a formation of a new covenant which is a completion of revelation as describe by Hebrews. The author of Hebrews argued the new covenant is needed not because of the violation of the old, but because of the weakness of the old system (Heb 7:22; 8:6-13). Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 46 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 114-15; David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the "Epistle to the Hebrews"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 146.

<sup>3</sup>There is disruption of priestly *service* during the 430 years in Egypt and during the Babylonian exile. However, this does not mean the priestly role was discontinued just like the kingly role

The direction of this chapter is to discuss in detail and bring understanding as to why the Phinehasian covenant should be considered irrevocable. I will justify the unilaterality of the Phinehasian covenant based on two major ideas: God's provision in preparing the priesthood for the redemption of all mankind and the similar covenantal terms used in reference to the Davidic covenant.

The first part this chapter will be a historical interpretation of the priesthood from creation until the inauguration of the Phinehasian covenant. The second part will be a parallel comparison between the Phinehasian covenant and the Davidic covenant so as to draw the focus toward the elements of unilaterality. The working model would be based on the specific covenantal phrase used in the Phinehasian covenant which also appeared in the Davidic covenant. The pattern laid down in Numbers 18:19 and 2 Chronicles 13:5 suggests that the similar covenantal language supports the idea that the Phinehasian covenant was expressed as a unilateral decree. This model will not only justify that the Phinehasian covenant is unilateral but above all, would lead us to a conclusion where the Phinehasian covenant would have equivalent weight and be as important as the Davidic covenant which functions as a messianic text.

### **Provision in Redemptive History**

God's provision in salvation includes the priesthood role in human history. The elements of expiation and atonement were all related to reconciliation with God after the fall. As we look at the subject of redemptive history and the solution for God's wrath against sins, one must not exclude the discussion of God's mercy in establishing priesthood to resolve the tension.<sup>4</sup>

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was not discontinued during the exile.

<sup>4</sup>I will discuss the transition of priesthood in view of redemptive history in this chapter and the actualization of priesthood in view of the New Testament perspective in chap. 5.

## Transition in the Priesthood

**Adam.** With the Garden of Eden seen as a prototype of God's cosmic temple, Adam was seen as God's first high priest that attended to it.<sup>5</sup> Adam was given the responsibility to "work" and take care of the garden (Gen 2:15). The word to "work" (עָבַד) suggests the idea of serving, and Moses used the same word for the priesthood to "serve" (Num 18:7).<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, there was no work required during that time nor merely require a farmer for food before the fall. The idea that Adam was to serve as priest is strengthened by the next word to "take care" (שָׁמַר) for the garden, and this word was also used for the high priest who would "keep" the charge of the sanctuary (Num 3:32; 18:7).<sup>7</sup> As Meredith Kline concludes, the verb שָׁמַר occurs in Genesis 2:15 which "contains an explicit reference to the entrusting of man in his priestly office with the task of defending the Edenic sanctuary" and is similar in the sense of guarding the holiness of God's sanctuary against an unauthorized person going near the sanctuary (Num 3:10).<sup>8</sup>

**Noah.** The first thing that Noah had in his mind after leaving the ark was to offer a burnt sacrifice, עֹלָה (Gen 8:20). Here, Moses used the same technical term of "pleasing aroma" (רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ) for the first time when Noah presents the sacrifice to God. This term is specifically used in reference the priest presenting an offering to the Lord.<sup>9</sup> Noah offering his priestly sacrifice symbolizes the beginning of priestly worship because

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<sup>5</sup>G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 66-69.

<sup>6</sup>James Strong, *The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, ed. John R. Kohlenberger III and James A. Swanson, rev. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 1034. Willem A. VanGemeren, *NIDOTTE* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 3:304-9.

<sup>7</sup>Strong, *The Strongest Strong's*, 635. Willem A. VanGemeren, *NIDOTTE* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 4:182-84.

<sup>8</sup>Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2000), 86.

<sup>9</sup>For examples, Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16; 4:31; 6:15, 21; 8:21, 28; 17:6; 23:13, 18.

the same term appears again in Exodus 29:18 where Aaron and his sons burn the entire ram on the altar.

**Abraham.** The idea of offering burnt sacrifices (עֹלָה) was established since Noah's offering continued. The same term never appears again when God asks Abraham to sacrifice his only son as a עֹלָה (Gen 22:2).<sup>10</sup> God is asking Abraham to act in some capacity as a priest. According to Douglas Van Dorn, the readers after the establishment of the Levitical priesthood in Israel could easily link this to a pattern of priesthood as regards to "priest Abraham."<sup>11</sup>

**Aaron.** Exclude Jethro, the priest of Midian, the next appearance of עֹלָה in relation to the priesthood is found in Exodus 29:18 whereby Aaron and his sons are to burn the עֹלָה as a pleasing aroma to the Lord.<sup>12</sup> Among the duties of the priests were the "perpetual sharing" (חֶקֶעֹלָה) of offering up sacrifices before God (Exod 29:28; Lev 6:18, 22; 7:34, 36; 10:15; 24:9; Num 18:8, 11, 19), the "lasting ordinance" (חֻקֵּי עֹלָה) of keeping the lamp burning (Exod 27:21), wearing the garments (Exod 28:43; 29:9), and cleansing (Exod 30:21) and blowing the trumpets (Num 10:8). Notably, the promise of "חֻקֵּי עֹלָה" not only related to tabernacle services, it also included the promise of "perpetual priesthood" (לְכֹהֲנָת עֹלָה) in Exodus 40:15.

**Phinehas.** This promise of "perpetual priesthood" is reaffirmed in Numbers 25:13 with a dedicated covenant as a "covenant of peace."<sup>13</sup> Phinehas, as the grandson of

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<sup>10</sup>James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 209.

<sup>11</sup>Douglas Van Dorn, *Waters of Creation: A Biblical-Theological Study of Baptism* (Erie, CO: Waters of Creation, 2009), 107.

<sup>12</sup>Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, 209.

<sup>13</sup>J. I. Packer, in his introduction "On Covenant Theology" in Herman Witsius's *Economy of the Covenant between God and Man*, places Phinehas alongside Noah, Abraham, Aaron and David, where each man "directs us to covenantal thinking is by the *specific parallel between Christ and Adam*," in which

Aaron, was rewarded a covenant for this “perpetual priesthood” out of God’s grace. The Phinehasian covenant was seen as the further transition from the preliminary election out of the Aaronic priesthood.

Therefore, the Phinehasian priesthood was a continuation of God’s purpose in his redemptive plan since the creation. In a broader sense, as this thesis discusses in the following chapters, God’s election and his establishment of the priesthood does have theological significance to his people.

### **The Meaning of the Everlasting Covenant**

Furthermore, the contextual meaning of the Phinehasian covenant can be interpreted from a macro perspective. Two factors stand preeminent in interpreting the term “everlasting covenant” from the contextual aspect: it involved the essence of the promise and the extension of the promise.<sup>14</sup> First of all, the essence of the promise is “perpetual.” When God made a covenant with Noah of no more floods in Genesis 9:16, the essence of the promise is spoken as an “everlasting covenant” (בְּרִית עוֹלָם). The form of promise with Abraham in Genesis 17:7 and 13 is also spoken as an “everlasting covenant” (בְּרִית עוֹלָם). God’s promise to Noah shall stand “as long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease” (Gen 8:22).<sup>15</sup> In the same way, God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham as an everlasting possession (Gen 17:8). Secondly, the extension of the covenant was to

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one person would stand for his community, involves the whole community in the consequences of his actions and receives promises that apply to the whole community “is a familiar facet of biblical covenant thought.” Herman Witsuis, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*, vol. 1 (repr. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), 40-41.

<sup>14</sup>Ronald B. Allen, *Numbers*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Numbers-Ruth*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 346.

<sup>15</sup>Irvin A. Busenitz, “Introduction to the Biblical Covenants: The Noahic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant,” *The Maser's Seminary Journal*, 10, no.2 (1999): 185-86.

their seeds (זרע). Both Noah's seeds (Gen 9:9) and Abraham's seeds (Gen 15:5) inherit the lasting promise.

When Moses used these terms, the readers of the Pentateuch would have understood both the meaning of "everlasting covenant" and "seeds" accurately because the covenants with Noah and Abraham already provided the readers with contextual clues that clarifies the meaning in the Phinehasian covenant. The statement that God made an "everlasting covenant" with Phinehas and his "seeds" in Numbers 25:13 should be straightforward with no other implication. In other words, the context surrounding the Phinehasian covenant should be as perpetual as the Noahic and the Abrahamic covenant that will continue until the earth is destroyed by fire (2 Pet 3:10; Rev 21:1).<sup>16</sup>

### **Parallel with the Davidic Covenant**

Another approach defining the unilaterality of the Phinehasian covenant is a parallel comparison with the Davidic covenant.<sup>17</sup> In contrast the distinctive difference between the Mosaic covenant and the Phinehasian covenant is that the Mosaic covenant was general and included everyone in the community, but the Phinehasian covenant was one specific person being elected for the whole community. Same criteria of comparison should apply since one specific person being elected in the Davidic covenant was considered as unilateral and therefore the unilaterality of the Phinehasian covenant should be considered in the same manner.

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<sup>16</sup>Busenitz points out three factors: (1) the terminology employed is similar to the covenants made with Noah, Abraham, David and the New Covenant; (2) the covenant still remains when the Mosaic covenant was rendered as obsolete; (3) the language of Jer 33:20-21 places its permanence alongside the Davidic covenant. See Busenitz, "Introduction to the Biblical Covenants," 188.

<sup>17</sup>As discussed in chap. 2, the promise made to David is still valid even though the Davidic kings failed to adhere to the Pentateuchal norms. God promised to David that his love stands firm forever (Ps 89:2-4). The Phinehasian covenant should be considered valid and as the same as the Davidic covenant and should not be considered obsolete under the observance of the Mosaic law.

The nature of Phinehas's promise can be justified by comparing the identical covenantal phrase that was used in the Davidic covenant.<sup>18</sup> Several lasting principles can be drawn from this comparison considering both covenants were rewarded as covenants of grant in recognition of meritorious conduct with similar covenantal phrases. This would suggest some equivalents of standard, namely the unilaterality and perpetuity, as the covenantal terms apply.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Covenant of Peace**

First, special attention should be given to the establishment of this “covenant of peace” (בְּרִית שְׁלֹום).<sup>20</sup> According to Timothy Ashley, God's promise to Phinehas is “my covenant of peace,” where the covenant belongs to God and the word “covenant” here has the meaning of a “bond” of obligation.<sup>21</sup> This bond of obligation is “as absolute and dependable as God” rather than “mutuality between parties.”<sup>22</sup> The consistency of the term in describing this covenant can be compared to the usage of this term in other places in Scripture.

Like the promises of restoration in Ezekiel 37, God will restore the nation of Israel like the resurrection of dry bones (v. 12) to become a people united (v. 22) under

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<sup>18</sup>Busenitz, “Introduction to the Biblical Covenants,” 186-89.

<sup>19</sup>Besides Abraham and David, Kline also sees Phinehas as the recipient of such covenants of grant as rewards for faithfulness. Meredith, *Kingdom Prologue*, 237.

<sup>20</sup>The “covenant of peace” only appears four times in the Scripture (Num 25:12; Isa 54:10; Ezek 34:25, 37:26). The Hebrew construction for the phrase “my covenant of peace” (בְּרִיתִי שְׁלֹום) in Numbers is unusual because we do not usually find intervening pronominal suffixes in bound constructions. Allen, *Numbers*, 346. Anyhow, the Targum Neofiti 1 and the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan retains the term as “covenant of peace.” Martin McNamara and Ernest G. Clarke, trans., *Targum Neofiti 1: Numbers, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Numbers*, The Aramaic Bible, vol. 4 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 144, 265.

<sup>21</sup>Timothy R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 522.

<sup>22</sup>Ashely, *The Book of Numbers*, 522.

the new David (v. 24). This eschatological redemptive promise for the nation of Israel is “made” (פָּרַת) into a “covenant of peace” that serves as an “everlasting covenant” (בְּרִית עוֹלָם). As an expression first used in Genesis 9:16, the “everlasting covenant” was God’s plan to restore the earth “to be fruitful and multiply,” this promise of “everlasting covenant” is used again here and is inextricably connected to the clause of “I will multiply them” (Ezek 37:26) with the same order given to Adam (Gen 1:22), Noah (Gen 9:1) and Jacob (Gen 35:11; Exod 32:13). The theme of restoration for Israel here includes in retrospect of the creation. This can be seen in Ezekiel 34:25 where a “covenant of peace” is made for the Israelite to live in harmony with wild animals and sleep in the forest safely. The Israelites are connected to the former promises that they are going to live in the land exactly as promised by God’s “everlasting covenant.” Again “creation” is a recurrent point in Isaiah 54:10 where God affirms that his “covenant of peace” with the Israelites will never be broken. God’s mercy remains the same for the new restoration of Israel just as when God had sworn to Noah that a flood will never cover the earth again for the new creation (v. 9).

The theme of restoration is inseparable from its purpose, which is to worship the Lord. This is what God desired when he created man (Eph 1:5-6). The ultimate adoration in national restoration is the figure of the future king (Ezek 37:25). Yet the climactic summary of this restoration is that the people will worship in the sanctuary forever, for “the Lord will be their God, and they shall be the Lord’s people” (Ezek 37:27). When God’s sanctuary is set among them forever, it will never again be interrupted by further destructions.<sup>23</sup> The restoration of Israel and the sanctuary is not a protection, but it is God’s election of his people. It shows God’s covenant is with them once again.

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<sup>23</sup>Horace D. Hummel gave details elaborating on the establishment of God’s eternal sanctuary “in the midst” of people implying that the Christological tabernacle will shelter the people of God. Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2007), 1095-97.

Therefore, the reading of the “covenant of peace” given under the Phinehasian covenant (Num 25:12) should be in line with the “everlasting covenant” that has to do with “creation” and “restoration.” As described in Isaiah 54:10, God’s faithful love and his “covenant of peace” will remain forever. Punishment, like in the time of Noah, will not happen again since Noah brought back about reconciliation with God (Gen 8:20).<sup>24</sup> The “covenant of peace” described in Ezekiel (34:25 and 37:26) which is a reminder of God’s promise to restore Israel, is once again a blessing among the nations. Notably, the blessings of the “covenant of peace” are showered upon the people without any reference to obedience (Ezek 34:26).<sup>25</sup> The divine mercy that granted this covenant is unconditional and required no obligation to keep the covenant. In other words, the details of this “covenant of peace” more closely resembles the restoration of futuristic worship.<sup>26</sup>

S. M. Baugh mentions that the “covenant of peace” is particularly interesting because the covenant extended to Phinehas is later interpreted in Psalm 106 as being “credited to him as righteousness.”<sup>27</sup> The same terms were used with Abraham in Genesis 15:6 that later granted him an unconditional covenant that required nothing of Abraham (Gen 15:18). The organic connection between imputation of righteousness and covenant is later developed by Paul in Romans 5:12-21.<sup>28</sup> As “one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people,” Christ’s righteous act has granted him a new

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<sup>24</sup>Noah built the first “altar” (מִזְבֵּחַ) that is recorded in Scripture. Willem A. VanGemeren, *NIDOTTE* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 2:889.

<sup>25</sup>Margaret S. Odell, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary: *Ezekiel* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 429.

<sup>26</sup>Jesus is the One in whom all the covenants of the Old Testament find their fulfillment. In him, we have peace with God; in him, we have peace with one another and all creation.

<sup>27</sup>S. M. Baugh, “Covenant Theology Illustrated: Romans 5 on the Federal Headship of Adam and Christ,” *Modern Reformation*, 9, no. 4 (July/August 2000): 22.

<sup>28</sup>Baugh, “Covenant Theology Illustrated”: 22.

covenant. This new covenant was granted by God as unilateral and is fulfilled by Christ eternally.

In short, the collective emphasis of Israel's restoration is to show that the establishment of the "covenant of peace" is justified. The "covenant of peace" woven together with the "everlasting covenant" was God's faithful promise that his covenant will not be removed. Therefore, the "covenant of peace" extended to Phinehas is consistent with the context throughout the whole Bible which is unilateral and cannot be removed.

### **The Covenant of Salt**

It is remarkable that the "covenant of salt" also has such obvious connections. The term is spoken only two times (Num 18:19 and 2 Chr 13:5), where the same idea was used in describing God's covenant with both Phinehas and David.<sup>29</sup> The context in the Phinehasian covenant is described as a "covenant of salt" *forever* (בְּרִית מֶלַח עוֹלָם) for both Aaron and his *sons* (בָּנָיו). A similar pattern is found in 2 Chronicles 13:5 where the kingship of Israel is given to David and his *sons* (בָּנָיו) *forever* by a "covenant of salt" (לְעוֹלָם לֹא יִלְבָּנוּ בְּרִית מֶלַח).

The Rabbis interpret the term "covenant of salt" as to instruct that salt should never be lacking from sacrifices. The Talmud *Menahot* 19B-21B mentions that the salting of the offering is indispensable because there is a covenant declared in regard to salt:<sup>30</sup>

For it has been taught: "'It is a covenant of salt forever (Num 18:19),' signifies that there is a covenant declared in regard to salt. So R. Judah. R. Simeon says, "Here we find 'It is a covenant of salt forever,' and elsewhere, 'The covenant of an

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<sup>29</sup>Interestingly, the first time this phrase is found is in Lev 2:13, but the order is interpreted as "salt of covenant" (בְּרִית מֶלַח), where the covenant is with salt itself. Salt was used in the grain offerings as preserving element indicating the perpetuity of God's commitment to Israel. Thus, it symbolizes that the covenant between the Lord and Israel was to be a binding covenant. Clyde M. Woods and Justin M. Rogers, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Leviticus-Numbers* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2006), 49.

<sup>30</sup>Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, vol. 19, *Menahot* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 117, 127.

everlasting priesthood' (Num 25:13). Just as it is not possible for offerings to be without the priesthood, so it is not possible for offerings to be without salt."

Scripture therefore states [concerning the salt], "it is a covenant of salt forever" (Num 18:19), and elsewhere [in regard to the Shewbread], "it is on behalf of the children of Israel, a covenant for ever" (Lev 24:8).<sup>31</sup>

One may suggest that salt was used in the offerings as a preserving or purifying agent; however, the reasoning is not convincing. The grain offering (Lev 2:13; Num 18:9) which had no blood does not require preservation or cleansing. Furthermore, the term "covenant of salt" was also used with David which has no relationship to the customs of priestly offerings. Thus, the meaning of "covenant of salt" is not about the context of offerings, but about the "share" that God promised to Aaron and his sons as an inheritance as seen in the context of Numbers 18. God said the same to David—that he and his sons will inherit the throne of Israel forever (2 Sam 7:12-13).

