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A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF CHRIST'S  
PRIESTHOOD AND COVENANT MEDIATION WITH  
RESPECT TO THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT

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

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
David Stephen Schrock

May 2013

**APPROVAL SHEET**

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To Wendy

My patient and faithful,

Proverbs 31 wife

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible Commentary
ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary Series
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
<i>ASB</i>	<i>Austin Seminary Bulletin</i>
<i>AThR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
BCOT	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed.
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>BETS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>BibSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
BTC	Brazos Theological Commentary
<i>BZAW</i>	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CTJ</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
<i>DBT</i>	<i>Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>
<i>DJG</i>	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i>

<i>DOTHB</i>	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament History Books</i>
<i>DOTP</i>	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch</i>
<i>DPL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i>
<i>DSCHT</i>	<i>Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology</i>
<i>DTIB</i>	<i>Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible</i>
<i>EBT</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology</i>
<i>EDT</i>	<i>Evangelical Dictionary of Theology</i>
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>ISBE</i>	<i>International Standard Biblical Encyclopedia</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JHSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LXX	Septuagint
<i>MSJ</i>	<i>The Master's Seminary Journal</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
NACSBT	New American Commentary Studies in Bible and Theology
<i>NDBT</i>	<i>New Dictionary of Biblical Theology.</i>
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary

NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTC	New Testament Commentary
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RBL</i>	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>RTJ</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Journal</i>
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSP	SBL Seminar Papers
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNT	Supplements to <i>Novum Testamentum</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TJT</i>	<i>Toronto Journal of Theology</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>

<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

## PREFACE

Psalm 111:2 reads, “Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.” In 2003, those words propelled me to go to seminary. Ten years later, they still resonate because God has sustained my studies with an ongoing fascination and delight in his Word. Such joy comes from his Spirit, but it also comes through flesh and blood—friends and family that God has used to spur me on in my pursuit of his Son. Without them, this dissertation would be greatly impoverished, if not unfinished.

First, I would like to thank the faculty of Southern Seminary. Since my arrival in 2004, they have formed in me a greater understanding and love for God’s truth. In particular, Bruce Ware and Tom Schreiner have taught me how to be an exegetical theologian, Russell Moore opened my eyes to see how all Scripture centers on Christ, and Tom Nettles gave me historical reasons to be a Baptist theologian. Above all, I want to thank my supervisor, Stephen Wellum, who more than anyone else has shaped my understanding of biblical hermeneutics and the task of theology. His friendship, relentless encouragement, and scholastic excellence have left a permanent mark on me. I am eternally indebted to him, and to the faculty of Southern Seminary.

I would also like to acknowledge the many friends who have spurred me on in my studies. Grant Gaines, Luke Stamps, Matthew Barrett, and Oren Martin, among others, have sharpened my understanding of the atonement in many seminars and conversations. Others like Brent Moore and Trent Hunter have kept me sane with their counsel and encouragement.

Simultaneously, God has also used two churches to fasten my academics to life and ministry. In Louisville, Ninth & O Baptist Church ministered greatly to my wife and me. And now in Seymour, Indiana, Calvary Baptist Church has patiently permitted their pastor to finish his doctoral degree. They have been nothing but supportive in the process. It has been a humbling joy to be their pastor. In particular, I want to thank Sam Emadi and Nick Dorsey for their faithful labors at Calvary, and for many conversations that have revolved around biblical theology, hermeneutics, and the glory of Christ in Scripture and ministry.

Most of all I want to thank my family. Wendy, I am grateful that God has given me such a Proverbs 31 wife. You have sacrificed much and faithfully cared for our family and me during this arduous season. For Titus and Silas, I am grateful for you both. The prospect of playing more with you has been a constant motivator to finish. And for the rest of my family, I have been constantly aided by your prayers and support.

Above all, my gratitude goes to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This offering of thanksgiving is more than just a final formality. His atoning sacrifice procured all the blessings that I enjoy. The abundant life and love that he gives is the superlative treasure of my life. Meditating on your priesthood has been the capstone of my seminary years. I pray that this dissertation honors you as our great royal priest, stimulates your children to love your atoning death more, and motivates your church to fulfill their priestly calling of evangelism and missions. Soli Deo Gloria.

David S. Schrock

Seymour, Indiana

May 2013

## CHAPTER 1

### DEFINITE ATONEMENT: A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

#### Introduction

For whom did Christ die? That is a question that has been debated throughout church history.<sup>1</sup> For some, the idea of limiting Christ's atonement is troubling<sup>2</sup> or "repulsive."<sup>3</sup> For others, it is the stamp of true evangelical orthodoxy.<sup>4</sup> Added to the complexity, there have been hypothetical universalists,<sup>5</sup> Amyraldians,<sup>6</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup>Alan Sell, *The Great Debate: Calvinism, Arminianism, and Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983); Raymond A. Blacketer, "Definite Atonement in Historical Perspective," in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 304-23.

<sup>2</sup>Frank S. Page, *Trouble with the TULIP: A Closer Examination of the Five Points of Calvinism* (Canton, GA: Riverstone Group, 2000). Rightly, the notion of "limiting" Christ's atoning work must be approached cautiously, but as Paige Patterson notes, "All evangelicals limit the atonement in some sense. Otherwise, one would, of necessity, be driven to universalism" ("The Work of Christ," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin [Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007], 584).

<sup>3</sup>Roger E. Olson, "Is God's Love Limited to the Elect? Rebutting a Calvinist Challenge to the Gospel," *Enrichment Journal* (2013), sec. 4 [journal on-line]; accessed 11 February 2013; available from [http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/201203/201203\\_044\\_limited\\_atonement.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/201203/201203_044_limited_atonement.cfm); Internet.

<sup>4</sup>Ian Hamilton, *The Erosion of Calvinist Orthodoxy: Drifting from the Truth in Confessional Scottish Churches* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2010), esp. 43-82.

<sup>5</sup>For an introduction to hypothetical universalism, see Jonathan D. Moore, *English Hypothetical Universalism: John Preston and the Softening of Reformed Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Richard A. Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 126-60.

<sup>6</sup>For discussion concerning Amyraldianism, see Roger Nicole, "Amyraldianism," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, vol. 1, ed. Edwin H. Palmer (Wilmington, DE: The National Foundation for Christian Education, 1964), 184-93; Brian G. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy: Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth-Century France* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); R.T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Carlisle, PA: Paternoster, 1997; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006); Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 107-25.



“modified”/“moderate” Calvinists<sup>7</sup> who have, in different ways, sought to navigate a *via media* between the classical Reformed position (limited atonement, better termed definite atonement) and the non-Calvinistic position (general or universal atonement).<sup>8</sup> With such a

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<sup>7</sup>Speaking most broadly, Muller suggests that everyone following Calvin (Amyraut, Davenant, Beza, Owen, etc.) have “modified” his views (*Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 57). Still, in terms of historical nomenclature, there is a difference between “moderate” and “modified” Calvinists. The former is a term that “orthodox Calvinists” have used to describe Calvinistic universalists going back to the Westminster Assembly. For instance, B. B. Warfield writes, “The interest of the debate to us lies in the revelation which it gives us in the Assembly of an influential and able, but apparently small, body of men whose conviction lay in the direction of the *modified Calvinism* which has been lately promulgated by Cameron and Amyraut for the express purpose of finding a place for a universal redemption in the Calvinistic system” (“The Making of the Westminster Confession, and Especially of Its Chapter on the Decree of God,” in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* [New York: Oxford, 1932; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003], 6:142). Emphasis mine.

The latter is a term that many twentieth and twenty-first century four-point Calvinists have applied to themselves. For instance, Robert Lightner (*The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement*, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998], *passim*) employed the terms “strict Calvinist” and “moderate Calvinists” to describe respectively those who defend definite atonement and those who deny it. Others prefer to use the more esoteric terminology of “Sublapsarian Calvinism” (Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997], 193; Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 52).

<sup>8</sup>Part of the communicative impasse related to the extent of the atonement is the use of language and labels. Four-pointers, five-pointers, and even four-and-a-half point (e.g., R. T. Kendall) vie for the right to claim Calvin as their theological forebear. As a result, they employ language that supports their view. “Modified Calvinism” implies that Calvin held to definite atonement and that four-pointers deviate from him; “moderate Calvinism” insinuates that a general atonement retrieves true Calvinist doctrine from the hands of high Calvinists, who are still not the same as hyper-Calvinists. Indeed, no one is happy with all the labels, and so choosing the right ones to avoid unnecessary confusion is near impossible.

For this dissertation, the term “generalist” will be used to describe those who argue for a general atonement and universal propitiation. This is the view expounded by the likes of Lightner, who affirms propitiation for all people without exception when he says about on 1 Pet 2:1, “Christ paid the ransom price for those who deny him,” (*The Death Christ Died*, 51; cf. Norman Douty, *Did Christ Die Only for the Elect? A Treatise on the Extent of the Atonement* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998], 29, 32-33). Likewise, Gary Shultz (“A Biblical and Theological Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement” [Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008], 114) cites Donald Lake with approval to affirm the “universal potentiality of Christ’s atonement” in 1 John 2:2 (Donald Lake, “He Died for All: The Universal Dimensions of the Atonement,” in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock [Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1975], 39). Conversely, “particularist” will be used to describe advocates of definite atonement who deny universal propitiation and affirm an efficacious redemption for a particular people (i.e., the elect).

Of course, there are a range of opinions and theological systems on both sides of the debate; however, the single question at issue is discerning whether Christ’s atoning work was for the forgiveness humanity at large and every person individually, or for a certain covenantal community? I affirm a “universal” extent of the atonement, meaning that Christ’s death has implications on all creation. My theological contention is that in his universal death, Jesus has a particular intention of remitting the sins of the elect *and* a series of universal intentions that include restoring creation, condemning the wicked, defeating Satan, providing common grace, and offering the gospel to all people without reservation. This “multi-intentioned” approach is different from that of Shultz because he affirms a universal propitiation (“A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement,” 112-20). Therefore, to speak with as much precision as possible, the language of definite atonement and general atonement, particularist and generalist will be used.

checkered past, any attempt to add to the cacophony may be a fool’s errand. And yet, understanding what Christ accomplished in his death and for whom he died is a necessary feature of biblical soteriology.

The challenge of speaking into the chaos of this debate is contributing something new. At least, that is the academic challenge—adding significant research to the collective body of knowledge. After all, when it comes to this “great debate,” what has not been said? My answer is that this dissertation does not aim to say anything novel. Rather, this dissertation aims to say something that has been said many times before but has not been said with such detail. Namely, this dissertation will argue that a biblical theology of Christ’s priesthood, which pays close attention to the typological and covenantal structures of Christ’s priestly mediation, will formally provide a better “framework” for understanding the doctrine and will materially result in a defense of definite atonement.<sup>9</sup>

History is helpful here. In the nineteenth century, modified Calvinism arose in Scotland.<sup>10</sup> John Macleod Campbell, Ralph Wardlaw, and a number of lesser-known Scots like James Morison began protesting against definite atonement.<sup>11</sup> Setting God’s universal

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<sup>9</sup>On the importance of setting doctrinal discussions into the framework of the Bible, see Richard Lints, *Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 290-334. See also, Andreas Köstenberger and Richard Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2011).

<sup>10</sup>One could just as easily look at seventeenth-century England or nineteenth-century New England to find historical forebears on both sides of the discussion. For a recent historical overview that focuses on Synod of Dort and the Westminster Assembly, see Lee Gatiss, *For Us and for Our Salvation: ‘Limited Atonement’ in the Bible, Doctrine, History, and Ministry* (London: The Latimer Trust, 2012).

<sup>11</sup>For an historical account of the “Atonement Controversy” in Scotland, see Andrew Robertson, *History of the Atonement Controversy: In Connexion with the Secession Church* (Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Sons, 1846); Hamilton, *The Erosion of Calvinist Orthodoxy*, 43-82. Hamilton outlines the division between orthodox Calvinists and modified Calvinists. A representative list of those men who held to the doctrine of election but denied definite atonement include James Morison, *The Extent of the Propitiation: Or, the Question, For Whom Did Christ Die? Answered* (London: Thomas Ward & Co., 1842); George Payne, *Lectures on Divine Sovereignty, Election, and the Atonement, Justification, and Regeneration* (London: James Dinnis, 1838). Most prolific during this period, however, was Ralph Wardlaw, whose works on the atonement included *Two Essays:*

love and the universal offer of the gospel as the controls of their systematic theology, they quickly denied definite atonement and soon after traded penal substitution for a governmental view of the atonement.<sup>12</sup> During this era, numerous orthodox Calvinists—pastors and professors—arose to defend definite atonement. The result was a corpus of carefully argued, exegetically sound, and theologically rich works on the nature and extent of the atonement.<sup>13</sup> Many of these works have gone unnoticed in the doctrinal history of the atonement.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, their brand of exegetical theology, which might today be called a “thick” reading of Scripture, needs to be reissued.<sup>15</sup> As it relates to the extent of the atonement, their methodology of tracing the priestly and covenantal themes in great detail is a model that this

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(I) *On the Assurance of Faith*, (II) *On the Extent of the Atonement, and Universal Pardon, in which the Views of T. Erskine are Particularly Examined* (New York: Jonathan Leavitt, 1830); *Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ* (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1843).

<sup>12</sup>J. McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement and Its Relation to Remission of Sins and Eternal Life* (1856; repr., London: James Clarke & Co., 1959).

<sup>13</sup>A representative list of Scotland’s orthodox Calvinists would include: Robert Stevenson, *A Dissertation on the Atonement* (Philadelphia: Towar & Hogan, 1832); William Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* (1834; repr., Pittsburgh: United Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1864); Robert Smith Candlish, *The Cross of Christ, The Call of God, Saving Faith: An Inquiry into the Completeness and Extent of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1845); idem, *The Atonement: Its Efficacy and Extent* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1867); William Cunningham, *Historical Theology* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1960), 2:237-370; George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1871; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953); idem, *The Apostle’s Doctrine of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1870; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957); Hugh Martin, *The Atonement: In Its Relation to the Covenant, the Priesthood, the Intercession of Our Lord* (London: Ames Nisbet & Company, 1870); and T. T. Crawford, *The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1874; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954).

<sup>14</sup>For instance, in *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), authors Steve Jeffrey, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, omit nineteenth-century Scotland in their historical review of penal substitution, but they are not alone. Gatiss does not mention it (*For Us and for Our Salvation*), nor does Shultz, in his lengthy historical section on the atonement’s extent (“A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement,” 19-97).

<sup>15</sup>Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning in this Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 309-15.

dissertation seeks to follow and develop.<sup>16</sup> While a method of ‘retrieval’ has gained recent interest,<sup>17</sup> the approach in this dissertation will depend on biblical theology not historical theology. That is to say, it will spend little time debating Calvin’s view of the atonement,<sup>18</sup> John Owens’ trilemma,<sup>19</sup> or the difference between redemption and atonement,<sup>20</sup> instead, it will construct a priestly theology from the biblical text itself.

Accordingly, this dissertation will depend heavily on exegesis and biblical theology. It will not quarrel over individual words, but will trace the typological structures of the priesthood throughout the whole Bible, paying attention to the various levels of the text—textual, epochal, and canonical.<sup>21</sup> Demonstrating that priestly typology and new

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<sup>16</sup>Preeminent in this regard are Martin, *The Atonement*, and Symington, *On The Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ*.

<sup>17</sup>John Webster, “Theologies of Retrieval,” in *Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, ed. John Webster et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 583-99. For a fruitful example of retrieving the best insights of the Reformation for understanding “union with Christ,” see J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

<sup>18</sup>For historians who champion Calvin as advocating definite atonement, see Paul Helm, *Calvin and the Calvinist* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1998); Robert A. Peterson, *Calvin and the Atonement* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1999); Thomas J. Nettles, “John Calvin’s Understanding of the Death of Christ,” in *Whomever He Wills: A Surprising Display of Sovereign Mercy*, ed. Matthew Barrett and Thomas J. Nettles (Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2012), 293-315; Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*. Conversely, historians who understand Calvin’s theology as best expressed by Moise Amyraut and other hypothetical universalists, see Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*; R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*; G. Michael Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to Consensus (1536-1675)*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 1997).

<sup>19</sup>For a scathing critique of John Owen’s atonement theology, see Alan C. Clifford, *Atonement and Justification: English Evangelical Theology, 1640-1790: An Evaluation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990); Neil A. Chambers, “A Critical Examination of John Owen’s Argument for Limited Atonement in the Death of Christ” (Th.M. thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, 1998); David Allen, “The Atonement,” in *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 83-92. In response to Clifford, see Carl R. Trueman, *The Claims of Truth: John Owen’s Trinitarian Theology* (Carlisle, PA: Paternoster Press, 1998), esp. 233–40.

<sup>20</sup>W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. Alan W. Gomes (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003), 743.

<sup>21</sup>Lints, *Fabric of Theology*; Michael Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville: Westminster-John Knox, 2002); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster-John Knox, 2005); Graeme Goldsworthy,

covenant efficacy arise in the text of Scripture and are absolutely essential to understanding the biblical storyline, along with the person and work of Christ, it will maintain that only as biblical interpreters self-consciously relate individual texts to these larger categories, will true doctrines emerge. “Interpretation of the Bible demands a framework within which the details are set,” and therefore, as Dumbrell puts it, “We need to know the big picture before we look at the details.”<sup>22</sup> With such attention to theological method, this dissertation will be both a case study in theological hermeneutics and a defense of definite atonement. Or better, it will defend definite atonement by means of biblical theology, with special attention to typology.<sup>23</sup>

Materially, this dissertation will focus its attention on the priesthood of Christ and the covenant that he ratifies as a priestly mediator. It will consider the binary nature of the priest, who simultaneously represented his covenant people and stood guard against God’s enemies. Explicating this more comprehensive understanding of the priesthood, it will show how Christ is both a priest who saves (*Kohen Mediator*) and teaches (*Kohen Teacher*) his covenant people and a priest who stands guard over God’s house (*Kohen Victor*).

Theologically, Jesus secures atonement for his covenant people by means of his priestly sacrifice, and then (in time) instructs his covenant people and purges the world of those who stand as God’s impure enemies. This binary ministry arises from the priestly office in the

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*Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

<sup>22</sup>William Dumbrell, *The Search for Order: Biblical Eschatology in Focus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 9. Of course, following the hermeneutical spiral, the propositions of individual texts must also inform and correct the larger structures of the Bible.

<sup>23</sup>Because “biblical theology” is used to describe a variety of interpretive approaches (see Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012]), it should be stated that the approach taken here is best represented in Klink

OT, is fulfilled by Jesus in the NT, and makes the best sense of individual texts related to the atonement and its extent.

Therefore, when all the biblical data about Christ's priesthood is evaluated, this dissertation will defend a "progressive covenantal" reading of the new covenant, where Christ secures the redemption of his covenant people *as a priest*.<sup>24</sup> What has been missing in so many formulations for and against definite atonement is a full-orbed consideration of Christ's priesthood. Yet, without attention to this office, it is impossible to interpret individual passages related to the atonement and it fails to let the larger and more explicit concepts of the priest inform the more particular designs of the atonement's extent and intent.

Altogether, this dissertation will not offer commentary on all the particular<sup>25</sup> and universal texts.<sup>26</sup> Nor will it provide extensive interpretations of individual passages, like George Smeaton's exposition of every NT passage on the atonement,<sup>27</sup> or Jarvis Williams's

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and Lockett's taxonomy as "biblical theology as history of redemption," especially because of the way that typology is employed (ibid., 84-86).

<sup>24</sup>Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), esp. 501-11.

<sup>25</sup>Typical texts employed to defend definite atonement are those that speak of Christ's work with definitive and efficacious language (e.g., Matt 1:21; Luke 19:10; Gal 1:3-4; 3:13; 1 Pet 3:18, etc.) and those that denominate a certain class of people as the express recipients of Christ's atoning death. This list includes "people" (Matt 1:21); "many" (Matt 20:28; 26:28); "sheep" (John 10:11-14); "children of God" (John 11:52-53); the ones "given" to Jesus (John 17:2ff.); "church" (Acts 20:28); "the elect" (Rom 8:32-34); "bride" (Eph 5:25-27); "the called" (Heb 9:15). For an elongated list of texts, see David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1963), 38-47.

<sup>26</sup>Typical texts that argue for general atonement include the "all" passages (e.g., Rom 5:14-15; 2 Cor 5:14, 15; 1 Tim 2:4, 6; Heb 2:9; 2 Pet 3:9; Rom 5:18), "world" passages (e.g., John 1:29; 3:16, 17, 18; 5:40; 6:32-51; 12:48; 16:8-11; 2 Cor 5:19; 1 John 2:2; 4:14), "whosoever will" passages (e.g., Mark 16:16; John 3:16; 6:37; Acts 10:43; Rom 3:22-23), and those passages which ostensibly speak of redeemed men perishing (Matt 18:32-33; Rom 14:15; 1 Cor 8:11; Heb 10:29; 2 Pet 2:1, 20). For an extended articulation of these "four squadrons" of texts from a generalist's perspective, see John Goodwin, *Redemption Redeemed: A Puritan Defense of Unlimited Atonement*, ed. John D. Wagner (London: John Macock, 1651; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 129-226.

<sup>27</sup>Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*; idem, *The Apostle's Doctrine of the Atonement*.

recent defense of definite atonement.<sup>28</sup> Rather, this dissertation will argue for definite atonement on the basis of Christ's priestly office, examined from the whole Bible.

### Thesis

This dissertation will argue that a biblical theology of the priestly mediation of the new covenant is necessary for understanding the extent of the atonement and that such a study will result in a clear affirmation of definite atonement. In other words, at its heart, this dissertation will defend a particular dogmatic position, namely that Christ died to secure the salvation of his covenant people. However, the method of argumentation will not be another attempt to weigh universal and particular texts in the balance of theological synthesis, nor an attempt to prove the truest form of Calvinism. Rather, this dissertation will utilize the rich findings of biblical theology and typology to assist our understanding of this thorny subject.

Indeed, church history has shown that one of the strongest arguments for definite atonement is an appeal to Christ's priestly work and new covenant mediation. In the past, theologians at many times and in many languages have appealed to the priestly and covenantal arguments for definite atonement.<sup>29</sup> This dissertation will often appeal to their

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<sup>28</sup>Jarvis Williams, *For Whom Did Christ Die? The Extent of the Atonement in Paul's Theology* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2012).

<sup>29</sup>John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 70-88, 170-72; Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1994), 2:455-82; Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Heritage Books, 1992), 1:601; Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ*, 194-96; Martin, *The Atonement*, 49-103; A. A. Hodge, *The Atonement* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1867), 150-60; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 466-69; Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 677; Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 236-37; Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 492-520.

observations, especially to the exegetical theologians of nineteenth century Scotland,<sup>30</sup> in order to make theological application of the exegetical and typological arguments proffered here. In the end, I will demonstrate how Christ *as a priest* mediates a new covenant and fulfills all the OT patterns of priesthood and sacrifice, thus effecting a definite atonement for his covenant people.

### **The Priesthood of Christ: An Historical Appraisal of Its Use in Theology**

In history, definite atonement has elicited a plethora of pamphlets, articles, chapters, books, and (more recently) blog posts arguing for and against the particular designs of the atonement.<sup>31</sup> However, because salvation does not depend on one's belief in the extent of the atonement, this doctrine has often been relegated to a peripheral matter. Still, the reason why this doctrine deserves another full-scale treatment is twofold. First, in the last century, there have been few full-length books or dissertations that have sought to explain the doctrine from the perspective of biblical theology. Affirming this, A. B. McGowan writes,

It seems to me that there is much study still to be undertaken in relation to the extent of the atonement . . . There has been a tendency to dismiss these matters as debates from a previous century, which are either settled or not capable of being settled. . . . There is scope for considerable work here. In carrying out this work it is important to continue to engage with Arminian scholars, since historically they too are a product of the Calvinist position. The reinvigorated Amyraldian position must also be tackled and their

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<sup>30</sup>Concerning these exegetical theologians, Donald Macleod writes that Scottish Presbyterians held to “a belief in limited atonement, but stated very carefully. . . [They] accepted that many benefits accrued to the reprobate from the death of Christ and did so by God’s conscious intention . . . and they had no hesitation whatever about the universal offer of the gospel . . . But properly defined, they did believe in limited atonement” (“The Atonement,” in *DSCHT*, ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron et al. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993], 39).

<sup>31</sup>This dissertation will use “extent of the atonement” as a general reference to the question at issue. More specifically, the debate is a matter of intention (see John Murray for clarification, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955], 61-64). Few Calvinists deny the universal impact of Christ’s death. For instance, see the “Scriptural Universalism” of R. B. Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die? A Study of the Divine Design of the Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 78–103. What particularists deny is universal propitiation.



arguments must be faced seriously and carefully. Many pamphlets have been written, but few full-scale studies have been undertaken.<sup>32</sup>

McGowan's point is reinforced and sharpened by the recent dissertation on the same subject by Gary Shultz. While Shultz advocates a "multi-intentioned view" of the atonement that includes a universal propitiation for sin, his concluding remarks rightly observe the need for incorporating the "bridge discipline" of biblical theology in the study of the atonement's extent.<sup>33</sup> He writes,

There are also other areas of research in theology that would complement this dissertation. A biblical theology of atonement in general, as it relates to believers and unbelievers, would be profitable, especially from the Old Testament. A biblical theology that explicitly traces God's multiple intentions in the atonement throughout the biblical narrative would also be worthwhile.<sup>34</sup>

The need for a biblical theological treatment of the atonement's extent is the first reason, but there is a second.

Equally lacking in the literature is attention to Christ's priestly office. In OT studies, a majority of scholars have followed Wellhausen to search for a priestly theology behind the biblical text.<sup>35</sup> In NT studies, only a few scholars have begun to engage the priesthood of Christ. Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis is one biblical scholar who has written numerous articles arguing that Jesus' messianic office is essentially that of a priest.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>A. T. B. McGowan, "The Atonement as Penal Substitution," in *Always Reforming: Explorations in Systematic Theology*, ed. A. T. B. McGowan (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 209.

<sup>33</sup>It is worth noting the relative dearth of journal articles on the extent of the atonement that rely on biblical theology. The predominant discipline that addresses this subject is historical theology, with an occasional exegetical investigation. See bibliography for a full list.

<sup>34</sup>Shultz, "A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement," 288.

<sup>35</sup>Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, trans. J. S. Black and A. Menzies (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885). For a survey of this scholarship, see T. J. Betts, "Ezekiel the Priest: A Custodian of the Tôrâ" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002), esp. 3-23.

<sup>36</sup>A sampling of Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis's work include, "The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7.13 as a Test Case," *SBLSP* (1997): 161-93; idem, "God's Image, His Cosmic

Likewise, Nicholas Perrin's *Jesus the Temple* makes many observations about Jesus as priest.<sup>37</sup> In biblical theology, there are a number of works on the theology of the priesthood, but if you remove the contributions of Catholic theologians (e.g., Andre Feuillet, Albert Vanhoye, Scott Hahn, and Gerald O'Collins)<sup>38</sup> and theologians sympathetic to a higher-critical approach to the Bible (Richard D. Nelson, David T. Williams, and Robert Sherman),<sup>39</sup> who remains? Evangelical theologians are nearly absent.

When we turn our attention to systematic theology, we find that most Christologies focus on Christ's role as prophet or king.<sup>40</sup> The priest is less prevalent.<sup>41</sup> While theologians from the Reformed tradition will often speak of Christ's *munus triplex*,

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Temple, and the High Priest: Towards an Historical and Theological Account of the Incarnation," in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2004); idem, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," *JHSJ* 4 (2006): 155-75; idem, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," *JSHJ* 5 (2007): 57-79.

<sup>37</sup>Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010).

<sup>38</sup>André Feuillet, *The Priesthood of Christ and His Ministers*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975); Albert Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest: According to the New Testament*, trans. J. Bernard Orchard (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's, 1986); Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Gerald O'Collins and Michael Keenan Jones, *Jesus Our Priest: A Christian Approach to the Priesthood of Christ* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>39</sup>Richard D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993); David Williams, *The Office of Christ and Its Expression in the Church: Prophet, Priest, King* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1997); Robert Sherman, *King, Prophet, Priest: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004).

<sup>40</sup>For instance, in his extensive "Taxonomy of Jesus' Death," Scot McKnight lists the majority views of scholars researching the biblical and historical background that informed Jesus' death, and strikingly the notion of priest is not even considered (*Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory* [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005], 100). McKnight's list, which synthesizes the works of C. H. Dodd, J. Jeremias, M. Hooker, B. Chilton, C. A. Evans, N. T. Wright, and others, lists "prophet, righteous sufferer, and atoning sacrifice" as prominent messianic identities, as well as differing conceptions of Christ as Suffering Servant or Son of Man, but noticeably absent is the biblical concept of priest, one that was increasingly prominent in Second Temple Judaism. Likewise, even in circles where penal substitution is esteemed, Christ's kingship is often asserted with little regard to his priesthood (see Russell D. Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004]).

<sup>41</sup>Peter J. Leithart gives a plausible argument that Enlightenment thought has, the anti-religious views of Kant, Nietzsche, and Weber have contributed a scholastic aversion to "priest-craft" ("Attendants of Yahweh's House: Priesthood in the Old Testament," *JSOT* 85 [1999]: 3-4).

few permit the exegetical details of the priestly office to shape their Christology.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, when theologians do focus attention on Christ's priesthood, it is typically reduced to his sacrifice and intercession,<sup>43</sup> but as it will be evidenced, the priestly office entails more than those two functions.<sup>44</sup> More germane to this dissertation, many theologians have appealed to the priesthood of Christ to support definite atonement, but not since Hugh Martin and William Symington has anyone provided anything more than a few pages. At the same time, those who oppose definite atonement ignore the priestly argument,<sup>45</sup> dismiss it,<sup>46</sup> abstract the work of the priest,<sup>47</sup> or misrepresent what the priest does.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>One recent exception is Horton's work, *The Christian Faith*, which defines his atoning work in priestly categories. Consequently, his presentation of Christ's death is ready to take on the interlocutors arguing against penal substitution of Christ's sacrifice (ibid., 492-520). See also Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 383-93.

<sup>43</sup>For instance, John Owen reduces the role of the priest to that of a "sacrificer" (*The Priesthood of Christ: Its Necessity and Nature* [Fearn, Scotland: Christian Heritage, 2010], 38).

<sup>44</sup>See Jonathan R. Wilson's critique of theology's narrow view of the priest in *God So Loved the World: A Christology for Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 47-53.

<sup>45</sup>Gary Long observes, "I have yet to find a work by an unlimited redemptionist which sets forth proof for unlimited atonement under a heading relating to Christ's priesthood" (*Definite Atonement* [Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2006], 31).

<sup>46</sup>Kenneth Keathley (*Salvation and Sovereignty: A Molinist Approach* [Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010], 199), citing Lightner (*The Death Christ Died*, 103-04), brushes aside the priestly argument in two paragraphs because Christ intercedes *only for those who appeal to him in faith*.

<sup>47</sup>Douty, *Did Christ Die Only for the Elect?*, 32-39. Douty considers the priesthood of Christ under the heading of "Atonement and Intercession," and because he does not ground his theological assertions in the biblical-theological matrix of the Bible, he can state that "Christ is divinely provided priest for all mankind, . . . Any member of Adam's race may have Him as his priest if he will" (ibid., 33). Douty's assertion goes against the grain of the whole Bible. As it will be argued, the priest is always proactive, antecedent to man's response, and efficacious as he represents God's covenant community.

<sup>48</sup>For instance, Shultz argues that Christ as a priest makes a general intercession for all mankind and a salvific intercession for the elect ("A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement," 154-55). Unfortunately, his multi-intentioned view of Christ's priesthood lacks exegetical and typological support. For instance, when he asserts that the multi-intentioned view takes into account the prophetic, priestly, and kingly work of Jesus, he does not relate Christ's work to the offices typified by Moses (prophet), Aaron/Melchizedek (priest), or David (king) (ibid., 280). Thus, he makes a theological argument for general atonement and intercession that misrepresents the typological structures extant in the Bible.

As a consequence of disregarding Christ’s priesthood—the role that is most properly his<sup>49</sup>—evangelical opponents of definite atonement misunderstand and malign definite atonement. They spend too little time considering how his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and Spiritual rule over his church are all held together in his priestly office. Still, the argument here is not just negative—criticizing generalists for failing to consider Christ’s priesthood. It is preeminently constructive and exegetical.

### **In Search of a Better Theological Method**

Looked at from the angle of methodology, this dissertation is a hermeneutical test case where the doctrine of the atonement will be examined. Based on the recent works of Lints, Horton, Vanhoozer, Goldsworthy, and Köstenberger,<sup>50</sup> it assumes that a canonical approach to theology with particular attention toward typological and covenantal structures will result in a better reading of the individual texts that are often employed to defend limited or unlimited atonement.<sup>51</sup> More specifically, it will follow the “progressive covenantalism” articulated by Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum,<sup>52</sup> and it will argue for a predictive, Christotelic, covenantal brand of typology that will be set out and defended in chapter 2.

To clarify exactly what this dissertation hopes to accomplish in contradistinction from other studies, the methodological approach needs to be outlined. While many who have written on the extent of the atonement have researched the history of the doctrine, or done in-

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<sup>49</sup>Sherman, *King, Prophet, Priest*, 22, 169.

<sup>50</sup>Lints, *Fabric of Theology*; Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology*; Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine*; Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*; Köstenberger and Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*.

<sup>51</sup>See also Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide For Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 42.

<sup>52</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*.

depth exegesis on one passage or a collection of texts, their conclusions often depend upon a creedal statement composed by men or a handful of words or proof-texts collected, synthesized, and removed from the framework of the Bible.<sup>53</sup> Alternatively, this dissertation will argue that theological doctrines do not hang on bare locutions. It will analyze sentences and paragraphs<sup>54</sup> to ascertain what the whole Bible says about the atonement's extent.<sup>55</sup>

As the title suggests, this dissertation is a biblical-theological investigation of priestly and covenantal structures found in the Bible and how they relate to and explain the extent of the atonement. To answer the question, "For whom did Christ die?" this dissertation will engage three main areas of biblical theology: (1) intrasystematic categories that develop doctrines at the level of text, epoch, and canon, (2) typology, especially as it relates to the priesthood, and (3) modular controls that help relate individual passages and ideas to larger covenantal structures. Let me explain these in turn.

First, any legitimate articulation of a doctrine requires attention to both testaments and the "intrasystematic categories" that arise from the corpus of the whole Bible.<sup>56</sup>

Accordingly, when proof-texts are rightly employed,<sup>57</sup> these texts must be read within their

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<sup>53</sup>For example, Andrew D. Chang, "Second Peter 2:1 and the Extent of the Atonement," *BibSac* 142 (1985): 52-61; Neil Chambers, "A Critical Examination of John Owen's Argument for Limited Atonement in *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*" (Th.M. thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, 1998); G. W. Slonaker, Jr., "1 Timothy: 4:10: A Clear Case for an Unlimited Atonement" (Th.M. thesis, Capitol Bible Seminary, 2003).

<sup>54</sup>Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 281-366.

<sup>55</sup>On this method, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Exegesis and Hermeneutics," and D. A. Carson, "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology," in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 52-63 and 89-104, respectively. For a more comprehensive treatment, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 81-126.

<sup>56</sup>Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology*, 1-19.

<sup>57</sup>R. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, "In Defense of Proof-Texting," *JETS* 54 (2011): 589-606.

textual, epochal, and covenantal contexts.<sup>58</sup> To paraphrase an old cliché, this dissertation will pay careful attention to the forest and the trees.

Second, doctrines (particularly those that relate to Christology) must find textual *and* typological support in Scripture. Indeed, typology is an under-utilized aspect of doctrinal formulation, especially as it concerns the extent of the atonement. While the appeal to typology is nothing new, most advocates of definite atonement have employed typology as a secondary argument.<sup>59</sup> By contrast, this dissertation will give pride of place to typology, to show just how much light it sheds on the particular and universal texts.

Third, following J. I. Packer’s modular taxonomy (e.g., control models, dogmatic models, and interpretive models),<sup>60</sup> this dissertation will defend definite atonement as the best “interpretive model” of the atonement’s extent because the larger “control models” of priesthood and covenant require a biblical delimitation of the priest’s work and the new covenant’s efficacy. Materially, what the Bible teaches about Christ’s priesthood and the new covenant must determine the extent of Christ’s atonement. In this way, definite atonement does not stand or fall with a “thin” interpretation of a number of difficult texts; it arises from a “thick” description of Christ’s priestly mediation of the new covenant.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Lints, *Fabric of Theology*, 293-311; Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 53-83.

<sup>59</sup>Gatiss, *For Us and for Our Salvation*, 36.

<sup>60</sup>In his chapter on penal substitution (“What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution,” in *In My Place Condemned He Stood* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007]), J. I. Packer lists three different kinds of models with which theologians must grapple: “‘control models’ given in Scripture (God, Son of God, kingdom of God),” “dogmatic models that the church crystallized out to define and defend the faith (*homoousion*, Trinity, nature, hypostatic union),” and “interpretive models lying between Scripture and defined dogma . . . (penal substitution, verbal inspiration, divinization)” (ibid., 36).

<sup>61</sup>I am borrowing terminology from Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*, 309-15. Whereas Vanhoozer uses the terminology—“thin” or “thick”—to describe the way interpreters read and explain the Bible, I am applying his hermeneutical insights to doctrinal formulation, where a “thin” doctrine is one that simply collects texts under doctrinal headings disconnected from the Bible’s self-presentation; a thick doctrine

Resultantly, it will be shown how the whole canon of Scripture argues for a particular and efficacious atonement.<sup>62</sup>

Finally, although this dissertation aims to provide a convincing argument for definite atonement, there are many limitations to its scope. First, while there are many arguments pertaining to the extent of the atonement,<sup>63</sup> this dissertation will only focus on the priestly argument with corollary consideration of the new covenant. Second, this dissertation functions as a test case for a specific way of reading the covenants; it will not provide a full-scale explanation of the covenants in the Bible. Instead, it will reference other works on covenant theology and make distinctions as needed. Third, this dissertation's main emphasis will be on integrating the parts into a whole instead of belaboring every point of exegesis. As it moves from biblical theology to systematic formulation, it will not provide an in-depth commentary on every passage. Last, this dissertation will primarily interact with moderate Calvinists and hypothetical universalists. Although there are many academic Arminians worthy of interaction, I will limit my conversation partners to those who hold to the doctrine of unconditional election so as to focus on the issue of the atonement alone. This dissertation is not a defense of Reformed theology or "the system" of five-point Calvinism. It is an attempt to shine the light of biblical theology onto the fog of the atonement's extent.

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is one that aims to understand a biblical doctrine in its fullest biblical expression, where the doctrinal propositions can be seen and explained in relationship to the larger framework of the Bible (cf. Lints, *Fabric of Theology*, 259-354).

<sup>62</sup>This argument is akin to Timothy Ward's defense of biblical inspiration. In *Word's of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God* ([Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009], 11-19), he argues that the doctrine of inspiration does not depend on a few key verses (e.g., 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:19-21), but that the whole Scripture testifies to the inspired nature of Scripture. Just the same, this dissertation will argue that definite atonement finds biblical-theological and typological support from the whole counsel of Scripture.

<sup>63</sup>John Owen lists sixteen arguments in Book III of *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, 124-82. Likewise, John Davenant replies to seventeen objections to his hypothetical universalism in the lengthy appendix to his Colossians commentary (*A Dissertation on the Death of Christ as to Its Extent and Special Benefits*, trans. Josiah Allport [London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1831-32], 366-400).

While the force of this dissertation's argument is found in the cumulative data presented on the priesthood, I will show from various epochs how the typological structures of the Bible anticipate the conclusion that Israel's high priest always and only served the covenant community. Therefore, instead of producing a final systematic chapter, most of the theological arguments are imbedded in the canonical analysis. In the end, this dissertation's argument is not based on one text or word, but on the whole presentation of the priesthood. This approach is similar to G. K. Beale's. So, I close with his words:

A typical strategy of argumentation . . . will be to adduce several lines of evidence in favour of a particular interpretation. Some of these lines will be stronger than others, but when all of the relevant material is viewed as a whole, the less convincing material should become more significant than when seen by itself. Therefore, it will sometimes be true that some of the arguments in favour of an interpretation will not stand on their own but are intended to take on more persuasive power when viewed in light of the other angles of reasoning. And, even when this may not be the case, the design is that the overall weight of the cumulative arguments points to the plausibility or probability of the main idea being contended for.<sup>64</sup>

### **The Argument: A Biblical Theology of the Priesthood**

To give a sense of this dissertation's argument, I will follow this outline. In chapter 2, I will consider what and how theology should employ typology. It will argue that biblical typology should be predictive, Christotelic, and covenantal. This chapter will expound the hermeneutical presuppositions undergirding the rest of the dissertation.

Next, in chapters 3-7, a biblical theology of the priesthood will be given. In chapter 3, I will argue that Adam, Noah, and Abraham function as priests. As prototypical priests, these covenant mediators make sacrifices, offer prayers, issue blessings, and defend their covenant people. As a result, this section will show how these priestly mediators served

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<sup>64</sup>G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 26-27.



their offspring and stood against their enemies. This sets the background for the law that is given to Moses. In chapter 4, the priestly office is legislated (i.e., regulated by the Law). Paying particular attention to the place where the priest serves, the garments he wears, the work he does, and the way he goes about making atonement for Israel, it will be suggested that the priest carries out three distinct roles—guarding, sacrificing, and teaching. Each of these will be developed from the Pentateuch and applied to the greater priest, Jesus Christ. In this chapter, nomenclature will be introduced that describes the work of the priest throughout the rest of the dissertation—namely, *Kohen Victor*, *Kohen Mediator*, and *Kohen Teacher*.

In chapters 5-6, I will consider what the prophets say about the priests. Chapter 5 will examine the prophetic judgments against the priests according to the three priestly duties of guarding, sacrificing, and teaching. The prophetic criticisms against the priests of Israel will be used analogously to consider which theological model (general atonement or definite atonement) is more faithful to the priestly type legislated by Moses and reiterated in the prophets. Anticipating our results, it will be argued that general atonement will not be able to withstand the judgment of the prophets, because (1) the priest of general atonement fails to separate the holy from unclean at the mercy seat (i.e., propitiation), (2) the priest fails to teach the whole covenant community, and (3) the priest also fails to provide an atonement in keeping with the particular stipulations of the covenant. By observing the way the Bible criticizes unfaithful priests, it will become obvious that general atonement cannot stand because its systematic commitments posit things about Jesus that subject him to prophetic judgment.

In the second prophetic section (chap. 6), a positive argument for a greater priest will be observed. Starting with 1 Samuel 2:35, it will consider the eschatological hope of a

greater priest who will come to inaugurate a better covenant and effect a greater salvation. From this priestly expectation, chapter 6 will show how the promises of a greater priest coalesce with the Davidic expectation of a greater king (2 Sam 7). This promised royal priest goes back to Adam in the garden (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15-17) and Israel at Sinai (Exod 19:5-6); and it parallels the messianic hopes arising in the prophetic history of Israel (Ps 110; Jer 30:21-22; Zech 3:1-10; 6:9-15). While space does not permit consideration of every passage or every prophet, this chapter will show how the prophets expect a messianic royal priest who will defeat his enemies (*Kohen Victor*), offer a final sacrifice for his covenant people (*Kohen Mediator*), and effectively instruct the hearts of all those whom he represents as priest (*Kohen Teacher*). Theologically, this chapter will make a final appeal that the coming priest only serves the people of the new covenant, but unlike the covenant mediated by Moses, this covenant will include people from every nation.

Finally, chapter 7 will show from the NT (especially the Gospels, Hebrews, and Revelation) how Christ Jesus fulfills all of the OT promises in regards to the priesthood. Specifically, it will consider the threefold ministry of Christ—*Kohen Victor*, *Kohen Mediator*, and *Kohen Teacher*. Considering all facets of Christ's priestly ministry, it will argue that the atonement's extent must be particular and definite, not general and indefinite.

Chapter 8 will conclude the dissertation. Based on the biblical theological data espoused in chapters 3 to 7, this chapter will summarize the evidence. It will apply the priesthood to five areas of systematic theology related to the extent of the atonement. It will close with an appeal for holding definite atonement on the basis of Christ's priesthood. In addition, it will suggest various avenues for doing future research.

For the record, it must be mentioned that the labor that has been put into this dissertation to understand Christ's priesthood and its entailments for the extent of the atonement comes not from a sense of disgust with generalists or anger to defend Calvinism. Rather, the impetus driving this dissertation is to see the glory of God in the face of Christ, and to show how Christ's priesthood is a hidden jewel in recent studies. Indeed, the motivation has been doxological and missiological. It is my prayer that those who have eyes to see will observe not merely a set of typological arguments but a composite of our messianic royal priest. It is this exalted priest (Ps 110:4), who has come to effect salvation for his people (Rom 5:9-10) and to call all who know him to fulfill their priestly duty of bringing the message of his priesthood to the ends of the earth (Rom 15:16; 1 Pet 2:9-10).

## CHAPTER 2

### PREDICTIVE, CHRISTOTELIC, COVENANTAL TYPOLOGY

As it was stated in chapter 1, this dissertation is formally an exercise in theological hermeneutics, materially an investigation of priestly typology, and theologically an argument for definite atonement. In this chapter, the subject of typology will be examined in relationship to the biblical canon and the covenants therein. Since “the typological structures of Scripture are developed primarily through the covenants,”<sup>1</sup> it will be argued that typology is organically related to the biblical covenants and that a right understanding of a typology depends upon a correct theology of the covenants.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter will propose an interpretive scheme for assessing biblical types. Since this dissertation is not a technical inquiry into the discipline of biblical hermeneutics or the sub-discipline of typology, it will not engage in a history of interpretation<sup>3</sup> or provide a

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<sup>1</sup>Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 606.

<sup>2</sup>A “theology of the covenants” is distinct from “Covenant Theology.” The latter is a biblical-theological system that understands the whole Bible as developing a single “covenant of grace” (Greg Nichols, *Covenant Theology: A Reformed and Baptist Perspective on God’s Covenants* [Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground, 2011], 123-43). The former is a biblical-theological approach to Scripture which lets the multi-textured development of covenants (plural), “progressive covenantalism,” develop over time and culminate in Christ’s new covenant. It is this approach, advanced most clearly by Gentry and Wellum (*Kingdom through Covenant*), which this dissertation will refer to regularly.

<sup>3</sup>For a history of how typology has been used, see Patrick Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956), 1:1-41; Richard Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical TYPOS Structures* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), 15-114. More recently, Benjamin J. Ribbens has provided a useful taxonomy of typologies (“Typology of Types: Typology in Dialogue,” *JTI* 5 [2011]: 81-95).

semiotic explanation of what typology is.<sup>4</sup> More modestly, it will propose three essential components of biblical typology, components that undergird argumentation in chapters 3-7.

Entering the debate about what makes a type biblical,<sup>5</sup> I will argue that a valid type must be (1) *predictive* in orientation, (2) *Christotelic* in focus, and (3) *covenantal* in nature.<sup>6</sup> As prophetic, the type is not merely a retrospective analogy created by some later biblical author, but a person, event, or institution created by God to prefigure Christ.<sup>7</sup> By Christotelic, I am suggesting that typology is eminently eschatological and that while every type has its place in history, its historical locus is insufficient for discerning its final significance.<sup>8</sup> Following Jesus' own hermeneutic,<sup>9</sup> the apostles make this assertion regularly: Christ is the end of the law (Rom 10:4), the fulfillment of every promise (2 Cor 1:20), the fullness of wisdom (Col 2:3), the substance of the shadow (Col 2:17; Heb 10:1). And as

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<sup>4</sup>For a technical definition of typology, see Davidson, *The Typology of Scripture*; Leonard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

<sup>5</sup>In the last decade, considerable attention has been given to what makes a valid type. Much of the literature will be referred to in the arguments below, but a few of the most recent, salient articles include Ribbens, "Typology of Types," 81-95; A. B. Caneday, "Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured: 'Which Things Are Written Allegorically' (Galatians 4:21-31)," *SBJT* 14 (2010): 50-77; James M. Hamilton, "The Typology of David's Rise to Power: Messianic Patterns in the Book of Samuel," *SBJT* 16 (2012): 4-25.

<sup>6</sup>These three features do not constitute the essence of a type; they, instead, serve as crucial additions to the commonplace definition that a type must possess historical factuality and a significant, escalating correspondence between type and antitype (cf. Goppelt, *Typos*, 17-18).

<sup>7</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 103-05. By prophetic, we have something similar in mind to G. K. Beale's notion of "forward-looking" typology (*Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old: Exegesis and Interpretation* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012], 14-15). See n. 26 for discussion.

<sup>8</sup>Admittedly, there are typological structures that do not find their *telos* in Christ (cf. Ribbens, "Typology of Types," esp. 90-94). For instance, Babel/Babylon (Gen 11:1-9; Isa 13:1-14:23; Rev 17-18) and betrayal (cf. Ps 41:9 cited in John 13:18; Pss 69:25; 109:8 cited in Acts 1:20) are Christ-denying examples. (Still, both of these types find their significance in the way they oppose God's anointed one). But with this class of types excluded, it can generally be asserted that all Scripture finds its *telos* in Jesus (John 5:39; Eph 1:10).

<sup>9</sup>"Jesus became the direct and primary source of the church's understanding of the Old Testament" (David Dockery, "Typological Exegesis: Moving Beyond Abuse and Neglect," in *Reclaiming the Prophetic Mantle: Preaching the Old Testament Faithfully*, ed. George L. Klein [Nashville: Broadman, 1992], 174; see

covenantal, the type must not only arise within redemptive history in some generic fashion; rather, a valid type must fit into the covenantal framework of the whole Bible. To say it another way, typology fills out the details of the covenants, and the covenants, in turn, provide each type the parameters in which they live, move, and have their being.<sup>10</sup> In this way, the Bible's typological and covenantal structures are interdependent. Together, they prepare the way for the superlative mediator of the new covenant, Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup> Each of these assertions will be defended below.<sup>12</sup>

### What is a Type?

Since its German publication in 1939 and translation into English in 1965, Leonard Goppelt's *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* has been the standard work on typology.<sup>13</sup> In general, he differentiates typology from allegory and the rabbinic methods of interpretation extant during the centuries before and after Jesus Christ

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also George Smeaton, *The Apostle's Doctrine of the Atonement* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1870; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957], 4-7).

<sup>10</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 602-11.

<sup>11</sup>With Gentry and Wellum, this dissertation will argue that the "new covenant supersedes all the previous covenants in redemptive-history," that each successive covenant builds on the previous covenant(s), and that "all the previous covenants find their *telos* in [Christ]" and his new covenant" (ibid., 604).

<sup>12</sup>Together, they explain the hermeneutical commitments undergirding the main argument of this dissertation, that from Creation to New Creation, God is—among other things—working to create a royal priesthood, based upon the ultimate priest-king, Jesus Christ, the Lord Incarnate (cf. Alex T. M. Cheung, "The Priest as the Redeemed Man: A Biblical-Theological Study of the Priesthood," *JETS* 29 [1986]: 265-75).

<sup>13</sup>Daniel Treier contests this point, saying that Davidson's volume has replaced Goppelt's earlier work ("Typology," in *DTIB*, ed. Kevin Vanhoozer [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005], 824). Analytically, Treier may be correct that Davidson's method provides a more inductive approach; however, historically, Goppelt's work stands at the head of twentieth century resurgence in typology and retains its pride of place.

and the recording of the NT.<sup>14</sup> According to Goppelt, typology is a method of interpretation and a view of history that arose within the Bible itself. He defines typology as follows:

Historical facts—persons, actions, events, and institutions—are material for typological interpretation; words and narratives can be utilized only insofar as they deal with such matters. These things are to be interpreted typologically only if they are considered to be divinely ordained representations or types of future realities that will be even greater and more complete. If the antitype does not represent a heightening of the type, if it is merely a repetition of the type, then it can be called typology only in certain instances and in a limited way.<sup>15</sup>

Many recent commentators have followed Goppelt's tripartite understanding of typology,<sup>16</sup> which in brief requires (1) historical factuality of the type,<sup>17</sup> (2) escalation between type and antitype, and (3) significant correspondence.<sup>18</sup> In general, there is little debate among scholars about these broad descriptions. However, as each element is pressed

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<sup>14</sup>Concurring with Patrick Fairbairn, he says, "A major part of Jesus' ministry was teaching the people, as well as the disciples, to interpret Scripture properly." Resultantly, "The use of Scripture in the NT that can be traced to him is completely different in principle from the exegesis of the time . . . careful study of the individual passages reveals that the NT use of Scripture, whenever it is not directly literal, should be considered typological rather than allegorical" (Goppelt, *Typos*, 13). In this quotation, Goppelt divulges his critical views towards Scripture, but he also acknowledges biblical typology as the proper method of interpretation, handed down from Jesus himself.

<sup>15</sup>Goppelt, *Typos*, 17-18.

<sup>16</sup>W. Edward Glenny gives a similar three-part definition: "(1) There must be an identifiable Scriptural pattern or correspondence between the OT type and the NT antitype. (2) The OT type and NT antitype must be based on 'historical facts—persons, actions, institutions,' not hidden meanings found in the text. (3) There must be an escalation or heightening from the OT type to the greater NT antitype" ("Typology: A Summary of the Present Evangelical Discussion," *JETS* 40 [1997]: 629). This definition is broader than that of Roy Zuck who limits typology to those OT prefigurations which are "designated in the New Testament" as typological (*Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth* [Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1991], 176).

<sup>17</sup>The need for historical factuality stands over against an allegorical approach to Scripture, one that severs the interpretation from the historical veracity of the text. For a comparison between typology and allegory, see G.H.W. Lampe, "The Reasonableness of Typology," in G. H. W. Lampe and K. J. Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology*, Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 22 (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1957), 30-33; David Dockery, *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the Light of the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 75-128; and James Barr, "Typology and Allegory," in *Old and New in Interpretation: A Study of the Two Testaments* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 103-48.

<sup>18</sup>"Significant correspondence" possesses a wide range of meaning. The goal of this chapter is to specify what constitutes a "significant correspondence."

and applied to the Bible itself, divisions occur.<sup>19</sup> In fact, whole theological systems are distinguished by the way they approach typology.<sup>20</sup> Thus there has been great debate about the way typology should or should not be employed.<sup>21</sup> Although it is impossible to address every methodological proposal, this dissertation will defend a predictive, Christotelic, covenant typology.

### **Predictive Typology: Before Christology Was Typology**

One of the primary debates about typology concerns the predictive nature of typology.<sup>22</sup> As David Baker frames it, the two major categories in typological studies are those that center on historical “prefiguration” and those that focus on historical “correspondence.”<sup>23</sup> He writes, “There seems to be a general agreement among modern scholars that typology is a form of historical interpretation, based on the Bible itself,”<sup>24</sup> however, both sides disagree on how history is to be interpreted. Is typology prospective or

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<sup>19</sup>For the most recent survey of approaches, see Ribbens, “A Typology of Types,” 81-96.

<sup>20</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 121-26.

<sup>21</sup>Such divergence can be seen in the proposals offered in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Stanley Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008). For a taxonomy of the way revised dispensationalists, progressive dispensationalists, and covenantal theologians utilize typology, see Glenny, “Typology.”

<sup>22</sup>Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old*, 13-27.

<sup>23</sup>David Baker, “Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament,” in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. G. K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 314-15. Paul Hoskins and John Stek make the same distinctions, and all three draw the same conclusion that prophetic-predictive typology is the older version of typology. See Paul Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 18-36; John Stek, “Biblical Typology, Yesterday, and Today,” *CTJ* 5 (1970): 133-62.

<sup>24</sup>Baker, “Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament,” 315. In general, Baker’s point is correct, but it is not without exception. Not everyone who defends typology is equally concerned about Scripture’s historical reality. As Hugenberger points out, scholars like Goulder and Von Rad bring into question biblical historicity (G. P. Hugenberger, “Introductory Notes on Typology,” in *Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts*, 333).



retrospective?<sup>25</sup> Advocates of prospective typology observe that instances of typology begins in the OT itself and moves on a parallel track with progressive revelation, which correlates with the eschatological nature of the Bible.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, those who construe typology as a retrospective correspondence in the light of later revelation,<sup>27</sup> normally see typology as a “method of writing” utilized by NT authors.<sup>28</sup> By implication, this second method restricts the activity of the divine author in the OT.<sup>29</sup> In this section, I will only consider representative views.

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<sup>25</sup>The terms *prospective* and *retrospective* are easily confused in Beale’s nuanced description of typology (*Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old*, 13-18). What Beale calls “forward-looking” types, alternately called prospective, prophetic, or predictive types by other authors, are those that occur in history with the divine intention of prefiguring some later, greater antitype. However, as Beale rightly notes, many of these prospective types are retrospectively discerned. He writes, “By ‘retrospection’ is meant the idea that it was after Christ’s resurrection and under the direction of the Spirit that the apostolic writers understood certain OT historical narratives about persons, events, or institutions to be indirect prophecies about Christ or the church” (ibid., 14). Therefore, the retrospective nature of types is related to epistemology, not to the predictive or prophetic character of the type in history. For this chapter, we will use the terminology of “predictive” typology to describe those types that are predictive in their historical setting but may require a retrospective reading to fully grasp the canonical significance of the type. The use of predictive is similar to that of Beale, but is best defined by the presentation in this chapter.

<sup>26</sup>Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture*; Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*; Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000); Francis Foulkes, “The Acts of God: A Study of the Basis of Typology in the Old Testament,” in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?*, 342-71; G.K. Beale, “Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?” *Themelios* 14 (1989): 89-96; Darrell Bock, “Single Meaning, Multiple Referents: The New Testament’s Legitimate, Accurate, and Multifaceted Use of the Old,” in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Stanley Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), esp. 118-21.

<sup>27</sup>Lampe and Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology*; Goppelt, *Typos*; Gerhard Von Rad, “Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament,” in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. Claus Westermann (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1971), 17-39; Hans Walter Wolff, “The Hermeneutics of the Old Testament,” in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, 160-99; Walther Eichrodt, “Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?” in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, 224-45; R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (Vancouver: Regent, 1998); Baker, “Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament,” in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts*, 313-30.

<sup>28</sup>Woollcombe, “The Biblical Origins and Patristic Development of Typology,” in *Essays on Typology*, 39. This idea of typology as a “method of writing” is key in understanding the way neo-typology conceives of typology in the Bible, and it is not wrong, in and of it itself. It simply does not say enough about how the Bible introduces typology.

<sup>29</sup>Hugenberger, “Introductory Notes on Typology,” 331-33. Glenny makes the same point, “It is important to note that for many the new typology does not presuppose God’s sovereign control and ordering of the typological elements, or even the historicity of the type and antitype” (“Typology,” 628).

Following in the footsteps of Lampe and Woollcombe’s “historical typology,”<sup>30</sup> British evangelical R. T. France is one of the clearest opponents of prospective typology. He objects, “A type is not a prediction; in itself it is simply a person, event, *etc.* recorded as historical fact, with no intrinsic reference to the future.”<sup>31</sup> And again, “typology is not exegesis, but application. It is theological reflection in the light of later events . . . interpret[ing] the latter in terms of the former, as an exemplification of the same principles.”<sup>32</sup> France’s prophecy-typology divide aims to shelter typology from allegory by restricting exegesis to the textual horizon of the passage in question.<sup>33</sup> However, he overcorrects and strips the OT of its messianic witness.<sup>34</sup> France’s concern is that of importing later revelation back into earlier texts. But this raises the question: If the Bible is a unified whole, inspired by the living God, why is such canonical exegesis out of bounds? I would suggest that retrospective typology arises from naturalistic presuppositions that fail to give God his proper place in redemptive history and biblical inspiration.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Lampe writes that NT typology “is an expression of the particular view of history held by the Scriptural writers as a whole, and in this expression the type is a genuine foreshadowing” (“The Reasonableness of Typology,” 30). Against spurious forms of Hellenistic typology, Woollcombe suggests that interpreters “confine typology to the search for historical patterns within the historical framework of revelation” (“The Biblical Origins and Patristic Developments of Typology,” 75).

<sup>31</sup>France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, 39-40. Oddly, France appeals to Eichrodt for the distinction between typology and prophecy, but the German scholar does not bifurcate typology and prophecy, as much as, he qualifies them. While Eichrodt differentiates typology and prophecy, he writes, “A type possesses its significance, pointing into the future, independently of any human medium and purely through its objective factual reality.” In the end, he calls NT typology “objectivized prophecy” (Eichrodt, “Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?,” 229).

<sup>32</sup>France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, 42.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 39-41.

<sup>34</sup>See Goldsworthy’s discussion of “The Eclipse of the Gospel in Historical Criticism” in his *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 139-54.

<sup>35</sup>“Biblical interpretation is always/already theological. One’s view of God, for instance, will influence which biblical statements about God one considers literal and which statements one takes as figurative” (Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “Introduction,” in *DTIB* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005], 21).

In his monograph *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in John* Paul Hoskins observes the same twofold distinction as Baker. However, his final analysis rejects historical correspondence because of its naturalistic tendencies. He observes that a retrospective reading of the Bible “attempt[s] to revive some form of typology that would be acceptable to critical scholarship.”<sup>36</sup> Further, this view “commonly displays less confidence in the historicity of the biblical, historical narratives.”<sup>37</sup> This is not to deny the point that NT writers did perceive with greater clarity the fullness of the OT texts (Heb 1:1-2); it simply posits divine intentionality to the OT types and guards against agnostic hermeneutics.<sup>38</sup>

Davidson concurs and remarks,

Throughout the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries typology was considered by most critical scholars as a relic of the past, no longer acceptable or relevant within the modern world view. But in recent decades [ca. 1980] an amazing instauration of interest in typology has occurred among noted advocates of the historical-critical method within the Biblical Theology Movement. The ‘post-critical neo-typology’ is not, however, a return to the traditional view. It is based upon a different understanding of history and revelation with little room for the predictive element. Typology is viewed as a common way of human thinking in terms of concrete analogies which in Scripture (and in modern typological interpretation) involves the retrospective recognition of god’s consistent ‘revelation in history.’<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, 31.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 29. Continuing this train of thought, he references Von Rad’s interpretive methodology and concludes, “Such an approach to Old Testament theology and interpretation essentially renders suspect the historical referents of Old Testament types. In doing so, it calls into question whether Old Testament typology is anything more than a literary phenomenon that the biblical writers used to describe Israel’s past and future in terms of traditions surrounding ‘a few saving institutions ordained by God’” (ibid., 29-30).

<sup>38</sup>Hoskins admits that a retrospective position is not incorrect; it is simply incomplete. He writes of the retrospective character of NT typology, “It was only in the light of further revelation that the NT authors were able to come to a fuller appreciation of the typological significance of the OT types . . . Even so, this does not exclude the possibility that God designed the type in order to prefigure its antitype, knowing full well that its typological significance would be gradually disclosed. Besides, NT typology has a lot in common with the typology in the OT prophets. They were already seeing earlier events, persons, and institutions as patterns for what God was going to do for his people. The recognition of the fulfillment of these patterns is bound to be retrospective, just like the recognition of the fulfillment of other forms of prediction” (ibid., 28-29).

<sup>39</sup>Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 111-12.

The traditional view, of which Davidson writes, is represented by Patrick Fairbairn. His typological approach is neither fantastical, nor restricted to the NT instances alone.<sup>40</sup> Rather, Fairbairn balances typology with prophecy in a way that dynamically affirms both. He writes,

*A type . . . necessarily possesses something of a prophetic character, and differs in form rather than in nature from what is usually designated prophecy. The one images or prefigures, while the other foretells, coming realities. In the one case representative acts or symbols, in the other verbal delineations, serve the purpose of indicating beforehand what God has designed to accomplish for His people in the approaching future.*<sup>41</sup>

Against the likes of France, Fairbairn lists four ways in which prophecy and typology interpenetrate one another.<sup>42</sup> Fairbairn preserves the organic unity of the Bible, without denying differing modes of discourse used in the OT. He shows that the relationship between typology and prophecy is much more complex than France allows. In short, what prophetic utterance does to foretell the future, predictive typology does to foreshadow the future. This is not simply a “method of writing” which looks back and reflects; it is the very nature of divine revelation itself from a God who makes promises and keeps his word.

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 33-45.

<sup>41</sup>Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture*, 106. Emphasis mine.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 106-30. More recently and succinctly, Bock has distinguished two kinds of prophetic-typology. In “*typological-PROPHETIC*” texts “there is a short-term historical referent, and yet the promise’s initial fulfillment is such that an expectation remains that more of the pattern needs ‘filling up’ to be completely fulfilled. The passage begs for and demands additional fulfillment (because God’s word is true)” (“Single Meaning, Multiple Contexts and Referents,” 119). Examples of this kind of typology include “the Day of the LORD” and the Servant passages in Isaiah. Alternatively, in “*TYPOLGICAL-prophetic*” texts “the pattern is not anticipated by the language, but is seen once the decisive pattern (or fulfillment pattern) occurs. Only then does the connection become clear. It is still a prophetic category because God designed the correspondence. But it works differently . . . [because] the pattern is not anticipated or looked for until the fulfillment makes the pattern apparent” (ibid., 119-20). Examples of this kind of typology include Matthew’s use of Hos 11:1 and the righteous-suffer passages in the Psalms.

Consequently, the retrospective view of typology, though prevalent in biblical scholarship, is to be rejected.<sup>43</sup> In keeping with the eschatological framework of the Bible, it will be argued that just as the covenants make promises that find their final fulfillment in Christ, so the covenantal mediators also typify the superlative covenant mediator—the antitype who embodies all other Christotelic types.<sup>44</sup> Thus, covenantal and typological structures both share a common predictive element; as the older covenants adumbrate the new covenant, so the covenantal mediators prefigure Christ. This is not accidental. Rather, selected by YHWH and marked out by his Spirit, the lives of these elect saints are divinely formed to foreshadow Jesus, which leads to our second typological consideration.

### **Christotelic Typology: All Types Lead to Christ**

Another area of disagreement in typology is the criterion of a type. In brief, the question concerns the nature of a type, or what constitutes a legitimate typological relationship. Many options have been given. On the one hand, there is typological maximalism, which might be defined as an interpretive predilection for seeing types everywhere in the Bible.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, typological minimalism is a hermeneutical approach to the Bible that is very reserved about affirming types, especially those types that

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<sup>43</sup>This position stands on the work of Fairbairn, Foulkes, Davidson, and Goldsworthy and follows the biblical theological endeavors of J. M. Hamilton, Hoskins, and Beale.

<sup>44</sup>For the prophetic uniqueness of “Christological types,” as opposed to “tropological examples” and “homological “patterns,” see Ribbens, “Typology of Types,” 90-94.

<sup>45</sup>Hugenberger uses this word to describe James Jordan (Hugenberger, “Introductory Notes on Typology,” 335). Other maximalists in the history of interpretation would include Origen, Coccieus, and Benjamin Keach. More recently, Peter Leithart and many within the Theological Interpretation of Scripture (TIS) movement (i.e., Richard Hays, Christopher Seitz, Stephen Fowl) would qualify as typological maximalists. For a history of these interpreters, see Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture*, 1-41, and Davidson, *Typology of Scripture*, 15-114. For a representative from the TIS movement, see Christopher Seitz, *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), who argues for a “figural approach” that intentionally blurs the lines between typology and allegory.

are not explicitly mentioned in the biblical text. These two positions will be evaluated, and a mediating position labeled “Christotelic typology” will be proffered.

### **Typological Maximalism**

In his “Introductory Notes on Typology,” Hugenberger writes, “Evangelical scholars appear distrustful of typology largely because of the apparent subjectivism of this approach, its unfalsifiable and contradictory results, and the indisputable record of interpretive excess.”<sup>46</sup> To this last complaint, he gives an example of James Jordan’s “interpretive ‘maximalism,’ which leads him to identify the attempted Sodomite rape of the Levite in Judges as a type of Christ’s sufferings.”<sup>47</sup> Typology of this sort, often associated with Origen, medieval allegory, and the Post-Reformation theologian Coccieus, has given typology a bad name, and shows the extremes which must be avoided.

A more sensible maximalist is Graeme Goldsworthy. An apologist for biblical theology, Goldsworthy has proposed a macro-typology “that goes beyond the usually identified elements of typology explicit in the New Testament application of the Old.”<sup>48</sup> In *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, Goldsworthy discusses the relationship between both Testaments, listing a plethora of “thematic polarities”<sup>49</sup> before concluding that typology is the organizing structure of the Old and New Testament. He explains, “Macro-typology is the underlying principle of theological structure and biblical unity that makes possible all the

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<sup>46</sup>Hugenberger, “Introductory Notes on Typology,” 335.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 251.

<sup>49</sup>These include “salvation history and eschatological consummation,” “type and antitype,” “promise and fulfillment,” “*sensus literalis* and *sensus plenior*,” “old covenants and new covenant,” “law and gospel,” “Israel and the church” (ibid., 241-45).

various perspectives on the relationship of the Testaments.”<sup>50</sup> He lists eighteen typological structures and posits that “all” biblical texts (which he defines as “a meaningful portion of any given book understood as part of that book and its overall message”)<sup>51</sup> speak about “God, human beings, or the created order, or they speak about some combination of these.”<sup>52</sup> Jesus Christ as the touchstone for each of these things—God, humanity, and creation—gives meaning to every portion of Scripture.

### **Typological Minimalism**

On the other side are those who argue for a minimalist position, and ironically make the opposite error. In their historical-critical commitments, they end up minimizing the role that typology plays between the Testaments. Often typology is set over against a literal hermeneutic. For instance, Paul Feinberg writes, “While types and analogies are appropriate ways of understanding the relationship between the two Testaments, typical and analogical hermeneutics are not. . . . The sense of any OT prediction must be determined through the application of historical-grammatical hermeneutics to that text.”<sup>53</sup> Though Feinberg will make room for types in his grammatical-historical exegesis, they require undefined “special rules of interpretation.”<sup>54</sup> Typology is permitted but under house arrest. Moreover, as recent hermeneutical works have shown, Feinberg’s radical distinction between text and typology is

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 251.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 256.

<sup>53</sup>Paul Feinberg, “Hermeneutics of Discontinuity,” in *The Right Doctrine for the Wrong Texts?*, 122-23.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 123.

not necessary,<sup>55</sup> nor ultimately helpful in discerning meaning. Instead, it reflects the vestiges of critical scholarship that muzzles the divine author.

On one hand, the minimalist grounds meaning in the text of Scripture and looks for analogy and eternal principals that can be gleaned for Christian use. On the other hand, the maximalist, appealing to an apostolic hermeneutic, aims to unite all the OT with Jesus Christ. In truth, both approaches need instauration, but the minimalist approach requires more heavy-lifting to make the appropriate changes. While Goldsworthy's Christ-centered hermeneutic has earned him the reputation as one who turns everything into a type,<sup>56</sup> it is a needed corrective to those kinds of typological structures that merely posit analogies between the Testaments or moralize the text with exemplary principles for living.<sup>57</sup> Goldsworthy, I

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<sup>55</sup>Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning in this Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), esp. 303-35; Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 325-409; Dennis Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007), 198-271.

<sup>56</sup>For instance, Erwin Ochsmeier, writes, "Despite the qualities of [Goldsworthy's] work, not all will agree with the different threads that are weaved into it. One of them is that the New Testament authors all shared the gospel-centered hermeneutics described by Goldsworthy. After all, when Jesus explains all things in the Scriptures that concerned him (if Luke 24:27 is referred to on 252), it does not necessarily mean that every text of the Scriptures talks about him" (Erwin Ochsmeier, "Review of Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation*," *RBL* 11 (2007) [on-line]; accessed 13 January 2013; available from [http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/5878\\_6224.pdf](http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/5878_6224.pdf); Internet).

<sup>57</sup>David Baker's essay on typology is a case in point. After limiting the prospects of predictive typology, he discusses the value of typology for the believer saying, "is not the Lord Jesus Christ the supreme "example" and "pattern" for Christians (Matt. 11:29; John 13:15; Phil. 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:21)? Perhaps those interested in typology should concern themselves less with looking for types of Christ and more with presenting Christ *himself* as the supreme 'type' for Christians and the world" ("Typology and the Christian Use of Scripture," 330). Baker's point is not without merit; it simply misses the main point, the finished and accomplished work of Jesus. His conclusion shows how minimalistic approaches to typology often result in appeals to moralism and pleas for us to be like Jesus, instead of standing in awe of what God has done in Christ, foreshadowed in the OT, finished in the NT.



believe, is correct that at its core typology plays an integral part of the biblical testimony and needs to inform the way that we read the Scriptures.<sup>58</sup> This dissertation aims to do just that.

### **Christotelic Typology**

The kind of typological approach that is needed mediates these positions, taking the best of both. It is maximal in that it follows the hermeneutical perspectives of Jesus and his apostles, reading passages like Luke 24:25-27 and John 5:39 as imperatives to see Christ in all the OT. Accordingly, it affirms an apostolic model of interpretation and takes its clues from the hermeneutical methods of the NT.<sup>59</sup> Yet, it also upholds the literary context and epochal situation of a given type so that unwarranted speculation is minimized. This textual priority accords with the history of redemption and progress of revelation, so that Jesus of Nazareth is not unwittingly transported back in time—the driving concern of most minimalists. So then, this approach reads the OT at the textual, epochal, and canonical levels,<sup>60</sup> allowing each to inform the other in a way that finds its completion in Jesus Christ.<sup>61</sup>

In the end, this mediating approach is closer to the “Christotelic” model of Peter Enns and G. K. Beale than the “Christocentric” presuppositionalism of Goldsworthy.

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<sup>58</sup>Compare Caneday’s article, “Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured,” which helpfully distinguishes the difference between typology as a method of interpretation and method of inspired writing that OT authors used to convey God’s historical and eschatological truth.

<sup>59</sup>For a recent survey of the NT methods for interpretation, see Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old*, 55-93.

<sup>60</sup>This terminology is not exclusive to Richard Lints, but his treatment nicely outlines these three horizons (Lintz, *The Fabric of Theology*, 293-309).

<sup>61</sup>Much has been written on this in recent years, two “multi-view” books survey the landscape well: Gundry, *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*; Gary Meadors, ed., *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009).

Though I take issue with Enns' aberrant view of Scripture,<sup>62</sup> the eschatological hermeneutic which leads him to see Christ as the end of the OT witness is helpful because of the way it holds in tension textual and canonical horizons. He writes,

To read the Old Testament "christotelically" is to read it already knowing that Christ is somehow the end to which the Old Testament story is heading . . . [Therefore] a grammatical-historical reading of the Old Testament is not only permissible but absolutely vital in that it allows the church to see the varied trajectories set in the pages of the Old Testament itself. It is only by understanding the Old Testament on its own terms, so to speak, that the church can appreciate the impact that the death and resurrection of Christ and the preaching of the gospel had in its first-century setting—and still should have today. But for the church, it is vital to remember that the Old Testament does not exist simply on its own, for its own sake. It cannot stand in isolation from the completion of the Old Testament story in the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>63</sup>

Therefore, my working definition for typology is that *biblical types are prophetic prefigurations of the Christ who is to come, where each person, event, or institution receives its typological shape and substance from the biblical text in which it is found, and going further, it finds its ultimate end in Jesus Christ.*<sup>64</sup>

In the case of priestly typology, Christ fulfills all the types and shadows of the biblical office. However, the shape of his priestly office is not defined by NT testimony but OT typology. For instance, nowhere in the Gospels is Jesus labeled a "priest," but as a few

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<sup>62</sup>For a thorough critique of Enns' doctrine of Scripture, see G. K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008). Remarkably, one place where Beale agrees with Enns is in regard to his Christotelic definition. Beale commends, "I like this term *christotelic* better than *christocentric*, since it refers more explicitly to approaching Old Testament texts without attempting to read Christ into every passage—something which some wrongly construe to be a Christocentric reading. The goal of the whole Old Testament is to point to the eschatological coming of Christ, and, therefore, I think Enns has made a very helpful improvement on a Christian approach to the Old Testament" (86).