Both R. J. Coggins and Raymond Dillard agree that the "covenant of salt" implies an "eternal and efficacious covenant," making the covenant made with Phinehas just as permanent as the Davidic covenant since the term was equally applicable to the Phinehas line.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch term this covenant of salt as an "indissoluble covenant" because the Lord had given the offerings to the priests as an eternal claim.<sup>33</sup> For this reason, Aaron and the whole priesthood have no inheritance among the Israelites. As it is expressed, God was their share and inheritance (Num 18:20). In addition, Baugh sees it from the perspective of a promised "inheritance" with

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<sup>31</sup>Worth noting, the Showbread is an "everlasting covenant" (בְּרִית עוֹלָם); according to Mason, this specific phrase that rarely appear in the Old Testament functions as a "sign of the sign" for the presentation of the everlasting covenant of the Sabbath introduced in Exod 31:16. Steven D. Mason, "Eternal Covenant" in *The Pentateuch: The Contours of an Elusive Phrase*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 494 (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 165.

<sup>32</sup>R. J. Coggins, *The First and Second Books of the Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 195; Raymond Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 15 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 107.

<sup>33</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1949), 3:118.

perpetual priesthood.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the “covenant of salt” signifies a concept of an everlasting and unbreakable covenant and together with its dues implying an indispensable priesthood. In this sense, the connotations of eternity associated with the claim of “covenant of salt” in the Phinehasian covenant is again proven by the same term being used in the Davidic covenant.<sup>35</sup>

### Summary

From what has been said so far, two things become apparent. First, the Phinehasian covenant should be unilateral if properly understood as provision from the perspective of redemptive history. Second, the Phinehasian covenant is as unilateral as God’s promise to David since a similar phrase used in the Phinehasian covenant was also used in the Davidic covenant.

Strikingly, the covenantal terms of “everlasting covenant,” “covenant of peace” or “covenant of salt” are references to the perpetuity of the Phinehasian covenant that should not be overlooked. Therefore, the Phinehasian covenant should be unilateral and there should be no terms because it is irrelevant to the commitment of the covenant.

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<sup>34</sup>Baugh, “Covenant Theology Illustrated,” 22.

<sup>35</sup>Everett Gill suggests the meeting of Jesus with the apostles as “Jesus. . . being *salted* (=making a salt covenant) *with them*, charged them...” (Act 1:4). The word literally meaning “to salt with” (*συναλιζόμενος*) has been translated either “to assemble” or “to eat with.” Gill sees that the scholars have missed the beautiful connotation of this word because it is not ordinary “to come together” nor “to eat together.” It should be a “covenant-coming-to-gather-and-eating.” Everett Gill, “Jesus’ Salt Covenant with the Eleven,” *Review & Expositor*, 36, no. 2 (1939): 197-98. For details of the issue, see discussion in bibliography in Don Garlington, “‘The Salt of the Earth’ in Covenantal Perspective,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 54, no. 4 (2011): 744.

## CHAPTER 4

### CANONICAL AND ANCIENT READING OF THE PHINEHASIAN COVENANT

The term messiah, “מָשִׁיחַ,” is often used and seen in the context of royalty.<sup>1</sup> Despite that, “messiah” could also pertain to the anointed high priest of Israel that points toward a future high priest. In general, the title of an anointed servant in the Old Testament could be appropriate for either a priest or a king. In fact, the title “anointed one” is not used exclusively for kings but was a common phrase in reference to the priests in the Pentateuch.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, the importance of God’s promise to Phinehas in Numbers 25:12-13 regarding the atonement Phinehas had made for the Israelites and the treatment of his perpetual priesthood has been frequently ignored in the field of messianism.<sup>3</sup> As one reads through the entire Hebrew Bible, the theme of the Phinehasian covenant could

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<sup>1</sup>Traditional messianic interpretation of the Old Testament has usually assumed that each passage looks only to the messianic king. For example, Daniel Block sees that a messiah should not be regarded as a prophet or a priest, but instead as a royal figure. 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 R. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 36-48.

<sup>2</sup>Exod 28:41; 30:30; 40:15; Lev 4:3, 5; 6:22.

<sup>3</sup>Louis Ginzberg’s work in *The Legends of the Jews* (chronological compilation of Haggada from legends in the Mishnah, Talmud and Midrash) points out that the Jewish tradition does take the Phinehasian covenant as a reward that granted him everlasting priesthood. But, Phinehas is deemed as the prophet Elijah. His everlasting priesthood is discharged until the resurrection of the dead. He was destined to be the forerunner of the Messiah to establish his coming peace on earth. For God said to Phinehas: “Thou hast in this world established peace between Me and Israel; in the future world also shalt thou establish peace between Me and them.” Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, vol. 3, trans. Paul Radin (repr. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1942), 389.

As chap. 2 pointed out, biblical scholars view this covenant as having been abolished in conjunction with the Mosaic covenant, but this view does not justify why the priesthood still existed after return from exile.

become clearer if God's redemptive plan for all eternity is seen through the lens of a coming "messiah."

The following discussion will unfold slowly in tracing this historical progress of revelation that ultimately leads to the final culmination in Jesus Christ as the eternal High Priest.<sup>4</sup> Hence, biblical support for the argument of this thesis will be established through a canonical reading of the Scripture and scriptural evidence will be discussed in comparison with the Davidic covenant. Trajectories of the Phinehasian covenant in the Hebrew Bible will be examined. The last part of this chapter will be examining the non-canonical sources that mention this covenant. The importance of these works is that they are ancient reflections on this Phinehasian covenant.

### **Canonical Reading of the Phinehasian Covenant**

This section will discuss the canonical reading of the Phinehasian covenant and how this messianic promise is interpreted along redemptive history.<sup>5</sup> With reference to the Phinehasian priesthood, it is an idea of formal expression throughout the history of Israel in passing the understanding of a future high priest, an anointed one, who would serve the Lord forever in his temple.<sup>6</sup>

#### **In the Torah**

**Exodus.** The first time the idea of an eternal priesthood appears is in Exodus 27:21 where it is "a perpetual ordinance" for Aaron and his sons to tend the lamp before the Lord. Following that, Aaron and his sons are reminded to wear the undergarments as

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<sup>4</sup>This thesis suggests that the Phinehasian covenant should be treated as part of the messianic text and Jesus had fulfilled the Phinehasian covenant when he completed the crucifixion on the cross. Then, Jesus will fulfill the Davidic covenant upon his second coming.

<sup>5</sup>No specific verses were quoted when Paul and Jesus explain the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead *according to the Scriptures* (Acts 17:2-3; Luke 24:46).

<sup>6</sup>Refer to figure A2 for an overview of God's progressive priesthood plan.

“a perpetual ordinance” whenever they go to the tent of meeting (Exod 28:43). Later, the Aaronic priesthood is explicitly addressed as “a perpetual priesthood” in Exodus 29:9. The wording in Exodus 29:9 provides the concept of priesthood not just for Aaron’s own sons but the priesthood in perpetuity. This goes along with verse 29-30 and 42 that the priesthood service will be throughout all generations.

However, this wording—“a perpetual ordinance,” is interpreted by scholars as literally for “an obligation of long time,” and the same rule applies to “a perpetual priesthood.”<sup>7</sup> Willem Hendrik Gispen explains that this probably comes from a composite of the term *olam* (עולם) which, when used in relation to time (i.e: Exod 19:9) literally means “hidden, unknown time,” and hence “time far removed in the past or in the future,” or “eternity” (i.e., Exod 27:21).<sup>8</sup> This interpretation is incorporated in the Jewish translation for Exodus 19:9 as Aaron and his sons shall have priesthood as “their right for all time.”<sup>9</sup> It is defined as the priestly prerogative and is effective only when the priest is fully and properly attired in his sacerdotal vestments.<sup>10</sup> Alternately, as George Bush suggests, it is to be understood that they shall enjoy the priesthood office in “uninterrupted succession” as long as the Aaronic priesthood continued.<sup>11</sup>

Either way, I do not agree with the “literal” interpretation simply because the priesthood that God promised will not be terminated or abolished. The Aaronic priesthood and Mosaic covenant, while running parallel to one another, remain distinct

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<sup>7</sup>Noel D. Osborn and Howard A. Hatton, *A Handbook on Exodus*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1999), 677, 684.

<sup>8</sup>Willem Hendrik Gispen, *Exodus*, The Bible Student’s Commentary, trans. Ed van der Mass (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 181.

<sup>9</sup>Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus: The Traditional Hebrew Text with The New JPS Translation*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 187.

<sup>10</sup>Sarna, *Exodus*, 187.

<sup>11</sup>George Bush, *Commentary on Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1993), 475.

because the priestly covenant was intended to be permanent. The escalation of the priesthood will continue and culminate in Christ as this paper explores this further in the following chapter.

**Numbers.** First of all, the priesthood of the house of Aaron is given by God as an unconditional “gift” (Numbers 18:7). In the same context, Numbers 18:19 clearly describes the priesthood as a “perpetual share” (לְחֶקֶד־עוֹלָם), for it is “an everlasting covenant of salt” (בְּרִית מֶלַח עוֹלָם) between the Lord and the descendants.

Later in the divine speech in Numbers 25:12-13 it was affirming that Aaron’s descendants would be priests forever and, specifically, the lineage of Phinehas according to the covenant with Phinehas.<sup>12</sup> As discussed in chapter 2, scholars like Allen, Dozeman, Mayhue and Ice, and Hahn, all suggest that this promise is identical to the Davidic covenant.<sup>13</sup>

### In the Prophets

**1 Samuel.** A prophecy from God came to Eli. According to 1 Samuel 2:35, God promised to raise up a faithful priest (singular) that would do God’s will and God would establish the priestly house to serve before the Lord’s anointed one (מְשִׁיחִי) “forever.” This raises the question “Who is the faithful priest and who is “my anointed”?” To the first question, James E. Smith supplies four answers for the “faithful priest”: (a) Samuel; (b) Zadok; (c) a collective of priests that God raised up; (d) Christ.<sup>14</sup> Smith rules

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<sup>12</sup>Recent scholarship has begun to recognize the Phinehasian covenant as a lasting covenant that was extended from the priestly service in Num 18:19. As Milgrom suggests, this grant of priesthood has the perquisites of the priestly office which is exclusively to the line of Phinehas and later reflected to the Zadokites as officiating priests. See Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, The JPS Torah Commentary, ed. Nahum M. Sarna (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 216-17, 479.

<sup>13</sup>Allen, *Numbers*, 219. Dozeman, “Numbers,” 2:200; Mayhue and Thomas Ice, “Covenants,” 61; and Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (London: Yale University Press, 2009), 158-60.

<sup>14</sup>James E. Smith, *1 & 2 Samuel*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College

out Samuel and Zadok since Samuel was not called as a priest and Zadok was not identified as the “faithful priest” by the author of Kings.<sup>15</sup> While (c) does not seem fit for a singular “priest,” I would suggest, a better view is that the “faithful priest” is Christ who would fulfill the Phinehasian covenant as the ultimate culmination. Christ, as the Faithful Priest, would carry out all task according to God’s heart.<sup>16</sup>

Who is the anointed one then? Scholars suggest this messiah should be the future king instead of a future priest.<sup>17</sup> Most take the reference here to be a Davidic king as the future anointed one, while others, who do not make this explicit identification, see no reference to a priestly messiah.<sup>18</sup> According to P. Kyle McCarter, for example, the “messiah” is to be interpreted as king rather than as priest because he sees the faithful priest as Zadok that served Solomon and the “sure house” is that of the Zadokites.<sup>19</sup>

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Press, 2000), 71.

<sup>15</sup>Samuel was not the seed of Aaron and the priestly race. Therefore, the perpetual priesthood could not go through Samuel. Smith, *1&2 Samuel*, 71. Cyril J. Barber suggests Samuel as the primary fulfillment of this faithful priest who will discharge Eli’s family, but Barber proposed that this prophecy may look into the later fulfillment that possibly included Christ. Cyril J. Barber, *The Books of Samuel*, vol. 1 (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1994), 58.

Both Ralph W. Klein and Robert D. Bergen suggested this faithful priest is Zadok with reference to the legitimate priests in Jerusalem under Solomon. This prophecy is seen as having been fulfilled with the rise of Zadok (1Kgs 2:35). Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 10 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 27; Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary vol. 7 (Broadman & Holman, 1996), 84. Their explanation is not convincing by referring to the anointed one as a Davidic king and seeing the faithful priest as fulfilled under a limited period, instead of the faithful priest and anointed one living forever.

<sup>16</sup>John 8:29.

<sup>17</sup>Why not a future priest? Both David Jobling and Tony W. Cartledge see the anointed one as anticipates monarchy because the covenant of priesthood with Phinehas is bring to an end and turned out to be stringently conditional (1Sam 2:30) as the result of the flagrant sin practiced by Eli’s house. David Jobling, *1 Samuel* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 56; Tony W. Cartledge, *1&2 Samuel*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2001), 61. I would argue, Eli’s house is not the descendant of Phinehas and the Phinehasian covenant is still relevant.

<sup>18</sup>It is unlikely to refer the anointed one as a priestly Messiah since the eternal priesthood covenant was nullified. Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 23.

<sup>19</sup>P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *1 Samuel*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday,

I do not want to reject this reading simply because my own reading is very different looking from the priesthood perspective. Moreover, Christ has both the role of Messiah as king and as priest, but I cannot find plausibility in it since the Phinehasian covenant cannot be nullified. In this sense, I would argue that the anointed one should be interpreted as the priestly Messiah.<sup>20</sup> As Smith notes, no high priest is ever said to have walked before the kings of Judah or Israel, not to mention, the Faithful Priest that God raised up.<sup>21</sup> This Faithful Priest is going to serve for the priestly Messiah forever. In a way, this also implied that the Faithful Priest has an everlasting life just as the priestly Messiah, which means, the Faithful Priest *is* the Anointed One that will serve God forever. Smith has the same view that sees the Faithful Priest as the priestly Messiah whereby he points out that the Messiah's house is to deal with priestly matters (not kingly matters) and the former priests would have to turn to the Faithful Priest (Messiah) for appointment of the priestly office (v. 36).<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, the context which speaks of a future messiah does not use the term “king” nor is there a direct contribution to a ruler or kingship. In the meantime, no King has appeared yet. With regard to the priestly house of Eli whose last descendant Abiathar was removed from the priesthood (1 Kgs 2:27), this promise seems to be in line with the promise in Numbers 25. The Septuagint expresses it as “ἐνώπιον χριστοῦ μου” (before my Christ) and interprets it as the faithful priest together with his priestly house will serve *Christ*. In light of the New Testament, the identity of this faithful priest and the messiah belongs to Jesus as the great High Priest (Heb 4:14).<sup>23</sup>

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1984), 91-93.

<sup>20</sup>The title “anointed” would also be appropriate to priests (Lev 4:3, 5, 16).

<sup>21</sup>Smith, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 71.

<sup>22</sup>Smith, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 72.

<sup>23</sup>Another hint to show Jesus was the prophesied “faithful priest” of 1Sam 2:35 is to link

**Isaiah.** Most scholars suggest that there is no unified presentation of a messianic figure within the book of Isaiah.<sup>24</sup> Alec Motyer proposes that there are three messianic portraits of one Messianic person according to the structural division of the book.<sup>25</sup> However, I would like to have references of the messianic figure focus on the servant songs which point directly to the eschatological servant as the priestly Messiah.<sup>26</sup> All four servant songs (Isa 42; 49; 50; 52-53) describe the service and suffering of the servant as being the atonement for the sins of the world and considerable details are provided that regard the Messiah as a priestly figure.<sup>27</sup>

In Isaiah 42:6 and Isaiah 49:8, the servant was made to be “a covenant for the people” and be “a light for the Gentiles.”<sup>28</sup> This reveals the servant was made as “a covenant” between God and the people. He is to represent the people as an agreement with God. This denotes the servant functions as *mediator*. The servant was also made as “a light” for the Gentiles. He is the source for the non-believers to walk out from

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Samuel’s childhood as a type of Jesus (1 Sam 2:26; Luke 2:40, 52).

<sup>24</sup>Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 455; Richard Schultz, “The King in the book of Isaiah,” *The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite, Richard S. Hess, and Gordon J. Wenham (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 142.

<sup>25</sup>Motyer distinguishes the three messianic figures according to the structure of the book as the King (Isa 1-37), the Servant (Isa 38-55), and the Anointed Conqueror (Isa 56-66). J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), 13.

<sup>26</sup>The Messiah in this context should be refer to a priestly Messiah. The priestly Messiah would be seen as an antitype of the high priest since suffering was part of the requirement for the role as high priest and as the instrument of salvation for God’s people. According to Brian Small, “Jesus’s suffering can be seen as *his vocational training* in preparation for his role as high priest.” See Brian Small, *The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews*, Biblical Interpretation Series 128 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 177.

<sup>27</sup>The identity of this servant has been hotly debated. For a summary of various positions held by scholars, see Gordon P. Hugenberger, “The Servant of the Lord in the ‘Servant Songs’ of Isaiah,” in *The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite, Richard S. Hess, and Gordon J. Wenham (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 108-19.

<sup>28</sup>The exact meaning of the phrase “a covenant for the people” is debatable. Childs suggests that the servant is given as a covenant to the people and embodies a covenantal relationship with the Gentiles. Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville: WJK, 2001), 326.

darkness (Isa 42:7) and turn to God. To turn the non-believer to God is the responsibility of a priest. Therefore, in both cases, the servant functioning as priest for the two parties is clearly shown.<sup>29</sup>

The servant who has appeared in Isaiah 50 addresses the call to faith to those who “fear the Lord” and “obeys the word of his servant” (v. 10). The collocation implies that these two are connected. The task of the servant is to teach so that the people may obey and fear the Lord. In order to teach, God had equipped him with the tongue of a teacher (v. 4). The teaching of the law is one of the primary roles the priest has besides overseeing the sacrificial cult (Lev 10:11; Deut 33:10; Jer 18:18).

The suffering servant in Isaiah 53:8 served a twofold role to his people. The servant not only carries the *priestly* duty to represent his people, he is also the *sacrifice* that is punished on behalf of the transgression.<sup>30</sup> This corresponds to the understanding toward priesthood because the priest should be from among the people in order to represent the community and transgression can be forgiven only through a guilt offering.<sup>31</sup>

In addition, the servant in Isaiah 61 also portrayed a priestly figure. He is “anointed” to proclaim the good news, to proclaim freedom, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. Through his work, the people will be called priests (v. 6), and they will be blessed by the Lord (v. 9). Most importantly, the servant has clothed his head “like a priest” with a beautiful ornament (v. 10).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>The author of Matthew comments that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isa 42 after Jesus had healed many people (Matt 12:1-16).

<sup>30</sup>The servant is suffering in the place of those who should be suffering, and he had to endure unjust suffering. John N. Oswalt rightly points out, it is not about the servant escaped from injustice, but his treatment was unjust that the servant was taken away to his death. This death denotes the servant’s voluntary submission to bear the sins of the world. See John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapter 40-66* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 393.

<sup>31</sup>Exod 28:1; Heb 5:1; Lev 7:2; 16:16.

<sup>32</sup>Ornament, פָּאָר is the turban used for priests (Exod 39:28) but was used for bridegrooms or

It shows clearly that the Messiah in the “servant songs” as well as in Isaiah 61 has an identification as an eschatological high priest.<sup>33</sup> As the book ends, God will choose his people from all the nations to be priests and Levites to serve in the new heavens and the new earth (Isa 66:21-22), indicating that the promise of priesthood still stands.

**Jeremiah.** The most obvious evidence that the promise to Phinehas was an “everlasting covenant” can be found in the book of Jeremiah. The words of the Lord came to Jeremiah twice and the oracles put both the Davidic covenant and the Phinehasian covenant in an equivalent comparison three times (see table 2).

Table 2. The equivalent comparison of the two covenants in Jeremiah

|                   | Davidic covenant   | Phinehasian covenant  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| First comparison  | This is what the Lord says:<br>v.17: <u>David will never fail</u> to have a man sit on the throne of Israel, | v.18: <i><b>nor</b></i> will <u>the Levitical priests ever fail</u> to have a man to stand before me continually to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to present sacrifices. |
| Second comparison | This is what the Lord says:<br>v.21: then <u>my covenant with David</u> my servant                           | <i><b>and</b></i> my <u>covenant with the Levites</u> who are priests ministering before me—can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne.                  |
| Third comparison  | v.22: I will make <u>the descendants of David</u> my servant   | <i><b>and</b></i> <u>the Levites</u> who minister before me as countless as the stars in the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore.  |

God’s statement is unequivocally assured to David’s successor that the king’s throne would be established forever, and at the same time the Phinehasian priesthood would be sustained forever as well.<sup>34</sup> For instance, in the first comparison, Jeremiah

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for women in Isaiah (Isa 3:20; 61:10). Childs concur that the suffering servant in Isaiah is a description identifying with the eschatological Messiah. Childs, *Isaiah*, 505.

<sup>33</sup>As this thesis proposes, this is the expected priestly figure mentioned in Num 25:13.

<sup>34</sup>Michael S. Kogan points out that Jeremiah included God’s assurance that both the Davidic dynasty and the Phinehasian priesthood were to be eternal (Jer 33:17-18). Michael S. Kogan, *Opening the*

33:18 resembles an eschatological promise given to the descendants of Phinehas as well as a reiteration that the duties of the priests remain during the eschatological period. Similarly, the covenant with the Levites (Phinehas) was in parallel comparison with the Davidic covenant again in verse 21. In other words, both covenants carry the same weight which remain in force that cannot be broken “with the day and with the night” (v. 20).<sup>35</sup> Moreover, in the third comparison, a similar emphasis about the Phinehas priesthood mentions that both the descendants of Phinehas and David will be as countless as the stars and the sand (v. 22), echoing the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 22:17). This shows clearly that in the eye of God these two covenants are equivalent, side by side, and there is no hint that the Phinehasian covenant is viewed as a subordinate covenant to David.

**Ezekiel.** A similar emphasis about Phinehas’s everlasting priesthood in God’s long-term purposes is found in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 37:24-26, when God establishes David as a king forever, God’s sanctuary will be set up “among them forever” too. The priests were implied in this text and are to serve God in the sanctuary forever (see table 3). They are not held accountable for their iniquity but continue to serve in the sanctuary (Ezek 44:10-11). This shows the Phinehasian covenant is not broken. In fact, the “Levitical priests” will be fully restored (Ezek 43:19; 44:15) once the great altar is restored. The Phinehasian priesthood is expected to continue to serve in the temple when God’s glory returns to the eschatological temple.

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*Covenant: A Jewish Theology of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 63.

<sup>35</sup>Charles Lee Feinberg makes an even stronger claim about the Phinehasian covenant being an everlasting covenant:

This passage has been a *crux interpretum* for expositors. It is especially difficult for those who hold an amillennial position in eschatology. The only resort for them is in allegorization of the text or the use of a dual hermeneutic. Simply stated, the passage assures that just as the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7) is guaranteed by God’s promise, so is the Levitical priesthood. . . . If the promises here are to be understood symbolically, this at once prejudices the disposition of the sacrifices in Ezek 40-48, the interpretation of Isa 66:21-23, and the treatment of Zech 14:16-19. How are these passages to be handled?

Charles Lee Feinberg, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 237.

Table 3. The equivalent comparison of the two covenants in Ezekiel

| Davidic covenant   | Phinehasian covenant implied                       |
|--|--|
| Ezekiel 37<br>v.26: I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and | <i>I will put my sanctuary among them forever.</i> |

**Zechariah.** The passages include the anointed high priest alongside the anointed descendant of David who both play a crucial role in the eschatological temple.<sup>36</sup> The Branch as the servant of the Lord will build the temple, sit and rule on his throne, but he will also be a priest on his throne at the same time (Zech 6:13).<sup>37</sup> It was mentioned that the high priest and kingship will become one and there will be harmony between the two (v. 13).<sup>38</sup> This is an enigma that cannot be solved without the light of the New Testament where Jesus himself carries the kingly messiah and priestly messiah role at the same time.

**Malachi.** Two descriptions need clarification before examining the Phinehasian covenant in the book of Malachi: “covenant with Levi” and “the messenger of the covenant.”

The term “covenant with Levi” appears two times in the book of Malachi (2:4, 8). The purpose of the book aims to remind the priests that God has a “covenant with

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<sup>36</sup>Zech 3:8; 4:14; 6:9-15.

<sup>37</sup>Childs suggests that the tradition of Zechariah and the sub-ordination of the prince to the priests in Ezekiel 40-48 contribute to the two messiahs ideology for Qumran. Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 455.

<sup>38</sup>Martin J. Selman suggests this passage together with other passages (i.e: Jer 33:14-26 and Ezek 37:24-28) that have royal and priestly anointed leaders are acting or ruling with righteousness and justice. In the matter of establishing the Davidic kingship, the spiritual values are important too. This achievement is not seen in military or political terms, but from the Levitical priesthood that brings belief into effect. Martin J. Selman, “Messianic Mysteries,” in *The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite, Richard S. Hess, and Gordon J. Wenham (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 291.

Levi” that is still efficacious with them and it is to bring “life and peace” to the people.<sup>39</sup> But why does Malachi call it the “covenant with Levi” if he is referring to the covenant given to Phinehas? William Brown and Ray Clendenen suggest that Malachi may instead be appealing the priestly covenant to the Levi *tribe* with a portrayal of the ideal priest in mind.<sup>40</sup> The sons of Levi stood up as one in zeal for the Lord in the golden calf episode and in the Midianite woman episode.<sup>41</sup> The zealousness of Levi resembles Malachi’s description of the “covenant with Levi.”<sup>42</sup> Matthew Henry says, “this covenant was made with the whole tribe of Levi when they were distinguished from the rest of the tribes. These great blessings of life and peace, contained in that covenant, God gave to him, to Levi, to Aaron, to Phinehas.”<sup>43</sup> Therefore, the “covenant with Levi” is the *same* as the

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<sup>39</sup>The covenant is also called a covenant of “life and peace” (Mal 2:5) because other than offering sacrifices, the responsibility of the priests was also to keep, read, teach and apply the Law of Moses to the people. Only through the establishment of the priesthood can the word of God “bring life and peace” to the people. Moshe Weinfeld notes the actions of “Levi” (Phinehas) are compared with Abraham and David. Particularly, the indication of loyalty and devotion of “Levi” is similar to the descriptions of the loyalty of Abraham and David: “He walked with me [he served me] in peace and uprightness” (Mal 2:6). See Moshe Weinfeld, *The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 230-31, 263.

Some scholars suggested that the “covenant with Levi” is connected with the Phinehasian covenant. See J. L. Smith, *Chiamus in the Post Exile Prophets: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi* (Anchorage, AK: White Stone Press, 2004), 115; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Micah-Malachi*, The Communicator’s Commentary Series 21 (Dallas: Word Books 1992), 457; and Jonathan Gibson suggests that both covenants are connected through a number of lexemes in Num 25:10-13. For example, פָּהֵן (Mal 1:6; 2:1; Num 25:11, 13); שָׁבַע (Mal 2:6; Num 25:11); נָתַן (Mal 2:2; Num 25:12); בָּרִית (Mal 2:4, 5, 8; Num 25:12, 13); שָׁלוֹם (Mal 2:5, 6; Num 25:12); זָרַע (Mal 2:3; Num 25:13). See Jonathan Gibson, *Covenant Continuity and Fidelity: A Study of Inner-Biblical Allusion and Exegesis in Malachi*, Library of Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament Studies 625 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 102-3.

<sup>40</sup>Brown and Clendenen suggest that this is at least part of what Malachi has in mind. See William P. Brown, *Obadiah through Malachi* (Louisville: WJK, 1996), 197, and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, NAC 21A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 297.

<sup>41</sup>By tradition Levites were renowned for their *zeal* (Exod 32:29; Num 25:13). And Moses said the Levites have been *set apart* (ESV translated as *ordained*) for the service of the Lord (Exod 32:29).

<sup>42</sup>Dorn suggests this “covenant with Levi” is very much like what God reconfirmed the Abrahamic covenant with Isaac and Jacob that God was narrowing the promise through their seed. In the same way, the Phinehasian covenant is an extension of the Levitical covenant. Douglas Van Dorn, *Waters of Creation: A Biblical-Theological Study of Baptism* (Erie, CO: Waters of Creation, 2009), 127.

<sup>43</sup>Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961), 1196.

“covenant with Phinehas” which God gave to Aaron and Phinehas.<sup>44</sup> Along the same lines, Beth Glazier-McDonald correctly writes that Malachi calls the priestly covenant a “covenant with Levi” rather than Aaronic (or Phinehas) which “stems from the aforementioned subordination of the priesthood to the house of Levi. Because of this development, the covenant concluded with Phinehas became common property of the ‘levitical’ priesthood.”<sup>45</sup> For this reason, the “covenant with Levi” should be treated as a “covenant with Phinehas” in Malachi.

Two messengers were mentioned in Malachi 3:1 and opinions on the messengers vary. Some scholars suggest both messengers refer to the prophetic forerunner, and others distinguish the two.<sup>46</sup> This thesis argues the second messenger is distinct from the first messenger, and the designated title of “the messenger of the covenant” should be referring to a priestly figure that is related to the Phinehasian covenant as the ultimate High Priest.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Dorn has the same position that the “covenant of Levi” is the same covenant to Phinehas. See Dorn, *Waters of Creation*, 127.

<sup>45</sup>Interestingly, the “peace” and “righteousness” surrounding the story of Phinehas (Num 25:12-13, Ps 106:31) is identical to Malachi’s message (Mal 2:5-6). Glazier-McDonald notes a similarity of language and construction used between the two episodes. The idolatrous practices (illicit sexual relationships and worship of other gods) that Phinehas is combating is precisely the same issues that Malachi condemns (Mal 2:10-16). Glazier-McDonald sees the second messenger as Yahweh himself. See Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi: The Divine Messenger*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 98 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 80.

<sup>46</sup>Scholars have identified numerous proposals. D. L. Petersen sees both messengers are the same forerunner, whereas Beth Glazier-McDonald sees the second messenger as Yahweh himself. Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 129-32. For detailed bibliography, see Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 286-88. Anyhow, the promise of the first messenger was later fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist. Jesus, using these words from Malachi, professes John the Baptist was the first messenger (Matt 11:10) and he was the Elijah to come (Matt 11:14).

<sup>47</sup>The following four reasons will justify the argument.

A. Different responsibility. The first messenger is to prepare the way for the Lord while the second messenger is to purge the sons of Levi and to judge (3:3, 5).

B. From the context. The second messenger should be a priestly figure who is to purify the priestly institutions based on the warnings given to the priests in the previous chapter (2:5, 8). The targeted group is the Levites and not the Israelites (3:3).

C. In relation to the covenant. The messenger of “the covenant” should be a priestly figure

The Lord or the “messenger of the covenant” will come to his temple (3:1). The prophet Ezekiel described God’s returns to the temple with two purposes. First, it is to live among the Israelites forever (Ezek 43:7). Secondly, it is to put away the detestable practices so that the people will never again defile God’s holy name (Ezek 43:7-9). Thus, the second messenger in Malachi invites an identification of a priestly figure. He is “the messenger of the *Phinehasian* covenant.” In a way, he is the greater High Priest that carries the divine figure so as to purge and purify the priesthood. Even though the term “anointed” is not being described, the priestly figure of this second messenger is to be understood as the anointed High Priest that will come. Hywel Jones gives his insightful view about this “messenger of the covenant” in relation to validating the covenant with Levi:

But it was not Nehemiah’s return to Jerusalem that Malachi was looking for as a validation of the covenant, or even for a prophet like Elijah (4:5). He was looking for the coming of the greatest Levite, the messenger of the covenant (3:1) who would bring into existence purged and consecrated Levites, that is, gospel preachers (3:2).<sup>48</sup>

The magnificent words which Malachi used therefore describe the Lord Jesus Christ and his servants who proclaim the truth of God. They are, perhaps, the most wonderful description in the Bible of the preacher of God’s good news, even though they are found in the Old Testament.<sup>49</sup>

With these considerations, this thesis’s proposal of a priestly Messiah fits the context of Malachi. To identify Jesus Christ as the messenger with a priestly figure provides a ready solution for the problem of the identity of the Lord. “The Lord” that the

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since “the covenant” is referring to “the covenant with Levi,” which is the only covenant mentioned in the book and is highlighted as “a covenant of life and peace” (2:5) that echoes Numbers 25:12. The second messenger is to restore the priesthood so that “the covenant with Levi” may continue (2:4).

D. The divine figure of the second messenger. The word plays in Malachi 3:1 identifies “the Lord” and “the messenger of the covenant” as the same person that the people desire to come.

<sup>48</sup>Hywel R. Jones, “Remembering A Forgotten Covenant,” *The Banner of Truth* 429 (June 1999): 4.

<sup>49</sup>Jones, “Remembering A Forgotten Covenant,” 5.

Israelites were seeking was identified as “the messenger of the covenant.” Since God never claimed himself to be a messenger, the “messenger of the covenant” is therefore a different identity than the divine God. Yet, the Lord reaffirms in Malachi 3:5 that he is “the messenger” that will come. It is hence reasonable to conclude that the priestly Messiah is Jesus and he was sent from God as the ultimate High Priest according to the promise in the Phinehasian covenant that the people are awaiting (Mal 3:1).

### **In the Writings**

**Psalms.** The passages in Psalms stand out in regard to the Phinehasian covenant as a comparison to the Davidic covenant. As Psalm 89 ends scroll three reiterating the covenant with David, Psalm 106:31 ends scroll four by reiterating that the covenant of the priesthood belonged to Phinehas’s “generations forever” (וְדֹר וָדֹר עוֹלָם). This is the only occurrence in the Bible that distinctly mentions the Phinehasian covenant besides Numbers 25.

**Ezra.** The emphasis of Ezra’s genealogy as the descendant of Phinehas and Aaron in Ezra 7:1-5 is an indication of the attention given to the Phinehasian covenant.<sup>50</sup> The priestly covenant was not abolished, even though the priests and the Levites have a mixed marriage that is not permitted in the Law. The mention of the descendants of Phinehas and David in the list of the return in Ezra 8:2 shows that the succession of the two lineages is of vital importance.

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<sup>50</sup>Besides showing that Ezra was from the Aaronic-Phinehasian high priestly line, the purpose of this genealogy is unclear. Commentators have difficulties with the awkward construction of the genealogy because it was inserted between the name Ezra in v. 1 and the main verb, “came up” in v. 6. See Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, The New American Commentary, vol. 10 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 126. As this thesis argues, the genealogy of the high priest is considerably important. It is to show the importance of the priesthood lineage as equally as important to the genealogy of the royal lineage. Because those who wanted to be priests or kings had to show they were descended from their line.

**Nehemiah.** Even after the exile, the returnees did not forget about the Phinehasian covenant. Although one of the sons of the high priest had defiled the priesthood by having a mixed marriage, Nehemiah banished him and asked God to rebuke them because they defiled the priestly office and “the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites” (Neh 13:29). When Nehemiah had purged everything foreign, he again installed and assigned the priests and the Levites back to their post (v. 30).

In summation, the canonical reading shows the Phinehasian covenant appeared consistently in the Scripture. Different terms (“Levitical priesthood” or “covenant with Levi”) may appear to reflect the same idea, yet, it is clear that the Phinehasian covenant stands alone in redemptive history. This covenant thus exists as one of the prominent covenants in the Scripture and never loses its luster even as it stands alongside the Davidic covenant.

### **Ancient Reading of the Phinehasian Covenant**

A dual vision of a Messiah referring to seeds of David and seeds of Phinehas, developed during the second temple period.<sup>51</sup> In the second century BCE, the hope for two messiahs was to be expected and is reflected in the concept of messianism.<sup>52</sup> The ancient writings from the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and the Qumran writings reveal a belief in two Anointed Ones who carry the Hebrew title “messiah” and are expected to arise contemporaneously.

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<sup>51</sup>For a bibliography on the doctrine of “two messiahs,” see the section on “Qumran Messianism” in Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Major Publications and Tools for Study* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 114-18.

<sup>52</sup>As discussed in the previous section, the materials in Ezekiel and Zechariah could supply the inspiration for a diarchic constitution. The idea of a royal-priestly diarchy continues to appear in early second century BCE. The impression given to the reader is that Israel is destined to be ruled by the term “a priest and a Davidic prince” or the theme “Levi and Judah.” See David Goodblatt, *The Monarchic Principle: Studies in Jewish Self-Government in Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994), 58-63. For examples that mentioned “Levi and Judah” in Pseudepigrapha, see Testament of Simeon 7:1-2; Testament of Dan 5:4; Testament of Gad 8:1; Testament of Joseph 19:6; and Testament of Levi 2:11.

## In the Apocrypha

**Sirach.** In the book of Sirach, also known as “the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach,” the author Ben Sira celebrates the covenant with the patriarchs and Israel by recounting the great figure of Israel’s history from Sirach 44:1-50:24.<sup>53</sup> After praising Moses and Aaron, the author gives his attention to Phinehas. The part worth noting is his description of the Phinehasian covenant in reference to the Davidic covenant:

Phinehas son of Eleazar . . . a covenant of friendship was established with him . . . that he and his descendants should have the dignity of the priesthood forever. **Just as** a covenant was established with David son of Jesse of the tribe of Judah, that the king’s heritage passes only from son to son, so the heritage of Aaron is for his descendants alone. (Sirach 45: 23-25, emphasis mine)

This interpretation connotes the ancient understanding that the Phinehasian covenant and the Davidic covenant both carry equal weight and an eternal promise from God. Both covenants are equally important in God’s eschatological promised plan. Apart from that, Ben Sira also shows how one of their contemporaries treat the priesthood. As Sirach 45: 6-25 describes the priestly covenant with Aaron and his descendants as eternal, it emphasizes that the Aaronic (Phinehas) priesthood was an “everlasting covenant” for him (vv. 7, 15, 24). In a way, this covenant is still within their memory and still in effect.

**1 Maccabees.** This understanding is further supported in the books of Maccabees which also clearly portrays that Phinehas had “received the covenant of everlasting priesthood” (1 Macc 2:54) after the Maccabees had already occupied prominent roles in the second century BCE. As classical allusion, the *zeal* of Phinehas was mentioned several times as the expression of “everlasting priesthood” would remain forever in the family of Phinehas as seen in 1 Maccabees 2:26, 50 and 4 Maccabees 18:12.<sup>54</sup> Aside from political reasons that use the Phinehasian covenant to “mask”

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<sup>53</sup>The title of this pericope, “hymn in honor of our ancestors” was included in the Greek text. Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1516.