<sup>63</sup>Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 154.

<sup>64</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 102-08; cf. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 14.

scholars have begun to observe, Jesus clearly performs priestly functions there.<sup>65</sup> More broadly, biblical types find their shape by the textual propositions, stipulations, and requirements in the OT. Since the priesthood goes back to creation and is developed through the canon, it is possible to discern continuity and discontinuity, reinforcement and deviation, as the type moves toward its *telos* in Christ. This inner-canonical development helps us to discern how Christ fulfills the priestly type, and even provides a rubric for evaluating theological models of Christ's priesthood.

As it will be argued in future chapters, biblical types provide divinely designed molds or patterns for all future types. As a future type adheres to the mold, it is judged good and true. However, when a future type deviates from the original, it can be evaluated and condemned on the basis of the earlier model. As it pertains to the question of the atonement's intent/extent, this is where the biblical data intersects with the theological formulation. If a theological model (i.e., Christ's person and work) fails to uphold the typological model (i.e., the duties of the priest) by positing features of the priesthood that contradict the biblical pattern (or by ignoring other features), then it becomes apparent that the theological formulation needs to be "recast" in light of the biblical data.

Still there is one more thing that needs to be said about typology. Because of the way typology has been abused in the past, it is vital to ground types not only to accidental features of the biblical text, but to unite them with the intra-systematic categories of the

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<sup>65</sup>Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," *JHSJ* 4 (2006): 155-58; idem, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," *JHSJ* 5 (2007): 57-79; cf. J. P. Heil, "Jesus as the Unique High Priest in the Gospel of John," *CBQ* 57 (1995): 729-45; André Feuillet, *The Priesthood of Christ and His Ministers*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975).

Bible.<sup>66</sup> While Goppelt and others have argued that valid types require significant correspondence, it will be argued that ‘significant correspondence’ must be organically related to the covenantal framework of the Bible.<sup>67</sup> It is not enough to find correspondence in the mind of the interpreter. Rather, like every nerve that extends from and returns to the spinal cord, biblical correspondence must relate to the “backbone” of the Bible itself.<sup>68</sup>

### **Covenantal Typology: Grounding Typology in the Framework of the Bible**

Genuine typology must find its origin in the covenantal structures of the OT and NT. *Real* typological correspondence is of necessity related to the unifying framework of the Bible—the biblical covenants. Therefore, only in organic connection to these larger covenantal structures does typology find license to operate. Before outlining the parameters of covenantal typology, however, another proposal for textual warrant must be considered.

#### **A Search for Textual Warrant**

In recent debate,<sup>69</sup> the validity of typology has hung on the question of textual warrant. According to some, typology’s tripartite definition—historic factuality, apparent correspondence, and escalation—is insufficient for validating typology. What is needed is some kind of authorizing mechanism or evaluative system. Most recently, James Hamilton

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<sup>66</sup>Michael Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 1-19. Louis Berkhof wisely cautions, “Accidental similarity between an Old and New Testament person or event does not constitute the one a type of the other. There must be some Scriptural evidence that it was so designed by God” (*Principles of Biblical Interpretation: Sacred Hermeneutics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952], 145)

<sup>67</sup>Speaking of each covenant mediator, Wellum states, “All of these types are organically related to the biblical covenants” (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 108).

<sup>68</sup>On the biblical covenants as the “backbone” of the Bible, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 92-102.

<sup>69</sup>See Ribbens, “Typology of Types,” 81-95; cf. Glenn, “Typology,” 627-38.

has made such a proposal. He appeals to three lines of evidence to show how the Davidic narratives (1-2 Sam) build upon the life of Joseph, and from there how Jesus Christ is himself an antitype of Joseph. He lists “linguistic correspondence,” “sequential event correspondence,” and “redemptive historical import,” as the three-legged stool on which typology rests.<sup>70</sup> In this section, the first and the last will be considered, while taking all three kinds of evidence as helpful means of discerning typological structures.

**Linguistic correspondence.** Concerning linguistic correspondence, Hamilton appeals to the literary nature of the Bible,<sup>71</sup> postulating that “the authors of the biblical narratives . . . make significant choices about which events or aspects of events to record, and they make linguistic choices regarding how to describe those events.”<sup>72</sup> From this position, Hamilton goes on to assert that the language of 1-2 Samuel is intentionally reminiscent of Joseph when recounting the story of David. In other words, typology in the Bible is a function of language, and failure to see typological structures is not simply a theological problem, but a reading problem.<sup>73</sup>

In the case of Joseph-David, there are “sixteen points of linguistic contact.”<sup>74</sup> He uses these linguistic correspondences to support his case that Joseph was a type of David and therefore of Christ. However, even Hamilton recognizes the limitations of this singular

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<sup>70</sup>James M. Hamilton, “Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification between Joseph, David, and Jesus,” *SBJT* 12 (2008): 52-77.

<sup>71</sup>Concerning the Bible, Hamilton begins, “In this essay I will argue that earlier biblical narratives so impacted later biblical authors that their minds, their vocabulary, and their interpretive framework were all shaped by what they read in earlier biblical narratives, chiefly the Pentateuch” (ibid., 52).

<sup>72</sup>Hamilton, “Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah?” 54.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 55.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 57.

approach and argues that they must be coupled with other evidence.<sup>75</sup> I would agree with his assessment and say that linguistic correspondence is a leading tool in determining typology, but taken alone it too is insufficient. Without the other two lines of evidence, these associations could simply be brushed aside as word games<sup>76</sup> or explained as a common property of language.<sup>77</sup> By itself, linguistic correspondence does not undergird typology as prophetic and divinely intended. Consequently, something more is needed.

**Redemptive historical import.** Following “linguistic correspondence,” Hamilton’s model adds “sequential event correspondence” and “redemptive historical import.” Since the first of these two additional functions is so similar to “linguistic correspondence,” I will proceed to his last consideration as an entryway into covenantal typology.<sup>78</sup> This typological connection with redemptive history, in general, and the

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<sup>75</sup>“Taken individually, these linguistic correspondences might seem threads too weak to tie up the case that the Joseph story was a formative influence on the author(s) of the narratives concerning David in Samuel. But taken all together we have a cord of far more than three strands . . . one not easily broken” (ibid).

<sup>76</sup>To be clear, what Hamilton is doing is not a matter of word games, nor to be rejected. I am simply arguing that “linguistic correspondence,” in and of itself, is not enough to support predictive typology, because, as it is used by Hamilton, it functions as a retrospective “method of writing” and something that demands little or no divine revelation.

<sup>77</sup>Douglas Moo uses a contemporary analogy to describe how borrowing language is a common part of life, one that is reflected by NT authors, but one that does not support predictive typology. He writes about playing basketball with his son, “‘Watch out, Luke, I’m going to take the ball to the basket on you!’ He shot back, ‘Go ahead, Dad, make my day.’ He was ‘quoting’ the lines of the character Dirty Harry from the movie starring Clint Eastwood. Eastwood, portraying a cop, uses these words to dare a criminal to draw his gun on him. Luke did not have a gun; he was not threatening to shoot me. He did not intend to quote the author’s ‘original intention,’ nor did I think that he was doing so. The language was a striking way of making a point: if I was foolish enough to try to take the ball to the basket on Luke, I could very well suffer the violence that Dirty Harry’s bad guy suffered in the movie. The quotation worked because we both knew the movie; it therefore communicated the point very well. So Paul and other New Testament writers often use Old Testament language” (*Encountering the Book of Romans: A Theological Survey* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002], 161).

<sup>78</sup>Linguistic correspondence (LC) and sequential event correspondence (SEC) are very similar. Like LC, SEC is incredibly valuable for discerning typological structures, especially in the events like the exodus or the story of David. Hamilton observes these parallels and it is evident that SEC and LC both function as tools for observing types more than a license for the typological method. On this point, Hamilton points out that there is more going on in the passage than can be “figured out.” He writes, “Those of us who affirm that

covenantal structures, in particular, has great potential for legitimating and also delimiting typological structures in ways that give promise to further typological investigation.<sup>79</sup>

Hamilton's approach is similar to that of E. Earl Ellis, who notes,

There is a pattern of correspondence between Old and New Covenants—the shadow and the true—so that the pattern outlines of the first may be imposed upon the second. NT typology does not, therefore, merely involve striking resemblances or analogies but points to a correspondence which inheres in the Divine economy of redemption. And this appears to be true not only in the Exodus typology, in which the two Covenants are so expressly contrasted, but in the other OT 'types' as well.<sup>80</sup>

Ellis's point aims to distinguish accidental and trivial semblances between characters from genuinely significant correspondences between type and antitype. Instead of determining relations at the level of words or events, Ellis's argument aims at the level of redemptive concepts or macro-types, to use Goldsworthy's terminology.<sup>81</sup> Geerhardus Vos makes a similar appeal, saying "The bond that holds type and antitype together must be a bond of vital continuity in the progress of redemption. Where this is ignored, and in the place of this bond are put accidental resemblances, void of spiritual significance, all sorts of absurdities will result."<sup>82</sup> Thus, the goal in typology must be to compare forest with forest,

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these events took place, of course, will see another hand at work in the shaping of history. A divine hand orchestrated what took place such that key patterns of events recurred in the lives of Joseph, David, and the others mentioned above . . . That the divine hand then guided the interpreters of those events, with the result that the descriptions of earlier instances of these patterns became the interpretive grid through which later describers of similar patterns interpreted the history they set down" (Hamilton, "Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah", 59). What is being argued here does not reject or deny Hamilton's interpretive schema. It tends to add to it and unite it with the covenantal structures that also possess inherent sequential patterns (i.e., promise before law, suffering before glory) and linguistic terminology (i.e., the notions of offspring, land, kingdom, and blessing). In this way, the predictive and Christotelic covenantal structures, in fact necessitate, a place for typology.

<sup>79</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 107.

<sup>80</sup>E. Earl Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1957), 128.

<sup>81</sup>Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 253-56.

<sup>82</sup>Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 146.

not just isolated trees within the forest; or to put it back in biblical language, we must see how the types relate to the covenantal structures in order to validate their meaning.

Along these lines, it is significant that Hamilton grounds his redemptive historical points to the larger story of salvation outlined in the OT. For instance, he traces the covenantal promises of God when he recounts the Patriarchal history leading up to Joseph.

Genesis 3:15 points to a seed of the woman who will crush the serpent's head. Genesis 5:29 indicates that the godly line traced in the genealogies expected a seed of the woman who would reverse the curses (cf. Gen 5:29 with Gen 3:17-19). Genesis 12:1-3 announces that all the families of the earth will be blessed by Abraham, and 22:18 adds that the blessing will come through the seed of Abraham. Genesis 17:6 and 16 say kings will come from Abraham, and a natural conclusion to draw is that the seed of Abraham through whom the nations will be blessed will be a king. The blessing of Abraham is passed to Isaac (Gen 26:2-5), then to Jacob (28:3-4). Then Joseph becomes lord of all Egypt (45:9), . . . [and] there is a sense in which all the families of the earth have been blessed through the seed of Abraham.<sup>83</sup>

From Joseph, Hamilton traverses the redemptive-historical path to David highlighting key passages like Genesis 49:8-12; Numbers 23:21; 24:7, 17; and Deuteronomy 17:14-20. In effect, he shows how Joseph, and to a greater extent David, fulfill earlier covenantal promises “to crush the head of the serpent and bless all the families of the earth as promised in the blessing of Abraham.”<sup>84</sup> Then in duplicative fashion, he moves from Joseph and David to Jesus, showing how the son of David recapitulates the lives of these typological forebears, improving their works—finishing off the devil, inaugurating a kingdom, and sharing his incorruptible inheritance with his brothers and sisters—as their culminating antitype, “the climactic rejected prophet” and “the risen king in the land.”<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Hamilton, “Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah,” 59-60.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 68.



These redemptive historical correspondences can be further grounded in the text of Scripture by showing the organic relationship between type and covenant. For instance, Joseph lives, moves, and has his blessing under the stipulations of the Abrahamic covenant. These are the promises that “tested” Joseph as he suffered in prison (Ps 105:16-19). Upon his release and exaltation in Egypt, Joseph became the logistical means by which the covenant people of God entered Egypt. Providentially arranged, his life served to bridge the earlier covenant with Abraham and the latter covenant with Israel. In this way, Joseph’s typological import is upheld by more than linguistic and sequential event correspondences or a loosely connected set of redemptive historical correspondences. His life is nested into the covenantal structure of the OT. As Hamilton asserts, Joseph proves to be a type because he resides in the “redemptive historical stream that flows through the Bible.”<sup>86</sup> And as I will argue below, this is a covenantal stream. In fact, Psalm 78:56-72 traces how the covenantal promises to Abraham move from Joseph to David. Due to the sin of the priests at Shiloh (1 Sam 1-4), the location of the covenant and the tribe who officiates the covenant are transferred.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, returning to Joseph’s role as a type, he is both a reservoir that rests downhill from the headwaters of God’s covenant with Abraham, and he is a tributary that runs into the later and greater streams of Moses and David—two other covenant mediators.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 53.

<sup>87</sup>Significantly, part of the transition from Joseph to David and Shiloh to Zion is the failure of the priests—Eli and his wicked sons (Ps 78:56-66). This anticipates the later argument, that unites priesthood and covenant, and that the strength of the former determines the permanence of the latter.

<sup>88</sup>This covenantal progression goes back to Adam, of whom Davidson says, “Like a hollow mold the OT representative man Adam is a *Nachbild* (of the divine design) which functions as a dynamic *Vorbild*, shaping the end (eschatological) product (Christ) so that it ineluctably (*devoir-être*) conforms to the (historical) contours of the *Vorbild* and surpasses it by fulfilling the (Christological-soteriological) purpose for which the *Vorbild* was designed” (*Typology in Scripture*, 311). From Adam to David, and from Peter to the Spirit-born believer, every member of the new covenant is shaped by the Spirit of Christ, and thus reflects the Son of God—either prospectively or retrospectively.

Extrapolating from this methodology, I will argue that the priesthood operates in a similar fashion. Not only is the priestly type part and parcel of the Old Covenant, but God makes a covenant with Levi that runs parallel to the covenant with Israel. The priests are commissioned as mediators, guardians, and instructors of the covenant, and thus their station and service—like every OT type—cannot be understood apart from the covenantal structures of the Bible. Discussion of the priestly typology without covenantal consideration will necessarily fail because of their mutual interdependence.

### **Covenantal Correspondence: How to Get from Adam to Christ**

To discern the mutually interpreting relationship between biblical covenants and biblical types, the rest of this chapter will posit four foci to keep in mind when moving from type to antitype. They will follow a chronological trajectory that begins with the OT text and moves to the person of Christ. In order, these steps consist of (1) determining the typological “mold,” (2) relating the type to the appropriate covenantal structure(s), (3) tracing future installments of the type to see how later revelation develops earlier prefigurations, and (4) uniting every type to Christ (Eph. 1:10). It is this approach to typology that will be advanced in the body of this dissertation.

**A textual ‘mold’ (*Vorbild*).** In his discussion of typology, Geerhardus Vos stresses the necessity of determining the symbolic significance of a given type before making any sort of typological connection across the canon.<sup>89</sup> In other words, biblical interpreters

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<sup>89</sup>Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 144-46. More fully, Geerhardus Vos, in a discussion of how types and symbols relate, says, “The solution of the problem [between discerning types and symbols] lies in this, that the thing symbolized and the things typified are not different sets of things. They are in reality the same things, only different in this respect that they come first on a lower stage of development in redemption, and then again,

must determine the “mold” of a biblical type from a grammatical-historical reading of the text *before* making any typological applications.<sup>90</sup> Richard Davidson calls this typological “mold” a *Vorbild* (impression) and the later antitype a *Nachbild* (image). In fact, using this impression-image distinction, he develops a whole schema of relating typological molds and the impressions they make on their image-bearing successors.<sup>91</sup> While there are types that may not exactly ‘fit’ this mold (e.g., tropological examples and homological patterns),<sup>92</sup> Christological types are well-suited for this kind of description.<sup>93</sup>

Using different vocabulary but similar concepts, Ribbens suggests that “ikonic *mimēsis* may offer a helpful category within which to think about typology, because typology can be conceived of as a ‘correspondence, not just at the verbal level, but at the level of mimetic sign.’”<sup>94</sup> Following the work of Frances Young, he distinguishes between *ikonic mimēsis* and *symbolic mimēsis*. The latter (‘symbolic *mimēsis*’) approaches words as symbols which need to be “decoded” and lend themselves to allegory; the former discerns the contours of the type through a close reading of the text with its words, events, and actions.<sup>95</sup>

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in a later period, on a higher stage. Thus what is symbolical with regard to the already existing edition of the fact or truth becomes typical, prophetic, of the later, final edition of the same fact or truth” (145).

<sup>90</sup>This accords with Caneday’s caution that typology is not a method of interpretation but a recognition of typology written in the original text (“Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured,” 66).

<sup>91</sup>Davidson, *Typology*, 131.

<sup>92</sup>Ribbens, “Typology of Types,” 92-94.

<sup>93</sup>Christological types (i.e., persons, offices, etc.) provide a textual image that fits the textual horizon but cannot be reduced to the textual horizon.

<sup>94</sup>Ribbens, “Typology of Types,” 87.

<sup>95</sup>Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); cf. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “The Voice and the Actor: A Dramatic Proposal about the Ministry and Minstrelsy of Theology,” in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method* (ed. John Stackhouse; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000).

Therefore, symbolic import (Geerhardus Vos),<sup>96</sup> *ikonik mimēsis* (Young, Treier, Ribbens), and *Nachbild-Vorbild* (Davidson) supply the exegete with conceptual tools to describe biblical types. The theological value is observed in an example given by Ribbens. He writes of the Day of Atonement,

Hebrews describes the sacrifice of the sin offering on the Day of Atonement as a type of Christ's death, because there is a correspondence in both facts and significance (9:1-14). The blood of goats and bulls was spilled, just as Jesus' blood was spilled, in order to atone for the sins of the people (Lev 16; Heb 2:17; 9:14). A dual correspondence such as this between fact and significance can appropriately be called *ikonik mimēsis*, because it re-presents, through a genuine likeness, the drama of levitical sacrifice in order to form the religious life of NT believers. *Ikonik mimēsis* stays true to the narrative sense and to the "significance" or "spiritual meaning" derived from the narrative. That is, it "does not read into the text a different or higher sense, but draws out from it a different or higher application of the same sense."<sup>97</sup>

This example nicely articulates the way that typology will be employed in this dissertation. Even more, the atonement example anticipates the way that Christ's death of necessity must consider typological structures.

Observing the shape of biblical types *from within the text* is not optional or secondary. Richard Lints avers, "To the extent modern readers have become oblivious to the theological significance of symbols, they have cut themselves off from a full understanding of individual texts."<sup>98</sup> Consequently, only a "thick" reading of the Bible will unearth its riches. Defining terms, recognizing syntax, and locating the text in its cultural setting are only the first step in biblical exegesis. To understand how a biblical type points to Christ, the full theological import of the symbol must be grasped. Readers must observe the "latent

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<sup>96</sup>"Symbolic" as employed by Vos (and Richard Lints) is not the same as Young's "symbolic *mimēsis*." Therefore, I affirm the former and deny the latter (cf. Ribbens, "Typology of Types," 87).

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 88-89.

<sup>98</sup>Lints, *The Fabric of Theology*, 300.

potential” and “open-ended” possibilities that are present at the textual level.<sup>99</sup> In other words, they must discern the symbolic, or literary, meaning of the historic type. While some interpreters can go too far—assigning too much symbolism to a given type—each interpretation should be evaluated on its own merits. As a rule, we need to recognize that the thought-world of the biblical authors is filled with types, shadows, metaphors, and word pictures; and that divinely inspired, their words are filled with “latent potential.” The usefulness of this “molding” is especially relevant for delineating the priesthood of Christ and will be used throughout this dissertation.

**Covenantal correspondence.** According to the NT, Christotelic typology began with Adam (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:45; cf. 1 Tim 2:13-14).<sup>100</sup> Imbedded in his DNA, as the *Imago Dei* and the covenantal head of the human race, Adam contains traces of every type to come.<sup>101</sup> As many scholars have shown, Adam functioned as God’s vice-regent, exercising

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<sup>99</sup>Vanhoozer *Is There a Meaning in This Text*, 303-35. On this, Vanhoozer writes, “The latent potential of a text is really there, buried in the cumulative wisdom carried by a literary form. What this means is that the literal sense—the sense of the literary act—may, at times, be indeterminate or open-ended. However—and this is crucial—the *indeterminacy we are considering is intended*; moreover, it is a definite feature of the meaning of the text. Old Testament prophecy and apocalyptic, for example, were intended as descriptions of what the original authors only dimly understood. To give a thick description of the literal sense, say of Isaiah 53, therefore requires an expansive account of the literary act. What often appears to be figural or typological interpretation may actually be an attempt to describe determinate, though complex literary act: testifying to the historical of salvation . . . Putting the [Old Testament Scriptures] together with the New Testament testimony does not ‘spiritualize’ but ‘specifies’ their reference” (ibid., 314).

<sup>100</sup>For the protological and eschatological features of Gen 1-3, see J. V. Fesko, *Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis 1-3 with the Christ of Eschatology* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2007), and Warren Austin Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (Winona Lake, IN: Carpenter, 1984).

<sup>101</sup>Looking back at the Old Testament through the eyes of Paul, Ellis describes the covenantal nature of typology. “In the Pauline writing two basic typological patterns appear—Adamic or Creation typology and Covenant typology. Each is related to a particular aspect of God’s redemptive purpose in Christ, and over all, they unite to form one interrelated whole. Thus, becoming a Christian is spoken of as a new birth (Exodus typology) and a new creation (Adamic typology); sometimes (e.g., Rom. 6:3) both ideas are apparently joined in the figure of resurrection” (*Paul’s Use of the Old Testament*, 134.). In other words, entering into a covenantal relationship with God, “becoming a Christian,” rests on a whole series of typological expressions.

royal and priestly duties,<sup>102</sup> dwelling in YHWH's garden-temple,<sup>103</sup> and enjoying the blessing of His presence.<sup>104</sup> Though he was dethroned through a Satanic lie and his own sinful rebellion towards his Maker, Adam still functioned as the covenantal head of redemptive history.<sup>105</sup> He, along with Eve, received the promise that one day her seed would crush the head of the seed of the serpent, thus beginning a blessed hope in the human race (Gen 3:15). Suffice it to say, the way in which God would re-establish the rule of "man" (*adam*), was to bring to earth a second Adam, one who would succeed where Adam failed, one who would atone for sin, and one who would destroy the devil.<sup>106</sup> Thus, woven into the fabric of the biblical narrative is a covenantal-typological relationship that develops together through time. Redemptive history and progressive revelation show an inter-relationship between the covenants and the covenantal mediators who typify the superlative mediator to come.

Consequently, when we look to establish a textual relationship between type and antitype we must not do so apart from covenantal structures. In fact, after assessing the textual mold, we must compare the person, event, or institution in question to the surrounding covenant(s) to discern significance. Problems occur when interpreters move

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<sup>102</sup>Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 83-90; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003); Peter Gentry, "Kingdom through Covenant: Humanity as the Divine Image," *SBJT* 12 (2008): 16-51.

<sup>103</sup>G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 2004.

<sup>104</sup>Samuel Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2000).

<sup>105</sup>O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1980), 93-107.

<sup>106</sup>For a biblical-theological overview tracing the outlines of redemptive history and stages of the covenants, see Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*; Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993); Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991); Willem Van Gemeren, *The Progress of Redemption: The Story of Salvation from Creation to the New Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1988); Walter Kaiser, Jr. *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

directly from the type to Christ, without travelling along the path of covenantal progress. Such a hasty method, usually based on outward similarities, opens the door to allegory and unwarranted spiritualizing.

Edmund Clowney mandates something similar when he writes, “In developing the biblical-theological interpretation of a text, the aspects of epochal structure and continuity may be separately considered. The first step is to relate the text to its immediate theological horizon. The second step is to relate the event to the text, by way of its proper interpretation in its own period, to the whole structure of redemptive history.”<sup>107</sup> Going a step beyond Clowney, this proposal seeks to let the structures of the covenant, not just redemptive-history in general, determine the significance of the type. This does not constrict typology to a rigid system. On the contrary, it merely serves as a conceptual tool to prove the validity of the type by comparing it to the covenantal structures of the type’s place in time and space.

For the study here, this epochal awareness will recognize six stages in the development of the priesthood. First, in creation God designed a priestly *Vorbild* to be the pattern for all humanity. Second, in the Law of Moses, God legislated his priesthood, assigning Levi and Aaron the privileged position of priests and high priest, respectively. Third, in the Prophets, the priestly office was defiled and disfigured, and therefore rebuked and threatened. Fourth, also in the Prophets, the priesthood was redesigned and reinforced with the Davidic covenant. In this period, an eschatological hope of a greater priest arose. Fifth, in the NT, God brought his Son to fulfill all priestly duties and to inaugurate the new covenant. From this new priest and new covenant all the promises of redemption, blessing, and peace would be eternally secured for his covenant people. Sixth, surpassing the limited

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<sup>107</sup>Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 88.

reach of the covenant with Israel, Christ's priesthood would serve people from every nation and call them into his priestly service, as well (1 Pet 2:5, 9). Each of these epochal stages contribute to the full image of Christ's priesthood and are necessary for understanding his person and work, as well as the theological question: Whom did Christ *as a priest* serve when he offered his life as a ransom? Only by assessing the biblical type, in all of its manifold stages of covenant history, will we be able to answer that question.

**Later installments.** Symbolic import and covenantal correspondence leads to the question of later typological installments. As the covenantal-typological structures unfold over time, do they exhibit a simple pattern of type and antitype? Or, is it more complex? In light of the serial development of the OT covenants, where each covenant organically expands the previous one, it will be suggested that typology functions in much the same way.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the typical pattern is not just type-antitype where the type directly symbolizes the antitype. Instead, typological structures function with an archetype-ectype-antitype pattern. This pattern is based upon the covenantal heads as the archetypes and Jesus as the ultimate antitype, with other ectypes finding themselves as "little Adams" on the covenantal pathway to Christ.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>On this point, Wellum writes, "It is important to note how closely typological structures and biblical covenants are related. . . . to reflect upon typological structures and their development is simultaneously to unpack the biblical covenants across redemptive-history. . . . In all these covenant heads [i.e., Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David], the role of Adam is continued in the world, and each one of them points forward to the coming of the last Adam, who through his obedience accomplishes for us our redemption" (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 107).

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 106. Wellum advances this kind of idea when he outlines covenantal development in the Old Testament from Adam to Noah to Abraham to Moses and ultimately to David ("Baptism and the Relationship between the Covenants," in *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* [Nashville: B & H Academic, 2006], 126-32). He writes, "The Davidic king becomes the mediator of covenant blessing, tied back to Abraham, ultimately tied back to Adam, as the covenant head of the human race. In the OT none of the covenant mediators . . . fulfilled their role and brought about the promise; *they only typified and anticipated the*



This idea of later installments finds support in Goldsworthy's macro-typology, where the archetype is revealed in salvation history, the ectype escalates the promise in later prophetic writings, and finally the antitypical fulfillment arrives in Christ.<sup>110</sup> Further attestation to this kind of typological structure is provided by Richard Davidson's lexicographical work on *typos* structures in the Bible, where Davidson posits a dynamic understanding of types and antitypes.<sup>111</sup> His suggestion is that an antitype (*Nachbild*) simultaneously functions as type (*Vorbild*), such that when the antitype consummates the typical expectation, it also points ahead to further installments or future antitypes.<sup>112</sup> Resultantly, Davidson's point seems to be that there is a locomotive relationship between type and antitype, whereby later antitypes themselves serve as types and generate more antitypes to come. So then, typology is not a simple correlation of type to antitype (T<sub>1</sub> to T<sub>2</sub>), but it is rather a series of escalating types, traveling on the covenantal path to prepare the way for Jesus (i.e., T<sub>1</sub> to T<sub>2</sub> to T<sub>3</sub> and so on, until it reaches T<sub>Christ</sub>).

**The end is Christ.** Finally, I am arguing that every archetype in the OT that legitimately manifests covenantal prefigurations must find their *ultimate* consummation in

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*one to come*" (131). Likewise, each typological installment recapitulates and escalates the original prototype on the way to Christ, the final antitype.

<sup>110</sup>Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 253-56. This typological development mirrors the progress of the covenants, as they progress in redemptive history.

<sup>111</sup>Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 115-90. He writes of these typological dynamics, "As we analyze the usage of *typos* in the literature of late Judaism and in the NT, we must be particularly aware of the possible presence of the third basic meaning [i.e., "the matrix or *Vorbild* which is at the same time an impression or *Nachbild*"] which has been so widely disregarded in the lexicographical literature. To ascertain the existence of both *Nachbild* and *Vorbild* dynamics in a give occurrence of *typos* would significantly expand our estimation of the breadth of signification of the term in that occurrence" (ibid., 131-32).

<sup>112</sup>Davidson depends heavily on the ethical use of *typos* to demonstrate this thesis; however, in the summary of his work he shows how typology in general is an eschatological structure. He says, "The typology of the NT hermeneutical *typos* passages involves the NT perspective of inaugurated, appropriated, and consummated eschatology (which perspective is often unrecognized or not clearly elucidated by exponents of traditional views)" (ibid., 408).

Christ. This should not come as a surprise. Since the goal of human history is the person and work of Jesus Christ (Eph 1:10), it is appropriate that all Scripture be fulfilled in him (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39). As Goppelt summarizes, “all that the Old Testament said and prophesied about the men of God and the messengers of God converge in him.”<sup>113</sup> This, it has been argued, is the end of the OT witness, but it is only the beginning of the study.

### Summary

In summary, this chapter has sought to provide a brief methodological proposal for biblical typology. It has argued that typology is predictive, not retrospective. Charting a course between typological maximalism and typological minimalism, it argued that the time-plotted goal (*telos*) of every type is Christ (i.e., Christotelic). And last, it argued that the most proper way to discern a biblical type, or typological pattern, is in relation to the linguistic correspondence found in the text of Scripture *and* in the covenantal framework of the biblical canon. To say it another way, biblical typology is covenantal typology, because every type is directly or indirectly related to one or more of the biblical covenants.

More materially, this chapter also posited a six-fold progression in redemptive history in which a type like the priestly office has room to develop and grow. These six stages are not rigid and formulaic; they are organically related, proceeding in time from creation to new creation. Moreover, they are governed by the stipulations of each biblical covenant. For the purposes of this dissertation, the next five chapters will follow these steps. At each stage, the type will be examined at the textual, epochal, and canonical horizon so that the five chapters will provide a biblical typology showcasing how the priestly office is (1)

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<sup>113</sup>Goppelt, *Typos*, 97.

created, (2) legislated, (3) disfigured, (4) reengineered, (5) fulfilled in Christ, and (6) expanded in the church.

Finally, as it concerns the doctrine of the atonement's extent, each stage will provide exegetical and theological witness to the particular shape of the priestly office—in shadow and substance. In this way, the priestly office will provide many insights into the question of the atonement's extent, and in the end, it will provide a conclusive argument that Christ's atonement was definite, not general. Simultaneously, it will challenge all those who engage this doctrine to consider the priesthood of Christ from both testaments and to situate Christ's priestly death in its covenantal context.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE CREATION OF THE PRIESTLY TYPE: ADAM, NOAH, AND ABRAHAM

The office of the priest is a predominant theme in the OT. Just in terms of usage, *kohen* occurs over 740 times,<sup>1</sup> “where it most commonly identifies a holder of the religious office<sup>2</sup> which had the responsibility for the maintenance of the cult of Yhwh,”<sup>3</sup> especially as it related to the tabernacle and later the temple.<sup>4</sup> While critical scholars have wrongly sought to find the priests behind the biblical text,<sup>5</sup> they have rightly observed the primacy of the

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<sup>1</sup>John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19:6* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 87. In addition to the nominal form of *kohen*, “there is also a denominative verb form *kihen* (piel, ‘to act as priests,’ used 23 times), and a cognate abstract noun *Kohena* (‘priesthood, priestly office,’ used 14 times)” (ibid., 88). While our understanding of the priesthood in Israel may be informed by understanding the surrounding Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) culture, this dissertation will focus on the priestly functions revealed in the canon of Scripture. For a view of comparing and contrasting ANE literature with that of the biblical testimony, especially as it relates to cultic and covenantal features of the priesthood, see Jeffrey Niehaus, *Ancient Near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), and G. K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 85-122.

<sup>2</sup>*Kohen* “is the only term used for priests of Yahweh, but it is also used for priests of foreign gods (the Phoenecian Ba‘al [2 Kgs 10:19; 11:18], the Philistine Dagon [1 Sam 5:5], the Moabite Chemosh [Jer 48:7], the Ammonite Milcom [Jer 49:3]), the priests of high places (1 Kgs 12:32), a priest of the Egyptian city of On (Gen 41:45), a priest of the Midianites (Ex 3:1), and Melchizedek, the priest of El Elyon (Gen 14:18)” (W. Dommershausen, “*kohen*,” in *TDOT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck et al., trans. David E. Green [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 7:66).

<sup>3</sup>Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 87. Speaking in general terms, J. Barton Payne defines a priest as “an authorized minister” (*The Theology of the Older Testament* [Grand Rapids: Academie, 1962], 372).

<sup>4</sup>Peter Leithart, “Attendants of Yahweh’s House: Priesthood in the Old Testament,” *JSOT* 85 (1999): 3-24.

<sup>5</sup>For a summary and critique of the documentary hypothesis, which was definitively articulated by Julius Wellhausen (*Prolegomena to the History of Israel* [Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1878]) and continued by modern critical scholars, see Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 41-189. See also Philip P. Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1992), 15-39; T. D. Alexander, “The Passover Sacrifice,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf

priesthood for understanding the Bible.<sup>6</sup> Alternately, systematic theologians have pursued the priestly office for the express theological purpose of explaining who Jesus Christ is and what he did on the cross.<sup>7</sup>

Sadly, cross-pollination between biblical studies and systematic theology has been sparse.<sup>8</sup> For instance, while critical theories differ on the origin and nature of the priesthood, all are agreed that divining the will of God, guarding the holy place, teaching the law, and offering sacrifices and prayers were part and parcel of the priestly office. While some argue for a diachronic approach to the priesthood and others for a synchronic, composite approach, there is little debate on the priestly makeup in the Bible.<sup>9</sup> Yet, when it comes to the systematic formulation of Jesus as a priest, theologians rarely move beyond Christ's death

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& Stock, 2004), 1-24; T. J. Betts, "Ezekiel the Priest: A Custodian of the Tôrâ" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002), esp. 1-23.

<sup>6</sup>While evangelical biblical theologians have given great attention to the temple (G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004]; T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole, eds., *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* [Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2004]), the next step is putting the priest in that temple and learning how the priestly types and prophecies inform the person and work of Jesus Christ.

<sup>7</sup>John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 1:501-03; Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics: Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (London: Allen and Unwin, 1950), 448-87; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner's, 1872-73; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 2:464-79; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 361-66; and Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrim's on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 483-520. See also, Robert Sherman, *King, Prophet, Priest: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 169-218; Geoffrey Wainwright, *For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 99-186.

<sup>8</sup>The TIS movement has sought to "bridge" biblical studies and systematics with various results (D. A. Carson, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, But . . .," in *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives*, ed. R. Michael Allen [London: T & T Clark, 2011], 192-96). For an introduction to TIS, see Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); for a recent appraisal of TIS, see Carson, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture," 187-207.

<sup>9</sup>For a helpful analysis of the options, see Leithart, "Attendants of Yahweh's House," esp. 7-12. Leithart resists making temple guarding or sacrificial mediation as primary. Instead, following Aelred Cody (*A History of Old Testament Priesthood* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1969], 29), he defines the priest as "ministers, stewards, or administrators of Yahweh's house and his personal attendants" (ibid., 12).

and intercession. Little attention is given to the reality of his other priestly ministries. On this point, Jonathan R. Wilson is a solitary voice crying in the theological wilderness.

Since we usually think of priest as offering sacrifices, we may be tempted to overlook Jesus' life as an expression of his priesthood and go straight to his death as a sacrifice. However, if we look Jesus' life in light of the larger responsibilities of the priesthood, then we see Jesus as priest in much of his preaching and in many of actions.<sup>10</sup>

Overlooking the full shape the priesthood is exactly what theologians have done when they have approached Christ's priestly work. Without abandoning the central feature of Christ's death and intercession, it is vital to recapture the whole office of the priesthood—exegetically outlined—in order to discern the theological makeup of Christ's person and work.<sup>11</sup>

In keeping with the focus of this dissertation, this chapter will lay out the first installment of a biblical typology of the priesthood,<sup>12</sup> where the priestly duties of guarding, mediating, and teaching are observed in the lives of Adam, Noah, and Abraham. As each priestly mediator is considered, the doctrinal question of the atonement's extent will be considered. As was mentioned in chapter 1, those who reject definite atonement have done so with insufficient attention to Christ's priestly work.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, since most evangelical theologians have only focused on the sacrificial aspects of Christ's priesthood, they have

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<sup>10</sup>Jonathan R. Wilson, *God So Loved the World: A Christology for Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 51.

<sup>11</sup>This is a similar observation to what George Stroup has said about the *munus triplex*, as a whole (“The Relevance of the *Munus Triplex* for Reformed Theology and Ministry,” *ASB* 98 [1983]: 26, 29).