<sup>54</sup>The *zeal* of Phinehas became the model of the Jews and the passage beginning in 1 Macc 2:26 marks the turning point for the entire book. From this point, faithful Jews ceased passive resistance against idolatry and began fighting back with weapons. The author of Maccabees sets in place the entire

Mattathias's authority, there must be also some truth in this covenant as interpreted by the religious leaders. The authenticity and efficacy of the Phinehasian covenant in conjunction with the Davidic covenant must have been seriously debated.<sup>55</sup>

Notably, after mentioning Phinehas's "everlasting priesthood," David's "throne of the kingdom forever" was mentioned again (1 Macc 2:57). The pattern of two covenants appearing together in parallel seems to imply that there is a link between the two covenants. As this thesis suggests, this may explain again that the Phinehasian covenant should be treated as important as the Davidic covenant.

**1 Esdras.** The passage in 1 Esdras 8:1-2 is similar to Ezra 7:1-5 and 2 Esdras 1:1-3 that comprises the genealogies of the priesthood line traced from Ezra "son of Seraiah" to "son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the high priest." According to Dorn, this pattern of genealogy tracing is the same way that genealogies of kings tracing the line of the kings in a manner corresponding to the Davidic covenant.<sup>56</sup> Indirectly, the priesthood genealogy implies a covenant with the priest.

### **In the Pseudepigrapha**

**Jubilees.** In Jubilees 30:18-20, the Phinehasian covenant was explicitly discussed, wherein the "seed" of Levi was chosen for priesthood in recognition of Phinehas's zeal, and the blessing of the covenant is "forever":

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ensuing revolt which was God's will to fight against Antiochus and apostate Jews who complied with Antiochus's enforced program of Hellenization and idolatry. Edward A. Engelbrecht, *The Apocrypha: The Lutheran Edition with Notes* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2012), 163-65.

<sup>55</sup>Concepts toward the Phinehasian covenant and Davidic covenant must have emerged at that time. The author of 1 Macc expresses the principles for legitimizing the Hasmonean dynasty to become both kings and priests, by which, Mattathias's zeal would win for them the priesthood, and their rule over God's people would make them become kings. Engelbrecht, *The Apocrypha*, 164.

<sup>56</sup>Dorn, *Waters of Creation*, 117n145.

And the *seed* of Levi was chosen for the priesthood and levitical (orders) to minister before the Lord always just as we do. And Levi and his sons will be blessed *forever* because he was zealous to do righteousness and judgement and vengeance against all who rose up against Israel. And thus a blessing and righteousness will be written (on high) as a testimony for him in the heavenly tablets before the God of all. And we will remember for a thousand generations the righteousness which a man did during his life in all of the (appointed) times of the years. And (it) will be written (on high) and it will come to him and his descendants after him. And he will be written down as a friend and a righteous one in the heavenly tablets.<sup>57</sup>

The author of Jubilees is retelling the historical event just as the ancient readers understood it throughout generations. The Phinehasian covenant became a major memory in the history of Israel and served as a reminder against idolatry.<sup>58</sup> The Phinehas figure would remind the readers about the new restoration that God would grant to the Israelites and that the blessing of Aaron's house would continue. Interestingly, Judah shares a blessing with Levi in the same pericope, which corresponds to the diarchic idea again (Jub. 37:11-20, 31).<sup>59</sup> Again, this proves that an understanding of a dual messiah was common at their contemporary.

**Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs.** In the Testament of Simeon, the passage mentioned that “the Lord shall raise up from Levi as it were a High Priest, and from Judah as it were a King.”<sup>60</sup> The high priesthood here is assigned to the descendants of Levi and the kingship is assigned to the descendants of Judah. Both roles explicitly show that the priesthood and kingship are parallel suggesting that the priesthood is eternal since the kingship is eternal.

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<sup>57</sup>Italic mine. O. S. Wintermute, “Jubilees (Second Century B.C.),” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 113.

<sup>58</sup>The theology of Jubilees is about to restore a proper relationship with God and call the readers to obedience. See Wintermute, “Jubilees (Second Century B.C.),” 47.

<sup>59</sup>Wintermute, “Jubilees (Second Century B.C.),” 36,115-16.

<sup>60</sup>T. Sim 7:1-2. See H. C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Second Century B.C.),” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1983), 787.

Whereas in the Testament of Judah, taken as a copy of the words of Judah which he spoke to his sons before he died: “to me, God has given the kingship and to him (Levi), the priesthood,” indicated that both carried the same nature of value in the author’s view.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, it shows that the understanding of the ancients was consistent in that the Phinehasian covenant was never omitted.

### **In the Dead Sea Scrolls**

In contrast to its subtle profile in historical sources, the Phinehasian covenant is something of a literary renaissance in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The theology during this period presents a different view on the Messiah.<sup>62</sup> Although the mystery about the Messiah in the Scripture remains difficult to explain, the community of Qumran clearly reflects the expectation of two messiahs, one of Aaron and one of Israel. The presentation of two anointed Messiah figures can be traced from the biblical presentation (i.e., Ps 115:12; 135:19), which then is echoed within the Dead Sea Scrolls documents.<sup>63</sup>

**CD, the Cairo Damascus Document.**<sup>64</sup> Four references about a priestly Messiah and royal Messiah were made in the *Cairo Damascus Document* (12:23-13:1;

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<sup>61</sup> *T. Jud* 21:1-2. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 800.

<sup>62</sup>For further understanding of the messianic figure in early Judaism, see L. H. Schiffman, “Messianic Figures and Ideas in the Qumran Scrolls,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 116-29.

<sup>63</sup>As Herbert Bateman, Darrell Bock, and Gordon Johnston note, the binary messianism occurs most clearly in three Dead Sea Scrolls: CD (*Cairo Damascus Document*), 1QS (*Rule of the Community*), and 1QSa (*Rule of the Congregation*). See Herbert W. Bateman IV, Darrell L. Bock, and Gordon H. Johnston, *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of the Israel’s King* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 256. Only three texts are going to be discussed in this thesis. For additional texts may refer 1QSb 3:26, 1QSb 5:17-18, 1QSb 5:21, 1QS Col. 9:11, 1QM 15-19, 11QT 23-27, 4Q545 Frag.4 Col.6:14-18, and 4Q543 Frag. 3: 1-4.

<sup>64</sup>The Damascus Document (Geniza A + B, 4Q266-272) from the Cairo Geniza was discovered and published under the title Zadokite Fragments. The fragments of the Document were found in Caves 4 and 5 later confirmed the Dead Sea sect was the source of the Damascus Document. See Michael O. Wise, Martin G. Abegg Jr., and Edward M. Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, rev. and updated ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 49.

14:19; 19:10-11; 20:1).<sup>65</sup> The dual messianism in the *Cairo Damascus Document* was mentioned in response to the community members as a reminder to obey the community rules in order to prevent a future condemnation.<sup>66</sup> The community is to obey the rules and regulations until the two Messiahs appeared and carry out their religious and political responsibilities respectively.

**1QS, the Rule of the Community.** The *Rule of the Community* (1QS = 1Q28) is sometimes referred to as the *Manual of Discipline* that contains the *Rule of Congregation* (1Q28a) and the *Rule of Blessings* (1Q28b).<sup>67</sup> It describes the religious law for entering the community during the pre-messianic age. The binary messianism is mentioned for the new member entering the congregation in 1QS 9:6-11.<sup>68</sup> Worth noting, the appearance of both Messiahs of Aaron and Israel will signify the end of the pre-messianic age.

**1QSa, the Rule of the Congregation.** The *Rule of the Congregation* (1QSa = 1Q28a) is a set of rules pertaining to the restored Israel of the Last Days and to the law of the Sons of Zadok (1QSa 1:1).<sup>69</sup> The rules refer to the presence of the Priest and the Messiah of Israel at the Council and explain the procedure for meeting at the messianic Meal when the Messiah is revealed. Two types of “Messiah” appeared in 1Q28a 2:11-

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<sup>65</sup>Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 257. See appendix.

<sup>66</sup>Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 260.

<sup>67</sup>Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 260.

<sup>68</sup>See appendix in Dead Sea Scrolls section.

<sup>69</sup>Herbert W. Bateman, Darrell Bock, and Gordon Johnston had listed three major Dead Sea Scrolls for the discussion about two messiahs: CD (*Cairo Damascus Document*), 1QS (*Rule of the Community* = 1Q28), and 1QSa (*Rule of the Congregation*). They suggest these texts reflect the disapproval of the non-Davidic Hasmoneans combining two separate offices of anointed king and anointed high priest into a single office. Other texts include CD 12:23-13:1; 14:19; 19:10-11; 20:1 which mentioned “the Messiah from Aaron and of Israel.” See details in Bateman, *Jesus the Messiah*, 256-63.

21.<sup>70</sup> First, it is the priestly Messiah who appears as “the head of the entire congregation of Israel” (2:12) who will enter first, followed by all his brothers, the sons of Aaron. Then the Messiah of Israel will enter, and the heads of the thousands of Israel are to sit before him by rank. When they gather at the communal table, it is the Priest who extends his hand over the portion of bread and wine. Afterward, the Messiah of Israel shall extend his hand over the bread. Finally, all the congregation of the community shall give a blessing in the order of his rank (1QSa 2:11-22).

In brief, the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha indicate that the emphasis of the Phinehasian covenant did not vanish from the readers. The Qumran manuscripts shows clearly that the community believed in the eschatological Israel, two messiahs, one as a priest and the other as a royal commander, and that they would emerge from its own ranks and share similar religious responsibilities.

### **Summary**

In this section, I have attempted to demonstrate that with all the ancient texts considered, from scriptural to non-canonical sources, it makes perfect sense that the Phinehasian covenant was never discontinued from redemptive history. The obvious examples are found in Jeremiah (Jer 33:17-22) and Ezekiel (Ezek 37:26) in light of the Davidic covenant. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel are not alone in referring the Phinehasian covenant. For instance, Nehemiah (Neh 13:29) and Malachi (Mal 2:4, 8) also talk about the same covenant.

The ancient writings (Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Dead Sea Scrolls) show that the ancient readers understood the substance of the promise made to Phinehas in the Scripture.<sup>71</sup> Their understanding was reflected in these non-canonical writings and make

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<sup>70</sup>See appendix in Dead Sea Scrolls section.

<sup>71</sup>Williamson traces the “covenant of perpetual priesthood” history line from the ordination of Aaron (Exod 29:9) to the “covenant of salt” (Num 18:19) to “covenant of peace” (Num 25:13) to Zadok (1 Chr 6:3-15) and finally into the Maccabean priesthood (1 Macc 2:54). His tracing reaffirms *same* covenant

an even stronger claim about the Phinehasian covenant being separate from the Mosaic covenant. All these may simply imply one proposition—that the Phinehasian priesthood held the promise of an everlasting covenant, which carries equal weight with the Davidic covenant.

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is expressed in covenantal terminology and as being implicit references to the Phinehasian covenant. See P. R. Williamson, “Covenant,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 425.

## CHAPTER 5

### THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION OF THE PHINEHASIAN COVENANT

#### **The Correspondence of the Phinehasian Covenant**

Over the past century scholars have no doubt that Hellenistic Greek had some influence on the New Testament writers.<sup>1</sup> In fact, many concepts were taken over from Hellenistic culture. Yet, as Martin McNamara argues, we cannot lose sight of the Jewish influence on the New Testament because the preaching of the gospel was rooted in the old covenants and it had its origins within Judaism.<sup>2</sup> He emphasizes that “we should explore Judaism to the full to see what light it has to shed on the New Testament” and the approach of interpretation should be Judaism rather than in Hellenism.<sup>3</sup> In fact, this understanding from the Jewish roots approach should have a bearing on God’s

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<sup>1</sup>Martin McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible: A Light on the New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010), 17.

<sup>2</sup>The gospel tradition was formed in a Jewish atmosphere where the Apostles and early believers were Jews. McNamara, *Targum and Testaments Revisited*, 18.

<sup>3</sup>McNamara, *Targum and Testaments Revisited*, 18. A separation from the Jewish roots of the faith and from the Jewish people set in later after the first century due to many reasons. For example, the controversies of the validity of the Mosaic ritual, the claim of the legitimate heritage of the divine covenant with Israel, Paul’s position on anti-Jewish reading and the Jews were blamed for the death of Jesus. John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 117-96; Steven Beller, *Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 13. The Jews as a whole should not be responsible for it and there should not be any “de-Judaizing” elements involved since most of the early Christians *were* Jewish. Paul did not get “converted” from Judaism to Christianity since Paul did not view Christianity as a religion distinct from Judaism. Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989), 27. The World Council of Churches made a condemnation of Christian complicity in anti-Semitism in 1948 and further commented in 1961 that the corporate guilt for Jesus’s crucifixion “should not be so presented as to fasten upon the Jewish people of today responsibility that belongs to our corporate humanity and not to one race or community.” Gavin D’Costa, *Vatican II: Catholic Doctrines on Jews and Muslims* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 114-15.

everlasting covenant with Israel as well as the overall view of the New Testament if we consider Christianity as the continuation of the Jewish religion.<sup>4</sup> In particular, this importance of Jewish tradition and its immediate influence on the New Testament writers are to be sought in the Gospels since the form of Judaism has influenced these writings the most. The combination of religious tradition and worship culture is so important that it merits special consideration here.

Therefore, the orientation of this chapter will deal with the significance of the Phinehasian covenant while considering the influence of the Jewish religion and comparing Jesus's priesthood role in the Gospels, where Christ does not use the language of a royal Messiah to describe his priesthood role. Rather, the audience and the writers seem to understand the figure of priestly Messiah whenever Jesus described his priestly role for salvation. In a way, it is about possible angles of interpretation in which the Phinehasian covenant offers a better explanation in the Gospels.

The last part of this paper will examine the application of the Phinehasian covenant used in the book of Hebrews as the fulfillment of Phinehas's messianic promise. This attempt is made through exposition work of relevant scriptures. Discussions and treatment of Christology will identify this messianic expression qualified as a priestly figure. In a way, Christianity should never lose its Jewish roots. Christ, as the promised Messiah who had come in realization of all the Old Testament promises and expectation, should also be the fulfillment of the Phinehasian covenant.

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<sup>4</sup>It is suggested that Martin Luther's anti-Jewish ways of reading Scripture contributed to this theological thought of separation from Judaism. Vincent Evener, "The 'Enemies of God' in Luther's Final Sermons: Jews, Papists, and the Problem of Blindness to Scripture," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 55, no. 3 (2016): 231. But H. H. Kramm clarifies that Luther was much more on the problem of religious than races, which Luther is on objection to Judaism (anti-Judaism) and not Semitic races (anti-Semitism). H. H. Kramm, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (London: James Clarke, 1947), 147-48.

## **The Priestly Messiah in the Gospels**

How do the authors of the Gospels describe the priestly role of Jesus and view the relationship between the priestly role and the royal role of Messiah? On one hand, the authors were describing Jesus as the coming “Son of David,” but on the other hand, the emphasis is actually more focused on Jesus’s redemptive mission that suits the “job description” of a high priest. To be exact, Jesus did not execute his *role* as the royal Messiah in the Gospels. The Jesus that appears in the Gospels and the New Testament is dealing with repentance, reconciliation and saving the world.<sup>5</sup> As such, the idea of the Messiah has to do with redemption and acting like a high priest as redeemer.

**The priestly role in the Synoptic Gospel.** John the Baptist says just prior to Jesus’s baptism that “he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matt 3:11-12). Obviously, Jesus’s mission has a close link to purge and to judge the people from its very first mention in the New Testament. Under the terms of the Old Covenant, the role of priests, which includes purging the Temple (2 Chr 29:4-17) and purging the wicked men from Israel (Deut 17:12), was truly reflected as what Jesus did in Matthew 21:12-13.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from that, the theme of repentance can be seen clearly throughout the Synoptic Gospels. When Jesus begins to preach, his first message was “*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”<sup>7</sup> Jesus’s focus is not the latter. Rather, his attention is on the former which is his mission to call for repentance since he did “not come to call

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<sup>5</sup>For instance, the Jesus that Peter preaches in Acts 2 is not about a royal Messiah, but rather, a priestly Messiah who had resurrected from the dead, had completed the salvation plan of God, and now seated to the right hand of God. “When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart.” (Acts 2:37).

<sup>6</sup>Also, in Mark 11:15-17 and Luke 19:45-46.

<sup>7</sup>Emphasis mine. Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15. The message of John the Baptist is also “repentance.” Repentance is the center message of John and Jesus. When Jesus sent out his disciples to proclaim the “kingdom of God,” it is referring to the “good news” (Luke 9:2, 6) and not about the coming of a Davidic king. Later, when Jesus sent out the seventy-two disciples, the message is also about proclaiming the “kingdom of God” (Luke 10:9, 11).

the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”<sup>8</sup> What Jesus means by repentance is evident when he is referring to the repentance of the Ninevites that turn from their sins at the preaching of Jonah (Matt 12:41).<sup>9</sup> Jesus’s call for repentance is in agreement with the priests’ function as mediator for the cultic sacrifices which allow the people to repent and cleanse their sins in the Old Testament.

Also, Jesus’s role as high priest that calls for repentance should include the teaching of God’s word, whereby, “returning” to God happens through receiving and believing in God’s word.<sup>10</sup> Jesus quoted Isaiah 6:9-10 in the parable of the sower (Matt 13:15; Luke 8:10) so as to illustrate how to “turn” (שוב) to the Lord by believing in God’s word—“see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with hearts.”<sup>11</sup> Jesus is implying that the Jews were like the people in Isaiah’s day who heard the word but could not repent. The implication is not that the people do not understand, or that God had hardened them; it is that the people do not believe in God’s word. Therefore, “the message about the kingdom” (Matt 13:1) is about repentance and not about the restoration of the kingdom. Jesus’s main mission in coming to the world was to save the world as high priest and not to restore the earthly kingdom as a Davidic king. The

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<sup>8</sup>Luke 5:32. Salvation is through repentance (Isa 30:15). Also, the triggering point for the Messiah to come is through repentance, “for the Redeemer will come to those who repent of their sins” (Isa 59:20).

<sup>9</sup>Repentance is a decision to turn from one’s sins. Jesus mentioned twice that those who do not repent will perish (Luke 13:3, 5).

<sup>10</sup>Scholars agree that there is no specific term for “repentance” in the Old Testament. Normally “turn” (שוב) and “change mind” (נָחַם) were used to illustrate the concept. See Aloys Dirksen, *The New Testament Concept of Metanoia* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1932), 148-50, William L. Holladay, *The Root ŠŪBH in the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 146-47; George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946), 1: 507; O. Michel, “μεταμέλομαι,” in *TDNT* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), 4:626-29.