<sup>12</sup>Despite asking the systematic question concerning the extent of the atonement, the methodology employed in this dissertation is not what Gerhard Hasel calls the “Dogmatic-Didactic Method” (*Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 39-42). It would be closer to Hasel's “Multiplex Canonical” approach (111-14), which strives to read the Bible “longitudinally” where the various biblical “themes, motifs, and concepts [are] formed by the Biblical materials themselves” (114). Only after discerning what the whole Bible says about the priesthood, can we rightly answer questions about the extent of the atonement (cf. D. A. Carson, “Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000], 89-104).

<sup>13</sup>Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 680.

failed to consider the other aspects of his ministry, and thus have not considered *all* that Christ did on the cross.

Therefore, this chapter will argue that the (1) defensive posture of the priest in God's temple, (2) the sacrificial mediation for God's covenant people Israel, and (3) the teaching ministry for Israel alone prepares the way for a priest who works for his people and against his enemies. In other words, it will be argued that the typological structures of the OT priesthood anticipate Christ's NT ministry, where he purges from his cosmic temple his unclean enemies, dies for his covenant people, and proclaims the message of forgiveness to all those who are in covenant with him.<sup>14</sup> To such a biblical typology, we now turn.

### **Adam: The Archetypal Royal Priest**

When Adam and Eve were created in the image and likeness of God, there was no need for a mediator.<sup>15</sup> God walked with man in the cool of the day (Gen 3:8), and the innocent pair freely spoke to their divine maker. In this garden setting, sacrifice was not necessary,<sup>16</sup> but there is yet reason to believe that Adam functioned as the first priest.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Let it be said from the outset, the universal call of the gospel will be defended in this dissertation. The particularity of Christ's atonement does not in any way reduce or limit the universality of the gospel proclamation. However, it is necessary to decide how the particularity of the atonement coheres with the universality of the new covenant (cf. Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17). This will be the burden of chap. 7 where it will call on the biblical framework of the priesthood of Christ to explain the missionary task given by Jesus to his church (cf. Matt 28:19-20; Rom 15:16; 1 Pet 2:9-10).

<sup>15</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 309.

<sup>16</sup>However, see Peter J. Leithart who speculates that Adam was supposed to present himself as a "living sacrifice" (*The Kingdom and Power: Rediscovering the Centrality of the Church* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1993], 27-28).

<sup>17</sup>*Pace* Dommershausen, who writes, "With permanent settlement came sanctuaries, . . . The first priests were thus charged with guardianship of the sacred precincts and what went on there" ("*kohen*," in *TDOT*, 7:66). A major difference between the priesthood articulated in this dissertation and that of critical scholars is that sociological and evolutionary explanations for the origin of the priesthood are in direct contradiction with the biblical testimony. Gen 1-3 records YHWH's creation of Adam for the purpose of priestly service in God's garden. Thus, the priesthood goes back to God's design, not man's natural attempt to reach the divine.

Meredith Kline, J. V. Fesko, G. K. Beale, Peter Gentry, among others<sup>18</sup> have argued that priesthood begins in the garden.<sup>19</sup> They stake their claim on a number of reasons,<sup>20</sup> which we must consider to form the original pattern of the priesthood.<sup>21</sup>

First, the garden itself is depicted as a sacred space.<sup>22</sup> Set on a mountain,<sup>23</sup> the “garden of God” (cf. Isa 51:3; Ezek 28:13; 31:9) is the place where Adam and Eve enjoyed the presence of YHWH.<sup>24</sup> While the untarnished creation is picturesque to behold, the point

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<sup>18</sup>Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 83-90; idem, *Images of the Spirit*: (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996), 35-56; J. V. Fesko, *Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis 1-3 with the Christ of Eschatology* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2007), 57-75; Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 81-121; Peter J. Gentry, “Kingdom through Covenant: Humanity as the Divine Image,” *SBJT* 12 (2008): 16–42. Others include T. D. Alexander (*From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008], 24), who points to the work of OT scholars Peter Kearney, Moshe Weinfield, and Joseph Blenkinsopp, who have seen priestly and temple themes in the creation account (Gen 1-2).

<sup>19</sup>Alternatively, John Owen denies such a starting place for the priesthood (*The Priesthood of Christ: Its Necessity and Nature* [Fearn, Scotland: Christian Heritage, 2010], 39-46). Owen delimits the priesthood saying, “the priest is a sacrificer” (38). Consequently, at the time of innocence, there could be no priest. While his point is valid, as far as it goes, ancient Near Eastern studies have shown that Gen 1-2 borrow from the prevalent cosmology of the day, which includes setting a priestly figure—in this case, the *Imago Dei*—in the garden of the God who dwells in garden of Eden. Working without this background knowledge—as his description of covenantal essentials shows (ibid., 125-27)—minimizes the impact his rejection of the priesthood in Genesis has on the subject.

<sup>20</sup>Gentry and Wellum list ten “parallels” between the Garden of Eden and the later Israelite tabernacle (Exod 25-40) and temples (1 Kgs 6-8; Ezek 40-47) (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 211-13). For the theological interests of this dissertation, we will focus on the priestly duties in the temple of God.

<sup>21</sup>Since Christ is the last Adam, canonical logic expects that Christ would fulfill and exceed the first Adam’s priestly status.

<sup>22</sup>Dumbrell writes that the word for garden (*gan*) “comes from a verb meaning ‘cover’ or ‘surround.’ This type of garden was a fenced-off enclosure protected by a wall or hedge” (*The Search for Order: Biblical Eschatology in Focus* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001], 24). In the Bible and in the ancient Near East, gardens were also associated with kings; gardens were often depicted as sanctuaries where priests offered service and worship (Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 66).

<sup>23</sup>Easily missed by a casual reading of Gen 2, the “Garden of Eden” (2:15; 3:23, 24; cf. Ezek 36:35; Joel 2:3) is actually a “Garden in Eden” (2:8; cf. 2:10); the Garden is a subsection of the land of Eden itself. Confirming this, John Walton writes, “Technically speaking, Genesis 2:10 indicates that the garden should be understood as adjoining Eden because the water flows from Eden and waters the garden” (“Garden of Eden,” in *DOTP*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003], 202).

<sup>24</sup>Gentry notes the similarity of language between the Garden and later descriptions of the tabernacle. “The verb *halak* in the hithpael stem (‘to walk to and fro,’ Gen 3:8) is the same term employed to



of Genesis 1-2 is theological.<sup>25</sup> Wenham suggests that the garden is far more than bucolic farmland. It is an “archetypal sanctuary” whose features are “found in later sanctuaries particularly the tabernacle or Jerusalem temple. These parallels suggest that the garden itself is understood as a sort of sanctuary.”<sup>26</sup> Going one step further, Beale suggests that within Genesis 1-3 there is a gradation from the outer court (the world outside the garden), to the inner court or the holy place (the garden), to the most holy place (Eden itself).<sup>27</sup> Putting all this together, Adam and all of his children were created in the image of God to commune with the Lord and to carry out his commands, which leads us to his priestly duties.

Stationed in God’s presence with the commission to expand the garden-sanctuary (Gen 1:28ff),<sup>28</sup> Adam is given a short but straightforward mandate.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. (Gen 2:15-17)

Developing the twin commands to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”<sup>29</sup> and to “subdue and rule” over all the creation (cf. Ps 8), Adam is now given the priestly task of

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describe the divine presence in the later tent sanctuaries (Lev 26:12; Deut 23:15; 2 Sam 7:6-7)” (Gentry, “Kingdom through Covenant,” 16–42).

<sup>25</sup>Through critical eyes, Gerhard Von Rad sees the creation story as a “priestly doctrine” whose meaning “cannot be easily over-interpreted theologically” (*Genesis: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961], 46).

<sup>26</sup>Gordon Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” in *“I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood”: Ancient Near Eastern and Literary Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, ed. R. S. Hess and D. Tsumura (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 19.

<sup>27</sup>Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 75.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 81-167.

<sup>29</sup>While “be fruitful and multiply” has clear implications for progeny, it also connotes other duties related to Adam’s priesthood. Christopher Ash observes, “As we rejoice with the lovers in the garden, we must not forget that there is work to be done. . . . The purpose of the man-woman match is not their mutual delight, wonderful though it is. It is that the woman should be just the helper the man needs, so that together they may serve and watch” (*Marriage: Sex in the Service of God* [Vancouver: Regent, 2003], 121). In time the man and

“serving” YHWH in his garden-sanctuary and “guarding” his sacred space. Indeed, Adam’s calling is not that of a prehistoric farmer. He is a royal priest who serves his Lord and guards his dwelling place.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, Adam’s mandate in Genesis 2:15 finds linguistic connection with the commands given to the priests in Numbers 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:5-7.<sup>31</sup> Appropriately, Mathews labels Adam “an archetypal Levite,”<sup>32</sup> and Ross says of Adam *and* Eve, “they were like the priests who had the responsibility for the care of all the divine institutions in the sanctuary.”<sup>33</sup>

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woman would become a priestly family, serving God in his garden-temple. Likewise, C. John Collins (*Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary and Theological Commentary* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2006], 87-88) relates that the LXX translates Gen 1:28 “be fruitful and *increase*,” and that Luke in Act 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; and 19:20 applies the fulfillment of God’s first commandment to the church itself, a family of priests (cf. Rom 15:16; 1 Pet 2:5, 9-10).

<sup>30</sup>Adding to the priestly ‘feel’ of Gen 2:15 is the language of ‘rest’ in God’s presence (cf. Exod 33:14). While Moses, in v. 8, states as a matter of fact in that God “put” (*sim*) Adam in the Garden, v. 15 changes the language to “caused to rest” (*nuah*). Ken Mathews (*Genesis 1-11:26*, NAC, vol. 1A [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996], 208-09) comments, “the language . . . is essentially equivalent to v. 8 in context, but ‘rest’ bears a special significance” (cf. Gen 5:29; 19:16; Deut 3:20; 12:10; 25:19). The significance is that “rest” often has to do with worship and temple building. For instance, when God delivered Israel from Egypt, he made a covenant with them, where “Sabbath rest” was the sign sealing their covenant (cf. Exod 32:12-18). Likewise, it was when God gave Israel “rest on every side” that Solomon’s temple could be built (1 Kgs 5:4). Cf. John Sailhamer, *Genesis*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 44-48.

<sup>31</sup>In a lexical study of *šāmar* and ‘*abad*, John Walton observes the challenge of knowing whether ‘*abad* refers to working the soil or serving in the sanctuary. When the object of the verb is the garden ambiguity results, thus the determinative factor is the meaning of *šāmar*. He writes, “(1) Since there are several contexts in which *šāmar* is used for levitical service alone with ‘*abad* (e.g., Num 3:8-9), (2) since the contextual use of *šāmar* here favors sacred service, (3) since ‘*abad* is as likely to refer to sacred service as agricultural tasks and (4) since there are other indications that the garden is being portrayed as sacred space, it is likely that the tasks given to Adam are of priestly nature: caring for sacred space. In ancient thinking, caring for sacred space was a way of upholding creation. By preserving order, chaos was held at bay” (“Garden of Eden,” 206).

<sup>32</sup>Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 52; see also Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 211-12; Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 66-70.

<sup>33</sup>Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), 106-07. Ross adds, “This [priestly reading] would be the intended meaning of the text, not, as some suggest, an implication drawn from the original meaning of the ground. They had a covenant of service or works with God that they were to fulfill. And because such a spiritual service (‘serving’) anticipated the forces of evil that were about, obedience to the LORD (‘keeping’) was absolutely essential. After the Fall the spiritual service would include atonement (as the Midrash included), purification, reconciliation, and instruction in holiness” (ibid., 107).

While Walton ‘presumes’ that there is no one to guard against,<sup>34</sup> Beale is more right when he states, “It is apparent that priestly obligations in Israel’s later temple included the duty of ‘guarding’ unclean things from entering (cf. Num 3:6-7, 32, 38; 18:1-7), and this appears to be relevant for Adam, especially in view of the unclean creature lurking on the perimeter of the Garden.”<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the priestly responsibility of Adam did not simply include keeping the garden; it also meant keeping the law of God. Gentry notes how the garden was “the place of divine decrees” and that characteristics of the tree of knowledge are “echoed by Psalm 19, where the covenant/Torah/law is described as ‘making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart, and enlightening the eyes.’”<sup>36</sup> The point is obvious: Just as later priests, under threat of death (Num 4:20; cf. 2 Sam 6:7), guarded the ark of the testimony (Exod 25:16; Deut 31:26), so Adam was commanded to guard God’s law.

In light of the evidence presented thus far, it is clear that Adam’s role was far more than a gardener.<sup>37</sup> Created in God’s image and likeness, and put to work in the garden (2:8), he was called to guard God’s dwelling place on earth and serve the Lord of heaven (vv. 15-

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<sup>34</sup>Walton, “Garden of Eden,” 206. Part of Walton’s impetus for playing down Adam’s defensive posture in the Garden is his assertion that Adam’s role is “much more than landscaping *or even priestly duties*” (emphasis mine). For Walton, Adam was put in the Garden to keep the “equilibrium God had established in the cosmos” (ibid.). This certainly fits with the larger concepts of God’s macro-temple in the universe, but it does not overturn Beale’s observation that something unclean lurked in the shadows.

<sup>35</sup>Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 69. Later in the OT, priestly officers were called “guards” (1 Chr 9:23) and “gatekeepers” (1 Chr 9:17-27; Neh 11:19). As 2 Chr 23:19 indicates, the reason for this was to ensure “that no one should enter who was in any way unclean.” Moreover, in Ezek 40:45 and 44:14, the priest is described as a warden who “keeps charge of the temple.” While standing outside the canon, 2 *Baruch* 10:18 instructs the priests, “Guard your house yourself, because, behold, we have been found to be false stewards” (cf. *Midrash Rabbah Leviticus* 19:6). Of significance, many ANE texts describing pagan religions relate how “priests of ancient pagan temples were also to ‘guard the temple’ and to kill intruders, as well as ‘guard’ and pass on sacred texts” (Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 69. Cf. R. B. Finnestad, “Temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods: Ancient Traditions in New Contexts,” in *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, ed. B. E. Shafer [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997], 185-237, esp. 228).

<sup>36</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 212-13.

<sup>37</sup>The notion of a gardener in the ANE and in the Bible is freighted with theological meaning. See Gentry’s balanced presentation of ANE gardening as “royal vocation” and a “lowly task” (ibid., 209-10).

17). Beale is surely right to assert that without sin Adam and his offspring would have expanded the garden to the utter most ends of the earth, and they would have done so as a royal family devoted to the priestly service of the Lord.<sup>38</sup> God's first son Adam was created to be a "sanctuary attendant," a priest in the house of the Lord.<sup>39</sup> Sadly, as the first of many imperfect priests, Adam failed to keep the covenant. He permitted his wife to break God's singular command, and he himself rebelled against God when he ate of the tree. True to his word, YHWH ejected his priest from the garden-temple. Like the priests of Israel, Adam's sanctuary privilege was terminated because he had polluted himself by failing to keep the law of God (cf. Hos 4:6). As a result, the first priesthood was over.

Nevertheless, in Adam we find a pattern that would be replicated in Israel and infinitely improved in Jesus Christ. While most of the molding features of the priesthood are detailed in Exodus-Deuteronomy, it is worth noting three aspects of Adam's priesthood. First, Adam's initial task was to "guard" the sanctuary (Gen 2:15). Thus, before the Fall, the man's priestly orientation was directed toward the Lord and his house. As the biblical narrative continues, this vertical orientation to defend God's holiness will continue. Moreover, in Jesus Christ, who is zealous for the house of the Lord (John 2:17; cf. Ps 69:9), we find that Christ fulfills more than the sacerdotal duties of the priest. Where Adam failed to keep God's sanctuary clean, Christ will perfectly succeed, eventually removing all unclean Gentiles and Jews from his Father's macrocosmic temple.

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<sup>38</sup>Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 93-100. On the tragic separation of priest and king, Beale comments, "Adam should always best be referred to as a 'priest-king,' since it is only after the 'fall' that priesthood is separated from kingship" (ibid., 70). This likely has implications for the reunification of both offices in Ps 110 and Zech 3 and 6.

<sup>39</sup>Leithart, "Attendants of Yahweh's House," *passim*.

Second, one of Adam's greatest pre-fall tasks would be the propagation of God's word. As an archetypal Levite, it is fitting that Adam would not only guard God's space, but he would guard his word through the ministry of teaching. In fact, the progression in Genesis 2:15-17, from priestly commission to covenantal stipulations, suggests that Adam had the responsibility of making known God's law to all those in his family.<sup>40</sup> While evidence is scant, it is clear that Eve was aware of the command not to eat of the tree. Genesis 3:2-3 records that when the serpent approached her, she replied, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" How did she know that? Apparently, Adam told her. While God's singular command predated her creation, Eve was well enough aware of God's instruction about the tree that she could *at first* resist the devil.<sup>41</sup> However, she was quickly deceived, because her husband, her priestly teacher, failed to protect her. Thus, while Adam had an original calling to make known God's command to all those in his family, he failed. Worse, instead of leading his family to walk in wisdom, he effectively passed on to them the corrupted nature of sinful humanity (Rom 5:12, 18-19).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Beale's intratextual observation gives strong support for maintaining priestly instruction as a necessary feature of Adam's guardianship in the Garden. He states, "After telling Adam to 'cultivate' and 'guard/keep' in Genesis 2:15, God gives him a specific 'command' in v. 16. The notion of divine commanding' (*sāwā*) or giving of 'commandments' (*miswōt*) not untypically follows the word 'guard/keep' (*šāmar*) elsewhere, and in 1 Kgs 9:6, when both 'serving' and 'keeping' occur together, the idea of 'commandments to be kept' is in view. The 1 Kings passage is addressed to Solomon and his sons immediately after he had 'finished building the house of the LORD' (1 Kgs 9:1): if they do 'not *keep* My commandments . . . and *serve* other gods . . . I will cut off Israel from the land and the house [temple] . . . I will cast out of My sight' (1 Kgs 9:6-7)" (*The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 68).

<sup>41</sup>It ventures into speculation to decide whether the change between God's command (Gen 2:16-17) and Eve's response is a result of Adam's modification and safe-guarding of the law, or Eve's (un)intentional changing of the law. Either way, it is clear that when the serpent approached, it was Adam who failed to correct his wife and crush the serpent.

<sup>42</sup>For an exegetical and theological defense of Adam's imputed guilt on the basis of corporate solidarity, see S. L. Johnson, Jr., "Romans 5:12—An Exercise in Exegesis and Theology," in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, ed. R. N. Longenecker and M. C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 298-316; cf. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 2:227-56; idem, *Commentary on*

It is impossible to make any decisive conclusions about Christ's priesthood based on Adam's failure here, but it does hint at this fact: The priest teaches all those who are in covenant with him. In the garden, this would be his wife Eve who is in covenant by marriage. But given time, it would go beyond that. Romans 5 indicates the ongoing nature of the first covenant, in that Adam's guilt is transferred by the principle of corporate solidarity and covenantal mediation. It is plausible to say that his failed priesthood polluted the entire human race.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, just as Adam, the first priestly mediator, effectively brought death to his covenant people; Jesus Christ, the greater priest, has effectively brought life to his covenant family.<sup>44</sup> The former did so with all those who shared his human nature; Christ does so with all those who share his new nature—those born of the Spirit and participants in his Spiritual covenant (Rom 5:12-19).<sup>45</sup>

Last, even though there is no ratifying sacrifice to initiate a covenant, there is strong evidence in Genesis 1-11 to believe that Adam mediated a covenant. This idea of a

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*the Epistle to the Romans* (1886; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 142-91; Thomas Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 267-93.

<sup>43</sup>This anticipates what Israel's priests would do in the years leading up to the exile (Ezek 22:26; Hos 4:6; Zeph 1:4-6; 3:4; Mal 2:8-9; cf. Ezek 40:6ff.).

<sup>44</sup>Hugh Martin, *The Atonement: In Its Relation to the Covenant, the Priesthood, the Intercession of Our Lord* (London: Ames Nisbet & Company, 1870).

<sup>45</sup>This obviously calls into question the meaning of Rom 5:18-19. Who is the "many"? Following a host of commentators, it seems best to understand *polloi* as meaning "all those who belong to Christ" (Schreiner, *Romans*, 292), for Paul's working contrast in vv. 18-19 does not concern "the numerical extent" but "the parallel that obtains between the way of condemnation and the way of justification" (John Murray, *The Epistles to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes: Chapters 1-8* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959], 203). In this way, all those in Adam are condemned unto death, and all those in Christ are justified unto life (George Smeaton, *The Apostle's Doctrine of the Atonement* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1870; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957], 154-61; idem, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1871; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953], 366; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, PCNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 238-40).

covenant with Adam (or creation) has had many supporters in church history.<sup>46</sup> Covenant theologians typically affirm some original covenant, even if they dispute the gracious nature of the covenant.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, a sizeable number of biblical scholars have argued for a covenant with Adam.<sup>48</sup> But most recently, Gentry and Wellum have argued that a covenant with Adam does exist.<sup>49</sup> Based on a close reading of the Hebrew words *heqim berith* and *karat berith*, they argue that God initiated a covenant with creation, mediated by Adam, which God reestablished with Noah after the flood.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>For an historical overview and theological defense, see Greg Nichols, *Covenant Theology: A Reformed and Baptist Perspective on God's Covenants* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground, 2011), 321-58.

<sup>47</sup>Mark W. Karlberg, "The Original State of Adam: Tensions in Reformed Theology," *EQ* 59 (1987): 291-309; cf. Herman Witsius, *The Economy of Covenants between God and Man*, 2 vols. (London, 1822; repr., Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2010); Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:354-77; Peter Golding, *Covenant Theology: The Key of Theology in Reformed Thought and Tradition* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2004), 105-20; Michael S. Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006).

<sup>48</sup>O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1980), 17-25, 67-87; William J. Dumbrell, *Creation and Covenant: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1984); Thomas Edward McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985). While Robertson argues for a creation covenant, he also argues that God's covenant with Adam "commences" with the *protoevangelium* in Gen 3:15 (*The Christ of the Covenants*, 93-107).

<sup>49</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 177-221. Paul Williamson argues against a covenant in/with creation. His reasons are many, but his strongest argument is based on the absence of *berith* in Gen 1-3 (*Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose*, NSBT [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007], 59-76). Against Williamson, Gentry and Wellum have updated and improved Dumbrell's earlier argument (*Creation and Covenant*, 11-46). Likewise, a cadre of careful scholars have argued for the presence of an Adamic covenant. See Willem VanGemeren, *The Progress of Redemption: The Story of Salvation from Creation to the New Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Academie, 1998), 59-64; Scott J. Hafemann, *The God of Promise and the Life of Faith: Understanding the Heart of the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 55-59; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 72-73.

<sup>50</sup>The NT, especially Rom 5, functions as a passage that confirms this reading. While N. T. Wright is probably correct to caution against drawing an exact "equivalence between Adam's trespass and God's gift in Christ" (N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 37), the comparison between Adam and Christ is the central contrast between OT and NT. *Contra* Wright, who subordinates Adam to Israel (*ibid.*, 18-40), Jesus is not simply a new Israel, a new Moses, or a new David—though he is all of these. Most comprehensively, he is the founder of a new humanity (Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975], 44-90; Michael Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007], 70-75). Thus, the covenant that God makes with Christ confirms the fact that in the beginning God made a covenant with Adam. All other covenants in the OT

Significant for the discussion here is the fact that Adam *as a priest* mediates a covenant. As it will be evidenced throughout the canon each biblical covenant is mediated by a priest,<sup>51</sup> and thus the new covenant, which is established by the Second Adam, is inextricably linked to Christ's priesthood. Indeed, the efficacy of his priesthood will be determined by the stipulations that are delineated in that eternal covenant.<sup>52</sup> Or to say it more appropriately, the efficacy of the priesthood determines the effectiveness of the covenant. In this way, the relationship between priest and covenant is twofold: (1) As Hebrews 7:12 states, the changing of a priest results in the changing of the law, which shows that the covenant is dependent on the priest, not the reverse. Conversely, (2) the nature and efficacy of the priesthood is publically communicated by the details of the covenant.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, as the priesthood is examined in type and shadow, it will regularly interact with the typological covenants in the OT. Likewise, as the priesthood of Jesus Christ is examined, it will be set in the context of the new covenant. Setting the priesthood in its canonical and covenantal contexts will discern the efficacy of the priesthood and the atonement's extent. Recognizing that Adam is a priest does little to discern the scope of the atonement, but his duties of guarding, teaching, and covenant mediation are key components of any future priest.

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bridged the gap between Adam and Christ; or to say it another way, redemption which came through a series of covenants find their ultimate terminus in the covenant mediated by the Last Adam.

<sup>51</sup>For a compelling argument for the priestly function of David and his greater Son, see Karl Deenick, "Priest and King or Priest-King in 1 Samuel 2:35," *WTJ* 73 (2011): 325-39.

<sup>52</sup>William Symington observes that Christ "laid down his life by covenant." Therefore, "the terms of the covenant must . . . define the designed extent of the objects of his death" (*The Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* [Pittsburgh: United Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1864], 191).

<sup>53</sup>This is the difference between the order of knowing and the order of being. The way we come to know the efficacy of the priesthood is through a close reading of the covenant, but the way the covenant is made effective is through the work of the priest. Therefore, the better the priest, the better the covenant. This priest-covenant relationship is vital for discerning the efficacy and extent of the priest's atoning work.



## The Patriarchs

The narrative record of Genesis presents Noah and Abraham as “new Adams.”<sup>54</sup>

As it relates to Adam’s priesthood, this chapter will argue that these two patriarchs continue Adam’s priestly duties associated with his covenant mediation. However, because of mankind’s new nature (i.e., hostile towards God and ritually unclean), they will also begin to offer sacrifices to God to atone for the sins of the people in covenant with them.

Commenting on the place of sacrifice and priesthood in the patriarchal period, J. Barton Payne observes that “in Noah’s time priestly ministrations had become the responsibility of the patriarchal family head.”<sup>55</sup> From the very first generation, priestly actions (e.g., sacrifice, intercession, and covenant mediation) were something that accompanied true worship (Gen 4:1ff.). Even while no official place of divine residence had been established in Genesis, God revealed himself repeatedly to the seed of the woman, and in every generation the men who called upon the name of the Lord offered worship to the true God.<sup>56</sup> Evidence of this prototypical priesthood is found in the central role that altars played in Genesis.<sup>57</sup> Because of sin’s presence, the priestly duty of Adam shifted from maintaining and guarding God’s holy place to offering sacrifices to God in order to shield God’s people from his holiness. Therefore, altars functioned as the place where the patriarch

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<sup>54</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 223-30.

<sup>55</sup>J. Barton Payne, *Theology of the Older Testament*, 373; see also, “Kōhen,” in *TWOT*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:431; Philip Jenson, “khn,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 2:600.

<sup>56</sup>On the origin and patriarchal meaning of the sacrifices, see Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ*, 66-92; cf. David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 25-26; Allen P. Ross, *A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 138-42.

<sup>57</sup>Tremper Longman III, *Immanuel in Our Place: Seeing Christ in Israel’s Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001), 15-23.

offered sacrifices to God for the sins of his family (cf. Job 1:5).<sup>58</sup> Even though Genesis nowhere assigns priesthood to any Hebrew, the *Sitz im Leben* of the ANE and the actions of the Patriarchs strongly suggest Noah, Abraham, and their sons were priestly Patriarchs.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, to understand the nature and scope of their priestly service, we must consider Genesis 6-9 and Genesis 12-25 to establish the original contours of the priestly type.

## Noah

Noah is introduced in Genesis 5:29 and his figure dominates the landscape of Genesis 6-9. After surviving the flood, he builds an altar—the first altar mentioned in the Bible.<sup>60</sup> It is built by Noah immediately after the ark is unloaded (vv. 13-19). The language used by Moses to describe the altar-building scene employs at least three Levitical terms (“clean” [v. 20, 2x], “burnt offerings,” [v. 20], “pleasing aroma”<sup>61</sup> [v. 21]).<sup>62</sup> Yet, it is not

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<sup>58</sup>Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 136-42; Gerard Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), 218-21.

<sup>59</sup>Alois Stöger, “Priest(hood),” in *EBT*, ed. J. B. Bauer (London: Sheed and Ward, 1982), 701; Ross, *Holiness to the Lord*, 31-33.

<sup>60</sup>Longman, *Immanuel in Our Place*, 15-16. Ross notes, “The word *altar* (*mizbēakh*) is related to the verb ‘to slaughter for sacrifice.’” And thus, “an altar was the ‘place of the slaughtering the sacrifice’” (*Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 138).

<sup>61</sup>Exod 29:18, 25, 41 describe the sacrifices offered in the priestly ordination as emitting a “pleasing aroma” before the Lord. In Leviticus, offerings that emit a “pleasing aroma” are mentioned 16 times—six times they are related to the burnt offering (1:9, 13, 17; 8:21, 28; 23:18); nine times a food offering (2:2, 9, 12; 6:15, 21; 8:21, 28; 23:13, 18), twice the peace offering (3:5, 16), once the sin offering (4:31), and once related to the Day of Atonement (17:6). With only three exceptions (3:16; 8:21, 28) the “pleasing aroma” was always directed “to the Lord.” In the remaining three, the context indicates YHWH as the intended recipient. Finally, with almost the same frequency, a priest was involved in every offering. In seven verses, a priest is explicitly mentioned (1:9, 13, 17; 2:2 [2x]; 3:16; 4:31 [2x]; 17:6); twice Moses is the officiating ‘priest’ (8:21, 28), twice the service is officiated by the priest without giving direct attribution to him (23:13, 18), and in all the rest, the context of the sacrifices involves the priest. A similar evaluation of “pleasing aroma” can be observed in Numbers, where the phrase occurs nineteen times in passages that recount the laws laid out in Leviticus. Thus, returning to Gen 8:21, an offering that gives of a “pleasing aroma” to the Lord clearly evokes priestly images.

<sup>62</sup>Speaking more broadly of the covenant with Noah, Hahn observes what other critical scholars have attributed to the P redactor, “From a critical perspective, Gen 6-9 is replete with terms characteristic of

just linguistic similarities that make Noah a priest. A number of older commentators “hold that the sacrifice” offered in Genesis 8:21 “was essentially propitiatory.”<sup>63</sup> Observing that “Noah’s sacrifice is effective for all mankind,” Wenham states, “we can view Noah’s offering of sacrifice as a prototype of the work of later priests who made atonement for Israel.”<sup>64</sup> Yet, in the case of Noah, his priestly service while “effective” is not salvific in the eternal sense. Rather, according to the stipulations laid out in Genesis 9, his priestly mediation “quiets” the wrath of God in this present age.<sup>65</sup> The place he serves in covenantal history is to preserve creation, not to offer eternal salvation.<sup>66</sup> In contrast to the later priests of Israel whose sacrifices enabled Israel to know and worship the Lord, Noah’s sacrifice restrained the wrath of God on all creatures but did not secure salvific or noetic blessings.<sup>67</sup>

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Priestly covenant theology (e.g., ‘everlasting’ [‘*ōlām*—9:16]; “sign” [‘*ōt*—9:12, 13, 17]; ‘remember’ [‘*zākar*—9:15, 16])” (*Kinship by Covenant*, 96).

<sup>63</sup>Gordon J. Wenham, “The Theology of Old Testament Sacrifice,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, 80.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>65</sup>Joel Skinner, *Genesis*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), 157.

<sup>66</sup>However, Noah’s typological significance is not bereft of salvific contours. For instance, his salvation through the waters of judgment prefigures the salvation which Jesus Christ provides (2 Pet 3:19-22). In redemptive history, Noah’s efficacious salvation through the flood anticipates Moses’ deliverance in the Nile River and Israel’s miraculous salvation in the Red Sea (Peter Enns, *Exodus*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000], 62). In this way, Noah like Moses after him, functions as a savior who not only saves his people from physical death, but he also warns those outside of his covenant of impending danger. It is clear from 2 Peter that Noah was a preacher, “a herald of righteousness” (2:5). He prefigures Moses who announced God’s judgment to Egypt as he simultaneously saved Israel, and he adumbrates the NT witness who brings a message of righteousness by faith and judgment against unrighteousness (cf. Jack P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978], esp. 3-9, 101-20).

<sup>67</sup>Explaining this point, Wenham observes the difference between Gen 6:5 and 8:21. In the former, the sin of mankind brought the deadly deluge; but in the latter, humanity’s sin is met with mercy. Why? Because of Noah’s sacrifice. Wenham writes, “Now, for the very same reason, the LORD declares that he will not curse the ground further. And the only hint that the narrative gives for this change of heart is ‘God’s smelling of the soothing aroma’” (“The Theology of Old Testament Sacrifice,” 81).

Therefore, from the sacrificial nature of God’s interaction with Noah (as well as, the Levitical language<sup>68</sup> and covenantal context of Gen 6-9)<sup>69</sup> there is strong reason to believe that Noah functions as a priest in this setting.<sup>70</sup> While he does not “defend” the sacrifices like Abraham will (Gen 15), as the mediator of this ‘new’ covenant, he does have the responsibility of enforcing these covenantal stipulations (e.g., be fruitful and multiply, have dominion over the earth, and do not shed blood).<sup>71</sup> Accordingly, as a covenant teacher, he would have to teach his children and their offspring the rules of the covenant. Tragically, like Adam, this royal priest will fail to keep his domain and the curse of God will fall on his descendents (9:24-25). As a result, Noah’s legacy secures universal common grace,<sup>72</sup> but his drunkenness effectively divides humanity and limits blessing to offspring of Shem.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>David Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant: Transformations of Genre in the Growth of Biblical Literature* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 292-93.

<sup>69</sup>Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 109-25; Dumbrell, *Creation and Covenant*, 11-46; Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 93-100; Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 59-76; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingship through Covenant*, 147-76.

<sup>70</sup>“The larger context of the Genesis narrative suggests at least three aspects of Noah’s privileged [covenantal] grant. These may be classified as priestly (8:20), kingly (9:1-3), and prophetic (9:25-27)” (Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 389). While Hahn attaches prophetic significance to the curse formula in Gen 9:25-27, it should be considered that other such blessing and curse iterations arise in priestly contexts (Lev 26-27 and Deut 27-28), where covenants are being mediated.

<sup>71</sup>Hahn argues for an unconditional covenant with Noah, but ironically, Hahn himself asserts conditionality in Noah’s ‘grant-type covenant.’ Describing the criteria of Noah’s covenant, he writes, “The covenant grant,” which he calls unconditional two sentences earlier, “*is based upon Noah’s exceptional loyalty in the face of a violent and corrupt generation of wicked men*” (*Kinship by Covenant*, 96, emphasis mine). Accordingly, Gentry and Wellum capture the tension better, when they say, “Theologians have attempted to classify and describe covenants as either conditional or unconditional . . . bilateral or unilateral . . . [But these] categories are not helpful or fruitful if one desires to accurately represent the biblical text. The covenant with Noah entails divine promises whose fulfillment cannot be thwarted, yet it also calls the community of animals and humans to answer for their actions and stewardship” (*Kingship through Covenant*, 174).

<sup>72</sup>Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 225-28; Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 244-50. *Contra* Ronald L. Cammenga, “The Covenant with Noah: Common Grace or Cosmic Grace?” *PRTJ* 40 (2007): 2-25.

<sup>73</sup>Warren Austin Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (Winona Lake, IN: Carpenter, 1984), 11-12, 137; Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 299.

After his “fall,” Noah as a prophetic-priest curses Canaan and blesses Shem and by extension Japheth (9:25-27). The priestly nature is found in the fact that later in Israelite history, it was the priests who mediated the blessings of God (Num 6:24-26; Deut 10:8; 1 Chr 23:13; cf. Gen 14:19-20).<sup>74</sup> In this pre-Mosaic context, two contrasts should be observed. First, the scope of the non-saving covenant is universal (all people), but the scope of the blessing—which includes the promise of salvation (Gen 3:15)—is particular. This hints at the reality, later to be confirmed in the election of Abraham, that God’s blessings are limited in scope.<sup>75</sup> Second, the blessing of Shem is promised to reach beyond himself, as Japheth is included in Shem’s blessing. While latent, this suggests that God’s blessing through Noah will extend beyond Shem. However, as the rest of redemptive history witnesses, this blessed extension is not experienced until the new covenant (Isa 54:9-10; Jer 33:19-26), when all the nations who were upheld by God’s covenant with Noah are now invited to come in and enjoy the blessings of Shem.<sup>76</sup>

In sum, discernible contours of Adam’s priesthood can be seen in Noah. As he announces the gospel (cf. 2 Pet 2:5), takes clean animals onto the ark, offers sacrifices (8:20), and mediates God’s covenant (9:1 ff.), Noah evidences many priestly traits developed later in the biblical canon. Related to the extent of the atonement, it should be noted that Noah’s

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<sup>74</sup>Richard D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 44-46.

<sup>75</sup>R. R. Reno labels God’s principle of election as the “Scandal of Particularity” (*Genesis*, BTC [Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010], 137-252), and Paul Williamson grounds his argument for definite atonement in the Pentateuch on God’s election of Israel (“‘Because He Loved Your Forefathers’: Election, Atonement, and Intercession in the Pentateuch,” in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. Jonathan Gibson and David Gibson [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, forthcoming]). See also, Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000), 76-79.

<sup>76</sup>Interestingly, the new covenant makes provision for the descendents of Shem, Ham, and Japheth to experience God’s blessing (see Isa 19:16-25).

priestly functions coalesce with his status as a covenant mediator. In most theological literature, the latter is regularly assumed, but the former is less obvious. Sometimes Noah's prophetic ministry is observed, but it is probably better to see his blessing in Genesis 9:24-28 as a covenantal blessing, like that of Moses (Lev 26-72; Deut 27-28) or the Levites (Num 6:24-26). While the covenant Noah inaugurates with a propitiatory sacrifice is universal, there will yet be a particular blessing for Shem and against Ham. In this way, Noah as a second Adam has a two-fold relationship with the world. First, his covenant sustains and upholds all creation, such that redemptive history can continue. But second, as in every other covenant, Noah mediates blessings for some and curses for others. In this way, Noah's universal covenant sets up the rest of redemptive history, and his function as a priest is directly related to the covenant he mediates and the people he blesses. This is but the first plank in the argument that covenant mediation is priestly: Priests are typically the administrators of salvific blessings to the people of the covenant alone.<sup>77</sup>

## **Abraham**

After the fall of Babel, the plotline in Genesis shifts attention to the man Abram, later renamed Abraham. Elected by God to be the recipient of his blessing, and commissioned to be a means of blessing to the all the families of the earth, Abraham becomes a central figure for the rest of redemptive history.<sup>78</sup> But was he a priest? God calls

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<sup>77</sup>More could be developed from Noah's universal relationship with all creation and his particular saving relationship with Shem and his offspring. Space does not permit such inquiry, but this twofold relationship may provide a typological answer to the question of how Christ can administer non-salvific grace to the world (i.e., common grace) and saving grace to the elect.