<sup>11</sup>It was an irony teaching that quotes Isa 6:9-10. Contrast of positive and negative appears in the context, where the secrets of the kingdom of heaven is given to those who heard the gospel, see it and hear it, and those do not believe will not see and do not understand. Especially the explanation made by Jesus later regarding those who hear the message, receive it with a good heart, and understand it.

teaching here is that the kingdom comes by the preaching of the message of the High Priest; not the King. As Matthew repeatedly emphasizes, Jesus fulfills the Jewish Scriptures and he portrays Jesus as the epitome of Israel's hope, in which the kingdom of heaven is given to those who repent and believe in the High Priest's teaching—God's word.<sup>12</sup>

There is no direct reference to Jesus claiming that he has a political significance as royal messiah except for two episodes: before the crucifixion when Jesus came riding on a donkey into Jerusalem (Matt 21:5-9) as fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, and in the answer that he gave to Pilate (Luke 23:3). Jesus's self-identification as a Davidic-lineage messiah came only toward the end of his journey on earth when he refers to the glorious coming of the one who is to judge the world. Nevertheless, we should take note of when Jesus himself claimed the title of Messiah in the Gospels. Jesus declared himself as the *long-awaited* Messiah to the Samaritan woman (John 4:21-26). Since the Samaritans only recognize the Pentateuch and not the whole Hebrew Bible, this would indirectly imply that the long-awaited Messiah should be found in the Pentateuch. Again, as this thesis is trying to show, it is the priestly Messiah from the Phinehasian covenant.

From another point of view, there is no need to emphasize the idea of "Son of Man" if Jesus is to be portrayed as a royal Messiah. The Branch of Jesse could suddenly appear in order to carry out the restoration of Israel (John 7:27). The futuristic king does not need to prove himself as being from the community, but the high priestly role requires that restriction, for "every high priest is selected from among the people in matters related to God."<sup>13</sup> Jesus needs to prove himself as the descendant of mankind in order to represent all mankind as high priest.

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<sup>12</sup>Same position in Luke's view where Jesus as the priestly Messiah is to proclaim the good news and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:17-19; Isa 61:1-2).

<sup>13</sup>Jesus had to fulfill certain requirements in order to become high priest: (1) had to be made like humans (Heb 2:17; 5:1); (2) had to experience temptation (Heb 2:18; 4:15); and (3) had to be obedience in order to be perfected (Heb 5:8-9). Furthermore, as Small points out, it seems that the entrance

Elsewhere in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus's answer is affirmative as the priestly Messiah when the high priest asked him "are you the Christ, the Son of God?"<sup>14</sup> His answer had a twofold meaning fulfilling Psalm 110:4 and Daniel 7:13, that the Son of Man *will* be seated at right hand of God (as High Priest) and he *will* be coming on the clouds of heaven to judge the world as King (Matt 26:64; Mark 14:61-62; Luke 22:68).<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the appearance of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels while he is on earth should conform to the description of a priestly Messiah instead of a royal Messiah.

**The priestly role in the Gospel of John.** When Andrew heard John the Baptist declare Jesus as "the Lamb of God" (John 1: 36), he followed Jesus and proclaimed that Jesus is "the Messiah" (John 1:41). This "Lamb of God" is to "take away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), indicating that Jesus is the sacrifice and there is no obvious indication reflecting Jesus as carrying the high priest feature. Jesus, as an atoning sacrifice alone, is inadequate for the redemption plan of God. He must also be the mediator at the same time to remove our sins.<sup>16</sup> So where did the idea of establishing Jesus as the high priest come from? As this thesis has attempted to show, it is from the

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into heaven was also a prerequisite for Jesus's priesthood. See Brian Small, *The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews*, Biblical Interpretation Series 128 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 185.

<sup>14</sup>Mark used the term as "Son of the Blessed One." The title was equivalent to "Son of God," but the title was referring to royal messiahship instead of a deity figure. Jesus's answer as "Son of Man" brings together Dan 7:13 and Ps 110:1 was to justify His deity figure. Kenneth Baker, ed., *The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 1527. The concept of "Son of God" is not anything divine, but just a normal human title as Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, Solomon and others were all called "son of God." In contrast, the "Son of Man" actually means the divine figure of Jesus (Ezek 1:26, 8:2; Rev 1:13).

<sup>15</sup>The earlier is achieved when Jesus died on the cross, and the latter will be achieved on His second coming (Rev 1:7).

<sup>16</sup>My statement is not to downplay Jesus's sacrificial atonement, but to highlight the importance of the High Priest role. It is not the sacrifices that takes away sins but the act of the high priest that makes atonement on behalf of the people (Lev 4:26, 35; 15:15). Just like the Day of Atonement, Christ enters the heavenly sanctuary as the high priest enters the Holy Place to offer sacrifices to take away sins (Heb 9:24-25).

understanding of the Phinehasian covenant—the priestly Messiah.<sup>17</sup> This title carries the role of the high priest that removes the sin of his people and has the responsibility of teaching God’s word. The concept of priestly Messiah as high priest to stand in the place for his people is the same concept of the Levites in place of all the firstborn of Israel to redeem the firstborn Israelites (Num 3:46), which Christ will redeem the sins of the world and to give his life as a “ransom” for many (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45). Further elaboration is given in Psalm 111:9 that the Lord provided “ransom” for his people because he has guaranteed *his covenant* with them forever.<sup>18</sup> I would argue, Christ died—as the *mediator*—in order to be the ransom which set mankind free from the penalty of sin (Heb 9:15). The blood of Christ cleanses sins, yet in order to represent mankind and to be “ransom,” Christ has to be the mediator. Therefore, Christ as the high priest is a man “chosen from among the people” to represent other people in dealings with God (Heb 5:1). In other words, Jesus as the priestly Messiah, fulfilled the role as mediator between God and mankind to redeem the sins of the world, and this role could not be fulfilled by the royal messiah alone.

John’s demonstration of Jesus as high priest is further illustrated in the discussion about eternal life with Nicodemus. Nicodemus did not look for Jesus to restore Israel or to meet with a royal Messiah. He came to look for an answer for all these signs and an answer to enter kingdom of God (John 3:2). Jesus referred to Daniel’s prophecy (Dan 7:13) and claiming to be the Messiah—the Son of Man. Jesus explained, the

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<sup>17</sup>Jesus manifested what Moses had written about him (John 5:46). In the Torah, Moses particularly prophesied about Jesus, as the Seed of woman (Gen 3:15), the Seed of Abraham (Gen 12:7; Gal 3:16), and the greater prophet (Deut 18:15). As this paper suggested, the prophecy of the ultimate High Priest (Num 25:13) should also be included since Jesus had asked the paralyzed man stop sinning (John 5:14). On the other hand, Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah (Matt 16:20) because the expectation of the people about messiah is different. The people were expecting a royal messiah whereas, Jesus’s mission is more of a priestly Messiah to redeem sin while he is on earth. He shall return as a royal Messiah to judge and rule the world in the end days.

<sup>18</sup>As 1 Pet 1:18 explains, this “ransom” that God paid was not paid with mere gold or silver as practiced in Numbers 3:44-48.

Messiah is to be lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness to save his people. Jesus's answer to Nicodemus "whoever *believes in him* has eternal life" is identical to "whoever *repents* has eternal life" (John 3:16).<sup>19</sup> In other words, either to Nicodemus or the first century readers, the message of the Messiah is clear. In contrast as king to restore the nation, it is about repentance and to have eternal life.

When Jesus makes claims about himself, he claims to be the "I am" (ἐγώ εἰμι)—the one who God sent (John 8:24, 28). If Jesus only has the figure of kingly Messiah, his death will not be welcomed by the first century Jewish Christians and will have no representative meaning in redeeming sins. The title "messiah" must mean to be a priestly figure too, because after Jesus had spoken, many believed in him (John 8:29)!<sup>20</sup> The messianic theme in the book of John is not about a royal king. It is never associated with the restoration of God's kingdom.<sup>21</sup> Rather, it presents ideas and situations that prevailed about the priesthood role of Jesus. The author of the Gospel of John was evidently aware that the messianic figure he presents was a priestly figure who redeems sins and gives life, instead of a kingly figure.<sup>22</sup> But most importantly, this purpose was one that John had in common with the men who wrote the synoptic gospels. The priestly Messiah feature is also demonstrated in the synoptic gospels when Jesus announced that

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<sup>19</sup>Emphasis mine. Robert N. Wilkin, *Confident in Christ: Living by Faith Really Works* (Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 1999), 200.

<sup>20</sup>Later in the narrative of John 9:22-34, it is understood that the (priestly) Messiah should not be a sinner in the eye of mankind. In the Old Testament, it is the priesthood that was seen as sinless after atonement, not the king. And to the New Testament Jewish believers, the reading of this episode would mean the same for a priestly Messiah.

<sup>21</sup>The whole gospel only mentions "the kingdom of God" twice and it is related to "born again" (John 3:3, 5).

<sup>22</sup>The purpose of John's gospel, as stated by John himself, is to show that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that *believers in him may have eternal life* (John 20:31). It is the priestly role of Messiah that gave eternal life, not a kingly one.

the sins of the paralyzed man were forgiven, for the Son of Man, as the priestly Messiah, has the authority on earth to forgive sins (Matt 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24).<sup>23</sup>

In fact, the authors of Gospels recognized the priestly Messiah. When Jesus healed all who were sick and cast out demons, he was deemed the fulfillment of what the prophet Isaiah had spoken about the “priestly” Messiah in Isaiah 53:4.<sup>24</sup> On one occasion after Jesus cured a demoniac who was blind and mute, all the crowds were amazed and questioned, “this man cannot be the Son of David, can he?” (Matt 12:23). This indirectly implied that they did not expect a royal Messiah to perform miracles.<sup>25</sup> Obviously, Jesus’s identity more portrayed the priestly Messiah than a royal Messiah while he is on earth because there is no description in the Old Testament that the son of David is expected to perform any sign or miracle.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, it is the duty of the priest to declare

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<sup>23</sup>The role of the priest is to show someone’s sin was forgiven through *waving* in the peace offerings (Lev 4:26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7). Other examples of declaration include to pronounce the skin diseases cleansed (Lev 14:7, 11) and “wave” the offering for a healed leper (Lev 14:12). Waving was added to the peace offering (Lev 7:29-34) to bring a special significance. According to Chief Rabbi Hertz, something more complex and deeper was involved in the wave offering. The waving of the offering symbolizes the consecration to God. See J. H. Hertz, ed., *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Soncino Press, 1973), 434. Interestingly, this waved offering (תְּרוּמָה) is “a present” and a holy gift (Num 18:19) to the priests as perpetual share that bind with a covenant of salt. See John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 4 (Dallas: Word Books, 1992), 101. The meaning of תְּרוּמָה is puzzling. For details, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 473-76. The solution, in my opinion, seems to suggest an act of declaration as the term “sin shall be forgiven” repeatedly appeared. This special characteristic of wave offering could be a type to Jesus’s statement proclaiming the paralyzed man’s sins are forgiven (Matt 9:2).

<sup>24</sup>Matt 8:17; 1Pet 2:24. Luke’s comment in the same event provides a better illustration of the priestly Messiah, for the demons “knew that he was the *Messiah*” (Luke 4:41). A kingly Messiah that will heal and cast out demons does not seem to fit here. Moreover, a priestly Messiah did not come “to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matt 9:13) proving his high priestly role of saving sinners.

<sup>25</sup>The crowds were astonished and expected a negative answer for Jesus to be “the son of David.” μήτι, as marker here introduced a negative response. See M. Eugene Boring, “The Gospel of Matthew,” in *NIB* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 8:285n261; John F. Collins, *A Primer of Ecclesiastical Latin* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of American Press, 1985), 223-24. Hence, they expect the Jesus who perform miracle is not the son of David.

<sup>26</sup>The Branch from Jesse is expected to lead the second exodus (Isa 11:10-16), but the Branch is not expected in any individual healing miracle.

someone's sin will be forgiven after the offerings. Jesus too had given a similar declaration after the sinners were healed (Mark 10:52).<sup>27</sup>

In brief, when we put together the Messiah's role with Christ's crucifixion, the only biblical conclusion one can come to is that the Gospels are calling the priestly expectation a prototype of a *Phinehasian* high priest that is related to Christ.<sup>28</sup> It is also of momentous significance that Jesus portrays himself as the Messiah in the Gospels. He did not openly proclaim his status as messiah more clearly simply because the people were expecting a royal Messiah and his identity was a priestly Messiah at that time. Thus, it is not the royal Messiah, rather, a priestly Messiah that fulfilled the New Covenant (Jer 31:31) while he was on earth.

### **The Escalation of the Phinehasian Priesthood**

My final point of taking the Phinehasian covenant as an everlasting covenant is crucial, for the expression in accordance with the salvation history, as well as for the focal point in connecting the old covenant congregations to worship under the new covenant assembly. The continuity of priesthood as the progressive plan of God (see figure A2) is the key in preparing Jesus's salvation for Israel and for the world. This role has to be the figure of the high priest and not the figure of the king. Therefore, I would argue the Phinehasian covenant does play the role as messianic text and carry its significance to the New Testament as a perpetual covenant. It is only through this priestly covenant that the continuity of the priesthood role and the idea of worshipping the Lord can be preserved prior to the coming of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>27</sup>In other occasions, see Matt 9:2; Luke 8:48; 17:19; 18:42; John 5:14.

<sup>28</sup>In contrast to the Epistle "to the Hebrews" which will be discuss in detail in the following, no signs or evidence that the Gospels shows anything that is related to the Melchizedekian priesthood order.

## The Priestly Messiah in the Hebrews

In order to see if it elucidates the argument of an everlasting covenant, the Epistle to the Hebrews presents an ideal test case for us to apply our findings on the meaning and significance of the Phinehasian covenant.<sup>29</sup> The expectation of a priestly Messiah should also be consistent in Hebrews following the Gospels, as an old frame of reference for the author to explain his Christology.<sup>30</sup> In other words, this thesis will continue to argue that the Phinehasian covenant is eternal and is perceived that way in Hebrews. To repeat my thesis: Jesus was the ultimate high priest that completed the everlasting covenant of Phinehas with the eschatological messianic figure in Hebrews.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast to the other writers of the Gospels, the idea of “superior” (κρείττων) than an Old Testament’s element is frequently seen in Hebrews.<sup>32</sup> As Hahn points out,

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<sup>29</sup>As this thesis argues, strong Phinehasian priestly tradition is found in the Qumran materials and in the Gospels. This priestly tradition seems to be understood as the backdrop of Hebrews. For example, the use of “high priest,” “blood,” “sacrifice.” Strong cultic language in relation to the Phinehasian priesthood that is found in Hebrews suggests a tension between the Phinehasian priesthood and Melchizedek’s priesthood. Strong contrast of priesthood (Heb 7:26-28) was found in Hebrews at its very core. The author must have this Phinehasian tradition in mind when he discusses the tension between these two priesthoods. Morna D. Hooker rightly points out, the author attempts to understand Jesus’s redemption through the lens of the Phinehasian high priest, and how this tradition was handed on to the author of Hebrews since it had been to Paul that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor 15:3). See Morna D. Hooker, “Christ, the ‘End’ of the Cult,” in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009), 209. Notably, the point is how Christ’s priesthood was done “according to the Scriptures” and not the Melchizedekian order that is in accordance with the Scriptures since the Phinehasian priestly tradition was the major worldview in the context of Old Testament. Otherwise, it would like the Islamic tradition started a new religion that separated from the Jewish tradition, it seems contrary if Jesus’s priesthood tradition was separated from the Phinehasian priestly tradition which has no continuity in the context of salvation history.

<sup>30</sup>The Melchizedekian order as a component for superiority in appointing Jesus’s priesthood was not developed before Hebrews. The author of Hebrews develops the Melchizedekian order from Ps 110:4 as proof text in order to develop the priestly Christology parallel to the Phinehasian priesthood. Dongshin Don Chang, *Phinehas, The Sons of Zadok, and Melchizedek: Priestly Covenant in Late Second Temple Texts* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 159.

<sup>31</sup>Daniel I. Block argues that nowhere does the Old Testament portray priesthood as an eschatological messianic figure. 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 R. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 33-36. A detailed critique of Block’s position is impossible here, but preliminarily the Pentateuch or the rest of the Old Testament does portray the priest as an eschatological messianic figure as discussed in Num 25:13; 1 Sam 2:35; and Zech 6:13.

<sup>32</sup>For examples, better than angels (1:4); better hope (7:19); better covenant (7:22); better

Hebrews repeatedly stresses Jesus's superiority and his role as the restoration of an original and superior form of covenant that had been lost since the institution of the priesthood.<sup>33</sup> That is, through Christ's threefold role as firstborn son, King, and High Priest; he restored the Old Covenant with the New.<sup>34</sup> For example, Hahn identify Hebrews 2:17 that mentions Christ as a "faithful high priest" is to recall the oracle of 1 Samuel 2:35, and Hebrews 3:1-6 refer to the "son" who "builds and rules the house of God" is to recall the oracle to the "seed" of David in 2 Samuel 7:13-14.<sup>35</sup>

Hahn's point highlighted the close connection between "sonship" and "priesthood," that illuminated the "natural" priesthood of the firstborn during the ancient patriarchal family.<sup>36</sup> He introduced this idea to the treatment of Melchizedekian order where it should be a type, model, and precedent of the patriarchal order of priesthood that functioned for centuries prior to the elevation and priestly ordination of the Levites.<sup>37</sup> In Hahn's words, the theological significance of the Melchizedekian order is "primarily with respect to his *priestly order* and only secondarily with respect to his *person*."<sup>38</sup> Hahn's insights help us see how the ancient order of Melchizedek could be taken into account with two posts as king and priest at the same time. He further explains how the non-

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promise (8:6); and better sacrifices (9:23). And the intention of the author is clear, that is to emphasize Jesus's none Levitical lineage priesthood is superior than the Phinehasian priesthood.

<sup>33</sup>Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (London: Yale University Press, 2009), 278.

<sup>34</sup>Hahn named the threefold role as "royal priestly primogeniture." The role is one not three roles, as the unique role rooted in the ancient patriarchal family (firstborn son), who inherited the father's authority (kingship) and cultic responsibilities (priesthood). See Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 279-80.

<sup>35</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 288-89.

<sup>36</sup>Hahn suggests God's original intent was "royal priestly primogeniture" for both Adam and the people of Israel. See Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 279.

<sup>37</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 298.

<sup>38</sup>Emphasis in original. Based on the rabbinic commentaries, Hahn claims Melchizedek's identity as the patriarch Shem that inherits the priesthood and kingship as the firstborn son of Noah. See Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 298-300.

Phinehasian priesthood of Melchizedek is not only legitimate, but even superior to Abraham and to Levi through this ancient royal priestly primogeniture model. Hahn summarizes how Jesus's Melchizedek priesthood is superior to the Phinehasian priesthood as argued in Hebrews 7:11-28 for four reasons:<sup>39</sup>

1. It is established *after* the Levitical priesthood—thus indicating that the Levitical priesthood was inadequate and in need of augmentation (vv. 11-14).
2. It is based on “the power of an indestructible life” (vv. 15-19).
3. It is founded on a divine oath (vv. 20-22).
4. It is permanent (vv. 23-28).

Hahn's argument is constructive, however, there are three major difficulties with his reasoning. First, it is inadequate in explaining the “longevity” of Melchizedek. By focusing on the “priestly order,” Hahn did not explain how a mortal Melchizedek-Shem could have an “indestructible life.” Following Hahn's analogy, the condition of Jesus's priesthood is heavenly (Heb 8:4), indicates that Melchizedek was not a priest on earth since Jesus was following Melchizedek's order. This status is in clear contrast to the Phinehasian priests whose order was only temporary due to death (Heb 7:23). The author of Hebrews justifies that Christ arises in the likeness of Melchizedek “by the power of an indestructible life” alone and nothing else (Heb 7:16). What connects Christ to Melchizedek is the similarity between the two—an indestructible life. Besides that, if Melchizedek is mortal, the duration of his ministry would be limited and not eternal.