<sup>78</sup>T. D. Alexander, "Abraham Re-Assessed Theologically: The Abraham Narrative and the New Testament Understanding of Justification by Faith," in *He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12-50*, ed. R. S. Hess et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 7-28.

Abraham a “prophet” (20:7) and the Hittites refer to him as “lord” and “a prince of God among us” (23:6), but nowhere does Scripture explicitly identify him as a priest.<sup>79</sup>

Nevertheless, Scott Hahn, following a bevy of scholars, makes a strong case for his priestly function.<sup>80</sup> He writes, “Canonical evidence points to the existence of a pre-Levitical form of priestly activity before the Mosaic period.”<sup>81</sup> Following his train of thought, I will argue that Abraham, like Adam and Noah, evidences a number of priestly characteristics.<sup>82</sup> In fact, from a close reading of Genesis 11:27-25:11, it will be demonstrated that Abraham carries out—to various degrees—the whole array of priestly duties and what is most relevant for this investigation: He serves as a priest for a particular people.<sup>83</sup>

Following the *toledot* structure of Genesis, the Abrahamic narrative runs from Genesis 11:27 to Genesis 25:11.<sup>84</sup> Rightly, many scholars have organized this section according to the unifying promises of land, seed, and blessing, which recur in these chapters

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<sup>79</sup>Hahn cautions, “To avoid the danger of anachronism, it should be stated that the patriarchs are called neither ‘priests’ nor ‘kings’ although such terms are applied to others” (*Kinship by Covenant*, 408). Still, as Hahn continues, “This does not annul the cultic nature of [the patriarchs] actions” (409). In fact, “On the ground of the natural association of cult with sanctuary, it is very likely that the patriarchs’ action recorded in [Gen 12:7-8; 13:4, 18; 26:25; 33:20; 35:6-7] were cultic acts” (J. Ha, *Genesis 15: A Theological Compendium of Pentateuchal History* [New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989], 117).

<sup>80</sup>While Hahn’s work on the priesthood is influenced by his apologetic interests—the advancement of the Roman Catholic priesthood—his biblical-theological work is exegetical and erudite. Evangelicals who share Hahn’s view of Abraham’s priestly status include John Sailhamer (*The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 373), and Van Groningen, who observes, “In the firstborn the dual capacity of king and priest is implicitly present” (*Messianic Revelation*, 221).

<sup>81</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 136.

<sup>82</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingship through Covenant*, 235.

<sup>83</sup>For instance, Alexander describes the particular nature of God’s covenant with Abraham, “God makes it clear that this covenant is intimately linked to the chosen family line; it is established with the promised ‘seed’ Isaac not Ishmael (17:19-21)” (“Abraham Re-Assessed,” 16). Thus, as priestly mediator, Abraham procures blessings for a limited number.

<sup>84</sup>Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 48.

(and throughout Genesis).<sup>85</sup> At the same time, the four covenantal passages (Gen 12, 15, 17, 22) mark the progress of God's dealings with Abraham in time.<sup>86</sup> Both of these textual realities must be kept in mind in this section of Scripture, and they will serve as the contextual backdrop for all that is argued here. These priestly observations are not meant to replace or hide the prominent features of covenant and promise, but rather to complement and clarify some of the events taking place in the life of Abraham. In total, there are no less than six ways in which Abraham exhibits priestly duties.

First, Abraham's call from the nations to receive a blessing from God and to become a blessing to his family is priestly. Van Groningen makes this observation when he comments on Genesis 12, "Abraham was to separate himself entirely from all human relations, except his wife and family servants."<sup>87</sup> Like Israel's call unto holiness (Exod 19:5-6) and the separation of Levites from all things unclean (Lev 21), Abraham's unique calling prepared him for priestly service. Moreover, the imperative given by God to Abraham to bless others is very similar to that of Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:24-26. Indeed, it is arguable that the idea of pronouncing a blessing from heaven is a priestly prerogative.<sup>88</sup> In

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<sup>85</sup>Alexander, "Abraham Re-Assessed Theologically," 9-11; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 55-82.

<sup>86</sup>Strangely, Dumbrell ignores Gen 22 and therefore stops short of fully grasping the Abrahamic Covenant (*Creation and Covenant*, 69-70). Gentry and Wellum give a better reading of the covenantal narrative in Gen 12-22 (*Kingship through Covenant*, 223-99). Hahn provides many insights to the progression of Abraham's covenant, but goes too far when he assigns each phase (Gen 15, 17, 22) to later covenant administrations related respectively to the covenants at Sinai, Moab, and Zion (*Kinship by Covenant*, 112-23).

<sup>87</sup>Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 133. Van Groningen may read more into God's call on Abraham than the text permits. However, he is correct to identify the unique calling of Abraham with its attendant priestly function of blessing others.

<sup>88</sup>"The priest functioned as an intermediary between God and people. This [function] is most clearly seen in his role as one who declares or imparts divine blessing and as one who intercedes with God on behalf of the people. The priestly blessing found in Num 6:23-27 (cf. Deut 10:8) is also reflected in the text of two amulets found in Jerusalem. To invoke the divine blessing on Israel to place the name of God on them (Num 6:27), that is, Israel is to have a privilege analogous to that of the high priest, who physically displays the divine name on his person [i.e., Exod 28:36-38]" (Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 163).



this way, God’s covenant with Abraham puts him in a priestly role where he stands between God and his family as the “mediator of blessing.”<sup>89</sup>

The second place where Abraham’s priestly duties are evident is in his relationship with sacral worship and building altars.<sup>90</sup> In Genesis 12:7-9, Abraham builds two altars—both in Canaan.<sup>91</sup> Thus, in his sojournings, “Abraham encounters God . . . [and] receives divine communications,” such that “his special relationship with God suggests he enjoys a status equivalent to that of a priest, although he is never designated as one.”<sup>92</sup> Then, after settling “by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron,” he builds his last altar before Mount Moriah (13:18).<sup>93</sup> While Moses takes little time to develop the theme of these altars, they both anticipate the altar on which Isaac will be laid (22:9), and the altars that will be associated with sacrifice and worship in the later stages of Israel (Exod 17:15; 20:24-26; 24:4-6; 27:1-8; 38:1-7). By keeping with the patriarchal pattern of fathers functioning as priests, Abraham’s altar building demonstrates his priestly service.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 68. This priestly prerogative will be elucidated later in this dissertation—namely, that the role of covenant mediator (Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24) is always carried out by a priest.

<sup>90</sup>“The name given to the place of worship between the Fall and Exodus is the altar” (Longman, *Immanuel in Our Place*, 15). See also, Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 142-80.

<sup>91</sup>“The altar and the tent characterise Abram’s activities in Canaan. Note that the altar is mentioned only in connection with sojourning in Canaan (Gen. 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 22:9 [2x]). There is no altar during his sojourns in Egypt or in Gerar; only half-truths, lies, and troubles. . . . Canaan is depicted in Edenic language as a mountain sanctuary. Now we see Abram fulfilling an *Adamic role*: he offers sacrifice as a priest and worships God in this mountain sanctuary” (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 235).

<sup>92</sup>T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 83.

<sup>93</sup>Longman asserts that the construction of altars by trees (Gen 12:6-7; 13:18; cf. 21:33) evokes images of Eden (*Immanuel in Our Place*, 21). This echo adds weight to Abraham’s role as a priest like Adam.

<sup>94</sup>In fact, one of the strongest arguments for priesthood among the Patriarchs is the argument that the fathers, and their firstborn sons, sacrificed for the family (Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 136-42)

Third, Abraham's powerful rescue of Lot anticipates (with obvious dissimilarity) the way priests would later guard the temple and engage in holy war.<sup>95</sup> Genesis 14 records that when four marauding kings kidnapped his nephew Lot, Abraham led his 318 trained men in a "dramatic rescue" effort, where he successfully defeated the kings of Elam, Goiim, Sinar, and Ellasar (v. 9) and reclaimed "all the possessions" including his "kinsman Lot" (v. 16).<sup>96</sup> In this episode, he is not only depicted as a superior to his neighboring kings,<sup>97</sup> he demonstrates his unique concern for his covenant family. Going back to Genesis 12:3, Abraham's blessing is passed on to Lot in more ways than just receiving a place to live (13:8-11); Abraham's blessing to Lot includes physical deliverance and later spiritual deliverance as well (Gen 18).<sup>98</sup> As a defender of Lot, Abraham adumbrates the kind of spiritual zeal that the true priests of God were supposed to exhibit. Significantly, the warfare that surrounded Lot had been going on for years (v. 4), but it was only when Lot, Abraham's

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<sup>95</sup>This detail, more than the others, could be questioned on the lack of priestly language and imagery in the account. Yet, in keeping with the rest of Abraham's priestly duties and the fact that Adam's priestly duty clearly included guarding (Gen 2:15), it is worth including.

<sup>96</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 236. In the same context, Gentry observes, "The events of Genesis 14 are important to the depiction of Abram and his role as 'priest-king.'"

<sup>97</sup>J. Gordon McConville, "Abraham and Melchizedek: Horizons in Genesis 14," in *He Swore and Oath*, 102, 111. Incidentally, many of these political leaders would have naturally been both priest and king. For instance, Gen 14 introduces Melchizedek as a priest-king and other ANE literature shows many instances where a royal figure performs priestly functions (Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 87-93).

<sup>98</sup>Moreover, on the way home, Abraham's priestly status is hinted at when he communes with Melchizedek and pays tithes to this greater priest-king (14:17ff.). In this episode, Gentry observes that by rejecting the worldly offering of Sodom's king and selecting to honor the king of Salem, Abraham was "adopting a king-priest role originally given to Adam and now given to him." (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 238). This idea of 'role adoption' is furthered if we accept Scott Hahn's thesis that Melchizedek is actually Shem (*Kinship by Covenant*, 97-100, 130-34). While seemingly improbable, Hahn's textual arguments might add support to the idea of priestly primogeniture that is passed from Adam to Noah to Shem to Abraham. Likewise, Bruce Vawter suggests that "by this story Abraham, and in Abraham the seed of Israel, is brought into intimate contact with that which was destined to be the holy city of David, and accordingly Abraham receives the blessing of the Jerusalem priesthood" (*Genesis: A New Reading* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977], 198).

“kinsman,” was kidnapped that Abraham was provoked to action.<sup>99</sup> In mounting his small army, Abraham was on a singular mission to rescue his family. Such is the brotherly relationship that the priests of Israel would have with those whom they represented (cf. Lev 15:31; Heb 2:9-10; 5:1). More to the point, as it concerns the extent of Abraham’s priestly duty, Abraham’s military zeal was limited in scope to those in his family (Gen 12:3).

Fourth, in another episode with Lot, Abraham’s priestly ministry is again limited in scope.<sup>100</sup> When the patriarch learns of God’s judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, he does not pray for God, the righteous judge (18:25), to spare the whole city. Rather, he intercedes for his “righteous” kinsman.<sup>101</sup> In his own words, Abraham is concerned that God would “sweep away the righteous with the wicked” (v. 23). So, beginning in verse 24, Abraham stands before God and pleads for the “righteous.” History tells the results. Only Lot—a “righteous man” according to 2 Peter 2:7—and his two daughters are saved. Sodom and Gomorrah are obliterated. God answers Abraham’s prayer: The righteous are saved from judgment by the prayers of their covenant mediator (19:29).<sup>102</sup> Related to Abraham’s priestly

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<sup>99</sup>Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 323.

<sup>100</sup>Gentry comments that Abraham “intercedes as a priest for the nations on the basis of God’s own character” (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 283), but significantly his international prayer is not for all people without exception, it is for “the righteous ones” who are also related to him.

<sup>101</sup>The texture of this passage and its NT usage is thick. In his willingness to live in Sodom and Gomorrah and his suggested offering to give his daughters to the wicked men of the city (Gen 19:8), Lot’s righteousness is suspect. In this way, Ken Mathews is right that Lot’s deliverance is not based on his righteousness (*Genesis 11:27-50:26*, NAC, vol. 1B [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005], 243). Yet, inspired Scripture judges him “righteous” (2 Pet 2:7), and his deliverance from destruction on the basis of Abraham’s prayer seems to put him on the righteous side of the ledger. The complexity of Lot’s righteousness is heightened by the relationship of his deliverance and Abraham’s prayer, which is made explicit in Gen 19:29. Gordon J. Wenham appropriately comments, “Lot was not saved on his own merits but through Abraham’s intercession” (*Genesis 16-50*, WBC, vol. 2 [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994], 59).

<sup>102</sup>Gen 19:29 reads, “So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.” This summary statement explains that Lot is preserved for Abraham’s sake; Abraham is “remembered” and Lot is spared. Harkening back to the promise of Gen 12:3, Lot’s “blessing” is mediated through the man Abraham and his prayers. (Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 158-59; John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called*

ministry, his intercession is both limited in scope and effectiveness.<sup>103</sup> This strongly typifies the kind of priestly intercession that Christ himself will have (John 17:9; Heb 5:7; 7:25).

Fifth, between the two episodes with Lot, the reader of Genesis observes two distinct but related covenantal ceremonies in Genesis 15 and 17.<sup>104</sup> Related to Abraham's priestly ministry, it is worth noting two things about Abraham's covenant mediation. First, in Genesis 15, Abraham is observed preparing the sacrifices and guarding the holy place of God—the place where God's presence would soon pass. In these twin functions—especially in his driving away the carrion-eating birds of prey<sup>105</sup>—he is acting out the duties that would later be given to the Levitical priests.<sup>106</sup> Second, as an obedient priest who carries out the duty of circumcision, he is marking out the people who would receive his blessing, and by extension establishing a boundary between God's people and the nations.<sup>107</sup> In fact, Gentry goes as far as to say, “Positively, circumcision symbolised complete devotion to the service

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*Genesis*, vol. 1, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, trans. John King [Edinburgh: 1843; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005], 516-17).

<sup>103</sup>On the efficacy of Abraham's prayer for the “city” (18:24), Sailhamer rightly observes that the “little city of Zoar was spared on Lot's behalf” and in accordance with Abraham's prayers (*Genesis*, 152-53, 156-57).

<sup>104</sup>Space does not permit a full discussion of Gen 15 and 17 and their various interpretations. Biblical scholars like Williamson and Hahn have argued for two divergent covenants (respectively, *Sealed with an Oath*, 77-93; *Kinship by Covenant*, 101-35). While these authors make some compelling arguments, this dissertation stands with the work of Alexander (“Abraham Re-Assessed Theologically,” 7-28), and Gentry and Wellum (*Kingship through Covenant*, 231-99), who argue for a singular covenant with Abraham that is developed over time and sealed with an oath in Gen 22.

<sup>105</sup>Ken Mathews comments, “The appearance of Abram as defender of the animal portions may refer to his obedient piety that confirmed his loyalty and ensured Israel's future (e.g., 22:16-18) or his intercessory function as prophet (e.g., 18:16-33; 20:7, 17)” (*Genesis 11:27-50:26*, 172). While Mathews posits a prophetic function to Abraham's ‘defending’ the animal pieces, it is just as likely, if not more fitting, for him to function as a priest because the animals “are the standard types of sacrificial animal” and frequently represent priests in Israel (Gordon J. Wenham, “The Symbolism of the Animal Rite in Genesis 15: A Response to G. F. Hasel, *JSOT* 19 [1981]: 61-78,” *JSOT* 22 [1982]: 135; Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966], 53-57).

<sup>106</sup>Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, 172-73.

<sup>107</sup>Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, NCBC (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 169-70.

of God as a priesthood. The covenant sign underlines Abraham's Adamic role as a priest in his calling to bring blessing to the nations."<sup>108</sup> Of course, for Abraham at the time, this included Israel's son according to the flesh (Ishmael), but the principle stands: Those who are in covenant with Abraham would be blessed,<sup>109</sup> but those who broke the covenant (as many in Israel would do) or those who rejected the covenant through non-circumcision (as Ishmael's children would do) would be cursed.<sup>110</sup> In circumcision then, Abraham leads his family to be in covenant with God, a task that Levites would later perform in order to keep covenant with God (Lev 12:3).

**Genesis 22: A priestly offering.** Turning from a general survey of Abraham's priestly duties to the high point of his life and service, we examine Genesis 22.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 275.

<sup>109</sup>As Dumbrell observes, Abraham "becomes the mediator of blessing for mankind" (*Creation and Covenant*, 68). It will have to be determined how God's gracious blessing to Abraham is transferred to "all the families of the earth," but at this point is worth noting that covenantal blessings are mediated by a priest.

<sup>110</sup>Priestly themes are evident in the Abrahamic Covenant as well. In Gen 17:1, YHWH states, "I am God Almighty, walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." On the first clause of this statement, Gentry observes how the command to "walk before me" means that Abraham is to serve as God's "emissary or diplomatic representative," and that this command "correlates directly with the command in 12:3 to be a blessing to the nations" (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 260-61). All together, even though Gentry does not make the connection, God's commission to walk before him fits the role of a priest (see 1 Sam 2:28, 30, 35), as does the calling to be a blessing to others (Num 6:22-26). Moreover, circumcision, which is issued in Gen 17 as the sign of the covenant, has been shown by John Meade to be a reminder to Abraham and his offspring of their priestly duties ("The Meaning of Circumcision in Israel: A Proposal for a Transfer of Rite from Egypt to Israel," *Adorare Mente* 1 [2008]: 14-29; cited in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingship through Covenant*, 273). Meade writes, "Only the priests were obligated to be circumcised in Egypt, but in Israel every male was to be circumcised on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12), signifying that Abraham's family consists of priests. Later in the story Israel is called a *kingdom of priests* and a holy nation (Ex. 19:6). The phrase "holy nation" also means consecrated to God or belonging to God and would complement the meaning of kingdom of priests. As a kingdom of priests, circumcision is the appropriate sign for the people of Israel, for it will remind every male Israelite that he is a priest, specially consecrated to Yahweh and his service" (*Kingship through Covenant*, 273). All in all, even if some of the finer details are in question, it is clear that Abraham's covenant mediation is that of a priest.

<sup>111</sup>Many have bound themselves in an exegetical thicket, because they like Origen have sought to find a "hidden treasure" in every detail of the account (Mark Sheridan, ed., *Genesis 12-50*, ACCS, vol. 2 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002], 101). While this passage is pregnant with types and shadows related to Christ and the gospel (Gal 3:8), the method taken here will follow that propounded in chap. 2—seeking

Theologically pregnant, this passage has been mined for various concepts and terms in biblical theology,<sup>112</sup> but it has dealt little with the idea of Abraham's priestly service.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, recalling what has been argued thus far, along with the priestly themes of worship, sacrifice, covenant, and blessing that arise from the text itself (22:1-19), there is strong evidence for understanding Abraham's actions as priestly. Consider four lines of evidence, which make up the sixth and final argument for Abraham's priestly *Vorbild*.

First, the location of the sacrifice is clearly associated with priestly sacrifices (vv. 2, 14). The Chronicler indicates that Solomon's temple was built on Mount Moriah (2 Chr 3:1), the same place where David purchased the threshing floor from Araunah (2 Sam 24:18-25). The sacral location of Abraham's/David's/Solomon's altar not only prefigures the location of Christ's own sacrifice, but if "Salem" in Genesis 14:18 is really Jerusalem, as Psalm 76:2 suggests,<sup>114</sup> then Abraham would be returning to the dwelling place of Melchizedek in order to carry out a priestly duty of the greatest magnitude. All in all, Abraham's sacrifice establishes the location for the temple where priests would substitute

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scriptural evidence at the textual, epochal, and canonical levels. For a history of interpretation on Gen 22, with an extensive bibliography, see E. D. Noort and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002).

<sup>112</sup>So laden with theological freight, Sidney Greidanus uses Gen 22 as a single example where all seven of his hermeneutical methods of moving from OT to NT can be found (*Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 313-14).

<sup>113</sup>One fruitful exception is the article by S. D. Walters, "Wood, Sand and Stars: Structure and Theology in Genesis 22:1-19," *TJT* 3 (1987): 301-30. Dempster also observes, "[Genesis 22] points forward as well as backward. For it contains very specific terminology and symbolism that are used later in the canon. . . . It as if [*sic*] the Day of Atonement institutionalizes for the public community this private experience of Abraham and Isaac" (*Dominion and Dynasty*, 85).

<sup>114</sup>"'Salem' is an ancient poetic name for Jerusalem" (Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, WBC, vol. 20 [Dallas: Word, 1990], 261; cf. Jo Bailey Wells, *God's Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology* [Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], 102-03).

lambs for the children of Israel and where Christ himself lay down his life for his sheep (John 10:11-18, 26).<sup>115</sup>

Second, the language of Genesis 22 suggests a priestly theme.<sup>116</sup> For instance, Abraham indicates that his journey to the mountain of the Lord would result in “worship.”<sup>117</sup> Likewise, six times Moses uses the word *olah* (vv. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 13) to speak of Isaac’s sacrifice. In Genesis, this term is only used of Noah’s offering (8:20), before it is uniformly used in Exodus-Deuteronomy to describe various kinds of “burnt offerings.”<sup>118</sup> Moreover, YHWH’s “test” of Abraham’s “fear” of God adumbrates Sinai,<sup>119</sup> which in turn became the pattern for the tabernacle service. Thus, the language of Genesis 22 connotes priestly activity.

Third, the sacrificial nature of Abraham’s obedience is unmistakably that of a priest. This is evident in Abraham’s obedience to the word of the Lord.<sup>120</sup> He does not sacrifice his son as a father, but in obedience to God, he raises the knife as a God-appointed

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<sup>115</sup>Walters goes further, suggesting that Gen 22 is an “aetiology” for the “entire cultic economy” (“Wood, Sand, and Stars,” 321).

<sup>116</sup>R. W. L. Moberly, “Christ as the Key to Scripture: Genesis 22 Reconsidered,” in *He Swore an Oath*, 154-61. More specifically, Walters argues on the basis of language that Gen 22 is “cultic” in nature (“Wood, Sand, and Stars,” 317).

<sup>117</sup>On the cultic significance of “worship” (*hwh*), see Terence E. Fretheim, “*Hwh*,” in *NIDOTTE*, 2:42-44.

<sup>118</sup>Highlighting the continuity (and discontinuity) between the patriarchal and Levitical sacrifices, Averbeck comments, “The same external worship system to which the Israelite people were already accustomed before Sinai was tailored to fit into the tabernacle system, where, however the key features of the rituals could be performed only by the Aaronic priests, not the offerers themselves” (“*Olah*,” in *NIDOTTE*, 3:408).

<sup>119</sup>Moberly comments that “the two primary words for interpreting the story are ‘test’ in 22:1, . . . and ‘fear’ in 22:12.” He continues by noting a “conceptual linkage” between these terms (Deut 5:29; Job 1:1; 28:28), and that the “specific juxtaposition of ‘test’ and ‘fear’ comes in only one other passage, Exodus 20:20, in which Moses explains to Israel the purpose of God giving to Israel the Ten Commandments, the heart of Torah” (“Christ as the Key to Scripture,” 155).

<sup>120</sup>Derek Tidball, *The Message of the Cross*, BST (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 39-41.

priest.<sup>121</sup> That Abraham functions as a priest is evident from a comparative reading of Deuteronomy 33:9 which could easily be applied to Abraham: “He disowned his brothers and ignored his children. For [he] observed your word and kept your covenant.”<sup>122</sup> The Levites were awarded the status of God’s chosen priests because of their allegiance to God *against* their kinsman, and such is the case with Abraham. And this feature of Abraham’s priesthood is supported by the more obvious reality, that Abraham offered the God-provided lamb instead. Another indication of God’s particular favor of the promised seed; YHWH did not provide a lamb for Ishmael, only Isaac.

More theological weight could be put on this point: Just as David’s sacrifice at Araunah’s threshing floor brought to an end God’s judgment on Israel and Solomon’s temple became the place where *Yom Kippur* enabled God to dwell in Canaan, here *in utero*, the nation of Israel (i.e., Isaac), not Edom (i.e., Esau), was ransomed through the sacrifice of a divinely provided lamb (cf. Rom 9:6-13; Gal 4:21-31).<sup>123</sup> In this way, the typology of the *Akedah* is enriched by an Abraham-Christ typology.<sup>124</sup> Without denying the presence of an

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<sup>121</sup>Affirming the divine nature of this strange command, Wenham following Delitzsch suggests, “In the first half of the story where God is acting in a strange, remote, and inexplicable way, he is called *elohim* [vv. 1, 3, 8], but when he is revealed as savior and renews the covenant promises, his personal name, ‘the LORD,’ is appropriate and reintroduced [v. 11]” (Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 103).

<sup>122</sup>Merrill suggests that the Levitical loyalty foreshadows the call Jesus has on his later disciples (*Deuteronomy*, 439). Indeed, Jesus’ imperative to let the “dead bury their dead” (Matt 8:22) may carry an allusion to the priestly command to separate themselves from the dead (see Lev 21:1-2, 11)

<sup>123</sup>In Gen 22:2, Isaac is described as the “beloved” and “only son” of Abraham. Both of these descriptions are also applied to Israel—God’s chosen nation (Exod 4:21-23; Hos 11:1ff.; Jer 31:7-9). Jon Levenson has demonstrated the intertextual connections between Isaac as a beloved son and Israel, God’s beloved son (*The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993], 36-42). The theological significance in this observation is profound: The lamb provided by God substituted for Isaac alone, not Ishmael (ibid., 213). This typifies a particular redemption of God’s beloved (Eph 1:3-7).

<sup>124</sup>An Abraham-Christ typology is not unprecedented (see Moberly, “Christ as the Key to Scripture,” 166-73). Moberly rightly sees the twin advantages of an Abraham-Christ typology: (1) It avoids the speculative readings of the *Akedah*, which focus on Abraham’s “inner anguish” (ibid., 171), and (2) “It ensures that the typology focuses on the genuine existential issues present in the biblical text” (ibid., 168).



Isaac typology or the divinely-provided lamb prefiguring Christ,<sup>125</sup> I am arguing that Abraham's obedience typifies Christ's priestly service. Like Abraham, Christ ascends the mount in perfect obedience to the Father's will; as the Lord incarnate, he provides the unblemished lamb (Heb 10:5-10). Through his priestly ministry he "brings many sons to glory," sons of Abraham raised to life and faith by his unswerving obedience (Heb 2:9-16; 3:1-6; 12:1-3).<sup>126</sup>

Fourth and last, the scope of the sacrifice is particular and effective (v. 13). It is conceivable that familiarity with this story hides the efficacious nature of sacrifice. Verse 13 records, "And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering *instead of his son.*" In this act, the life of Isaac was not simply given back. It was ransomed. The lamb was clearly a substitute, and he was only a substitute for "his only son" (vv. 1, 13). And if only in the flesh, the sacrifice was effective to spare the life of his son. As with the firstborn sons in Exodus 12 and Numbers 3, the right to live was gained through blood, and that by the sacrifice of an animal. To borrow Sidney Greidanus's terminology, a "longitudinal theme" is clearly perceived in Genesis 22, moving "from the lamb slain as a substitute offering for Isaac to the Passover lambs slain annually instead of firstborn sons, to the lambs slain daily at the temple for Israel, to Jesus Christ slain 'once for all' (Heb 10) for his people."<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, 300-06; Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 64.

<sup>126</sup>Nichols, *Covenant Theology*, 193. The continuity between Abraham in Heb 11:8-19 and Christ in Heb 12:1-3 adds further support to this reading, that Christ's priestly obedience secured the blessings of God for his offspring (William Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, WBC, vol. 47B [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000], 406-15; cf. Graham A. Cole, *God the Peacemaker: How Atonement Brings Shalom*, NSBT [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009], 103-19).

<sup>127</sup>Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 314.

In other words, *because* Abraham obeyed God’s voice and sacrificed his own son, the patriarch and all his offspring would be blessed. To ears trained to repulse synergism and works-based righteousness, this causal notion of Abraham *earning* God’s blessing sounds wrong-headed, if not heterodox. Yet, before passing judgment, read Genesis 22:15-18.

And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Coming at the end of the covenantal narrative of Abraham, Genesis 22:15-18 forms a “frame or *inclusio* with Abraham’s call in 12:1-3.”<sup>128</sup> Looking back at Abraham’s obedience, it reiterates God’s blessing with greater strength than before.<sup>129</sup> In this way it unifies and summarizes all that has been said,<sup>130</sup> but it also raises the certitude of the promise: “All that was promised conditionally in 12:1-3 is now guaranteed by divine oath.”<sup>131</sup> Stressing the importance of this passage, Moberly asserts, “In context, vv. 15-18

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<sup>128</sup>Alexander, “Abraham Reassessed Theologically,” 18. For a defense of these verses as original to Moses, see Victor Hamilton, *Genesis 18-50*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 114-15.

<sup>129</sup>While God had promised blessing before, now he says he gives a more sure promise, “I will *surely* bless you and I will *surely* multiply your offspring” (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 285). Likewise, phrases illustrating the multiplication of Abraham’s seed are reused (15:5) or improved (13:16) (cf. R. W. L. Moberly, “The Earliest Commentary on the *Akedah*,” *VT* 38 (1988): 317-18). Furthermore, general promises of a land and kings (Gen 12:1, 7; 13:15-17; 15:7-8; 17:8 and Gen 17:6, 16), have been intensified by the promise that “your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies.” Gordon J. Wenham notes how this “novelty” is “a more realistic formulation of the promise of the land than the earlier promises” (*Genesis 16-50*, WBC, vol. 2 [Dallas: Word, 1994], 112).

<sup>130</sup>Against Williamson, who sees two covenants with Abraham (*Sealed with an Oath*, 84-91), the summarizing effect of Gen 22:15-18 makes a strong case for reading the Abrahamic covenant as one unified whole (Moberly, “The Earliest Commentary on the *Akedah*,” 313-15; cf. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 286).

<sup>131</sup>Alexander, “Abraham Reassessed Theologically,” 18. More diachronically, Gentry writes, “God affirms his promises given in Genesis 12, solemnized by covenant in Genesis 15, given in covenant confirmation in Genesis 17 and also mentioned in Genesis 18:19, by a mighty oath . . . the strongest statement of a guarantee by God” (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 285).

are clearly drawing out the implications of what has preceded—‘because you have done this . . .’<sup>132</sup> Altogether, Abraham’s obedience elicits the sworn oath of God, which strengthens the earlier promise in Genesis 15.<sup>133</sup> But how?

This is where theologians and commentators disagree. On the one hand, reformers like John Calvin want to make sure no element of works is confused with God’s promise.<sup>134</sup> And more recently, Michael Horton, following Delbert Hillers,<sup>135</sup> argues that the Abrahamic covenant is only “unilateral and utterly promissory”<sup>136</sup> and therefore free from any conditions. Such theological readings fail to do justice to the text of Scripture.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>132</sup>R. W. L. Moberly, “The Earliest Commentary on the *Akedah*,” 311-14. Following Moberly, Victor Hamilton denies a causal reading of *ki* in v. 17 (“because”), but ends up supporting the view that “the promises . . . shall be fulfilled *because* Abraham has done the appropriate thing” (*Genesis 18-50*, 116).

<sup>133</sup>Keith N. Grüneberg, *Abraham, Blessing, and the Nations: A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in Its Narrative Context* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 222-35; cf. Gordon L. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage Developed from the Perspective of Malachi* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 186-87.

<sup>134</sup>For instance, Calvin rescues Gen 22 from Romish error, when he comments, “Therefore, in order that the truth of God, founded upon his gratuitous kindness, may stand firm, we must of necessity conclude, that what is freely given, is yet called the reward of works” (*Genesis*, 1:572).

<sup>135</sup>It is significant that Delbert Hillers, upon whom Horton relies heavily (*God of Promise*, 35-76), never considers Gen 22:15-18 and dismisses the conditional statement of Gen 17:1 with an unintelligible appeal to “J” and “P” (*Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969], 104).

<sup>136</sup>Horton, *God of Promise*, 50. Nichols (*Covenant Theology*, 178-79) also moves from Gen 22:18 to the canonical fulfillment in Christ, without doing justice to the textual horizon or the causal relationship between Abraham’s obedience and blessing (22:16, 18; 26:3). This premature move to the covenant of grace is what leads Dumbrell to say of covenant theologians, “They do not take sufficient account of *precise* biblical content” (*Creation and Covenant*, 46; cf. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 56-80).

<sup>137</sup>This inattention to the textual horizon is the underlying biblical-theological premise of Gentry and Wellum, who assert that Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology have both missed the mark because both have failed to see the typological structures of the land promises (Dispensationalism) and the seed promises (Covenant Theology) (*Kingdom through Covenant*, esp. 39-80). See also, John G. Reisinger, *Abraham’s Four Seeds: A Biblical Examination of the Presuppositions of Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism* (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media), esp. 1-9.

**Progressive covenantalism.** It is worth noting that when Horton comments on Genesis 22:15-18, he rightly discerns the typological nature of the event.<sup>138</sup> He quotes Meredith Kline, who states, “God was pleased to constitute Abraham’s exemplary works as the *meritorious ground for granting to Israel after the flesh* the distinctive role of being formed as the typological kingdom, the matrix from which Christ should come.”<sup>139</sup> Kline’s comment requires reflection. It supports the view that the Abrahamic covenant not only depends on God’s faithfulness, but also on a “priestly ministry of sacrifice.”<sup>140</sup> As the priestly mediator of this covenant, Abraham receives God’s blessing for his offspring “because . . . [he] did not withhold [his] son” (Gen 22:16).<sup>141</sup> However, Abraham’s faithfulness to God’s command was not enough to merit the universal blessings that God promised him (12:1-3, 22:15-18). A greater priestly mediator would be needed to “merit” the greater, Spiritual blessings which Abraham’s covenant foreshadowed. This antitype was Jesus Christ, Abraham’s true seed (Gal 3:16). Because Christ has come and fulfilled all that Genesis 22 typifies—the priestly Abraham, the beloved son, and the substitutionary lamb—he is able to give the Spirit freely to Jew and Gentile (Gal 3:26-29).<sup>142</sup> Therefore, generally speaking, we can agree with Horton and Kline about the typological nature of Genesis 22. However, when we dig deeper to see what they mean by typology, as it relates to Genesis 22 and their covenantal system, problems arise.

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<sup>138</sup>Horton, *God of Promise*, 45.

<sup>139</sup>Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 325.

<sup>140</sup>This point is also elucidated by Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 326.

<sup>141</sup>There is complexity in the way Scripture speaks of Abraham’s offspring. God’s favor upon Abraham has historical benefits for his physical offspring. Yet, any benefit that Ishmael received pales in comparison to the salvific blessings that Isaac received. The same is true for Abraham’s spiritual offspring, all those who by faith are united to Christ, Abraham’s true seed (Gal 3:16, 26-29). For discussion of these redemptive-historical differences, see Reisinger, *Abraham’s Four Seeds*, 11-21.

While Horton can speak of Christ, the antitype of Abraham, as the one “who would merit by his obedience the reward of everlasting life that this old covenant economy foreshadowed,”<sup>143</sup> he denies the same meritorious reality to the type itself—albeit a typological reality (i.e., life in the Promised Land). In other words, he makes Abraham's obedience nothing and something at the same time. In Genesis 22 it is merely an instrument by which blessings are passed on—though he never says which blessings. And then as it relates to Galatians 3-4, Abraham's obedience is something—the type which Christ fulfills.

This equivocation goes against the *Vorbild-Nachbild* pattern, which Davidson has demonstrated is an essential component of biblical typology.<sup>144</sup> In other words, because Horton reads Genesis 12-22 through the lens of one unified, unconditional “covenant of grace,” he fails to see how Abraham, as the historical *Vorbild*, merits the national blessings for Israel, in a way that typifies the greater meritorious work of Jesus, who is the eschatological *Nachbild*.<sup>145</sup> The end result for Horton does not adversely affect his monergistic view of salvation, but it radically misconstrues his view of the covenant and its membership.<sup>146</sup>

Approaching the new covenant, Horton maintains a mixed community of elect and non-elect because he does not clearly make a distinction between the Abrahamic Covenant, a

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<sup>142</sup>Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*, 200-19.

<sup>143</sup>Horton, *God of Promise*, 45.

<sup>144</sup>Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 115-32.

<sup>145</sup>For further articulation of the way in which the blessings of Abraham find fulfillment in multiple ‘seeds,’ see Reisinger, *Abraham's Four Seeds*, 23-81.

<sup>146</sup>For a critique of Horton's view of the covenant community, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 56-77, 683-703.

covenant according to the flesh, and the new covenant, a covenant according to the Spirit.<sup>147</sup> As it relates to the atonement, Horton's covenantal system, with its errant typology, will actually result in a kind of indefinite atonement—i.e., Christ dying for the church, comprised of elect and non-elect members of the new covenant community. Ironically, this is the problem that Wellum points out against modified Calvinists, when he states that “Scripture not only denies this ‘mixed’ understanding of the subjects of the new covenant, it also strongly affirms that our Lord, as the *greater* priest, does not fail to apply his work to *all* those in that covenant. In the end, general atonement advocates have to redefine the people of the new covenant.”<sup>148</sup>

The same is true with Reformed theologians like Horton who argue that there is a difference between Christ's bride (visible church) and his wife (invisible church).<sup>149</sup> Accordingly, the effect of the atonement with its corollary blessings must be subdivided between the visible and invisible church. In this way, the atonement is limited but not definite. Christ dies for the church, but because the church (i.e., the covenant community) includes the non-elect, the efficacy of the atonement is compromised and the scope of the atonement is wider than the eschatological gathering of the saints (Heb 12:23). This problem will be developed further in later chapters, but for now it is worth noticing that the origin of the problem is found in a typological misunderstanding of the Abrahamic Covenant.

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<sup>147</sup>Kline's quotation does make that distinction (between flesh and Spirit), but this is only to show the inconsistency in his Horton's system: Horton depends on Kline, but does not retain the typological differences (*God of Promise*, 77-111).

<sup>148</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 682.

<sup>149</sup>Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 726-27.

Putting this theological excursus aside, Genesis 22:15-18 needs to be read “on its own terms,” without superimposing a “subsequent theological debate.”<sup>150</sup> With that said, when read as a unified whole, Genesis 12-22 does not advocate merit-based salvation.<sup>151</sup> Rather, in accordance with the whole of Scripture, it teaches how God’s blessings, freely promised, can only be received and enjoyed by God’s covenant people when a priestly mediator of the covenant provides atonement for the people whom he represents—which is what Abraham’s service at the Mountain of God typifies.<sup>152</sup>

If one remembers that Genesis 22 summarizes all that has been revealed to Abraham, then it is possible to see how the events (vv. 1-14) and commentary (vv. 15-18) of Genesis 22 embrace both the unilateral promise of God to bless Abraham in Genesis 15 and the explicit call to walk blameless before God in Genesis 17.<sup>153</sup> If disregarded, this would leave Abraham’s children “cut off” from blessing. Moses felt the wrath of God on this point. *Before receiving the law*, God nearly ended his life because his children had failed to be circumcised (Exod 4:24-26)—a stipulation of the “gracious” Abrahamic Covenant, not the Sinai Covenant! Therefore, Genesis 22:15-18 does not introduce the tension; it resolves the

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<sup>150</sup>Moberly, “The Earliest Commentary on the Akedah,” 319.

<sup>151</sup>Iain M. Duguid, *Living in the Gap between Promise and Reality: The Gospel According to Abraham* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1999), 134-37.

<sup>152</sup>Hafemann, *The God of Promise and the Life of Faith*, 70. At this point, it is important to note that the Abrahamic Covenant is not just one more administration within the covenant of grace. As a covenant, it is typological. It anticipates and prepares the way for the new covenant, which Christ himself—as the son of Abraham (Matt 1:1; Gal 3:16)—will fulfill when he perfectly obeys the Father and dies in the place of God’s elect (read: beloved sons). In this way, just like Abraham’s priestly obedience, Christ’s priestly work “obtained the promise” and secured the oath of God (Heb 6:13-20).

<sup>153</sup>Hafemann strikes the right balance of promise and condition in his discussion of Abraham’s covenant, saying, “The covenant promises . . . are conditional upon his faith, expressed in continuing obedience to God’s call. But as the narrative of Abram’s life makes clear, God will give what he demands by continuing to reveal his presence to Abram and by doing whatever else it takes to preserve Abram’s confidence in his promises” (*The God of Promise and the Life of Faith*, 66-74).

tension: “Abraham’s obedience has been incorporated into the divine promise,” in a way analogous to intercessory prayer.<sup>154</sup> Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac, followed by the real sacrifice of the provided lamb, secures the oath of God, but in so doing, Abraham typifies the priestly work of his true seed, Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16).

**Genesis 22: An atoning sacrifice.** As a priestly mediator of the covenant, Abraham is a conduit of blessing for his innumerable offspring.<sup>155</sup> However, because of their sin and God’s claim upon their lives, they cannot receive the blessings of God without atonement. Strangely, in light of Abraham’s two deceitful episodes with Abimelech (12:10-20; 20:1-18), there has yet to be any mention of sin or judgment on Abraham and his family. However, in Genesis 22 that all changes. In order for Abraham’s seed to be blessed, there would need to be an atoning sacrifice for sin. God was not asking Abraham to murder Isaac. As Tim Keller has observed, “[God] was calling in Abraham’s debt.”<sup>156</sup> Isaac was “an extension of his father,”<sup>157</sup> and thus he “was going to die for the sins of the family.”<sup>158</sup> This was Abraham’s test of faith: How could his son receive the divine blessing, now that God demanded justice for sin? Abraham’s answer is recorded in Hebrews 11 where the inspired writer relates how Abraham reckoned that God could raise Isaac from the dead (v. 19).

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<sup>154</sup>Moberly, “The Earliest Commentary on the Akedah,” 321. Moberly compares Abraham on Moriah to Moses on Sinai, and without using the exact term, he depicts them as priestly mediators. Through their representative work before God, they obtain the blessing of God’s covenant people. In this way, Abraham prefigures Jesus Christ, the greater high priest whose intercession is clearly delimited (John 17:9).

<sup>155</sup>“Because of his faithfulness, Abraham would have not merely one descendent but many, and they would possess a land of their own, in spite of their enemies” (Duguid, *Living in the Gap*, 136).

<sup>156</sup>Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope That Matters* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2009), 10.

<sup>157</sup>Tidball, *The Message of the Cross*, 39.

<sup>158</sup>Keller, *Counterfeit Gods*, 10.



Abraham took his offering to Mount Moriah in order to meet God. It was in this priestly act that God—at the right time (cf. Gal 4:4)—provided the sacrificial ram “instead of his son” (Gen 22:13).<sup>159</sup> Thus, in this dramatic event, God through Abraham’s priesthood confirmed his covenant by the means of a substitutionary death and a resurrection of the firstborn. In type and shadow, God preached the gospel to Abraham and his children.<sup>160</sup>

Confirmation of this reading is found in Galatians 3:8 where Paul reflecting on the offspring of Abraham says, “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’” There are at least four vital observations to see how the whole of Genesis 22 preached the gospel beforehand. First, Galatians 3:8 has the whole narrative of Genesis 12-22 in view. Scott Hahn has rightly articulated that the quotation is a conflation of Genesis 12:3 and 22:18, and thus puts the whole narrative together.<sup>161</sup> Second, the “gospel,” as Paul defines it (cf. Rom 1:1-7; 1 Cor 15:3-8) would be incomplete without death *and* resurrection. Therefore when speaking of the “gospel to Abraham,” it must be citing the provision of a substitute (Gen 22:13-14) *and* the return of Isaac from the altar.<sup>162</sup> Third, the canonical witness of Scripture conceives of Isaac’s aborted sacrifice as a death and resurrection (Heb 11:19), yet the operating sacrifice in Genesis 22 is not Isaac’s but the animal’s. It is the substitute provided by God and sacrificed by Abraham. It is Abraham’s

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<sup>159</sup>The possessive in Gen 22:13 denotes Abraham, but Isaac was also YHWH’s son (cf. Exod 4:23; Hos 11:1).

<sup>160</sup>Duguid, on the basis of John 8:56, goes so far as to say that “Abraham had a unique insight into the way of salvation that was to be established through Jesus Christ” (*Living in the Gap*, 134).

<sup>161</sup>Scott Hahn, “Covenant, Oath, and the Aqedah: *DIATHEKE* in Galatians 3:15-18,” *CBQ* 67 (2005): 93-95.

<sup>162</sup>Duguid, *Living in the Gap*, 129-39.

sacrifice that receives the curse of death, while the beloved son is given life and the sworn promise of blessing (Gal 3:13-14).<sup>163</sup> Fourth, Paul's reading of Genesis 22 is confirmed by Hebrews 6:13-20, which states that the God's promise was confirmed with an oath. Or to say it another way, just as in the Abrahamic covenant God made a promise that he then secured with an oath; so with the new covenant, God secured his promises with a priestly oath (cf. Ps 110:4). And in both cases, the sworn oath comes as a result of a priestly sacrifice.<sup>164</sup>

In history, Abraham's obedience secured the promise to his kin according to the flesh that they might have a place to dwell (Gen 26:3-5), or as Grüeneberg says, "Abraham's actions become a *further* grounding for the promise alongside God's free decision."<sup>165</sup> That is to say, Abraham's obedience did not provide an alternative ground for blessing. His faithful service, which I have argued is priestly, simply advanced the free decision of God to bless Abraham and his family. Moberly puts it succinctly, "A promise which was previously grounded solely in the will and purposes of Yahweh is transformed so that it is now grounded *both* in the will of Yahweh *and* in obedience of Abraham."<sup>166</sup>

Abraham's action did not change the mind of God through an act of merit, but like the Levitical sacrifices, which would propitiate God's anger, and Christ's own work of

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<sup>163</sup>It is not without importance that many Jewish and Christian commentators have made direct connection between Paul's quotation of Deut 21:23 in Gal 3:13 and the story of the *Akedah* (Hahn, "Covenant, Oath, and the Aqedah," 92-94).

<sup>164</sup>Anticipating the discussion of chap. 6, it is important to recognize that while God's sworn oath has its final sights on the international community of "all nations," the emphasis at this stage in Israel's history is on the particular prosperity of Israel. Grüeneberg explains, "Genesis 22:18 does not deny that the nations will gain blessing: by implication it affirms it. But its main thrust is to stress Israel's own prosperity" (*Abraham, Blessing, and the Nations*, 235). Grammatically then, the emphasis does not fall on the universal language of "all nations," but upon Israel's unique call to be the chosen people who bring blessings to the world (cf. Rom 9:4-5).

<sup>165</sup>Grüeneberg, *Abraham, Blessing, and the Nations*, 226. Emphasis mine.

<sup>166</sup>Moberly, "The Earliest Commentary on the Akedah," 320.

atonement at the mercy seat of God, God commissioned Abraham to offer a sacrifice that he himself would provide. Abraham's priestly obedience—which typified his later, greater offspring (singular)—ensured that his seed (plural) would enjoy the blessings of God. Thus, in typological fashion, what would later converge to bring salvation to the church was enacted in type and shadow on the temple mount centuries before Calvary. Collectively, Genesis 22 prefigures a perfect high priest, a willing son, and a spotless lamb. Taken together, they compose all the necessary provisions of the gospel, but significantly, Abraham, as the priestly mediator, takes the leading role in offering the sacrifice.

Finally, as it relates to the extent of the atonement, it is clear that the sacrificial lamb provided by God was intended to substitute for Isaac alone. Ishmael, who would become a mighty nation (21:13, 18), was “cast out” because he was not the son of promise. While still working with types, the structure of God's design is unmistakable: YHWH would provide a priest and a substitutionary sacrifice for his beloved children, but he would not do the same for all people.<sup>167</sup>

### Summary

Summarizing the observations related to Adam, Noah, and Abraham, it can be said that before the legislation of the priestly office in the Law, covenantal leadership included

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<sup>167</sup>Commenting on Gal 4:21-31, Ardel Caneday makes the typological connection “to correlate Gentile believers with Isaac as children of promise,” while “the Judaizers” who opposed God's children are identified “with Ishmael and . . . with Ishmael's persecution of Isaac.” He concludes that “Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac bear symbolic representation pointing to things greater than themselves because they are characters in the drama of the fulfillment of God's promise with a trajectory that spans Israel's history under the law until the fullness of time comes when Messiah, the Seed to whom the promises were spoken, is revealed” (“Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured: ‘Which Things Are Written Allegorically’ [Galatians 4:21-31],” *SBJT* 14 [2010]: 65). All in all, God's particular salvation of Isaac (Gen 22) is matched by his particular salvation of Israel (Deut 7:7-9), which is ultimately matched and improved by his effectual salvation of his children of promise (Gal 4:21-31).

priestly duties.<sup>168</sup> Sacrifice, intercession, and altar-building were just some of the priestly duties handled by the fathers and their firstborn sons. This familial setting for priestly service favors a particular scope of priesthood, rather than a general mediation, because in every situation the priest was also the father of the family to whom God had revealed himself.<sup>169</sup> Yet, the priestly ministrations of Adam, Noah, and Abraham are only sketches of what would be legislated in Exodus-Deuteronomy, and it is to the Levitical office of the priest that we must turn.

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<sup>168</sup>Michael D. Williams, *As Far as the Curse is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2005), 113. In fact, Davies makes the cogent point that God has a special relationship with Israel, “his treasured possession” (*segulla*), and that the priestly role they have is reserved for them only (*A Royal Priesthood*, 54-55).

<sup>169</sup>This line of thinking leads Hahn to find biblical warrant for the fathers in the Catholic church (Scott Hahn, *Many Are Called: Rediscovering the Glory of the Priesthood* [New York: Doubleday, 2010], esp. 39-49). But this goes a step too far. As with so many other theological aberrations, the error Hahn makes is to emphasize the continuity between the Patriarchs and today, without sufficient discontinuity determined by the eschatological fulfillment, teleological termination, and spiritual reconstitution of the priesthood under the new covenant.

## CHAPTER 4

### *KOHEN VICTOR, KOHEN TEACHER, AND KOHEN MEDIATOR: THE LEGISLATION OF THE PRIESTLY TYPE*

Priesthood, as a *formalized institution*, begins in Exodus.<sup>1</sup> As Davies has argued, the whole book has priestly themes, but Exodus 19:5-6 announces Israel's chosen position as YHWH's "treasured possession among all the peoples, . . . a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."<sup>2</sup> Only now, after the Exodus, at God's holy mountain, does God set forth his priestly instructions for the nation of his choosing.<sup>3</sup> At this point in the redemptive story, there is considerable reason to believe that all of Israel might participate in this kind of priestly ministry.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the stated purpose in Exodus 19 is that those redeemed by YHWH

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<sup>1</sup>Jo Bailey Wells, *God's Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 102-04; R. K. Duke, "Priests, Priesthood," in *DOTP*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 646-47.

<sup>2</sup>John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19:6* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 103ff.

<sup>3</sup>A noticeable lacuna in this dissertation is that of Moses himself. While Scripture only affixes "priest" to Moses' names in one place (Ps 99:6), Wells is right to speak of Moses as the "ultimate priest" and to associate his priestly service with that of Aaron (*God's Holy People*, 107, 111-12). Likewise, Davies observes, "Moses is clearly portrayed to some degree in priestly terms," but he prefers to consider his role as "*sui generis*" (*A Royal Priesthood*, 106). Accordingly, even as Moses takes on a variety of priestly functions (Exod 28:41; 30:30; 40:13) and is himself a Levite (6:14-20), the portrait of the priesthood in Exodus-Deuteronomy centers around Aaron and his sons (cf. Albert Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, trans. J. Bernard Orchard [Petersham, MA: St Bede's, 1986], 106-07). In this way, Moses takes the role of "priest-maker" more than a licensed priest (Wells, *God's Holy People*, 127). Therefore, as it relates to the legislation of the priesthood, this dissertation will focus on the Levitical priests. For a full description of Moses the priest, albeit with higher-critical presuppositions, see George Buchanan Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 194-210.

<sup>4</sup>While some have argued that Israel is a nation with a priestly class of leaders, Davies has proven that Israel as a nation is a priestly people. For a survey of interpretations, see Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 61-

and brought to the holy mountain (v. 4), those who are called his “treasured possession” (v. 5), will now serve as God’s chosen priests among all the nations.<sup>5</sup> However, it will soon become apparent that only one tribe will serve as priests (Exod 32:25-29).<sup>6</sup>

After God made covenant with Israel (Exod 19-24) and supplied Moses with a blueprint for the earthly tabernacle (Exod 25-27), Exodus introduces the Levitical priesthood. While the official installment of the priests is found after the tabernacle was completed (Lev 8-9), the mention of Aaron and his sons in Exodus 27:21 seems to indicate their office originated in conjunction with the tabernacle itself.<sup>7</sup> Significantly, Exodus and Leviticus stressed holiness for God’s priests.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, “even though the priesthood was hereditary the priest had to receive consecration and investiture” in order to carry out the duties in the most

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102. Also, Wells makes a strong case against the division of Levites and priests that has been the consensus among critical scholars since Wellhausen (*God’s Holy People*, 98-101, 115-19).

<sup>5</sup>Against the popular notion that Israel was chosen for the vocation of blessing the nations (cf. C. J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006], esp. 252-64), Davies suggests that God’s election of Israel *does not immediately* set them on a mission to reach the other nations (*A Royal Priesthood*, 94-98). Rather, they are first called by God to himself and separated from the other nations. Citing parallel references to Israel’s special position (Deut 7:6; 14:2; 1 Kgs 8:53; Amos 3:2), Davies declares that “Israel is . . . ‘a special treasure *in distinction* from all the nations” (ibid., 54). He explains, “There is a disjunction between the status of “all the earth” and that of Israel . . . Though both stand in some relation to Yhwh, they must stand in relation to Yhwh in contrasting ways” (ibid., 58). The difference between Davies and Wright will be revisited in chap. 6.

<sup>6</sup>“From the point of view of the text as it stands, Levi was originally a secular ‘tribe’ that was later set apart for sacred service” (Timothy Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 86-92). The point of departure for Levi among the other tribes comes in Exod 32 when “the Levites were chosen by Moses to execute the death sentence on 3,000 idolaters after the incident with the golden calf (Exod. 32:28)” (ibid., 87).

<sup>7</sup>R. K. Duke suggests that Aaron’s selection may yet precede this context, saying, “Exodus 24:1, 9 gives the impression that their ‘selection’ took place earlier, perhaps when ‘Aaron the Levite’ was chosen as a co-spokesperson with Moses (Exod 4:14)” (“Priests, Priesthood,” 647).

<sup>8</sup>Arguing from the whole of the Pentateuch, Wells explains that Israel’s call to be a “holy nation of priests” in Exod 19:5-6 is worked out in the specific details of the priests calling. As men separated unto holiness, they are to model for all of Israel the holiness of God and thus to lead the nation into greater holiness (*God’s Holy People*, 107-09).

holy place.<sup>9</sup> Thus, Exodus-Deuteronomy provides an inspired template for the office of the priesthood. While Adam, Noah, and Abraham performed priestly duties,<sup>10</sup> Moses legislates the priesthood with its duties and dangers. Theologically, the priestly duties will be determinative for Jesus' priesthood and the scope of the atonement.

In what follows, I will consider the threefold service of the priestly office; these will be denominated *Kohen Victor*, *Kohen Mediator*, and *Kohen Teacher*.<sup>11</sup> In his guarding the sanctuary of God (*Kohen Victor*), mediating the sacrifices of the covenant (*Kohen Mediator*), and teaching of the covenant (*Kohen Teacher*), Israelite priests achieved and maintained the purity of Israel. And there is no better place to see a summary of their priestly duties than in Moses' final blessing of Levi.<sup>12</sup> Set in a context where Moses blesses

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<sup>9</sup>Alois Stöger, "Priest(hood)," in *EBT* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1982), 702. At the same time, an "efficacious priesthood" depended on the gracious nature of the institution "as a gift from the Lord (Num 18:7)" (J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* [Grand Rapids: Academie, 1962], 374).

<sup>10</sup>Incidentally, Exodus presupposes a patriarchal form of priestly service. As R. K. Duke has observed, "The biblical portrait [in Exodus] presupposes a cultural background that from the beginning is familiar with priestly institutions. . . . Moreover, Exodus 19:20-24 gives the impression that some sort of priestly system of Yahweh worship existed among the Israelites" ("Priests, Priesthood," 646-47).

<sup>11</sup>Reformed theology since Calvin has regularly appealed to the *munus triplex* (prophet, priest, and king) to explain the mediatorial work of Christ (cf. John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960], 1:494-50; Heinrich Heppel, *Reformed Dogmatics: Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources*, trans. G. T. Thomson (London: George Allen, & Unwin, 1950), 448-87); cf. Robert Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement* [New York: T & T Clark, 2004], esp. 116-261). The argument espoused here does not overturn the idea of the *munus triplex*. Rather, it asserts that the three duties of Christ's priesthood overlap with these other recognized offices. In his rabbinic role, the priest becomes very similar to the prophet; indeed Ezekiel was both a prophet and priest. In his protective role, the priest becomes much like a king, which finds biblical support in multiple places (1 Sam 2:35; Ps 110; Zech 3). And of course, as a priest, Christ will offer sacrifice and intercede for his covenant people. All in all, the thesis advanced here complements the historical Reformed position that Christ is prophet, priest, and king, even as it gives greater attention to all the ways Scripture speaks of the priest.

<sup>12</sup>Since this dissertation assumes Mosaic authorship and an intelligible, chronological presentation of redemptive history in Scripture, the tribe of Levi is not set at odds with the priests (Wells, *God's Holy People*, 115-19). Rather, the Levites are a priestly tribe who has within their ranks various "grades" of holiness (Philip P. Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* [Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1992], 119-35).

each of the twelve tribes before his death, Deuteronomy 33:8-11 supplies the most comprehensive list of priestly duties in the OT. Moses records YHWH's words to Levi,

Give to Levi your Thummim, and your Urim to your godly one, whom you tested at Massah, with whom you quarreled at the waters of Meribah; who said of his father and mother, "I regard them not"; he disowned his brothers and ignored his children. For they observed your word and kept your covenant. They shall teach Jacob your rules and Israel your law; they shall put incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar. Bless, O LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands; crush the loins of his adversaries, of those who hate him, that they rise not again.

In these four verses, Moses provides a "spectrum" of the priestly duties. Divination (v. 8a), instruction (v. 10a), and ritual sacrifice (v. 10b) are explicitly mentioned. The priest's role as guardian is more implicit. Verse 9 refers back to incident with the Golden Calf (Exod 32).<sup>13</sup> There, Levi proved his loyalty to God and his Law. By refusing to regard his parents above YHWH and by "disowning his brothers and ignored his children," this tribe of future priests "observed [God's] word and kept [God's] covenant" (v. 9). Their willingness to shed blood for the sake of his holiness qualified them as priests and adumbrated a significant feature of their holy service—temple defense and spiritual warfare.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, as it will be evidenced below, the priests not only functioned as mediators for the people of Israel, they also served as guardians of God's holy place, covenantal teachers, and leaders in times of war.<sup>15</sup> In all of

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<sup>13</sup>Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 792.

<sup>14</sup>This list is supported by 1 Sam 2:28 and Ezek 45:4. The former lists the priestly duties as "going up to my altar," "burning incense," and "wearing an ephod" (i.e., divining God's will with the Urim and Thummim); the latter includes "ministry in the sanctuary," and "approaching the Lord to minister to him", as well as, working to keep the land of Israel holy. See also, Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 91-93, and Richard D. Nelson, who lists Lev 10:10-11; Deut 10:8-9; 1 Sam 2:28; and 1 Chr 23:13, to round out the "job description" of the priest (*Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993], 39).

<sup>15</sup>For a comprehensive list of priestly duties, see Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1961) 345-57; Terry J. Betts, "Ezekiel the Priest: A Custodian of Tôrâ" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002), 25-32; Richard Gamble, *The Whole Counsel of God: God's Mighty Acts in the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 444-45. Waltke's two-part definition of teaching and sacrificing is too narrow (*An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007], 460-61).



these ways, the priest was commissioned to maintain the purity and holiness of Israel.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, this was the essence of his office.<sup>17</sup>

The effect of the priest's ministry was the difference between life and death, blessing and curse. Success in these sacred duties preserved and promoted the favor of God in Israel, while negligence and disobedience brought death and defilement. In the Latter Prophets, Israel's priests are excoriated for failing to keep the law, but in the beginning, in the Pentateuch, there is an "idealized" vision of what the priests should be.

In terms of both canon and content, . . . what the Pentateuch says about priesthood is paradigmatic for understanding its meaning in theological terms. Other texts may provide older or later views concerning priests in Israel's history, but they do not necessarily contribute much to the theological picture.<sup>18</sup>

Largely agreeing with Wells' assessment, what follows is a reading of the Pentateuch that outlines the three most prominent aspects of the priestly ministry: guarding, sacrificing, and teaching.<sup>19</sup> In each section the typology of the priesthood will be observed, along with theological commentary that relates to the extent of the atonement. Clearly, the goal of this section is to examine the priestly *Vorbild* which Christ himself will later fulfill. While some attention will be given to later texts, these three aspects will focus on the typological presentations found in Exodus-Deuteronomy. Only then, will we turn toward the eschatological movement in the OT and NT.

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<sup>16</sup>Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 25-31.

<sup>17</sup>Wells, *God's Holy People*, 114.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>19</sup>For sake of space, divination will not be considered. It should be noted that as the eternal Son of God (John 1:1-18), Jesus perfectly knew and did the will of the Father (John 5:30; 10:30). The priests were also assigned the responsibility of judging. This will be addressed under the headings of *Kohen Victor*, when the priest engaged in spiritual warfare, and *Kohen Teacher*, when the priest taught the people about purity laws and made judgments about ritual purity (i.e., evaluating human leprosy and domestic cleanliness [Lev 11-15]).

### ***Kohen Victor: A Guardian of God’s Dwelling***

In *A Royal Priesthood*, Davies observes that the “priests are defined as ‘the ones who draw near to Yhwh’ (Exod 19:22), or [as] ‘those who approach Yhwh’ (Ezek 42:13; cf. 43:19; Lev 10:3).”<sup>20</sup> While “access” does not say everything about the priests, it does create a priestly responsibility to guard YHWH’s holiness. He continues,

A corollary right of access is that the privilege had to be guarded, and no unauthorized approach permitted or other infringement of the sanctity provisions countenanced. . . . With the Levites, the priests had the charge of all aspects of maintaining and guarding the holiness of the sanctuary (Num 1:53; 3:32; 18:5; 2 Kgs 12:11; Ezek 40:45; 44:15).<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, as guardians of God’s dwelling place, the priests were charged with defending the holy abode of YHWH.<sup>22</sup> In this way, the priestly duty included a defensive posture toward anyone who would attempt to enter God’s house in an improper manner.<sup>23</sup> This defensive posture goes back to Eden (Gen 2:15); it qualified the Levites for office (Deut 33:8-9); and ultimately, it became a distinguishing trait of the priests in Israel. It marked a predominant role in the priestly office—one that is often missed when Christ’s priesthood is considered. Yet, as it will be evidenced, the priestly *Vorbild* necessarily includes a defensive posture toward God’s holy abode and a righteous zeal against those who are unclean. In what follows, I will show how the priests functioned both as guardians in God’s presence and ambassadors of God’s holiness, as they participated in the holy warfare of Israel.

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<sup>20</sup>Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 162.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Duke, “Priests, Priesthood,” 651-52; Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 115-48; Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 17-53.

<sup>23</sup>More specifically, it was the Levites who guarded the outer courts (Num 3:5-10, 27ff; 18:1-7) and the sons of Aaron who ministered at the altar (Exod 29:44) and guarded the house of the Lord (cf. Num 18:7b). Jenson makes the distinction like this: “The Levites were to guard the sanctuary, while the priests protected the holy items inside” (Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 132).

## Temple Guardians and Spiritual Warriors

In the OT, there are a large number of passages that show priests defending God's holy place and God's people from his dangerous holiness.<sup>24</sup> For instance, in Numbers 3, the Levites are given the general responsibility of guarding the high priest (v. 7), the furnishings and people (v. 8), and their own priesthood (v. 10). Then, specific to each clan, the Gershonites, Kohathites, and Merarites are called to guard, respectively, the tent of meeting (vv. 21-26), the sanctuary (vv. 27-33), and the frames of the tabernacle (vv. 33-37). This is followed by the placement of the Levites in front of the sanctuary gate with the license to kill "any outsider who came near" (vv. 38-39). Guarding is a prevalent theme for the priests in Numbers.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, throughout the OT (2 Chr 35:9; 36:4; Ezra 10:5) and into the NT (Luke 22:4, 52; Acts 4:1; 5:24, 26) a "temple guard" is present.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to guarding the temple, the priests also engaged in the holy warfare of Israel. For instance, Deuteronomy 20:1-4 shows the priests rallying the troops before the men of Israel were sent into battle. Verse 2 shows the priest addressing Israel's soldiers as they "draw near for battle." While not taking up the sword himself, the priest reminds the men of God's presence on the battlefield (v. 4). He calls them to have courage and to fight for the

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<sup>24</sup>Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 92; Wells, *God's Holy People*, 114.

<sup>25</sup>For instance, see Num 1:53; 3:7, 8, 10, 25, 28, 31, 32, 36; 4:28; 8:26; 18:3, 4, 5, 7; 31:30, 47. This defensive posture of God's holy place is an outworking of the spatial gradation of God's holy abode (Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 107-14), which the priests and Levites were assigned to guard. For the definitive treatment on the priestly response to the "encroacher," see Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology* (Berkeley: University of California, 1970), 5-59. See also, Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 181-84.

<sup>26</sup>T. Nichol and J. W. D. H., "Captain," in *ISBE*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 1:612; cf. Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Service* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 61-62. Moreover, Second Temple Judaism is replete with images of a militaristic priest. For an entrée into this priestly-warrior motif, see Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," *JHSJ* 4 (2006): 155-75; idem, "The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7.13 as a Test Case," *SBLSP* (1997): 161-93.

Lord (v. 3). Likewise, if the “officers” in vv. 5-9 are Levites, as Block suggests (cf. 1 Chr 23:4; 2 Chr 19:11; 34:13),<sup>27</sup> then the whole pericope may speak of priestly leadership in the context of war.<sup>28</sup>

Likewise, Israel consulted the priests before deciding on their military strategy (Num 27:18-21; Jdg 20:26-28), and when they went into battle, the priests were present and active (Num 31:1-54). Overseeing the holy nature of the warfare, they reinforced Israel’s purity (v. 20), gave instruction concerning the plunder (vv. 21-24), received contributions for the Levites (v. 29-30, 47), made atonement for the warriors (v. 50), and brought the plundered gold to the tabernacle as a memorial to YHWH (v. 52-54). Likewise, they had the enduring responsibility to blow the silver trumpets (Num 10:1-10; cf. 1 Chr 15:24; 2 Chr 5:12; 13:12; 29:26).<sup>29</sup> Commenting on the use of the trumpets, Klingbeil states,

The purpose of the priestly blowing of the trumpet was either cultic or military. This military aspect of priestly is noteworthy. Their involvement in national war is unmistakable: priests accompany the Israelites in Jericho (Josh 6) and are also present in the wars against the Philistines (1 Sam 14:19, 36). David’s guerilla fighters are accompanied by Abiathar, the sole survivor of Saul’s attack against the priests of Nob (1 Sam 23:9; 30:7).<sup>30</sup>

The priests, therefore, are intimately involved in the warfare of Israel, as Nelson confirms:

In the days of the early monarchy and before, warfare was a religious activity and naturally involved the priests (Num 31:6). An important part of their role was to deliver

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<sup>27</sup>Block, *Deuteronomy*, 468-74.

<sup>28</sup>Finding corroboration in the NT, C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis argues that Jesus’ call to discipleship is a call to priestly warfare (“Jesus Inspects His Priestly War Party (Luke 14:25-35),” in *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of R. L. North*, ed. Steve Moyise [Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], 126-45).

<sup>29</sup>“In times of conflict, the priests blew the horns as a alarm either to the camp or to the army in battle (2 Chr 13:12). Along with the holy vessels, the priests led the army out to war with trumpets in order to give direction to the troops” (Betts, “Ezekiel the Priest,” 28).

<sup>30</sup>G. A. Klingbeil, “Priests and Levites,” in *DOTHB*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 813.

oracles, using an ephod, the ark, or the sacred lots, to direct the campaign (Num. 27:21; Judg. 20:27-28; 1 Sam. 14:18-19; 23:9-12; 30:7-8). Torah decisions might have to be made about booty or other matters (Num. 31:21-24). Deuteronomy 20:2-4 represents priests as delivering uplifting homilies to the troops. If the ark were taken into battle (Joshua 6; 1 Samuel 4; 2 Sam. 11:11), priests would be needed to attend to it. Because blowing trumpets was a ritual reserved for the priests (Num. 10:10; 1 Chron. 15:24; 2 Chron. 5:12; 29:26; Sir. 50:16), they also sounded trumpets in warfare. Trumpet blasts assembled and rallied the army and served as a token of war's sacral nature (Num. 10:1-9; Joshua 6; 2 Chron. 13:12, 14).<sup>31</sup>

Added to these historical features of the priest's in times of war, there is another facet to their ministry that helps explain their participation in holy war. Fletcher-Louis argues that the priest's ephod, his sash, pomegranates, golden bells,<sup>32</sup> and the splattered blood on the high priest garments contribute to the view that the priest is a "divine warrior."<sup>33</sup> While Fletcher-Louis's argumentation depends on the extra-biblical support of ANE traditions, his observations regarding Sinai and the tabernacle/temple are worth hearing. He writes,

Aaron is ordained at Mount Sinai and thenceforth he officiates in the Tabernacle as the people journey through the wilderness and enter the promised land. The nation is arraigned in a military formation and we are reminded of those biblical texts where the LORD comes up from Sinai and the region of Edom as a divine warrior surrounded by 'myriads of holy ones' (Deut 33:2-3; cf. Judg 5:4-5; Ps 68:8-9, 18). In particular, the ordination of Aaron in this narrative setting evokes the scene in Isaiah 63:1-6 where the divine warrior marches in great might from Edom stained with the blood of his enemies which has 'spattered' (*yez*) his crimson garments.<sup>34</sup>

What Fletcher-Louis observes concerning the blood-splattered garments of the priestly warrior anticipates the vision of Christ's priesthood in Revelation, and this provides an OT

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<sup>31</sup>Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 49; cf. Duke, "Priests, Priesthood," 654.

<sup>32</sup>Fletcher-Louis cites Josephus, "War of the Jews," in *The Complete Works of Josephus*, ed. William Whiston (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1981), 556; idem, "Antiquities of the Jews," 74.

<sup>33</sup>Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "God's Image, His Cosmic Temple, and the High Priest: Towards an Historical and Theological Account of the Incarnation," in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2004), 94-96.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 95. Jenson (*Graded Holiness*, 137-38) observes that the encampment of Israel, with the Levites guarding the tabernacle, has military significance.

backdrop for the vision of an exalted, militaristic Christ (Rev 1:12-16, 19:11-16).<sup>35</sup> Still, there is more evidence for the *Kohen Victor* aspect of the priesthood.

### **Azariah and Phinehas: Two Types of *Kohen Victor***

Going beyond the instructions of the Law, there are a few persons in Israel's history who adumbrate Christ as the *Kohen Victor*. Two of these deserve mention. First, Azariah's bold reproach of King Uzziah demonstrates the role that priests were to play in the temple (2 Chr 26:16-23).<sup>36</sup> When Uzziah unlawfully entered the temple to offer incense, Azariah and eighty other priests pursued the king (2 Chr 26:17) and confronted him with the law of God (v. 18).<sup>37</sup> Then, as leprosy broke out on his forehead, they rushed him out of God's presence (vv. 19-20). This episode clearly demonstrates and applauds the priestly use of force to maintain the purity of God's holy place.

Second, in Numbers 25:1-9, Moses recounts the incident of Baal-Peor, which led to the deaths of 24,000 Israelites. What is striking in this passage as it relates to the priest as *Kohen Victor* is how God honored Phinehas's priestly violence.<sup>38</sup> Verses 6-9 record that when Phinehas witnessed an Israelite coming into the camp with a Midianite woman, "he rose and left the congregation and took a spear in his hand and went after the man of Israel into the chamber and pierced both of them, . . . *Thus the plague on the people of Israel was*

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<sup>35</sup>Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 47-50. It should be mentioned that this militaristic Christ post-dates his resurrection and ascension. While on earth, Christ walks in humility and awaits his enthronement (Ps 110:1) and a priestly oath (Ps 110:4).

<sup>36</sup>Throughout the OT, priests are presented as "defenders of spatial holiness" (Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 135-36).

<sup>37</sup>For a description of the boldness of the priests, see Richard Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 1998), 552-57.

<sup>38</sup>Much like the Levites in Exod 32:19-20, Phinehas receives his commendation for turning on his idolatrous brothers (R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, NAC, vol. 3B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 440-41).

stopped” (vv. 7-8). Verses 10-13 provide commentary. Phinehas’s “atonement for the people of Israel” (v. 13) “turned back [God’s] wrath from the people of Israel” (v. 11). In sum, his act of aggression effectively ended the plague. Because of Phinehas’s loyalty to God, God made a covenant of peace with him, a covenant that would provide “safe dwelling and abundant blessing” for the whole nation of Israel.<sup>39</sup> Thus, through his defense of God’s holiness, Phinehas effected atonement for God’s people and became a mediator of a “covenant of peace” (cf. Isa 54:10; Ezek 34:25).<sup>40</sup> In his zeal for God’s house (cf. Ps 69:9), Phinehas fulfilled his priestly calling, and remarkably he is rewarded with a perpetual priesthood. Like the Levites in Exodus 32,<sup>41</sup> and Abraham before them (Gen 22), the sworn oath of God is given to Phinehas because of his act of priestly loyalty.

Phinehas’s zeal foreshadows the greater zeal of Jesus Christ, but it also informs us of the latter’s work.<sup>42</sup> The work of Christ is not only to cleanse the people of the new

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<sup>39</sup>Rightly, R. D. Cole observes that the scope of God’s blessing on Phinehas is coterminous with the nation of Israel. He comments, “By virtue of Phinehas’s priestly role in being a mediator between God and man, the covenant of peace extended well beyond him and his priestly descendants; it included the entire nation that survived the plague” (ibid, 444).

<sup>40</sup>Jacob Milgrom comments, “Phinehas provided a ransom for Israel, and God’s wrath was assuaged. So too, when the Levitical guard cuts down the encroacher on God’s sancta, he also provides a ransom that stays God’s wrath from venting itself upon Israel” (*Numbers* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003], 217). Obviously, this kind of atonement upon God’s unrepentant enemies must play a role in understanding the full effect of Christ’s atoning death.

<sup>41</sup>Scott Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire: A Theological Commentary on 1-2 Chronicles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 36-37.