Second, his argument may indicate that God is contradicting himself in establishing priesthood. The whole priesthood system that God had established since the creation becomes meaningless with this “new” Melchizedek order.<sup>40</sup> The requirement that priest should have genealogical register to prove his pedigree from both parents is nullified.<sup>41</sup> In history, pedigree is a crucial factor in determining priesthood. Following

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<sup>39</sup>Emphasis in original, points summarized. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 300.

<sup>40</sup>Since Jesus is from Melchizedek's order, most people would think that Jesus's “genealogy” is coming from a different priesthood rather than the Phinehasian priesthood.

<sup>41</sup>Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. 2, rev. ed.

this concept in Hebrews, since Hebrews also illustrates the Phinehasian priesthood as a type to Jesus's priesthood, then the "priestly order" of Melchizedek should have its own genealogy, but this was not shown. Taking a step back, if Shem was Melchizedek, Shem would have his own genealogy (Gen 10:22) which is recorded in Hebrews as "without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever" (Heb 7:3).<sup>42</sup>

Third, "an oath" with the Messiah to follow the Melchizedekian order which is established *after* the Phinehasian priesthood does not seem to fit in chronological order.<sup>43</sup> If there is a Melchizedek-Shem that exists, his order should be *before* the law and "an oath" that follows this order should be *before* the law prior to the vanishing of this order or being replaced by the Phinehasian priesthood. The only possible explanation that suits the context of this "oath" and matches the condition of "after the law" would be—a coexistence of two priesthood order at the same time.<sup>44</sup> This unfading Melchizedekian priesthood order has not been proven in history and has no biblical support.

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(Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 240. See also Ezra 2:61-63; Neh 7:63-65.

<sup>42</sup>Hahn explains the analogy of "without genealogy" as a technical term with respect to the requirements of the Levitical priesthood. Melchizedek belonged to an order or priesthood that is free from such restrictions that a priest should have a lineal descendant of Aaron, or genealogy to prove his Levitical pedigree. See Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 301-2. However, I find this explanation less persuasive because the name Melchizedek means "King of Righteousness." Then, Salem is not a place, "King of Salem" that means "King of Peace," is a parallel to the "Prince of Peace," (Isa 9:6) which was another *model* (ἀφομοίω) to "the Son of God," Heb 7:2-3.

<sup>43</sup>Heb 7:28.

<sup>44</sup>Surprisingly, this oath which holds a prominent position in the Bible came into existence without the knowledge of Moses. This "oath" exists between the Messianic priest and the Lord, which is not described in the Pentateuch and remained a mystery. The only book that is available to David while he received the vision of Psalm 110 was the Pentateuch and there was no further explanation on when this oath took place. David did not question this oath, but this thesis would suggest that David already has clues about this oath beforehand (Ps 40:7). See "Excursus to Hebrews" in appendix for a detailed explanation on how the Phinehasian covenant could apply to the enigma of the Melchizedekian order by exegesis of Heb 7:20-28 (Ps 110:4) and Heb 10:5-7 (Ps 40:6-8). It seems like Hebrews mainly relies on these texts to argue the author's intention to link the priesthood to Phinehas. The messianic prophecy in Ps 40:7 and "an oath" to the priestly Messiah in Ps 110:4 seems like two clear indications pointing the priesthood towards the Phinehasian covenant (which is after the law, Heb 7:28).

Therefore, after reviewing these points, it seems reasonable to suggest that Melchizedek is an immortal figure since eternity is attributed to Melchizedek (Heb 7:8) and “an oath” refers to the longevity of Melchizedek.<sup>45</sup> In other words, the historical Melchizedek was Jesus.<sup>46</sup> This interpretation of developing Melchizedek and Jesus as the same person also integrated the image of first priest that appeared in Genesis and the final

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<sup>45</sup>This mystery of Melchizedek was assumed as the pre-incarnate Jesus. According to Chang, the figure of Melchizedek appears several times in various traditions: *Genesis Apocryphon*, *Jubilees*, Pseudo-Eupolemus, Josephus, Philo, and some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, including 11QMelchizedek. For example, Philo presents an allegorical understanding of Melchizedek, considering him a symbol of the divine Logos (*Leg. All.* 3.79-82). In 1 *En.* 71-72, Melchizedek is described as a heavenly being and eschatological priest; In 1QMelchizedek, Melchizedek is a heavenly judge and priest, though his priestly role is not explicit. See Chang, *Phinehas*, 13, 176.

The idea of theophany continues to extend to early church fathers. William T. Bullock points out that around A.D. 400 “Epiphanius says some (Haer. Lxvii.3 & lv.5) in the church held the theophany view that Melchizedek was the Son of God,” and “Ambrose (De. Abrah. 1§3)” was included among them. The view that Melchizedek was Christ remained in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Joachim Cunaeus, Jacques Gaillard and others. References cited from James A. Borland, *Christ in the Old Testament* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 139-40. Joshua G. Matthews lists various interpretations of Melchizedek as it developed historically. See Joshua G. Matthews, *Melchizedek’s Alternative Priestly Order: A Compositional Analysis of Genesis 14:18-20 and Its Echoes throughout the Tanak*, Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement 8 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 6-23.

This explanation may reinforce one of my arguments that Christ was the ultimate fulfillment of the Phinehasian covenant. Whereby, the pre-incarnate Christ—Melchizedek, was the King of Righteousness that was more superior than Phinehas’s righteousness, and was the King of Peace in relation to Phinehas’s covenant of peace. See John 8:56 and “the Oath in Hebrews 7:28” in appendix.

<sup>46</sup>Kenneth Trent sees Melchizedek as Christ himself because the eternal characteristics of Melchizedek can apply only to deity. He listed three points of which I agree: (1) The name “Melchizedek” means “King of Righteousness” and Jesus is the King of Righteousness and the Giver of Righteousness (Rom 10:4; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9); (2) Both Melchizedek and Christ were “King of Peace,” for Christ was declared in Isaiah 9:6 that “His name shall be called . . . The Prince of Peace;” and (3) both Melchizedek and Christ are “continuing priests.” The continuing priesthood of Melchizedek can only be as eternal as Christ is eternal (Heb 7:17). Kenneth E. Trent, *Types of Christ in the Old Testament: A Conservative Approach to Old Testament Typology* (New York: Exposition Press, 1960), 24-26. For examples of scholars who also have a similar view, see Koester, *Hebrews*, 348; Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia 72 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 190.

On further consideration, most interpreters argue that the author of Hebrews declares Melchizedek to be without parentage and genealogy because no data for any of these can be found in Genesis. Horton rejects this particular exegetical move, noting that numerous figures (for example, Reuel/Jethro) appear in Scripture without such information. Fred. L. Horton Jr., *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 30 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 153-54.

priest that lasts forever.<sup>47</sup> The change of priesthood from Phinehas to Melchizedek is because of the change of *longevity* now.<sup>48</sup> According to Psalm 110, because of Melchizedek's longevity, it could only now happen by one (and the same) person, and that person is Jesus.<sup>49</sup>

The whole argument in this section actually hinges on the promise in Psalm 110:4 as the "ultimate basis" for Christ to follow the Melchizedekian order and not the Phinehasian order, namely the Phinehasian covenant. Notably, the relationship between "an oath" and "the oath" may be obscured because these terms are ambiguous. This thesis views the promise in Psalm 110:4 with Messiah ("an oath") being distinguished from "the oath" that appoints Messiah as a priest made perfect forever in Hebrews 7:28.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>In support of this view is the fact that it makes better sense to understand the pre-incarnate Jesus in relation to God's revelatory purpose. Jesus should be the first high priest that has no fixed beginning point and the last high priest that has no ending point. He should be the pioneer or the source of salvation (Heb 2:10). Besides that, Jesus does not change. He remains the same in the past, present, and future (Heb 13:8). He would hold his priesthood the same in the past, present and forever (Heb 5:6; 6:20; 7:3). In the Scriptures, all God's priests were never kings. In fact, only the Messiah was referred to both the king and the priest (Ps 110:1-4; Zech 6:13).

<sup>48</sup>In this sense, my position is similar to Chang, who explains the change of priesthood order from the Phinehasian to Jesus's Melchizedekian is due to the inferiority (mortality) of the Phinehasian order and the superiority (immortality) of Jesus's Melchizedekian order. This change of priesthood because of superiority causes the change of law from temporary to eternal and is also supported by the immediate context (Heb 7:12-17). The author uses "longevity" (an indestructible life, Heb 7:16) as proof of his claim for the nature of Jesus's high priesthood (Heb 7:17). See Chang, *Phinehas*, 141, 183, 186. According to Eric Mason, the author did not explain the relationship of Melchizedek to Jesus's high priesthood until Heb 7:1-10, then he promptly drops Melchizedek from further discussion after 7:15 and does not mention him again in the final six chapters of the book. See Eric F. Mason, *You Are a Priest Forever: Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 74 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 25. Apparently, the author of Hebrews is convinced that Melchizedek has served his purpose in explaining the longevity. Small holds the same view that Jesus obtained his priesthood not by the requirement of lineage, but according to "the power of an indestructible life" (Heb 7:16). Small, *The Characterization of Jesus*, 293.

<sup>49</sup>Josephus reckoned Melchizedek as the first priest mentioned in Scripture, and Philo considered him "self-taught." Refer Josephus, *J. W.* 6.438; Philo, *Cong.* 99, quoted in Mason, *You Are a Priest Forever*, 29n65. There should be no one that preceded Jesus because Jesus as God should be uniquely different from others.

<sup>50</sup>For the sake of completeness, this thesis has included the interpretation of Hebrews from the perspective of the Phinehasian covenant. As to the question of whether "the oath" *came after the law* in Hebrews 7:28 is referring to the promise to Melchizedek or it belongs to the Phinehasian covenant, see

Therefore, “an oath” that is related to Melchizedek in Psalm 110:4 should be associated with “longevity,” and “the oath” that *came after the law* should point to the Phinehasian covenant.<sup>51</sup>

As Dorn claims, the whole reason Melchizedek comes up in Hebrews is precisely to be an explanation for how Jesus could fulfill the Phinehasian priesthood.<sup>52</sup> Hebrews recognizes that Jesus is not biologically of the seed of Levi, nor from the order of Aaron, so Jesus’s “lineage” is linked to Melchizedek to prove its superiority over the Phinehasian order. The Phinehasian order as the shadow for Jesus, is now actualized by Jesus. The Melchizedekian order which promised an everlasting life, would make Jesus the substance of the Phinehasian covenant.<sup>53</sup> For this reason, Jesus is able to fulfill the Levitical ceremonial and sacrificial law because he is not from the Phinehasian order, which is temporary, that makes no man perfect. In contrast, the Melchizedekian order, which is everlasting, makes man perfect and makes law perfect. On the other hand, the Melchizedekian order, which perfected the High Priest, has perfected the Phinehasian cultic service. The perfected High Priest carried out his Phinehasian priestly role “once for all.”<sup>54</sup> In this way, the covenant with Phinehas continues forever, and the perfected High Priest will lead his priests just as what Isaiah is referring (Isa 56:3-8)—that God

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appendix “Excursus to Hebrews.”

<sup>51</sup>Jesus was granted the permanent priesthood not because of the Melchizedek order, *but* because he lives forever (Heb 7:24). In the same way, he entered not the earthly tabernacle *but* the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 9:11) that justified him to become the High Priest in heaven.

<sup>52</sup>Dorn, *Waters of Creation*, 132.

<sup>53</sup>Dorn did not explain in detail how Jesus may fulfill the Levitical sacrificial laws and covenant. But, it is the idea of “perfection” following Heb 7:11 that sheds light for me on linking to the suggestion of “longevity” to this thesis.

<sup>54</sup>Once for all, the High Priest offer sacrifices (Heb 7:27); entered the holy places (Heb 9:12); to put sin away (Heb 9:26); and sanctified us (Heb 10:10).

would choose for himself priests and Levites to continue to offer “burnt offering and sacrifices” in the eschatological temple.<sup>55</sup>

**The continuity in blessing.** With the connecting links to the Phinehasian priesthood, the same association suggests a continuity in blessing. The Phinehasian priesthood as an indication that the human priest is to be a vassal of God to bless his people, was to be continued and now escalates to an even greater high that the divine priest would bless his people directly by his blood.<sup>56</sup> God appointed the Phinehasian priesthood as representative of himself to pronounce his blessing in the past. Now Jesus, the great High Priest as the antitype of Phinehas, would never cease to bless his people.<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, the Abrahamic promise affirms that those who respond positively to Abraham will in turn be blessed by God. For instance, the Balaam incident is a typical example that the surrounding nations that bless the descendants of Abraham will be blessed and those who curse will be cursed. Hence, Christ was the antitype of the Phinehasian priesthood, and the element of blessing is now propagated to the New Testament that applies to the body of Christ.<sup>58</sup> The Church now as the representative of Christ will be the blessing agent to bless those who bless and curse those who curse.

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<sup>55</sup>Mason discuss his work of “eternal covenant” only within the scope of the Pentateuch. He did not extend his work to the New Testament. Anyhow, he did suggest a future exploration for this עוֹלָם בְּרִית in Heb 13:20 that identifies the potential complexities of this rare phrase used elsewhere. Steven D. Mason, *“Eternal Covenant” in the Pentateuch: The Contours of an Elusive Phrase*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 494 (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 232.

<sup>56</sup>Num 6:23-26; 2 Chr 30:27; Act 3:26.

<sup>57</sup>Isa 42:6.

<sup>58</sup>God “sent him first to you to bless you” shows clearly that the blessing of Abraham is available to the Jews and Gentiles through Christ (Act 3:26). The continuation of royal priesthood also picked up by Peter (1 Pet 2:9) in refer to the Old Testament, whereby the titles of “kingdom of priest” and “holy nation” (Exod 19:6) were used. The priesthood of Peter calls all believers a “holy” and “royal,” of course, began with Aaron. See Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 91; David R. Helm, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude*, ed. R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 76. Peter’s allusion served another proof that indicate the continuation is from the Phinehasian order in contrast to the Melchizedekian order.

**The continuity in faith.** There is another side to Jesus following the fulfillment of the Phinehasian priesthood. The purpose of Hebrews is to warn the audience against the danger of loss of faith (Heb 6 and 11). The author wrote to exhort his audience (Heb 13:22) to reject the strange Jewish teachings (Heb 13:9-10) and to continue to remain faithful in Jesus (Heb 13:5-8).<sup>59</sup> To accomplish this goal, the author uses the typological interpretation of the Phinehasian priesthood so as to affirm the supremacy of Christ over the Phinehas high priest as well as to bring out the ultimate fulfillment of the Phinehasian covenant in Christ. There is a continuity of faith and development of Old Testament faith by connecting Jesus as the antitype of the Phinehasian priesthood.<sup>60</sup>

From the redemptive history perspective, there is still hope for the future people (who are recounted in Num 26) after a major fall in Numbers 25.<sup>61</sup> Phinehas plays a significant role not only in securing the future of the priesthood, but also the entire nation that is to be viewed as the “ideal priesthood” that could still continue as God initially commanded. This story of Phinehas and the promised everlasting covenant brought great significance to the Jewish readers throughout generations. In addition, it symbolized a new generation who will continue to travel to the promised land (new Exodus) since God is faithful to his promises. For the same reason, even though there is

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<sup>59</sup>Apparently, the local Jewish community wanted the audience to reject Jesus as the Messiah since the temple and Levitical priesthood were still in place. Their belief about the appearance of the great high priest should be from the lineage of Phinehas.

<sup>60</sup>Similarly, it is important to note the continuity of the Old Testament priesthood role as described in the New Testament. Otherwise, it would be meaningless for the book of Leviticus to be recorded as canon and insignificant of the priesthood practice if Jesus is not related to the Phinehasian priesthood.

<sup>61</sup>The detailed comparisons between the foreshadowing of the Phinehas priesthood and the eschatological reality of Jesus as heavenly high priest led to a typological reading of the Scripture because the history of Israel and the history of the church are seen as typological in the context of redemptive history. Edgar V. McKnight and Christopher Lee Church, *Hebrews-James* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publication, 2004), 19.

discontinuity in the Mosaic covenant, the faithfulness of God will ensure the continuity of both the Phinehasian and Davidic covenants remain and are fulfilled in the new covenant. Jesus, as the ultimate antitype of Phinehas and David, succeeded the priesthood and kingship forever.<sup>62</sup>

Thomas Boston acknowledges the Phinehasian covenant as a type of “covenant of grace” that was made with Christ as the representative of his spiritual seed:<sup>63</sup>

... he typified Jesus Christ, representing his spiritual seed in the covenant of grace; for it is evident, that as in Christ, who made the great atonement for sinners, the everlasting priesthood promised to Phinehas, hath its full accomplishment, his spiritual seed partaking of the same in him.

Kline also leaned toward this thought that the Phinehasian covenant is one of the grant-type covenants “with typological significance invested by the Lord” so that it may be a typological manifestation of God’s redemptive plan that pointed to Christ for the obedient fulfillment of his covenantal mission.<sup>64</sup> In another work of his, Boston explains that Christ acted in a twofold capacity in order to save mankind: as the eternal Word that represents the Lord and as the last Adam (1Cor 15:45) that represents the chosen community.<sup>65</sup> Christ laid a foundation of covenant with God to take the sinners’s place and put himself in their room as the second Adam (Rom 5:12-18) and he was thereby constituted as Mediator between God and man.<sup>66</sup> A new covenant was made with

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<sup>62</sup>This coincides with the expectation of everlasting high priest from the Phinehasian covenant and king from the Davidic covenant, because in Zechariah 4:14 “these are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth.” The two anointed ones in Zechariah’s time were the king, Zerubbabel, and the high priest, Joshua. These two leaders figuratively represented the physical kingdom and the priesthood. The two institutions would forever light God’s world. David Haggith, *End-Time Prophecies of the Bible* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1999), 234.

<sup>63</sup>Thomas Boston, *A View on the Covenant of Grace from the Sacred Records* (Glasgow: R. Chapman, 1747), 16-17.

<sup>64</sup>Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 237-38.

<sup>65</sup>Thomas Boston, *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend and Learned Mr. Thomas Boston*, ed. Samuel M’Millan (Aberdeen: 1848) 1: 324.

<sup>66</sup>Boston, *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend and Learned Mr. Thomas Boston*, 326.

the second Adam because Christ was the “head and representative of the elect,”<sup>67</sup> whereby, Christ as the antitype of David and Phinehas was the representative of their seed.<sup>68</sup> Boston continues to justify his view by quoting Psalm 110:4 as evidence that “the everlasting priesthood promised to Phinehas has had its full accomplishment in Jesus Christ.”<sup>69</sup>

### Two Messiahs, One Christ

On one occasion, while Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked whose son the Messiah is (Mark 12:35). The question cites Psalm 110:1 which points to the Messiah as being more than a man since David referred to the Messiah as his “Lord.” Obviously, Jesus is not repudiating the title of the “Son of David,” but he is repudiating the adequacy of the title and he is going to define it from another perspective.<sup>70</sup> Jesus is using David’s psalm as reasoning for the tension between the Messiah’s humanity and divinity. It should be the highlighting of the Messiah’s deity figure that matters to the crowd, because the real question should be, why would the crowd have been “delighted” after Jesus questions the scribes?<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Boston, *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend and Learned Mr. Thomas Boston*, 328.