<sup>42</sup>Phinehas’s act of zeal made atonement for the sins of the people—24,000 of whom had already perished. In a singular act, Phinehas expunged evil and averted wrath, something that adumbrates what Christ would do on Calvary. Moreover, it should be recognized, as R. D. Cole and Milgrom point out: The inauguration of Phinehas’ priesthood and the priesthood of the Levites in Exod 32 originates from their loyalty to protecting God’s house. Cole writes, “In comparing the role of Phinehas in this incident to that of the Levites in the case of the gold calf (Exod 32:19-20), Milgrom (*Numbers*, 441) remarks that ‘both had to slay ‘each his brother,’ for which both received ordination to the priesthood.’” Very clearly then, the loyal priest atones for the people of God, while at the same time avenging the enemies of God, beginning even within the house of Israel. The work of the priest is not just a sanguine intercession; it is intercession that includes laying down his own life to protect God’s residence and to atone for the sins of God’s redeemed people.

covenant, it is also to cleanse the dwelling place of God (cf. Heb 9:12, 24). Thus, one of the ways that Jesus cleanses God's temple is to remove all uncleanness. This will include the "unclean spirits" and Satan himself; it will include the powers of sin, death, and earthly corruption; and it will also include the removal all the serpent's offspring. In this way, Jesus as high priest comes not only to atone for the sins of his people through penal substitution. He also comes to cleanse the world through the effective destruction of his enemies who stand against him and pollute his inheritance—his people and his place.<sup>43</sup>

Theologically, a full understanding of the OT priesthood does not lead to a general view of the atonement. Christ does not die for those men and women who will remain his enemies (John 8:44). As a guardian of God's dwelling place, he actually dies to remove them from his eternal kingdom. As Jesus comes to lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13), he simultaneously dies in order to crush the serpent and his seed. In other words, as a zealous high priest, like Phinehas, Jesus brings judgment on his enemies and salvation to his elect. This makes the work of the cross universal (salvation and judgment), but it does not make it general (atonement for all).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>For an excellent synthesis of two atonement models (e.g., penal substitution and *Christus Victor*), see Henri Blocher's chapter, "Agnus Victor," in *What Does It Mean to be Saved? Broadening Evangelical Horizons of Salvation*, ed. John G. Stackhouse (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 67-91. He critiques the proposal of Youssouf Dembele ("Salvation as Victory: A Reconsideration of the Concept of Salvation in the Light of Jesus Christ's Life and Work Viewed as a Triumph over the Personal Powers of Evil" [Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2001]), who subordinates penal substitution to the *Christus Victor* model. Blocher puts the order in the opposite direction, making *Christus Victor* dependent on penal substitution.

<sup>44</sup>It is important to make a qualification here: The spiritual warfare of Jesus should be applied to his entire person and work. He is not a spiritual warrior in his priesthood alone (so C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," *JHSJ* 5 (2007): 57-79), nor in his kingship alone (so Phillip Bethancourt, "Christ the Warrior King: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Analysis of the Divine Warrior Theme in Christology" [Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010]), nor in his status of prophet alone (so N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996], 147-97). He is a spiritual warrior in the fullness of his *munus triplex*.

Yet, as it relates to his priesthood, it should be remembered that his victorious mission to purify his people and his temple, takes place over time and that even two millennia after his atoning sacrifice, the world awaits its final cleansing. Furthermore, this integrated approach of prophet, priest, and king corresponds to the tenor of the whole Bible as a program of salvation through judgment (so James M. Hamilton, *The Glory of God*



To summarize, the pentateuchal evidence clearly demonstrates that the priests are temple guardians and spiritual warriors. When applied to Christ, this has at least three implications for the extent of the atonement. First, even as Christ's priesthood is greater than that of Levi and Aaron, his service as high priest must fulfill the structures of the priesthood as delineated in the Pentateuch. At the same time, the success of his ministry can be evaluated by his adherence to these priestly duties. Second, in the OT, the particularity of the priesthood is limited to Israel, and instead of being neutral towards outsiders, the priest is regularly shown to oppose any foreigner (or unclean Israelite) who would come too near to God. In this way, the priestly orientation is two-pronged. The priest is both *for* some and *against* others. What determines his posture is the stipulations set forth in the covenant. Unlike the reissue of Noah's covenant with creation, God restricted the service of Aaron and the Levites to sons of Abraham, governed by the Mosaic covenant. In principal, the scope of the priesthood is always coextensive with the scope of the specified covenant.

Last, this adversarial work of the priest is undervalued in most theological treatments of Christ, and must be considered to have a fully developed Christology.<sup>45</sup> Those who argue against definite atonement must wrestle with *all* the biblical data, including this aspect of his priesthood. Just as Christ offers a greater sacrifice, he also defends the house of God with greater zeal and efficacy.<sup>46</sup> While we await the final cleansing of God's cosmic

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*in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009]), and it resonates with the two-fold work of the cross, which centers on penal substitution for the elect (and hence definite atonement) and *Christus Victor* for the cosmos.

<sup>45</sup>Jonathan R. Wilson, *God So Loved the World: A Christology for Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 51-53.

<sup>46</sup>Nicholas Perrin cogently argues that Jesus' ministry was a 'counter-temple' movement, one that sought to establish God's dwelling with his new covenant people (*Jesus the Temple* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010], esp. 80-113).

temple, Christ's zeal for his Father's house is evidenced in his earthly life (John 2:13-17), so too his power and authority over "unclean spirits" (Mark 1:26-27; 5:8; 6:7; 9:25). Indeed, while the timing of his atonement and his cleansing of the cosmic temple may be separated between his first and second advent, the functions of his priestly office unify his work. And in his priestly office, he is a *Kohen Victor*.<sup>47</sup> But that is not all. Like the priests in Israel, he is also teacher of the covenant.

### ***Kohen Teacher: A Teacher of the Covenant***

As important as the priest's function of "covenant teacher" is, Betts observes, "it is remarkable how little attention scholars have given to the subject."<sup>48</sup> If this is the case in biblical studies, it is amplified in systematics. Few have considered the relationship between atonement and announcement; the priest not only offers sacrifice and prayer, but he also teaches the same people for whom he serves at the altar.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, in this brief section, it will be important to observe the covenant role of the priestly teacher (*Kohen Teacher*) who communicates to all his covenant people the blessings of the covenant. Following Betts and Östborn, it is clear that since "many of [Israel's] cultic rites were closely connected to the covenant, 'it was natural that the priests should become the most reputable custodians and preachers of the covenant and law in Israel.'"<sup>50</sup> Applied to the question of "For whom did

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<sup>47</sup>This is not a hidden theme in the NT (see John 12:31; Col 2:14-15; Heb 2:14-18), but it is one that is often considered without explicit attention to his priestly office.

<sup>48</sup>Betts, "Ezekiel the Priest," 2-3. Writing in 2002, he continues, "It has been thirty years since any scholar [P. J. Budd, "The Role of the Priesthood in the Preservation and Propagation of Law" (M. Litt. thesis, University of Durham, 1971)] completely devoted to the priests' role as custodians of *torah* in the Old Testament" (ibid).

<sup>49</sup>Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament*, 373.

<sup>50</sup>Betts, "Ezekiel the Priest," 10; G. Östborn, *Tora in the Old Testament: A Semantic Study* (Lund: Hakan Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1945).

Christ die?” there is much to be gained from understanding the covenantal relationship between atonement and instruction.<sup>51</sup>

### **Teachers of *Torah***

As part of their duty to protect the holy place of God, the priests were called to be teachers of the covenant (Lev 10:10-11; Deut 33:10; cf. 2 Chr 35:3; Ezek 22:26; Hag 2:11-13; Mal 2:6-9).<sup>52</sup> While this didactic ministry was independent of the priests’ guarding duty, the two were not unrelated. As Leithart intimates, “Priests guarded boundaries of holiness as much by teaching Torah as by serving as custodians of the literal gates of the sanctuary.”<sup>53</sup> In particular, the priests had the responsibility of instructing the people of God concerning what was clean and unclean, holy and impure (cf. Lev 11-15).<sup>54</sup> Because they were situated in the mediating position between God and man—relationally and physically—they served as boundary keepers and boundary interpreters.<sup>55</sup>

Yet, like their calling to the priesthood (Exod 32:25-29), the origins of their teaching ministry comes from a particular event. In Leviticus 10, Nadab and Abihu are

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<sup>51</sup>In systematics, atonement and instruction, “the work of Christ” and the “way of Christ,” are sadly bifurcated. Even among conservative, Reformed theologians, instruction is usually associated with Christ’s prophetic office, and thus divorced from his priestly ministry. For an historical critique of this trend, see George Stroup, “The Relevance of the *Munus Triplex* for Reformed Theology and Ministry,” *ASB* 98 (1983): 22-32.

<sup>52</sup>For a full discussion of who, what, and how the priests taught, see Betts, ““Ezekiel the Priest,”” 24-63.

<sup>53</sup>Peter Leithart, “Attendants of Yahweh’s House: Priesthood in the Old Testament,” *JSOT* 85 (1999): 22. He continues, “In short, the sanctuary and pastoral dimensions,” which I take to mean, respectively, the guarding and teaching ministries of the priest, “are mutually interpreting, and this because sanctuary and people are different forms of Yahweh’s house” (ibid.). While Leithart’s conflation of sanctuary and people verges on equivocation, he is right to associate the intimate relationship between people and place.

<sup>54</sup>Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 17-38.

<sup>55</sup>Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 115-48; Frank H. Gorman, Jr., *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1990), 55-57.

killed when they offer strange fire on the altar. God responds by issuing a warning to Moses, who in turn tells Aaron and the priests that those who are near to God (i.e., the priests) will “treat God as holy” (v. 3 NIV).<sup>56</sup> Next, in vv. 8, Moses instructs the sons of Levi about how to conduct themselves as they go into the presence of God. In vv. 10, he writes, “You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean.” Going forward, this would be one of the key occupations of the Levitical priest. And not only would this instruction be for him, but like Adam who passed on instruction about the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” the Levites were the gatekeepers of knowledge pertaining to the things of God. As R. K. Duke notes,

The priests worked to create, maintain, and reestablish the divine order symbolized by the classical systems of clean/unclean and the holy/common. The charge given to the priests in Leviticus 10:10 to “distinguish” (*habdil*) between the holy and the common and between the clean and the unclean uses the same Hebrew root for the divine action of making distinctions in the process of creation (Gen 1:4, 6, 7, 14, 18). . . . By maintaining those distinctions, they upheld the creational order from the constant threat of encroachment of chaos and death.<sup>57</sup>

The priests had the requisite task of making known the covenant law.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the chapters that follow in Leviticus supply the purity laws, which the priests would teach the people.<sup>59</sup>

This “holiness code” was an essential part of Israel’s ability to dwell in the presence of God,

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<sup>56</sup>A similar warning (and provision) would be issued in Num 16-18 when the people of Israel lament their endangered position before God (17:12-13). YHWH reiterates his intentions for the sons of Aaron and Levi to guard God’s holy dwelling and to approach his altar according to holy boundaries that he has established (18:1-7). This “graded” access to the various regions of God’s dwelling place would be something the priests and Levites would teach for generations to come (Deut 17:8-13, 18).

<sup>57</sup>Duke, “Priests, Priesthood,” 651. On this point, Duke cites Lev 20:24, 25, 26 as thrice-repeated reason for why Israel should obey God’s commands. Because YHWH has ‘separated’ his people from the nations they are to live as holy people, separated for him. The priests functioned as mediating guides to ensure that the people rightly divided clean/unclean, holy/common. Cf. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual*.

<sup>58</sup>Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 17-38.

<sup>59</sup>For instance, some of the Levitical laws concern clean and unclean animals (11:1-47), purification after childbirth (12:1-8), leprosy of the skin (13:1-14:32), leprosy in a house (14:33-57), and bodily discharges (15:1-33).

and it was the priestly duty to make these laws known to the people.<sup>60</sup> In other words, a true priest is one who guarded God's holy dwelling<sup>61</sup> through an explicit ministry of teaching.<sup>62</sup>

According to God's designs, it was the priest's responsibility to make these things known to Israel: "You are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the LORD has spoken to them by Moses" (Lev 10:11). To put it in covenantal terms, the Levites were the covenant teachers to the covenant people of all that the covenant law required.

In this way, it is clear that the knowledge of God was given to the priests, and the priests in turn taught Israel, and only Israel.<sup>63</sup> Betts puts it succinctly, "Yahweh said 'my

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<sup>60</sup>While these holiness laws emphasize the ethical duties of the Israelites, the priests would also be responsible for reinforcing the annual feasts, markers of God's mercy and grace towards God's people (Lev 23). Thus, it is not as though the priests were only advocates of rigorous law-keeping; they were the ones who more comprehensively taught the people the holiness *and* mercy of God.

<sup>61</sup>Comparing the later priestly work to the first royal priest, Beale writes, "It is apparent that priestly obligations in Israel's later temple included the duty of 'guarding' unclean things from entering (cf. Num 3:6-7, 32, 38; 18:1-7), and this appeared to be relevant for Adam, especially in view of the unclean creature lurking on the perimeter of the Garden and who then enters" (*The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 69). He continues, and includes some insight from the culture surrounding Israel, "Interestingly, priests of ancient pagan temples were also 'to guard the temple' and to kill intruders, as well as 'guard' and pass on sacred texts" (*ibid.*). And later, he quotes 2 Bar 10:18, where the priestly sentiment was to say to God, "Guard your house yourself, because behold, we have been found false stewards" (*ibid.*).

<sup>62</sup>Commenting on Lev 10:10-11, Gordon J. Wenham writes, "The priests were not just men who offered sacrifices, but were also teachers. To 'instruct' (*lehorot*) the people involved teaching the law (*torah*), which included both teaching the revealed rules and making decisions about difficult cases not explicitly covered in the Sinai revelation (Deut 17:9ff.]" (*The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 159).

<sup>63</sup>An important question concerning the role of prophets and their relationship to the priestly office might be interjected at this point: If the priests are given responsibility to teach the people the stipulations of the covenant, what role did the prophets play? This question takes us from the main emphasis of this dissertation and cannot be discussed at length, but let me suggest two answers. Chronologically, it might be argued that the priests came first to teach people the law (Exod 28-29; Lev 8-10); the prophets came later when the people (often because of priestly negligence) went astray (Jer 7:25). Spatially, it might be conceived that the priests were to disseminate the law of God from Zion to the nation (cf. Isa 2:1-5), while the prophets, who arose outside of Zion, called Israel to return to the Lord. In truth, both offices were originally bound up in Moses. As a son of Levi, he functioned as a priest (Ps 99:6). At the same time, Deut 18:15-18 indicates that Moses was the prophet *par excellence*. In his role as covenant mediator, he functioned as law-giver and prophetic witness calling Israel back to God. Later in Israel's history, the offices were often conjoined as in the case of Ezekiel. In this way, we see in Israel's history a natural interweaving between offices in preparation for Christ to come.

For our purposes, the argument that the priest was the primary keeper and teacher of the law is tied to the whole covenantal system (e.g., temple, sacrifice, covenant, and mediators). Lev 10:10-11 and Deut 33:8-

people' were to have been the recipient of priestly instruction. Yahweh speaks only of the nation of Israel as 'my people.'"<sup>64</sup> The priests were responsible to teach the nation, and Israel was responsible to listen to their teaching. Peril would result when priests failed to teach what was right (Jer 2:8) and the people failed to listen (18:18). Still, in the structure of the old covenant, the priests were the ones who proclaimed God's word, and that word was always and only for the people of Israel. Non-Jews were not absolutely excluded from the ministry of the Levites, but they could become Israelites (through voluntary circumcision) in order to experience the blessings of the covenant.<sup>65</sup> Thus, the scope of the Levite's ministry was coterminous with the extent of the covenant people—Jew and proselyte.

To say it another way, the ministry of teaching served to form a *Vorbild* for Christ's superlative teaching ministry. However, unlike Christ's greater ministry of teaching, which would involve the pouring out of the Spirit and the empowerment of the Spirit to send forth the gospel, the fallible nature of the Levitical priests meant that they would often fail to do all that God intended. In time, their failures to teach the people would result in disaster (Judg 2:10ff; Hos 4:6). By contrast, the new covenant promised an immediate knowledge of

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11 assign the priest as the rightful custodian of the *torah*. Likewise, Heb 7:11 asserts that "the people received the law" under the administration of the "Levitical priesthood." All in all, a natural and legal connection existed between the priest's sacrifice and instruction. God intended to keep Israel in covenant by means of the priesthood. When Christ came, he fulfilled all the offices (prophet, priest, and king), and resolved all institutional tension that existed under the old covenant. Theologically, the two offices of priest and prophet are not at odds with one another, but in our theological formulation we may find that functions traditionally assigned to Christ status as prophet are actually functions of his priesthood (cf. George Stroup, "The Relevance of the *Munus Triplex* for Reformed Theology and Ministry," *ASB* 98 [1983]: 22-32).

<sup>64</sup>Betts, "Ezekiel the Priest," 34. He continues, "Yahweh first called the Israelites 'my people' when they were in Egypt (Exod 3:7). Throughout the rest of the OT the term has accentuated the unique covenantal relationship that Israel enjoyed with Yahweh. Every person within the covenant community of Israel was expected to receive knowledge through the instruction of the priests" (ibid., 34-35).

<sup>65</sup>Of course, two of the most famous OT converts, Rahab and Ruth, were women and did not undergo circumcision; nevertheless, by marrying Jewish men, they did enter into the covenant of circumcision (e.g., the Abrahamic-Israelite covenant) by way of their respective husbands.

God. This would not dismiss the need for teachers, for one of the Spirit's gifts is teaching (Eph 4:10-11). However, as Jeremiah 31:34 says all those in the new covenant would "know the Lord" because Christ himself (Jer 31:34; Heb 8:1-13) would send the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28ff.) to lead his people—and only his people—into all truth (1 John 2:27).

Thus, in type and shadow, the teaching ministry of the old covenant priests prefigured a better ministry of teaching. More exactly, the teaching would come through Christ's Spirit and by Spirit-filled witnesses, whom the NT calls "priests" (Rom 15:16; 1 Pet 2:9-10). Significantly, in both covenants the teaching ministry was for the covenant people, even as it made invitation to those outside the covenant to enter into the covenant. As a means of achieving shalom in Israel, the proclamation of and obedience to God's word secured the blessings promised in God's first covenant.<sup>66</sup> Though imperfect and rare, this pattern of priestly instruction serves as a type of Christ's priestly instruction.

### **The Aaronic Blessing**

Nowhere is the priestly mediation of blessing to God's covenant people more evident than in Numbers 6. In the Aaronic blessing, the sacral duty is not teaching per se, but blessing.<sup>67</sup> After Moses records the laws of the Nazirites, YHWH says to him,

Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: You shall say to them, The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. (vv. 23-26)

The significance of this passage for the extent of the atonement relates to the extent of the blessing. In this priestly benediction, the blessing is spoken by the priest and is intended for

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<sup>66</sup>We will say more on the transition from old covenant to new in chapters seven and eight.

<sup>67</sup>Betts unifies "teaching" and "blessing" under the title of spokesman ("Ezekiel the Priest," 30).

the covenantal people of Israel.<sup>68</sup> In fact, as the blessing echoes through the Psalms, it is often referenced in the context of warfare and pleas for deliverance from enemy nations (see Ps 31:14-16; 44:2-3; 80:6-7). Even in Ps 67, the covenant blessings go to Israel in the midst of the nations.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the Aaronic blessing is not generic but specific. Functionally, it serves as a boundary marker for God's chosen people and all others (cf. Ps 65:4). When the priest speaks, he stamps the name of the Lord on Israel with his blessing, in opposition to enemies of God. As Numbers 6:27 says of the sons of Aaron, "So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them." God designs for the priests to bless his elect people, and not all people in general.

Generalists often fail to appreciate this kind of priestly specificity. For instance, Norman Douty says of Christ's priesthood, "Christ is a divinely provided priest for all mankind, and that as such, He is to be offered to all men in the Gospel."<sup>70</sup> Of course, the gospel is to be offered to all men, but such a generalization must not disfigure the contours of the priestly office. The Aaronic blessing evidences a personal and particular relationship between God and his people. As the priest pronounces the name of God upon the people of Israel, he calls down the blessings of God from heaven to earth. More specifically, since Deuteronomy 12 says that he is placing his "name" in Israel, the priests who later pronounce God's blessing in the temple do so in a particular place for a particular people. Even

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<sup>68</sup>On the topic of priestly blessings, Nelson writes, "In Israel, a blessing was more than just a pious wish, but an effective and power-laden formula" (45). Thus, when the high priest would pronounce the Aaronic blessing, it was not an indiscriminate benediction, it was proclamation intended to effect blessing within the ranks of God's covenant people. The repetitive nature of this blessing in the Bible and archaeology (R. D. Cole, *Numbers*, 128) affirms its place as the kind of word that separated the people of God from the nations.

<sup>69</sup>In chaps. 6-7, attention will be given to the way in which the particular blessings of the old covenant become "universalized" in the new.

<sup>70</sup>Norman F. Douty, *Did Christ Die Only For the Elect? A Treatise on the Extent of the Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998), 33. For clarity sake, Douty is speaking of all mankind without exception.



accepting the fact that foreigners were sometimes adopted into God's family, the scope of the priest's ministry remains particular to Israel.

When discussing the priesthood of Christ, generalists do not include this didactic function in the atoning work of Christ. While there is overlap here with the prophetic office, the priest is by definition a teacher; and any priest who makes atonement for some whom he does not instruct is a priest unworthy of the office. Essentially, four-point Calvinism teaches: Jesus died for all, but not all receive that message. Yes, the message of the gospel is to be proclaimed universally, but in actuality, there is missionary evidence that many people die in their sins not knowing of Jesus and the gospel. Is this a failure of Christ as priest to instruct the nations (Matt 28:19-20)? It coheres better with Scripture to assert that Christ as priest instructs all those for whom he dies.<sup>71</sup> This is the logic of John 10: Jesus as the good shepherd laid down his life for his sheep (v. 11). They will hear his voice and believe (v. 26) and he will lose not one (vv. 27-29).<sup>72</sup> However, for all those who are not his sheep, they will not understand and some may not even hear. Consequently, based on this line of reasoning, it can be affirmed, the non-elect were not represented by Christ on the cross. In this way, Christ's priestly work is not truncated or divided. He effectively instructs all those for whom he represents as priest (see Isa 54:13; John 6:35ff.).

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<sup>71</sup>William Symington writes, "In every age of the world, the revelation of mercy has been, in fact, restricted to a few [the people of the covenant]. In ancient times, the Almighty showed his word to Jacob, and his judgments to Israel, while the nations at large sat in darkness. In later times, although the diffusion has been more wide, and the command has been that the Gospel should be preached to every creature, it has actually been greatly limited compared with the population of the world. To this hour there are hundreds of millions of our race who remain unvisited by the day-spring from on high. And if we suppose that for these the atonement which the Gospel reveals was as much designed as for the others, we shall be led to the most unworthy view of the divine character" (*On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* [Pittsburgh: United Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1864], 197). Most particularly, such a view would besmirch the character of the Son's priesthood.

<sup>72</sup>George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1871; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953), 319-33.

### ***Kohen Mediator: An Atoning Mediator of the Covenant***

In *God's Holy People*, Jo Bailey Wells, spends a chapter outlining the OT priests as portrayed in the Pentateuch.<sup>73</sup> His chapter is largely in agreement with everything that was said about the priests as guardians and teachers.<sup>74</sup> However, what is strangely absent from Wells' proposal is the priest's role as a sacrificial mediator.<sup>75</sup> This, ironically, is the converse of Reformed theologians who reduce the priesthood to that of sacrifice and intercession.<sup>76</sup> The aim of this dissertation is to bring both of these realities together, and since the Pentateuch provides a well-defined *Vorbild* for the person and work of Jesus Christ, it is now time to consider the central feature of the priest's work—namely, the offering of a complex of sacrifices. As such, this next section will be the longest in this chapter.

The sacrifices instituted in the Pentateuch are complex, and to the modern mind, boring if not banal.<sup>77</sup> However, for the purposes of understanding what Christ's death accomplished, it is essential to understand the role of the priest who makes atonement for the people in covenant with God. In keeping with the argument of this dissertation, this section will examine the policies and procedures of the Levitical sacrifices with an eye to the extent

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<sup>73</sup>Wells, *God's Holy People*, 98-129.

<sup>74</sup>More specifically, Wells summarizes the role of the priest in three ways: (1) Imitators of Moses, the "ultimate mediator between God and man"; (2) "Guardians of Yhwh's holiness"; and (3) Exemplars of holy living to a holy people (*God's Holy People*, 127-28).

<sup>75</sup>By contrast, De Vaux rightly argues that the priest "is always an intermediary" and that "the priesthood is an institution for mediation" (*Ancient Israel*, 357).

<sup>76</sup>For instance, John Owen reduces the priestly role of the priest to that of a "sacrificer" (*The Priesthood of Christ: Its Necessity and Nature* [Fearn, Scotland: Christian Heritage, 2010], 38). Bavinck is more comprehensive in his list of priestly duties, but he too misses the defensive posture of the priest (*Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 333).

<sup>77</sup>For a survey of approaches to the sacrificial system, see Philip Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 155-65.

of the atonement. It will ask this question: Whom do priests and Levites represent and atone? To answer that question, I will argue that (1) the replacement of the firstborn in Israel by the Levites hints at definite atonement, (2) the particular location (e.g., the tabernacle and temple) of the sacrifice delimits the scope of the atonement, (3) the symbolism of temple complex and the high priestly garments (Exod 28-29) requires definite atonement, and (4) the sacrifices themselves typify a definite, not a general atonement.<sup>78</sup> Altogether, this section will argue that the priestly structures in the OT are clearly for the covenant community, not for all people without exception. This, in turn, will provide the typological basis for defining the extent of Christ's atonement as coterminous with the covenant community.

### **Redeeming the Firstborn of Israel**

When YHWH calls Israel his "firstborn son" (Exod 4:22),<sup>79</sup> he commits himself to saving Israel and judging Pharaoh and all the firstborns of his nation (vv. 22-23).<sup>80</sup> Like with Isaac, YHWH will provide a particular means of atonement for his "seed," but not for the nations (i.e., Moab, Ammon, Egypt). Exodus says he even hardens Pharaoh.<sup>81</sup> As Hamilton

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<sup>78</sup>Most recently this typological argument has been advanced by Tom Barnes, *Atonement Matters: A Call to Declare the Biblical View of the Atonement* (Webster, NY: Evangelical, 2008).

<sup>79</sup>Even before Exodus, the notion of the firstborn has special significance (Gerard Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997], 218-21; Jon Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993], 36-169).

<sup>80</sup>J. M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 91-96. Likewise, Williamson states, "Any consideration of Israel's experiences must take on board Israel's unique status as the elect people of God. God's special dealings with Israel, to which the Pentateuch repeatedly attests, are firmly premised on the idea of Israel's divine election. It is within this larger theological construct that any Old Testament theology of atonement must be understood" ("Because He Loved Your Forefathers': Election, Atonement, and Intercession in the Pentateuch," in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. Jonathan Gibson and David Gibson [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, forthcoming]).

<sup>81</sup>For an exegetical defense of God's sovereign hardening of Pharaoh's heart, see G. K. Beale, "An Exegetical and Theological Consideration of the Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart in Exodus 4-14 and Romans 9," *TJ* 5 (1984): 129-154.

has elucidated, God has engaged in “seed warfare” with the nations who oppose his elect (Gen 3:15; cf. Gen 12:3).<sup>82</sup> In Exodus, the decisive moment is when YHWH strikes down all the firstborns in Egypt (Exod 11-13) and delivers all the firstborn sons of Israel in the Passover. While shocking to modern sensibilities, God’s judgment falls on the firstborn of Pharaoh and peasant girls (11:4-9), while Israel’s heirs are delivered. At the textual level, this event is highly suggestive of a particular redemption. As Psalm 136:10-16 sings, God’s love is displayed to Israel by his judicious defeat of Egypt. The Passover is multi-intentioned—winning salvation for Israel and executing judgment upon Egypt.<sup>83</sup> Clearly, this militates against a general atonement. Yet, it gets more specific. The restriction of the Passover to those who are circumcised (12:43-49), the precise proportions of the sacrifice (12:3-4),<sup>84</sup> and even the command to burn up all extraneous meat (12:10), all bear witness to the definite nature of the Passover.<sup>85</sup> However, it also prepares the way for Numbers 3, where the priestly role of the Levites is depicted as a substitution for the firstborn sons of Israel.<sup>86</sup>

In Numbers 3:11, Moses records the words of God, “Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the people of Israel.” After introducing the work of the Levites in verses 5-10, Moses counts the Levites (vv. 14-39) and all the firstborn males in Israel (vv. 40-43) for the purpose

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<sup>82</sup>James M. Hamilton, “The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *SBJT* 11 (2006): 30-55.

<sup>83</sup>Derek Tidball, *The Message of the Cross*, BST (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 57-63.

<sup>84</sup>Alec Motyer, *The Message of Exodus*, BST [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005], 135).

<sup>85</sup>If God intended to save all men, he might have allowed the Passover meal to go to Egypt, but that does not happen: “Because the meat was sacred, no-one else was permitted to eat it, and any meat left till the morning was to be burnt up” (T. D. Alexander, “The Passover Sacrifice,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004], 8).

<sup>86</sup>Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament*, 374.

of substituting the Levites for the firstborn males. The census totals are similar, but not exact: 22,000 Levites and 22,273 firstborns. The next instruction is what shows the particular nature of this substitution. In order to *redeem* the firstborn males who were spared in the Passover, God has selected in their place the Levites. Numbers 3:45-48 explains the substitution:

Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle. The Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD. And as the redemption price for the 273 of the firstborn of the people of Israel, over and above the number of male Levites, you shall take five shekels per head...and give the money to Aaron and his sons as the redemption price for those who are over.

The fact that God is not satisfied with an approximate substitution, but requires a “redemption price” for the remaining 273 firstborns, shows that God expects an exact redemption.<sup>87</sup> Numbers 3, therefore, moves us further into understanding the scope of the priestly work as delineated by the biblical text. Just as the firstborn sons of Israel were spared by a proportional sacrifice in Exodus 12, so the firstborn sons of Israel are replaced by an exact number of Levitical priests. Clearly, God does not waste his sacrifices, and thus the redemption of the firstborn sons typifies a definite atonement.

### **The Symbolism of the Temple of the Lord**

In the OT, the land had a particular holy nature, and God’s temple was its epicenter.<sup>88</sup> Israelites traveled to Jerusalem at least three times a year to celebrate the

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<sup>87</sup>Explaining the OT idea of redemption, T. F. Torrance appeals to this passage to show the substitutionary nature of redemption, the biblical notion that redemption is “a life for a life” (*Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009], 27-28). This passage not only indicates the nature of redemption, but also its scope. God goes to great lengths to make sure the substitution is exactly one-for-one. The point to be made here is not that Christ’s death is a commercial transaction, but that redemption, representation, and substitution are not general, but particular. The redemption of Israel’s firstborn sons adds to the weight of the case for definite redemption for all members of God’s covenant people.

<sup>88</sup>Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual*, 55-57; Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 89-114.

Passover (Lev 23:4-8), the Feast of Firstfruits (23:9-14), the Feast of Weeks (23:15-22), the Feast of Trumpets (23:23-25), and most importantly, the Day of Atonement (16:1ff.; 23:26-32). Obviously but importantly, these festivals were only for Jews. In the law of Israel, God separated his people through lifestyle (see Lev 11-15) and by land.<sup>89</sup> As OT history records the surrounding nations were enemies to Israel and unconcerned about the sacrifices offered in Jerusalem during these holy days.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, in considering the scope of the atonement, it is important to consider how the priestly work fit in the OT context, and where and how the sacrifices were made. On this point, there are two matters for consideration— (1) the relationship between priest, temple, and people, and (2) the indivisible connection between atonement offered and applied.

First, the priest served in a particular place for a particular people. Like Adam, the Levites walked before God in the garden-temple in order to “keep guard . . . over the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, as they minister at the tabernacle” (Num 3:7). Numbers 3:8 explicitly delimits the priestly ministrations to “the people of Israel.” Called from their brothers, these priests ministered for their brothers. The high priest did not make atonement for all the nations, nor did he go on tour making intercession for Israel’s neighbors.<sup>91</sup> As the temple was settled in a specific place (Deut 12; 2 Sam 5-7), so the priest

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<sup>89</sup>“This [spatial] grading is not just a theoretical structure, but is related to central aspects of the Priestly theology, particularly the character of God himself and his relation to this people” (Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 114).

<sup>90</sup>More than unconcerned, the other nations were ceremonially unclean. The Law denied their approach to God’s dwelling place, as Num 18:7 states, “any outsider who comes near shall be put to death” (cf. Num 1:51; 3:10, 38).

<sup>91</sup>In fact, Judg 18:15-20 describes a wandering Levite whose opportunistic ministry indicates the moral disintegration during that period. Daniel I. Block rightly condemns the young Levite, saying of the Danites, “They bribe the Levite to abandon his employer and join their migration . . . with classic appeal to ambition and the opportunism, they offer him the status of ‘pope’ to an entire tribe/clan” (*Judges, Ruth*, NAC,

limited his service to God's earthly throne. From the location of this temple service, it was clearly the congregation of Israel, the elect of God according to the flesh (Rom 9:4-5; 11:28), whom he served. Never was Israel's high priest a universal mediator.<sup>92</sup>

Peter Leithart's observations reinforce this reality. Discussing the 'house-keeping' duties of the priest at the temple and among the people, Leithart notes,

The intimate connection between the ritual and social sides of priestly service can be seen if we keep in mind that the tabernacle and temple were architectural representations of the people of God. The sanctuary's threefold division into courtyard, holy place, and most holy place directly corresponds to Israelite liturgical hierarchy of layman, priest, and High Priest.<sup>93</sup>

Moreover, the priest's symbolic garments took the people of Israel into the presence of God when he entered God's presence; and he mediated the presence of God to the people whenever he took the Word of God to the people, making the unity between priest, people, and divine presence get even closer.<sup>94</sup> In the NT these three realities—priest, people, and temple—coalesce in the person of Christ. When God's Son tabernacles among God's people (John 1:14) and when Christ becomes the cornerstone of God's eschatological temple (Eph 2:20), there will be no division between God and man, heaven and earth.<sup>95</sup>

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vol. 6 [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999], 506). In the book of Judges, which indicts Israel's anarchy (21:25), this priestly migration must be seen as a counter-example to faithful service.

<sup>92</sup>It is true that the high priest's mediation represented ethnic Israel, which consisted of believers who were saved (Heb 11) and others who died in unbelief (Ps 95), but this does not argue for Christ to have a universal mediation. The mixed community in Israel simply reveals the weakness of the old covenant.

<sup>93</sup>Leithart, "Attendants of Yahweh's House," 22. See also, Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 115-48.

<sup>94</sup>"When the priest enters the divine presence in the sanctuary, the community enters through him" (Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 166). C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis even uses the language of perichoresis to explain the interpenetration between priest and people ("Jesus as the Messianic High Priest: Part 1," 159). Such terminology equivocates on a term that better describes the unique relationship of the trinity. Nevertheless, Fletcher-Louis is correct to assert the indivisible relationship between priest and people.

<sup>95</sup>It is important at this point to insert an essential qualification. While there is indivisible oneness between God and man (John 17:21-23), there is not confusion. The unity between God and man is spiritual and covenantal, not ontological or essential (cf. Oliver Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity*, Current Issues in Theology (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007)). This point applies to Fletcher-Louis's use of perichoresis.

Second, the locus of blood's application indicates a particular atonement, in that the orientation of the atonement is towards God. For instance, observe in Exodus 24:6-8, Moses the priestly mediator of the old covenant "throws" the blood of the covenant on the altar (v. 6)<sup>96</sup> and on the people (v. 8).<sup>97</sup> Likewise, in the consecration ritual of Aaron, the blood applied to Aaron and his sons (Lev 8:22-24; cf. Exod 29:19-21) was also applied to the altar (Lev 8:15). Furthermore, in the system of sacrifice in Leviticus 1-7, the blood is always applied to the altar.<sup>98</sup> In all of these rituals, the blood is applied to the altar itself, thus effecting purification and redemption.<sup>99</sup> Significantly, the primary orientation is not toward the worshiper; it is toward God.<sup>100</sup> This heavenly orientation—even in typological form—illustrates that the atonement is not simply removing a barrier for the sinner. Instead, the atonement penetrates the very throne room of God, and the application of the blood to the brazen altar (Lev 1-7) or the golden ark (Lev 16:14-15) effects God's propitiation. In this way, there is nothing conditional about the offering. In type and shadow, the Israelite priests demonstrated what Christ would do when he entered heaven to present his final sacrifice

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<sup>96</sup>The altar is surrounded by 12 stone pillars. Like the twelve jewels on the high priest's chest, the symbolism of the twelve pillars is another reminder of God's specific plans for his covenant people. Stuart writes, "The twelve stone pillars visibly represented the tribes of Israel, all of whom were committing themselves to keep the covenant both severally and together, and it also would function as a reminder to all who saw them that God has made a covenant at this place with a multifaceted people" (Douglas Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC, vol. 2 [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006], 554).

<sup>97</sup>It is significant that the blood that is sprinkled on the altar of God is the same blood that is sprinkled on the people of Israel. As this covenant-making provides explicit background to Christ's death (cf. Heb 9:18-22), the blood which Jesus sheds to inaugurate the covenant (Heb 9:15-21), simultaneously effects forgiveness for the covenant community (Heb 9:22-28).

<sup>98</sup>In the case of the sin offering (Lev 4:1-5:13), the blood is always applied to the horns of the altar and then poured out at the base of the altar (4:7, 18, 25, 20, 34; cf. 5:9).

<sup>99</sup>On the nature of atoning blood as effecting purification and ransom, see Jay Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions*, Hebrew Monographs (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005).

<sup>100</sup>George Smeaton, *The Apostles Doctrine of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1870; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), 36-38.