<sup>68</sup>Boston, *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend and Learned Mr. Thomas Boston*, 328.

<sup>69</sup>Boston did not explain in detail how the Phinehasian priesthood can be fulfilled in the context of Ps 110. Boston, *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend and Learned Mr. Thomas Boston*, 328.

<sup>70</sup>Jesus has not denied the physical Davidic descent of the Messiah. See Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 34B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 274.

<sup>71</sup>Two possibilities of the delighted reaction are proposed: (1) As R. Alan Cole, Walter W. Wessel and Mark L. Strauss suggested, the crowd was delighted when the scribes seemed unanswerable and greeted the discomfiture of the scribes with delight. See R. Alan Cole, *Mark*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 275; Walter W. Wessel and Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, in vol. 9 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 910. (2) As Adrienne von Speyr suggests, the crowd was glad at what they had heard about the eternal truth of God. See Adrienne von Speyr, *Mark: Meditations for a Community*, trans. Michelle K. Borrás (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 566. James A. Brooks comments that even though the crowd was delighted because Jesus had put the scribes to shame, it is uncertain whether the “delight” should be associated with the preceding context or the following section that Jesus explains the mystery of the Messiah. See James A. Brooks, *Mark*, The New American

As most of the major commentaries did not discuss this, following the argument of this thesis, I would like to propose it is because the crowd is enlightened by Jesus's explanation in regard to the expectation of the Messiah.<sup>72</sup> This is because the restoration of the nation did not go far enough for the people's needs. It is the people's soul that the theme of restoration forgot. If the expectation was purely on national restoration, a mortal messiah will do, and no deity figure is needed. In other words, the Messiah does not have to be a divine figure in order to restore the nation. But, there is another connection that the crowds wish to make about the restoration, and that is reconciliation with God. True restoration can only come when there is true reconciliation.

Light is shed upon this discussion if the priesthood role of the Messiah is considered in this context. The Messiah has to be a divine figure, in order to have the power to overcome death, and at the same time, have the ability as a sinless person to represent mankind. Only through the power of a deity can the relationship between Israelite and the Lord be fully restored. Thus, the emphasis should be that the futuristic Messiah is a deity that will become a perfect Mediator so as to overcome sin and to restore the nation through genuine repentance.<sup>73</sup> The restoration of Israel is inadequate with just a mortal son of David. This son of David has to be a divine figure that has the ability to overcome sin as a representative of mankind. Which means, this son of David also carries out the role of mediator at the same time. This mediator's role is vividly seen in the Old Testament and it is the image of priesthood that is portrayed. In fact, David's

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Commentary, vol. 23 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), 201. This thesis inclined to the latter suggestion since the crowd would be eagerly seeking an answer about the mystery of the coming Messiah.

<sup>72</sup>For example, no further comments regarding the crowd was made in Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 274-76; PHEME PERKINS, *Mark, NIB* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 680; C. S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 27 (Garden City, NY: Double day, 1986), 482-86.

<sup>73</sup>Just like the narrative of Jonah where the true repentance of Nineveh would hold God's wrath against his people. Jesus as the greater Jonah, in this sense, is an antitype of a greater Mediator for sinful people (Matt 12:41; Mark 11:32).

vision is focusing on the priesthood as eternal high priest (Ps 110:4) that reconciles the nation forever.<sup>74</sup> Indirectly, the reference to Psalm 110 also describes the immortality of the Messiah that points to another identity—eternal priesthood.

On one hand, Jesus as the priestly Messiah had to suffer and die for the sins of the world. On the other hand, Jesus as the descendant of David was to fulfill the prophecy as the royal Messiah to come. He is the one who fulfilled everything that is in accordance with the Law, and in the Prophets.<sup>75</sup> In reality, there are not two Messiahs coming at one time, but one Christ coming at two times in two separate time periods, with two identities.

### Summary

Jesus did not come to begin a new priesthood order. He came to fulfill the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:44). Therefore, how could the priesthood role of Jesus not be linked to the priesthood tradition in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms? The priesthood role of Jesus must be in connection with and rooted in the Old Testament tradition.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, the New Testament presents Jesus as the priestly Messiah and his Messianic role has no explicit political implications.

If Jesus's ministry does not contain the Phinehasian high priest features in the New Testament, his work should be interpreted as retrospective of Melchizedek's order rather than as fulfillments of the Old Testament expectations.<sup>77</sup> If Jesus is only the kingly Messiah, there will be no atonement to redeem the sins of the world. The royal figure is

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<sup>74</sup>Jesus is crowned with glory and seated at the right hand of God *after* he had completed his work of redemption (Heb 1:3; 2:9; 10:12). Then Jesus assumes his royal role as the royal Messiah.

<sup>75</sup>Matt 5:17; John 1:45; Acts 24:14; 2 Cor 1:20.

<sup>76</sup>Just like the baptism within the New Testament context is by the means of immersion, the High Priest role within the Bible context should be through the mean of the Phinehasian priesthood.

<sup>77</sup>Block, "My Servant David," 56.

to deliver freedom and to restore the righteousness for God's kingdom but does not include reconciliation with God. If Jesus is only the kingly Messiah, there is no need for him to be born as man to represent mankind for the ransom of sin. There must be a priestly function within the Messiah and this priestly function must be consistent within the priesthood practices in the Old Testament.

This consistency is continued and shown in the Gospels and further escalated in Hebrews as explained by the authors. Sometimes the presence of certain messianic teaching in the Gospels may be explained by the presence of priesthood elements in reference to the Phinehasian covenant rather than by a direct dependence of the Davidic covenant on the royal messiah. The Jewish hearers may not necessarily refer to the messiah as a Davidic king or a monarchy kingdom to come. Interestingly, Psalm 110 was frequently quoted in the Gospels and Hebrews so as to prove Jesus's divinity and superiority over the Old Testament priesthood. This idea of being more superior than the Phinehasian covenant revealed clearly that Jesus is to fulfill the promise as a greater High Priest than Phinehas, just like Jesus's kingship would be a greater King than David.

In short, the re-describing of the Phinehasian covenant creates many theological links. First, it reminds us of God's faithfulness to his promises and the mystery of God's redemptive plan.<sup>78</sup> Second, it reminds people about the Jewish root, and Christ's redemption formula has a direct correlation to the Phinehasian priesthood (not Melchizedekian priesthood). Third, it proclaims the Old Testament worship is not by means of work, but through the Phinehasian covenant, as described in Hebrews, not by sacrifices but by repentance and through a mediator to reconcile with God.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>This mystery of Christ's fully human and fully divine nature is what the gospel about as to save mankind (Col 1:25). Christ's fully human characteristic is for the sake of the Phinehasian priesthood.

<sup>79</sup>Mason suggested several future explorations pertaining to the phrase *בְּרִית עוֹלָם* are worth pursuing in the New Testament studies. Especially as this thesis discussed, how does the idea of "eternal covenant" with Phinehas's zealous act be reconciled with Paul's defense of Abraham's faith where both were reckoned as "righteousness"? This could shed lights into the discussion of Covenantal Nomism and

## Conclusion

The gospel was rooted in the old covenants and it had its origins within Jewish faith history. We should pay more attention to the Jewish root and not totally segregate it without appreciating its significance. The term “covenant with Phinehas” is especially important to the study of covenants. As this thesis argued, it would be arbitrary to conclude the Phinehasian covenant was obsolete without a proper investigation from a theological and historical perspective.

This thesis has proved that the Phinehasian covenant should not be taken as obsolete nor subsumed under the Mosaic covenant based on a few factors. First, the covenantal language (בְּרִית עוֹלָם) and the grant-type terminology (מָלַח and בְּרִיתִי שְׁלֹום) employed a unilateral nature. This unilateral nature of the Phinehasian covenant suggests that it should stand as a separate covenant and not as part of the Mosaic covenant.

Second, in light of the Davidic covenant, the fact that the Phinehasian covenant remains, speaks even louder as a separate covenant when the Mosaic covenant was presented as obsolete. From the provision of God’s salvation plan and the covenantal terminology used, it shows both covenants with Phinehas and David are equally important. In fact, both were subsumed under the aegis of an overarching plan of God in revealing Christ as the Messiah.

Third, as we have seen from the canonical and non-canonical reading, this Phinehasian covenant was part of the messianic text supported by all the ancient data. The biblical authors placed this Phinehasian covenant alongside the Davidic covenant and repeatedly mentioned it in several places has proved its efficacy. Consequently, the ancient authors and readers understood the meaning of the Phinehasian covenant and preserved it through the extra-biblical writings. For the ancient Jewish readers, the

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the New Perspective on Paul. For details, see Mason, “*Eternal Covenant*,” 233.

Phinehasian covenant was viewed as a separate and important covenant alongside the Davidic covenant mentioned in the Old Testament.

Fourth, Jesus explained it himself and the New Testament authors described it. The Phinehasian covenant links was further established while looking at the mission and the identity of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Jesus would not complete the redemptive work by only dying as a sacrifice on the cross. Neither would he complete the work by dying in the place of the offenders. Only through the role of mediator could Jesus accomplish a way for sin to be redeemed. This reconcile work is not merely done by an earthly high priest, or neither a Melchizedekian high priest nor a royal Messiah, but by a great High Priest, who was appointed after the law, and had everlasting life (Heb 7:28; 13:8).

In brief, all these considered, it would be reasonable to conclude that the promise given to Phinehas is everlasting, and this covenant has been actualized in Christ. The significance and realizations of the Phinehasian covenant were finally all found in Jesus as the priestly Messiah. This thesis has shown that God's promise did not fail, and his faithfulness is proven in his unfolding plan.

Finally, this thesis suggests that it is appropriate for the study of covenants today to recapture this Phinehasian covenant, especially in the discussions of the Messiah. Most importantly, as Hahn concludes, it would be unwise to neglect this covenant, because the nonfulfillment of the Phinehasian covenant portrays the idea that God did not fulfill his covenant with Phinehas and that would be exegetically and theologically incorrect.<sup>80</sup> Rather, it should be given a lofty place with the same treatment as the Davidic covenant and we should put the Phinehasian covenant back within the proper biblical context from which the covenant was uprooted.

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<sup>80</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 174-75.

# APPENDIX 1

## THE BIBLICAL COVENANTS

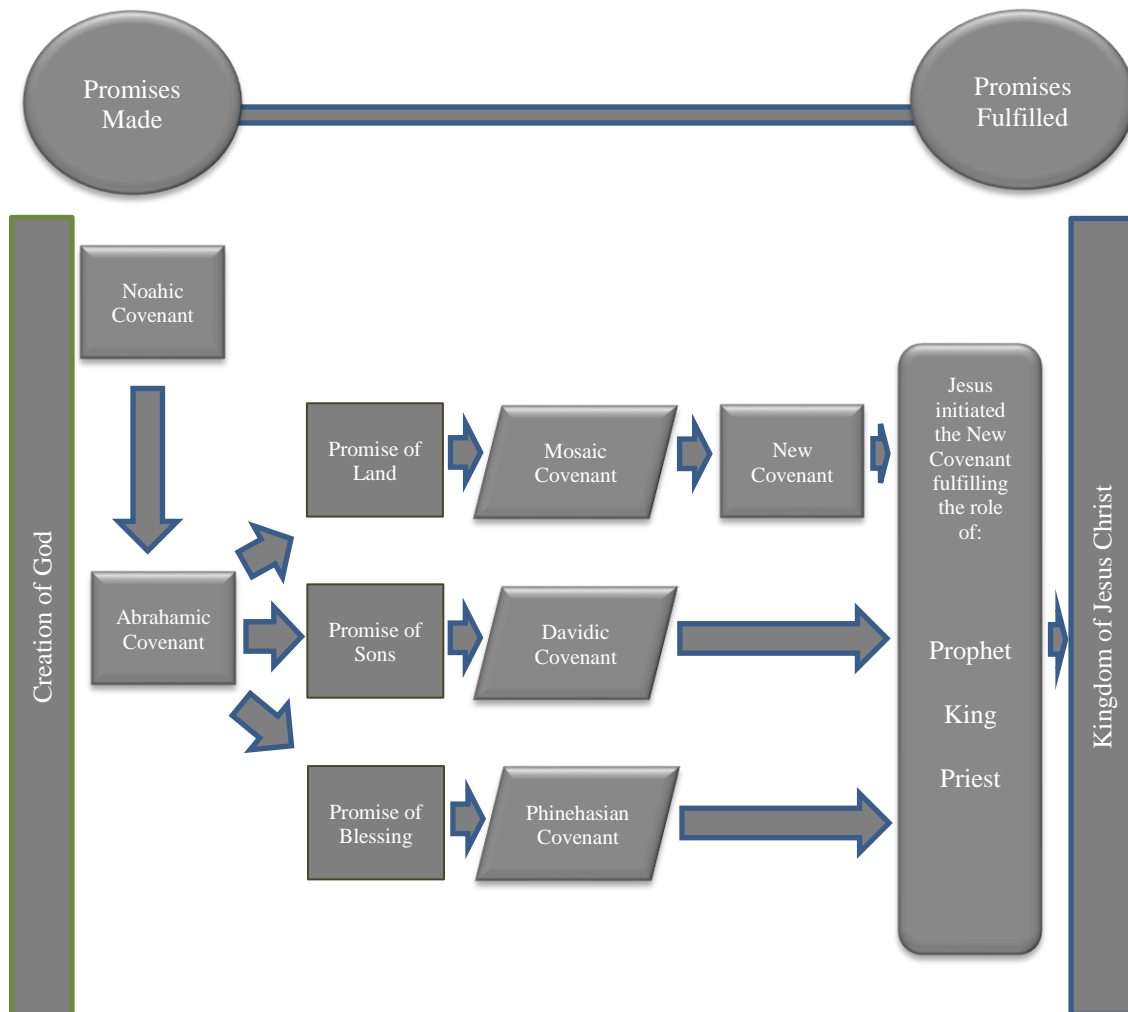


Figure A1. The biblical covenants

## APPENDIX 2

### THE PROGRESSIVE PRIESTHOOD PLAN OF GOD

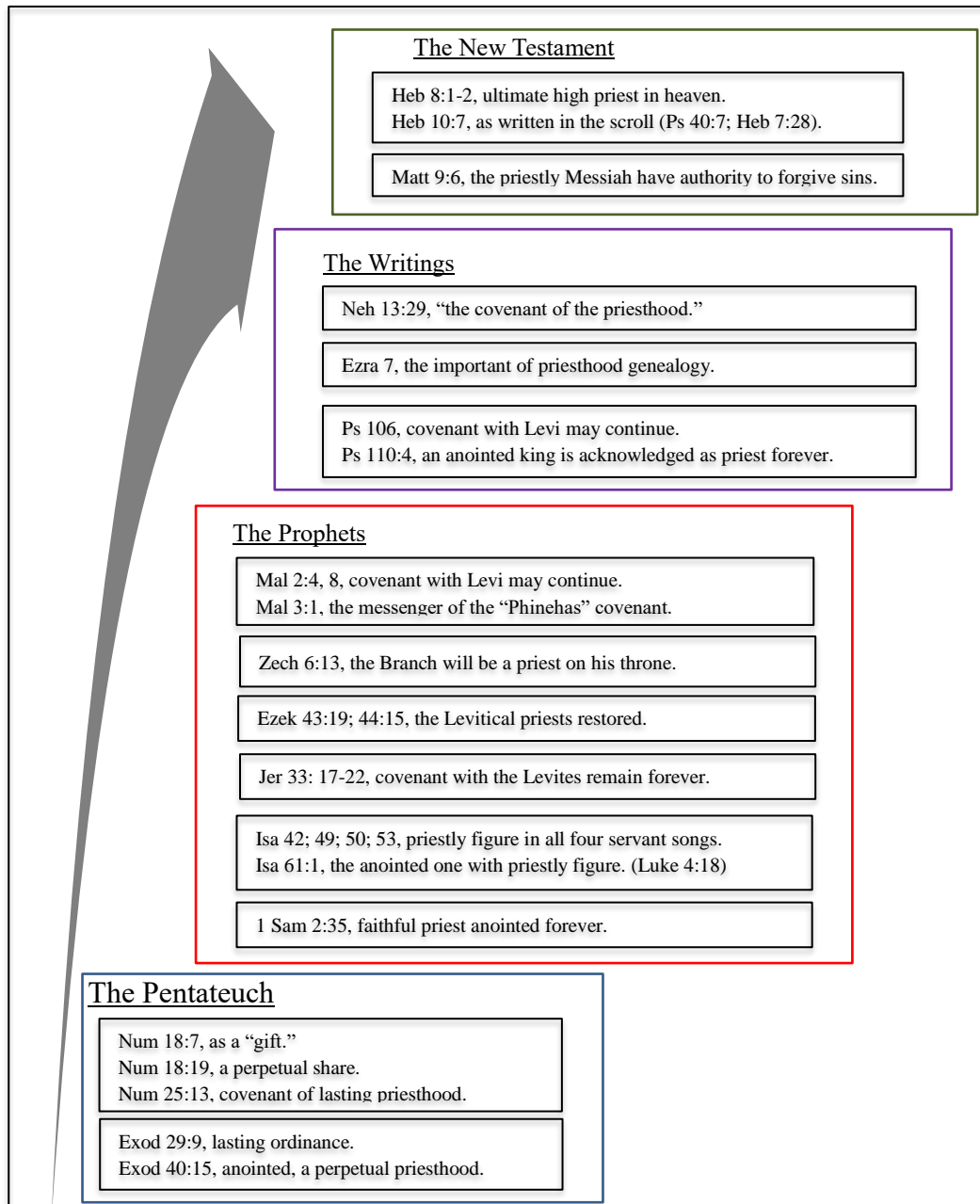


Figure A2. The progressive priesthood plan of God

APPENDIX 3  
THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

**CD 14:17-19 = 4Q266 Frag.10 Col.1:10-13<sup>1</sup>**

This is the explication [of the dwelling of the camps and the]se are the foundation walls of the community, and this is the explication of [the rules by which they shall be go]verned until the rise of the anointed of **Aaron and Israel**, [and he will atone their iniquity better than me]al and sin offerings.

**1QS Col.9:6-11<sup>2</sup>**

The community shall set apart a holy house for Aaron, in order to form a most holy community, and a house of the Community for Israel, those who walk in perfection. Only the sons of Aaron will have authority in the matter of judgment and of goods, and their word will settle the lot of all provision for the men of the Community and the goods of the men of holiness who walk in perfection. Their goods must not be mixed with the goods of the men of deceit who have not cleansed their path to separate from injustice and walk in a perfect behaviour. They should not depart from any counsel of the law in order to walk in complete stubbornness of their heart, but instead shall be ruled by the first directives which the men of the Community began to be taught until the prophet comes, and **the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel**.

**1Q28a 2:11-21<sup>3</sup>**

When God will have engendered (**the Priest-)** **Messiah**, he shall come [at] the head of the whole congregation of Israel with all [his brethren, the sons] of Aaron the Priests, [those called] to the assembly, the men of renown; and they shall sit [before him, each man] in the order of his dignity. And then [**the Mess]iah of Israel** shall [come], and the chiefs of the [clans of Israel] shall sit before him, [each] in the order of his dignity,

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<sup>1</sup>Emphasis mine. Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader: Part 1, Texts Concerned with Religious Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 107.

<sup>2</sup>Emphasis mine. Florentino Garcia Martinez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 91-93.

<sup>3</sup>Emphasis mine. Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, rev., 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 121-22.

according to [his place] in their camps and marches. And before them shall sit all the heads of [family of the congreg]ation, and the wise men of [the holy congregation,] each in the order of his dignity.

And [when] they shall gather for the common [tab]le, to eat and [to drink] new wine, when the common table shall be set for eating and the new wine [poured] for drinking, let no man extend his hand over the first-fruits of bread and wine before the Priest; for [it is he] who shall bless the first-fruits of bread and wine, and shall be the first [to extend] his hand over the bread. Thereafter, **the Messiah of Israel** shall extend his hand over the bread, [and] all the congregation of the Community [shall utter a] blessing, [each man in the order] of his dignity.

## APPENDIX 4

### EXCURSUS TO HEBREWS

#### **The Oath in Hebrews 7:28**

The transition of Jesus's priesthood relies on "an oath" (Heb 7:20) and later made perfect forever by "the oath" *after the Law* (Heb 7:28).<sup>4</sup> Therefore, we should first distinguish the definition between "an oath" and "the oath" in Hebrews 7:20-28. Traditionally, scholars considered "an oath" the same as "the oath," but there is tension between these two oaths.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of "an oath" is to allow the change of priesthood that follows the pattern of Melchizedek "on the basis of the power of an indestructible life" (Heb 7:16).<sup>6</sup> Which means, Melchizedek, who has indestructible life, has become the model for the Messiah to follow because of this "an oath" as the promise. It was made between the Lord and the Messiah in David's vision (Ps 110) to appoint the Messiah to be the ultimate high priest (Heb 7: 21).<sup>7</sup>

In contrast, "the oath" which came after the Law, is to make the Son perfect forever (Heb 7:28). The purpose of "the oath" is not to follow the pattern of an

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<sup>4</sup> The term "oath" (ὀρκωμοσία) only occurs in this passage, which is a total of four times in the whole New Testament. Georg Bertram, "ὄρκος," in *TDNT* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1973), 5: 463. All four occurrences are found in one small section (Heb 7:20, 21 and 28). This implies that this pericope could be a place where the conceptualization of "the oath" is developed.

<sup>5</sup> Jim Girdwoord and Peter Verkruijse, *Hebrews*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1997), 259; R. T. France, *Hebrews*, in vol. 13 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 103.

<sup>6</sup> This promise to the Messiah is not stated when it takes place. According to Mason's observation and later confirmed by Lange and Weigold, compared to the extensive use of Psalm 110:4 by Hebrews, there is none of the Second Temple period Jewish texts quotes from or alludes to Melchizedek from Ps 110:4 tradition. For further investigation, see Steven D. Mason, "Eternal Covenant" in *the Pentateuch: The Contours of an Elusive Phrase*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 494 (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 160; Armin Lange and Matthies Weigold, *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature*, Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplement 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 175.

<sup>7</sup> This particular "an oath" is not an ordinary promise. It was dedicated specially to the Messiah, because how could it be possible that the priests became priest without an oath (Heb 7:21) since all the priests were appointed after the promise of Phinehas? Clearly, this "an oath" is not a general oath.

indestructible life, but rather, to make the high priest perfect forever.<sup>8</sup> The emphasis of “came after the Law” provides us another clue to look into the differences, because “the oath” now made the sacrifices perfected and completed according to the Levitical customs (Heb 7:27-28).<sup>9</sup> “The oath” did not perfect Melchizedek’s sacrificial customs, but was a continuation to perfect the Phinehasian sacrificial customs. Perfection of the Phinehasian priesthood is now attainable through Jesus as the fulfillment to that promise.<sup>10</sup>

The following will give a simple illustration of the two scenarios that define further the dissimilarity of the two oaths (refer figure A3).

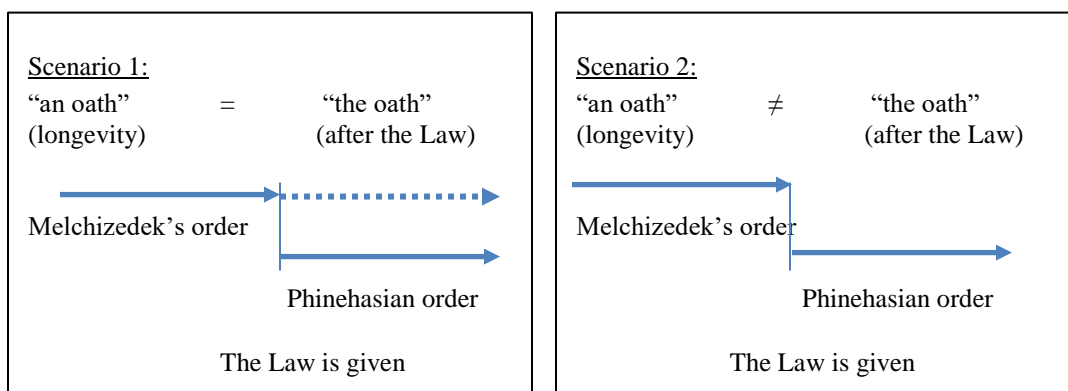


Figure A3. The dissimilarity of the two oaths

<sup>8</sup>How could an Old Testament high priest be perfect forever? Apart from indestructible life that qualifies him to live forever as the first requirement, he has to be sinless in order to be perfect. The term “the Son” being used and not “the Messiah” seems to bring out this idea because the Messiah in early Judaism is not necessarily a divine figure.

<sup>9</sup>It seems contradict if the perfection is not connected to the Leviticus. On one hand, Jesus has perfected the sacrificial custom according to the Leviticus, but on the other hand, Jesus did not perfect the Phinehasian priesthood according to the Leviticus tradition.

<sup>10</sup>The verb “made perfect” may convey a variety of nuances. As Small suggests, this verb may have a cultic meaning, which refer to the idea of ordination or consecration to the priesthood. Details see Brian Small, *The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews*, Biblical Interpretation Series 128 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 223. David A. deSilva suggested a second possibility for Jesus as “perfecter.” Jesus is presented as the one who perfects others (Heb 11:39-12:2), that bring others to the fulfillment of the thing they were trusting to receive. David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle “to the Hebrews”* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 432. In both cases, just like Phinehas was the model of faith, this verb signifies Jesus was the one who bring the believers’ faith to completion. Jesus was the perfected Phinehas (high priest) and now he can become the perfecter of faith.

In scenario 1, if “an oath” is the same as “the oath,” that would mean the co-existence of the Melchizedek’s priesthood order and the Phinehasian priesthood order in the timeline simultaneously. Because for “an oath” that promised the Messiah would have the same indestructible life as Melchizedek, the Melchizedekian order would have to extend to after the Law in order to fulfill this “an oath” can take place “after the Law.”

As for scenario 2, if “an oath” is separated from “the oath,” that would mean the historical Melchizedek priesthood order stopped when the Law inaugurated and the Phinehasian priesthood order took place in the redemptive history.<sup>11</sup> Because there is no physical Melchizedek priesthood order really found after the Phinehasian order, it is reasonable to think that “the oath” after the Law should be separated from “an oath.”

Therefore, most likely, the first oath and the second oath are two different entities. The first (an oath) refers to the promise made between God and the Messiah which is not described in the Scripture. The second (*the* oath) refers to the promise made *after the Law*.

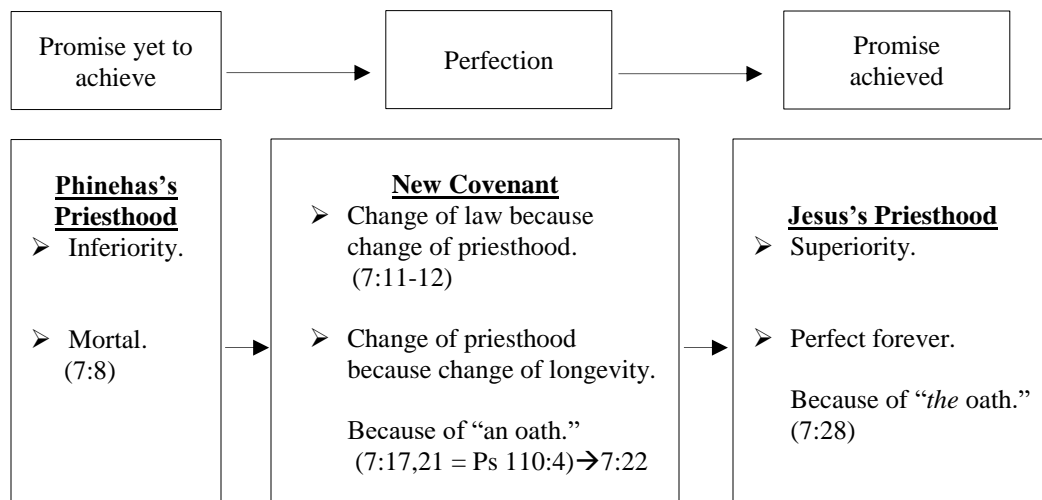


Figure A4. A framework for the change of priesthood order in Hebrews 7

Overall, “an oath” promised the Messiah would have longevity and become priest forever.<sup>12</sup> Now, the author of Hebrews claims the change of priesthood from the

<sup>11</sup> Commentators understand the reading of these verses as a stark contrast between the Melchizedekian priesthood and the Phinehasian priesthood because the Levites will cease from the office upon death but Melchizedek, who lasts forever has no parameters nor limitations. George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, The NIV Application Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 254.

<sup>12</sup> The only motif that the author of Hebrews developed with Melchizedek’s order in relation to

mortal priesthood to a priesthood that could last forever since there is a change of longevity (see figure A4). No one from Phinehas's lineage would be able to do that, but Melchizedek, the pre-incarnate Jesus, could achieve this oath. For he is without father and mother, he has no beginning of days nor end of life; he is *like* "the Son of God" that can remain a priest *forever* (v. 3) and he is still *alive* (v. 8)!<sup>13</sup> The author explicitly mentions that the contents of "an oath" which emphasizes the order of Melchizedek from Psalm 110:4 shows that "this priest lives forever!"

The author now links the priesthood office (mortal) to another priest-like character that had an "indestructible life" (immortal) with "a better hope." Consequently, the author reads Psalm 110:4 as it changes the priestly order from Phinehas to Melchizedek (Heb 7:11) and continues to the next phrase because *the* oath now would appoint *a Son* (Heb 7:28) to complete the Phinehasian priesthood instead of appointing *men*. It is unfolding of the change from a priesthood institution to an individual personal.

### **The Scroll in Hebrews 10:7**

How should *the* oath that God had sworn *after the Law* be determined then or justified as the oath to Phinehas? First, I would like to justify from the perspective of Moses. Moses, who wrote the Pentateuch (which consist of the Melchizedek and Phinehas periscopes) would have recorded both oaths if they were made known, but since the oath of Melchizedek was unknown to Moses and remained silent until Psalm 110, this possibly means this oath was before the law (in which Moses is alive and could witness). There are only two oaths *after the law* that are made known in the Bible (related to Messiah), namely—Phinehas and Davidic. From the context of Hebrews, it is the Phinehasian covenant that further pointed to this ascription—a promise in which the readers of Hebrews have hope, in direct connection to what Jesus had begun to accomplish. This fits perfectly into the broad Hebrews notion that God appointed his Son with *the* oath, and now the priestly covenant, which came after the Law that was fulfilled by Jesus, has been made perfect forever (Heb 7:28).

Second, I would like to justify from the perspective of the Hebrews' author. The author cited Ps 110 first in Heb 7 and later Ps 40 in Heb 10, which does not follow the chronological order of Psalms.<sup>14</sup> No further clarification for this "the oath" in Heb

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Jesus's priesthood is the eternity motif concerning Melchizedek and no other. Not "righteousness" nor "peace." Dongshin Don Chang, *Phinehas, The Sons of Zadok, and Melchizedek: Priestly Covenant in Late Second Temple Texts* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 175, 183. Mason quotes several scholars who have similar position that suggest Melchizedek is identified as an everlasting figure. For example, Paul Kobelski points out that "the divine oath directed to the Son, 'you are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek,' must also mean that Melchizedek himself is eternal." Moreover, the understanding of an eternal Melchizedek is supported internally by the statement in Heb 7:8 that Melchizedek is 'one of whom it is testified that he lives.' See Eric F. Mason, *You Are a Priest Forever: Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* 74 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 31.

<sup>13</sup>I would suggest the term "like" actually means "is." For instance, in Dan 7:13, the one "like" the Son of man is actually the Son of man. See also Ezek 1:26, 8:2 and Rev 1:13.

<sup>14</sup>The author of Hebrews fetches God's secret through the things revealed and of the things the

7:28, but it became clearer when the author explain in Heb 10:7 with Ps 40:7 cited. “It was written about me in the *scroll*” provides the insight that it may link to a promise that was mentioned in the scroll.<sup>15</sup> The *scroll* that was written concerning the Messiah (Ps 40:7), which no doubt refers to the Pentateuch, has to be either Deuteronomy 18:15 (a greater prophet) or Numbers 25:13 (an eternal high priest).<sup>16</sup> It is remarkable that the following verse of Ps 40 provides the answer that the foretold Messiah will lead the assembly of God’s people in praise to God the Father. Because as the mediator, the high priest as supreme spiritual leader also involves leading worship. Hence, the passage that foretold about the Messiah in *the scroll* should refer to a priestly figure, which points toward the forever priesthood of Numbers 25:13.

The citing of the Phinehasian covenant fits well in the context as the author of Hebrews keeps using the Phinehasian priesthood as a cross reference and as a shadow of Christ. Most importantly, the author brought out his point that the covenant promised to Phinehas is now fulfilled. Ultimately, at the conclusion of the whole argument about priesthood, Jesus had fulfilled the Phinehasian covenant that a high priest as mediator forever has come to inaugurate the new covenant (Heb 10:16-17) so that sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary since Jesus has made the perfect sacrifice for eternity (Heb 10:18).<sup>17</sup>

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Old Testament saints were aware of. By quoting Ps 40, the author is telling his audience two important messages: (a) that Jesus has already come; and (b) that the content of the fulfillment of what is written about the Messiah in the *scroll* (Ps 40:7; Heb 10:7). Most certainly the author interpreted Ps 40 in a Christological way. But whether David means the same when Ps 40 is composed is debatable by scholars. The fact that subjects and objects are not explicitly defined in Ps 40:6 leads to ears that do not necessarily belong to David but could also belong to God (as in *Midrash Tehillin* 16:2). The subject of the verb does not have to be David, but could be God, and the indirect object of *לִי* does not have to be David but could be God (as in Nelson’s translation of *Mekhila de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai*). Consequently, the author of Hebrews could have known several different interpretations. For details debate of interpreting Ps 40 in a messianic sense, see George A. Walser, *Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews: Studies in their Textual and Contextual Background* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 90-140.

Notably, there is only one Targum of Ps 40:6 and it reads: “sacrifice and offering you do not desire; ears *to listen to your commandments* you have dug for me; burnt offering and sin offering *for transgressions* you have not required” (italic by Walser), translation from David Stec, *The Aramaic Bible* vol. 16: *The Targum of Psalms* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), 85, quoted in Walser, *Old Testament Quotations*, 103n57. These cultic ceremonies link the prophecy to a priestly Messiah.

<sup>15</sup>The term scroll (סֵפֶר) in the hagiographa is agreed by scholars to mean the Pentateuch. Mayer I. Gruber, *Rashi’s Commentary on Psalms*, The Brill Reference Library of Judaism 18 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 331; Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 15 (London: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 178; J. W. Rogerson and J. W. McKay, *Psalms 1-50* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 193.

<sup>16</sup>The scroll cannot refer to the Writings. At the time of Ps 40 was composed, the book of Psalms was not yet compiled. On the same note, Ps 110 also was not yet ready if we follow the order of Psalms chronologically. In either case, there is nowhere any allusion that relates “the oath” that after the Law to the Melchizedekian order since the Melchizedek order was before the Law. Also, the scroll cannot refer to the Prophets either because the Pentateuch was the only book that was composed at the writing of this psalm.).

<sup>17</sup>John 12:34 does indicate that the teaching from the Pentateuch foretold that the Messiah will

The author explains his quotes of Psalm 40:6-8 in Hebrews 10:5-7 to bring out the importance that Jesus has become the high priest—Jesus has come in order to do God’s will (Heb 10:9). Emphasis should be given to Jesus’s obedience to come and his zealousness to follow God’s will. The attitude of Jesus in his incarnation reflected (as mentioned in Ps 40:7-8) “here I am, I have come... I desire to do your will, my God.” There is no force in the universe that can force the supreme Lord to leave the throne of the glory in heaven and to be born with a humble body. There is no power, except love, and only love, that caused Jesus to voluntarily condescend to save the world. Indeed, Jesus’s love counted as *zealous* for the honor of God that he was called to righteousness and zeal for God (Ps 69:9; John 2:17) to save mankind.<sup>18</sup> This characteristic is again a typological comparison with the Phinehasian priesthood in which the Phinehasian covenant was granted based on the zealousness of Phinehas.

Careful analysis reveals that the connections to each text are closely linked and points toward the Phinehasian covenant. In short, if the Melchizedekian order was taken as mortal, there is no way “an oath” could be after the law. If the Melchizedekian order was taken as immortal, since Jesus *is* Melchizedek, then, this “an oath” of longevity would together with “the oath” fulfill the Phinehasian covenant, and fulfill what the Scripture had promised beforehand, that is in accordance with Num 25:13, Ps 40:7, and Heb 7:28.

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remain forever. Where did the Pentateuch foretell this? While Longman suggests there is no future Messianic figure in the Pentateuch, Thorne sees Jesus as the Seed that overcame Satan in Gen 3:15. Stanley E. Porter, ed., *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 13; Thomas Thorne, *Jesus, as Foretold in the Old Testament: Yeshua from the Tanakh* (Denver, NC: Advance Teamwork, 2012), 4. However, I do not see Gen 3:15 as a direct reference to the Messiah prophecy because there is no proclamation of God’s righteousness (Ps 40:9-10), instead it was an indication that the Messiah was a descendant of woman.

<sup>18</sup>Or in other words, Jesus (the gospel) is regarded as the revelation of God’s righteousness, Rom 1:16-17.

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## ABSTRACT

### GOD'S EVERLASTING COVENANT WITH PHINEHAS

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018

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One may easily have the impression that the promise of “everlasting covenant” with Phinehas has been reached under the Sinai covenant. On closer examination of the question, however, general agreement in fact counts for little. Rather, most of the questions on this point appear to be still open.

The purpose of this thesis is to re-examine the efficacy of the Phinehasian covenant in light of the Davidic covenant and through some related ancient literature readings. The continuity and significance of the Phinehasian covenant is further discussion in the context of the Gospels and Hebrews as to elucidate the mystery of the Messiah's priestly identity. In applying all these data, this thesis reveals that Christ Jesus is viewed as the ultimate fulfillment of the Phinehasian covenant.

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