(Heb 9:22-28).<sup>101</sup> Therefore, in shadow and substance, the location of the application speaks to the efficacy of the atonement for God's covenant community.<sup>102</sup>

### **The Symbolism of the Priestly Garments**

In a careful examination of the priestly garments and installation, there are strong indications of definite atonement. The priestly garments are made “for glory and for beauty” (28:2), but they are not for aesthetics alone; they are symbolic and instructive for discerning what the priest did behind the veil.<sup>103</sup> As Carol Meyers puts it, “priestly office and priestly garb are inextricably related.”<sup>104</sup> Beale has developed the connection between the garments, the temple, and the universe,<sup>105</sup> but there is also good reason to examine the relationship between the priest and the covenant people.<sup>106</sup> As Davies observes, “The priest represents the community. One indication of this fact is that the priest and the community are to be regarded as being of equivalent value.”<sup>107</sup> That is, in regards to the sacrifices prescribed in Leviticus 4:1-5:13, the same animals offered for the people are offered for the priest.

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<sup>101</sup>On the importance of the resurrection and ascension in atonement theology, especially as it is delineated in Hebrews, see David J. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2011).

<sup>102</sup>Theologically, this truth is bolstered by the “ascension theology” of Douglas Farrow (*Ascension Theology* [New York: T & T Clark, 2011], 4-5, 121-51), who shows the tight relationship between ascension and atonement.

<sup>103</sup>Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 124-28; Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel*, 165-74; Stuart, *Exodus*, 604.

<sup>104</sup>Carol Meyers, *Exodus*, NCBC (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 240.

<sup>105</sup>Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 39-45; cf. Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 104-05.

<sup>106</sup>Davies treatment of the “priestly regal vestments” suggests a number of typological relationships between the well-dressed priest and the first man (Ezek 28:12-14), royalty (Ps 8:5), a wedding day (Isa 61:10), and the materials of the tabernacle itself, which in turn reflected elements of the cosmos (*A Royal Priesthood*, 157-61). Likewise, Kline relates the priestly garments of Exod 28-29 to exalted Christ of Rev 1 (*Images of the Spirit*, 42-47).

Going further, Davies draws a connection between the priestly gemstones and the priest's representative role.<sup>108</sup> In this regard, the priestly attire 'visualizes' the particular nature of the atonement.<sup>109</sup> It does so in this way: From head to foot, the holy attire, which the priest wears before the people, teaches Israel and us what the priest is doing as he enters into the holy of holies.<sup>110</sup> Of interest for our discussion are the "shoulder pieces" and the "breastpiece of judgment." Concerning the former, YHWH instructs,

And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and of fine twined linen, skillfully worked. It shall have two shoulder pieces attached to its two edges, so that it may be joined together... You shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. As a jeweler engraves signets, so shall you engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel... And you shall set the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders for remembrance. (Exod 28:6-12; cf. 39:2-7)

On the priest's shoulders, the names of the twelve tribes were "deeply and permanently cut into the onyx."<sup>111</sup> As the priest of the covenant, these engraved names signified the *corporate solidarity* the priest shared with Israel. This union was a necessary function of his priesthood. His clothes illustrated the nature and scope of his service. Therefore, in terms of typology, the high priest's entrance into the tabernacle or temple "secure[d] the well-being" Israel, and Israel alone.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 165.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid. Another place where names are used to represent the tribes of Israel is Num 17:1-7, of which R. D. Cole comments, "Each of the twelve tribal leaders' staffs was symbolic of the larger tribe" (*Numbers*, 274), and by summation, the twelve staffs represented all Israel, God's covenant people.

<sup>109</sup>For instance, speaking of the priest in his vestments, Motyer writes, "he is the visual display of the Lord's 'judgment,' his opinion regarding his people" (*The Message of Exodus*, 279).

<sup>110</sup>David Williams, *The Office of Christ and Its Expression in the Church: Prophet, Priest, King* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1997), 35, 40.

<sup>111</sup>Stuart, *Exodus*, 609.

In the same way, the high priest's breastpiece of judgment functioned as a symbol of the high priest's covenantal representation (Exod 28:15-30; cf. 39:8-21).<sup>113</sup> Like the shoulder pieces, the breastpiece was designed to bring the sons of Israel into "regular remembrance before the Lord" (28:29). Again, as a priest chosen from his brothers for his brothers and their families, he does not generally atone, intercede, or minister. Rather, God has appointed the high priest to make atonement for God's particular people, people who knew they had a priest. Rightly, Stuart says, "the high priest symbolized Israel" and "whatever he did, he did as the people's representative, and his actions would have the same essential effect that they would have if all of them, one by one, had done the same thing."<sup>114</sup>

Theologically, Martin is correct to argue that the relationship of priest and people "rests on personal relation," not abstract ideals. The priest represents "individual men, particular persons."<sup>115</sup> Moving from textual observation to dogmatic assertion, he asserts,

If the atonement of Christ falls under the category of His Priesthood, it is impossible it can be impersonal, indefinite, unlimited; for the priesthood is not. In order to its very constitution, it pre-requires personal relation; and the same must be true of the Atonement, unless the Atonement transpires outside the limits and actings and conditions of the priesthood... The pre-requisite of personal relation to particular persons is so indispensable in all real priesthood whatsoever. It is true of "every" priest that is taken from among men. Any "general reference" contradictory to this, or in addition to this . . . violates the very first principles of the office.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup>Meyers, *Exodus*, 241.

<sup>113</sup>Stuart, *Exodus*, 610.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 611.

<sup>115</sup>Martin, *The Atonement*, 58. Martin ties this particular relationship to the definite nature of the atonement: "The priests of Levi were chosen *for*, or in lieu of, the first-born [Num 3]; and they were ordained *for* [Lev 8-9], or in room and on behalf of men, even for the Israel of God collectively and individually. They acted for individuals; and besides such action, they had no priestly action whatsoever, no official duty to discharge. The introduction of a 'general reference' into the theory of their office is an absurdity" (ibid., 65).

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 55-56. See also, Williams, *The Office of Christ*, 13-14.

At the same time, an argument for definite atonement based on the priestly garments counters John Goodwin's view that the covenant people are "whosoever will." In his attempt to prove unlimited atonement, Goodwin states that the covenant of grace must be made with named people. He asserts that the elect are an unknown subset of humanity, and thus he questions the plausibility of God making covenant with unknown people. Without explanation of how God can know the names of all men but not his elect, Goodwin asserts that the party with whom God enters into covenant is "whosoever." He cites the usual passages (e.g., John 3:16; 6:37), and concludes that the covenant of grace is made with the entire world without exception. What Goodwin fails to recognize is the covenant God makes with men is circumscribed by the role of the priest, and in this case, Christ's knowledge of the ones he represents is perfect (cf. 2 Tim 2:19). More than simply having their names written externally on his garments, Christ knows who are his because the Father gave them to him before the foundation of the world (John 17:2ff.; Titus 1:2). These are the ones whose names are written in the "Lamb's book of life" (Rev 21:27; cf. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15).<sup>117</sup> Goodwin is right to assert that the covenant must be made with 'named' men, but he is wrong to suggest that God does not know who these elect are.<sup>118</sup>

In sum, without adopting fanciful speculations, the priestly garments supply a tapestry of theological meaning. In the OT, the regal robes are intended to match the

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<sup>117</sup>The names recorded in the Lamb's book of life were written "before the creation, which means that they were identified at that time as ones who would benefit from the Lamb's redemptive death. Therefore, they have been given the protection of eternal life, which comes as a result of the Lamb's death" (G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 1102). The combination of prehistoric election unto eternal life and the explicit reference to Christ as the lamb, who sealed the salvation of these souls through his death, conjures up priestly (or at least sacrificial) imagery, and it seems to supply the necessary and improved antitype of the priestly ephod that contained Israel's tribal names.

<sup>118</sup>John Goodwin, *Redemption Redeemed: Wherein the Most Glorious Work of the Redemption of the Word by Jesus Christ is Vindicated against the Encroachments of Later Times* (1651; repr., London: Thomas Tegg, 1840), 587-90.

materials of the tabernacle, while at the same time the names engraved on the shoulder pieces and ephod correspond to the covenant people of Israel. In this way, God's presence, God's priest, and God's people are intimately but externally associated. However, in the new covenant, Christ becomes the true tabernacle (John 1:14), the superior priest (Heb 5-10), and the firstborn among many brethren (Rom 8:29). Thus, what is disparate under the old covenant is unified in the new, and what becomes evident is that just as the Aaronic priest could only serve in the place his clothes matched and represent the people whose names were on his chest, so Christ only serves in the temple made without hands and only dies for those people with whom he will spend eternity.<sup>119</sup>

### **The Symbolism of the Sacrifices**

While I am arguing in this dissertation that the priestly duties included more than sacrifice and intercession, it is important to remember that “priestly work in the sanctuary was essentially mediatorial.”<sup>120</sup> This includes the mediation of a covenant (as was observed with Noah and Abraham); and it relates to the regular offering of sacrifices and intercessory prayer,<sup>121</sup> which Hebrews 5:1 elevates as the essence of the priestly duty. Moreover, as it has been argued thus far, the ministry of the priest is carried out for a specific people in a specific place. That is to say, the principle duty of the priests was not for the nations but for Israel

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<sup>119</sup>These “elect” (Rom 8:33) are variously termed his posterity (Isa 53:10-12), his sheep (John 10:14), his church (Acts 20:28), his bride (Eph 5:25-27), his children (Heb 2:10), and his living stones (1 Pet 2:5). All of these appellations are covenantal terms.

<sup>120</sup>Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 32.

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*

alone.<sup>122</sup> As YHWH restricted his revelation and dwelling place to Israel, so he also restricted the call of priests to the tribe of Levi for the people of Israel. This is a very basic point, but one that is often overlooked. Consider David Williams commentary.

The sacrificial system, although it encompassed those who had identified with Israel by sojourning in their midst, obviously did not apply to those outside the covenant. The covenant was therefore essential to the relationship with God; there are however hints that it would in due course be extended to the nations (e.g., Is 19:21). It is perhaps interesting that the word used in Numbers 15:30 to indicate separation from the community is the same one involved in making (cutting) a covenant, a normal word for severing (as in 1 Sam 24:4 or Is 8:15). The covenant involved separation from other nations, so it was appropriate that breaking it involved expulsion back to them.<sup>123</sup>

This covenantal separation prepares the way to examine the particular function of the sacrifices in Israel's temple cult. While sacrifices are seen before the exodus, Exodus 12-13 permanently insert sacrifice into Israel's calendar. Moreover, the other sacrifices detailed in Leviticus do not replace the Passover so much as they complement and explain the purifying work of the first Passover.<sup>124</sup> Overall, these sacrifices form a unified system that provided atonement for Israel until the greater lamb would come to take away sin once and for all.<sup>125</sup> Collectively, these different offerings explain what Christ did on the cross,<sup>126</sup> and

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<sup>122</sup>“One important characteristic of the sacrificial system in general is that the sacrifice was considered a gift in a communal context. The sacrificial system was part of *Israel's* covenant relationship with God” (Richard C. Gamble, *The Whole Counsel of God: God's Mighty Acts in the Old Testament* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2009], 437). Emphasis mine. A prevailing weakness with general atonement is its inability to explain how covenantal blessings—namely, forgiveness—can be given to those who stand outside the covenant. But then again, many generalists are not working with covenantal categories.

<sup>123</sup>Williams, *The Office of Christ*, 14.

<sup>124</sup>Following the anthropological work of Mary Douglas, Gordon J. Wenham “insist[s] that it is necessary to understand the whole ritual system and not just parts of it, or more precisely to understand the parts of it in the light of the whole” (“The Theology of Old Testament Sacrifice,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, 78; cf. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966]).

<sup>125</sup>At the canonical level, the unifying principle of the sacrifices is Jesus Christ himself (Luke 24:27; John 5:39; Eph 1:10; Heb 10:1). As S. H. Kellogg once said, “Everyone of these bloody offerings of Leviticus typified, and *was intended to typify*, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. The burnt-offering, represented Christ; the peace-offering, Christ; the sin-offering, Christ; the guilt-, or trespass-offering, Christ” (*Studies in Leviticus: Tabernacle Worship and the Daily Lives of God's People* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988], 45). Likewise,

when the question of extent is applied to them, it becomes evident that they are harbingers of a definite atonement. This can be seen in at least two ways.

**The Passover.** First, as Williams indicated above, the purpose of the Passover was to separate the people of Israel from the nation of Egypt.<sup>127</sup> Paul Hoskins explains how God sanctified Israel in the Passover, concluding, “As was the case with the earlier plagues (8:22-23), the Passover sacrifice indicates a separation between God’s people and Pharaoh’s people.”<sup>128</sup> It is not that the Passover was made for Israel *and* Egypt and only Israel partook. Rather, God designed the Passover to redeem Israel and destroy Egypt (Exod 9:15-17; 10:1-2).<sup>129</sup> In the historical narrative of Exodus, this is seen when Pharaoh and his army are destroyed in the Red Sea and YHWH is praised for being a victorious warrior (Exod 14-15).

Furthermore, the Passover was off limits to foreigners: “No foreigner shall eat of it, but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him” (Exod 12:43-44). From this qualification, the Passover is only shared with circumcised

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Symington puts the emphasis on the right syllable, when he comments, “It were much nearer the truth to maintain, that *the only real and proper sacrifice is that of Christ, and that all others were only figures of it*” (*On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ*, 114).

<sup>126</sup>Relating the antitype (Christ) to the types in Leviticus, John Murray explains, “We must also keep in view what we have reflected on already that the Levitical sacrifices were patterned after the heavenly exemplar, after what the epistle to the Hebrews calls ‘the heavenly things.’ The blood offerings of the Mosaic ritual were patterns of the grand offerings of Christ himself by which the things in the heavens were purified (Heb 9:23). This serves to confirm the thesis that what was constitutive in the Levitical sacrifices must also have been constitutive in the sacrifice of Christ. . . . We must interpret the sacrifice of Christ in terms of the Levitical patterns because they were themselves patterned after Christ’s offering” (*Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955], 27).

<sup>127</sup>It should not be forgotten that God intended to show his power over Pharaoh and Egypt through the death of his firstborn (Exod 4:21-23; 9:16; cf. Rom 9:16). Accordingly, the substitutionary work of the Passover is accompanied by a decisive victory over the serpent’s seed (James M. Hamilton, “The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman,” 30-55).

<sup>128</sup>Paul Hoskins, *That Scripture Might Be Fulfilled: Typology and the Death of Christ* (Xulon Press, 2009), 93.

members of the covenantal community.<sup>130</sup> Because circumcision functioned as the visible—although private—sign of the covenant, it is evident that one intention of the yearly celebration was to distinguish the true people of God.<sup>131</sup> The Passover was only for Israel. All together, this weighs in on the side of particularity, and shows again that God’s saving intention was for his covenant people alone.<sup>132</sup>

Second, the efficacy of the Passover is seen in the simple fact that it actually preserved the life of the firstborn in Exodus. Just as the Levitical sacrifices effected bodily purification for the people, the priest, and the dwelling of God; the Passover effected redemption. As Martin explains, “For whomsoever a Levitical priest sacerdotally officiated, he was completely successful—completely successful in averting the evil, or procuring the privilege, which his official action contemplated.”<sup>133</sup> While not forgetting the fact that these

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<sup>129</sup>Hoskins writes, “As was the case with earlier plagues (Exodus 8:22-23), the Passover sacrifice indicates a separation between God’s people and Pharaoh’s people” (ibid., 93).

<sup>130</sup>John Meade, in defining the origin and meaning of circumcision, argues that circumcision was a reminder to the sons of Israel of their priestly calling, and hence their special relationship with the Lord (“The Meaning of Circumcision in Israel: A Proposal for a Transfer of Rite from Egypt to Israel,” *Adorare Mente* 1 [2008]: 14–29, cited in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 273).

<sup>131</sup>“Circumcision was a ritual required by Abraham and his family signifying membership in the covenant community. Negatively, the person who remained uncircumcised would be cut off from the covenant community. Positively, circumcision symbolized complete devotion to the service of God as a priesthood” (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 274-75).

<sup>132</sup>Additionally, in the Passover ceremony, there existed a sacrificial proportionality where smaller families were instructed to share their meal with their nearest neighbor if a lamb was too much for them alone (Exod 12:3-4). Prefiguring the definite work of Christ, paschal lambs were sacrificed in proportion to the needed serving size (Motyer, *The Message of Exodus*, 136-37). This prefigures the way Christ’s sacrifice was intended to provide life-giving food and drink to all those whom God gave to Christ (John 6:37), i.e., the same covenant community who would receive his message to eat his flesh and drink his blood (John 6:53). While in the new covenant the boundaries of the covenant are extended to include the elect from all nations, particularity remains. Nothing is wasted in the ancient Passover (Stuart, *Exodus*, 273-74), and nothing is wasted in the antitype, either. All those for whom Christ atoned will be saved.

<sup>133</sup>Martin, *The Atonement*, 65. Martin continues and connects this typological success to the greater success of Christ, saying, “If the same thing is not admitted concerning the priesthood of Christ, then we are logically landed, in the *first* place, in this most offensive result, that Christ’s Priesthood is relatively inferior to that of Levi; and, in the *second* place, in this prodigious paralogsism also—that is, if the Levitical priesthood was



animal sacrifices were not able to ultimately save, YHWH's prescribed system of atonement was effective in its covenantal context. Reymond rightly remarks, "As a biblical principle, wherever the blood of a *sacrifice* is shed as God prescribes so that he stays his judgment against the sinner one may infer that expiation or the 'covering' of sin has been effected."<sup>134</sup> In other words, the Passover, while instructing the Israelites that they needed a greater sacrifice, was offered with the confidence that it would effectively redeem. The confidence garnished from God's promises is a theme that runs throughout Scripture, and the reality of God's salvation is only increased when the blood of God's Son is the atoning agent.<sup>135</sup> More could be said about the Passover, but we must turn to the other Levitical sacrifices.

**Leviticus 1-7.** With the presence of God dwelling in Israel's midst (Exod 40:34-38), God gave Moses a detailed but not exhaustive list of instructions for sacrifices and offerings.<sup>136</sup> These offerings were necessary for a sinful people "to maintain their covenantal relationship with God."<sup>137</sup> In what follows, I will consider how the Levitical system of

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typical of Christ's—namely, that uniform and complete success in the one is, by Divine wisdom, erected into a type and symbol of extensive failure in the other" (ibid., 65-66).

<sup>134</sup>Robert L. Reymond, *The Lamb of God: The Bible's Unfolding Revelation of Sacrifice* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2006), 24.

<sup>135</sup>This is one of many arguments made by Owen in his extensive treatise defending definite atonement. Listing text after text, Owen makes the point that the plain reading of Scripture presents salvation as an efficacious work (John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959], 46-48). In Israel, the physical deliverance of Israel from Egypt provides a concrete illustration of this spiritual reality—even if the spiritual reality is not yet efficacious in the old covenant.

<sup>136</sup>John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 323. For a further exposition of the Levitical sacrifices, see Richard E. Averbeck, "Offerings and Sacrifices," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 4:996-1022; Ross, *Holiness to the Lord*, 26-31; Wenham, *Leviticus*, 47-128; Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual*, 39-102; Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 149-81; Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*.

<sup>137</sup>Ross, *Holiness to the Lord*, 30; cf. D. J. Davies, "An Interpretation of Sacrifice in Leviticus," *ZAW* 89 (1977): 387-99; Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 29-37.

sacrifice adds to the typological mold (*Vorbild*), which Christ will later fulfill. Space prohibits a full articulation of these sacrifices, but at least four truths can be observed.

First, the priest does not kill the animal. In each of the sacrifices of Leviticus 1-7, the men of Israel supply the animal and shed the blood (Lev 1:3-5, 10-11,14; 3:1-2, 6-8, 12-13; 4:13-16, 27-29; 32-33). The priest's role was to apply the blood.<sup>138</sup> As Kellogg points out, "It was in this sprinkling of the blood that the atoning work was completed."<sup>139</sup> This points to the fact that the priests main work is not, in a theological sense, atonement accomplished, but atonement applied.<sup>140</sup> In fact, the idea of division between bloodshed and application—an idea that is common among generalists—is completely foreign to Leviticus. A priest who fails to apply blood to altar disqualifies himself from temple service.

Second, the blood applied is technically what accounts for atonement and forgiveness. In Leviticus 4:20, "forgiveness" is the result of the atoning sacrifice.<sup>141</sup> In each instance, atonement and forgiveness are mentioned together. Thus, when the priest *applies* the blood, he atones for the sins of the people and effects forgiveness.<sup>142</sup> Biblically-speaking, there is no concept of atonement without application. Consider Vos's comments which unify redemption accomplished with redemption applied.

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<sup>138</sup>The exception to this rule is when the priest is himself guilty (Lev 4:4), or when the animal is so small its blood must be extracted at the altar itself (1:14-16), or when the priest represents the congregation himself, as in the Day of Atonement (16:15-16).

<sup>139</sup>Kellogg, *Studies in Leviticus*, 59. Likewise, Owen states, "It was the blood whereby the atonement was made" (*The Priesthood of Christ*, 224).

<sup>140</sup>See Lev 1:5, 11; 3:3, 8, 13; 4:16-18, 25, 30, 34; 5:8-9; 7:14. For a discussion of these sacrifices, see Kellogg, *Studies in Leviticus*, 58-60, 146-55.

<sup>141</sup>See Lev 4:26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7. For a more thorough explanation of atonement in Leviticus, see Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*.

<sup>142</sup>This is not to deny the place of "faith" in salvation. However, it is worth noting that in Leviticus 1-7, faith is not mentioned. The effectiveness of the sacrifice is based on the priest's ministration.

We are inclined to draw distinctions here which are necessary for dogmatic precision. Thus we distinguish between the atonement itself and the application of the atonement. The symbolism of the ritual takes these two into one. When it says that ‘blood covers’ (that is a technical term for expiation), it means to describe in one word the atonement as we call it, plus the application of the atonement (which we call justification). Now in this sense the process of covering is not completed until the blood, as the symbol of death, has been applied to the altar, i.e., brought into contact with God, who dwells in the altar. This is the simple reason why the law refrains from saying that the slaying atones, and why it is so careful to emphasize that the application of the blood to the altar has this effect.<sup>143</sup>

In the details of Leviticus, it must be maintained that atonement proper is found in the application of the blood to the altar, not simply in the flow of the blood. This understanding is confirmed by Jacob Milgrom, when he borrows an analogy from Oscar Wilde’s novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.<sup>144</sup> He explains that there is a real relationship between sinner and sancta: Even if unseen—like in the case of Dorian Gray—Israel’s sins and ritual impurities pollute the house of the Lord.<sup>145</sup> There is an imperceptible but real connection between the holy altar and the holy people.<sup>146</sup> Accordingly, when the altar receives the blood of the sacrifice, the people of Israel are cleansed and forgiven. The result of these two observations is that the priest who applies the blood literally effects forgiveness for the congregation of individuals whom they represent. While the atonement only purified the flesh, it was *effective* in doing what it was designed to do (Heb 9:13).

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<sup>143</sup>Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000), 164.

<sup>144</sup>Jacob Milgrom, “Israel’s Sanctuary: The Priestly *Picture of Dorian Gray*,” *RB* 83 (1976): 390-99.

<sup>145</sup>In fact, different degrees of sin pollute different areas of the tabernacle/temple, and in turn require different levels of sanctification (ibid., 393-94). The worst offenses “must await the annual purgation of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement” (ibid., 393).

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., 398. Likewise, Jenson adds, “The nearer the blood comes to the centre of the sanctuary, the more effective is the purification” (*Graded Holiness*, 173). Hence, the most “effective” sacrifice is the Day of Atonement, which is the sacrifice that Hebrews refers to most frequently. Expanding on Jenson’s stated

Often, opponents of definite atonement conflate the spiritual nature of the new covenant with the fleshly nature of the old.<sup>147</sup> As a result, they make arguments that confuse the way in which the high priest serves as a type of Christ. For instance, when David Allen critiques the analogy between the Aaronic high priest and Christ, he asks “Are we to assume that each and every member of each of the twelve tribes of Israel was genuinely a recipient of the benefits of the sacrifice made by the high priest such that upon their death they were “saved” and went to heaven?”<sup>148</sup> Rightly, he observes that the OT priest does not save eternally the people of Israel, but wrongly, he concludes that the blood of bulls and goats was ineffective.<sup>149</sup> It was ineffective to save their souls (Heb 10:4), but Hebrews 9:13 assumes

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principle: If Christ’s blood was brought into heaven itself, how could it not effect the eternal salvation of those whom he propitiated.

<sup>147</sup>One example is Gary Shultz, (“A Biblical and Theological Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement” [Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008], 101-06). For instance, his treatment of Isa 53 shows no recognition of the covenantal categories which are shifting in Isaiah (cf. Peter J. Gentry, “The Atonement in Isaiah’s Fourth Servant Song [Isaiah 52:13-53:12],” *SBJT* 11 [2007]: 22; O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980], 224). Therefore, he misuses the fourth Servant song to support unlimited atonement because he does not discern how Isa 53-55 is describing the new covenant. I will return to Isa 53 and the use of “prophetic universalism” in chap. 6.

<sup>148</sup>David Allen, “A Selective Review and Critique of *Whomever He Wills* –Part 2E,” SBC Today [blog on-line]; accessed 7 September 2012; available from <http://sbctoday.com/2012/08/30/a-selective-review-and-critique-of-whomever-he-wills-%E2%80%93part-2e/>; Internet.

<sup>149</sup>Speaking of those Israelites who were saved according to the flesh but spiritually lost because of their unbelief (Ps 95; cf. 1 Cor 10:5), Allen writes, “Were these not members of the twelve tribes whose names the high priest wore on his ephod? Did the high priest make sacrifices on the Day of Atonement for them? It would appear so.” Allen assumes that because many of these were spiritually lost—though perhaps not all of them (see Num 14:20)—that the work of the priest could not be effective. In other words, the priest atoned for those who would be ultimately condemned. However, his observation proves the point being made here. Only Christ, as high priest, is able to make atonement that cleanses the conscience of sin and dead works (Heb 9:14, 26; 10:4). What the high priest under the Mosaic administration did was to atone for the flesh, or as I. Howard Marshall puts it, that which “deals with the limited life of an earthly community,” one that dwelt in the presence of God (“Soteriology in Hebrews,” in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 269). In this way, God did relinquish his anger. He did allow the people to live bodily for a season, even if the first generation was cut off from the promised land. Allen’s observation does not overturn efficacious nature of the old covenant; it only helps clarify the manner in which the sacrifices effected (and typified an effectual) atonement.

that the blood of bulls and goats was efficacious to purify the flesh.<sup>150</sup> Failure to grasp the efficacy of the old covenant—provisional and fleshly as it was—results in a misaligned typology between the high priest and Jesus. The comparison in Hebrews 9:13-14 is not between the high priests inability to cleanse the soul and Jesus ability—though this is true—the contrast is between the efficacy of the OT sacrifices to cleanse the body and the new covenant efficacy to cleanse the conscience.<sup>151</sup>

Third, the efficacy of the blood itself speaks to the definite nature of the atonement. While stepping outside of Leviticus 1-7, Leviticus 17 provides a “general theological principle” that applies to all the atoning sacrifices.<sup>152</sup> Moses records, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life” (v. 11). The significance of this sacrificial truth is that the blood that is shed and applied is always effective. As Sklar persuasively argues, the blood of the atonement *always* ransoms *and* purifies.<sup>153</sup> Applied theologically, this would result in the twofold reality of justification (i.e. forgiveness) and positional sanctification (i.e. cleansing). In this way, the blood applied always effects both. To confirm this reading, Hebrews 9:22-28 indicates that the ones who receive forgiveness are

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<sup>150</sup>Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 322-26. Even David L. Allen (*Hebrews*, NAC, vol. 35 [Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010], 472-73) generally affirms the effectiveness of this bodily sanctification, but he does not seem to perceive how the efficacy of the OT sacrifices “serve[s] as a model for what Christ accomplishes perfectly” (Marshall, “Soteriology in Hebrews,” 269). Interestingly, Marshall, who rejects definite atonement, rightly perceives the typological relationship between the bodily purification of the OT sacrifice and the spiritual efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice.

<sup>151</sup>Barry Joslin, *Hebrews, Christ, and the Law: The Theology of the Mosaic Law in Hebrews 7:1-10:18* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2008), 232-33.

<sup>152</sup>Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 181. For a thorough defense of this view of the blood, see Sklar’s whole chapter (*ibid.*, 163-82).

<sup>153</sup>At the end of his lexical analysis of *kpr*, Sklar concludes, “Since both inadvertent sin and major impurity endanger (requiring ransom) and pollute (requiring purgation), sacrificial atonement must both ransom

the ones who will ultimately be sanctified and glorified. The same cannot be said by generalists because for them many for whom Christ died will still die in their sins.

Fourth and finally, as a unified system of sacrifice, each picture in the sacrificial collage provides graphic information to understand all that Christ did at Calvary. To say it another way, when Christ makes atonement “for” someone, he not only makes a sin offering, he is also making a grain offering, a burnt offering, and so on. Christ cannot make a *one time* sin offering for all people without also making an *on going* burnt offering for all people.<sup>154</sup> As a faithful priest who fulfills all of the Law (Matt 5:17; Rom 10:4; Heb 10:5-10), Christ would have had to burn the sin offering on the altar outside of camp, thus removing sin (Lev 4:19, 25, 31, 35), and indeed Hebrews 13:12-13 indicates that he did just that. Likewise, as a priest, he would have to eat the holy portion of the meat,<sup>155</sup> indicating that the sacrifice was accepted on behalf of the community for whom he atoned (Lev 6:16-18, 23, 26, 29; 7:6, 15-27).<sup>156</sup> Again, there are indications throughout his ministry that he ate with his followers.<sup>157</sup> More to the point, his covenant meal—the Passover-turned-Lord’s Supper—promises a

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and cleanse. The verb used to describe this dual event is the verb *kipper*, and the power of the *kipper*-rite to accomplish both is due to the lifeblood of the animal” (*Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 187).

<sup>154</sup>Kellogg observes, “The burnt-offering teaches us to remember that Christ has not only died for our sins [i.e., passive obedience], but has also consecrated Himself for us to God in full self-surrender in our behalf [i.e., active obedience and intercession] . . . And for this reason it is for us an ever-prevailing argument for own acceptance, and for the gracious bestowment for Christ’s sake of all that there is in Him for us” (*Studies in Leviticus*, 67).

<sup>155</sup>Lev 10:12-20 indicates the seriousness of eating the meal. Verse 17 goes so far as to say that the eating of the sin offering was part of the atonement (Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 159-60; R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1980], 118-20).

<sup>156</sup>Harrison notes how the priest ate the sacrifice in order to “bear the iniquity” of the people (Lev 6:26; 10:17): “It is thus made clear that the priests are mediators of divine grace, assisting the populace to make atonement for sin and then partaking of the offering, indicating its full acceptance by God and the restoration of fellowship of the people” (*The Book of Leviticus*, 119). Atonement includes more than just shedding blood; it also includes a meal, which is “an essential element in the offering of the sacrifice” (Rooker, *Leviticus*, 163).

<sup>157</sup>Tim Chester, *A Meal with Jesus: Discovering Grace, Community, and Mission around the Table* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), esp. 101-138.

banqueting feast for those who are a part of his covenant. Therefore, by way of typology we can see that Jesus did not make a general atonement for sin that required another movement of grace (i.e. personal application). Rather, for everyone for whom he died, he also removed the defilement of sin and ate the holy meal, such that the covenant community he represented would be holy (Heb 13:20). That is to say, because his blood was covenant blood, Jesus guarantees that everyone who benefits from the blood of the covenant will eat and drink in the kingdom to come (Matt 26:26-28).

In the end, when generalists argue that Christ made a universal propitiation, they tear asunder the system of sacrifice outlined in Leviticus. When Lightner states, “Nowhere is it declared that this obedience in life was substitutionary or vicarious in nature,”<sup>158</sup> he misses the way that the totality of Christ’s life and death merits the covenantal blessings of God and fulfills all the sacrifices. By denying the importance of Christ’s active obedience, Lightner exposes how his view of the cross is extracted from the framework of the Bible and uninformed by a biblical typology of the priesthood. Likewise, Demarest argues that Christ dies “as a substitute, a propitiation, a ransom, etc. for the universe of sinners,” but he limits Christ’s application.<sup>159</sup> He inserts a division in the nature of the atonement that is not present in Leviticus. By consequence, he misconstrues the extent of the atonement. Alternatively, a careful reading of the sacrificial system anticipates a definite atonement performed by the perfect priest.

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<sup>158</sup>Robert P. Lightner, *The Death of Christ: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 21.

<sup>159</sup>Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 191-93; cf. Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 849-52.

**The Day of Atonement.** I will conclude this section with a consideration of *Yom Kippur* outlined in Leviticus 16. The passage begins by making explicit connection to “the death of the two sons of Aaron” (v. 1). With this introduction, the whole chapter is designed to make sure Israel approaches God in the prescribed way.<sup>160</sup> Leviticus 16 is directed primarily towards the high priest who is commanded to enter to the holy of holies once a year to make purification for the sanctuary, the altar, the priests, and the people (v. 33). This passage is of great importance to the work of Christ because the author of Hebrews depends so heavily on it to make his case in Hebrews 9-10.<sup>161</sup>

In the immediate context, there are a number of things to be mentioned which continue to prove the particularity of the priestly work. First, when the priest approaches the Lord, he goes on behalf of Israel. What is important to see is how Aaron moves from the congregation (Lev 16:5) to the holy of holies (vv. 6-17) and back to the altar where the people would bring their offerings (vv. 18-19). In this way, the congregation of Israel is in “solidarity” with the high priest, and vice versa.<sup>162</sup> For instance, his humble attire (v. 4, 32) reflects his representation on behalf of the nation.<sup>163</sup> Likewise, the people’s acts of contrition

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<sup>160</sup>Harrison, *The Book of Leviticus*, 168.

<sup>161</sup>Guthrie compares Lev 16 and Heb 9, saying, “Leviticus explains that atonement had to be made for the holiest place and the tent of meeting because of the impurity and rebellion of the Israelites. Thus, in the case of the new-covenant offering of Christ, the heavenly tabernacle had to be cleansed because of the sins of the people who would be brought into the covenant. The heavenly tabernacle is cleansed in conjunction with the cleansing of God’s people” (George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews,” in *Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. D.A. Carson and G.K. Beale [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 975).

<sup>162</sup>“On the Day of Atonement the high priest is closely identified with the rest of Israel” (Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 200). For more on the representative nature of the “congregation” (*‘edah*), see Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 98-99.

<sup>163</sup>Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual*, 90-95; Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 199-201. Gorman asserts that the “distinctiveness” of the high priest on the Day of Atonement is “his commonality, his indistinctiveness, and this indistinctiveness serves to emphasize his identification with the people” (91).



(Lev 16:29-34; 23:26-32) mirror his own humble posture as he enters God's presence.<sup>164</sup> In this way, the priest's actions and apparel are expressly related to the covenant people of God, and not those outside the covenant.<sup>165</sup>

Second, in the oblation itself, the high priest is said to "kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people" (v. 15a). Here again, the work of the priest is *for* God's elect (according to the flesh). More powerfully though, the verse describes how the priest brings the sacrificial blood "inside the veil...sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat" (v. 15b). Next, he makes atonement for the "holy place" and the "tent of meeting" (v. 16) as well as the altar (v. 18). Since each of these areas have been defiled by the sins of the people, each of these areas needs cleansing. Thus, when verse 17 says that the priest makes "atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel," it

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<sup>164</sup>Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 230.

<sup>165</sup>It is worth noting the presence of strangers in Israel on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29). Since a main pillar of the argument here depends on the tight relationship between priest and covenant people, it could be countered that the presence of strangers and their participation in the Day of Atonement would negate the typological structures advanced here. However, the opposite is the case (*contra* Eric Hankins, "Jason Allen and The Gospel Project," SBC Today [blog on-line]; accessed October 18, 2012, available from <http://sbctoday.com/2012/10/18/jason-allen-and-the-gospel-project>; Internet). By definition, strangers are those who are uncircumcised and thus not apart of the covenant community (Exod 12:48). Consequently, any benefits they might have from dwelling in Canaan comes from their close proximity to God's people and not from God himself (cf. Num 15:16, 29). In their case, participation is not a matter of spiritual benefit but national policy. This is part and parcel of the theocratic nature of OT Israel and the mixed community that existed there. The priestly system of sacrifice was designed to bless the covenant community (cf. Num 6:24-26). By contrast, the new covenant, as it will be argued later, is not a mixed multitude, even if local churches have elect and non-elect on their membership rolls (cf. Stephen J. Wellum, "Beyond Mere Ecclesiology: Toward a Theology of the Church," in *The Community of Jesus: A Theology of the Church*, ed. Kendell H. Easley and Christopher W. Morgan (Nashville: B&H Academic, forthcoming 2013). There may be an analogy between the temporary blessings that uncircumcised sojourners received when they lived in Israel and the temporary blessings which unbelievers receive as they dwell among Christian families or attend Christian churches; however, the nature of the new covenant is fundamentally different from that of the old.

should be observed that the blood he applies to the mercy seat, holy place, and altar are in direct spatial correspondence to the high priest, the Levites, and the people of Israel.<sup>166</sup>

Third, the employment of a second goat on this day gives explanation for what takes place behind the veil. When the first goat was slain and its blood was applied to the various regions of the tabernacle, then in corresponding fashion, Aaron (the high priest) puts “all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, and all their sins . . . on the head of the goat [Azazel, v. 26] and send[s] it away into the wilderness” (v. 21). The effect is to remove the sins of the people and to send them into a “remote area,” far from the remembrance of the Lord (cf. Ps 103:11-13; Mic 7:19). The symbolism of the two goats is mutually-interpreting,<sup>167</sup> and the effect is to purge the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of the people for another year.<sup>168</sup> The efficacy of the blood applied to the mercy seat is evidenced in the non-return of the scapegoat, and the particular nature of the atonement is witnessed in Leviticus 16:22 which reads that the goat was sent out “to bear all their [i.e., Israel’s] iniquities on itself to a remote area.”

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<sup>166</sup>Jenson, *The Graded Holiness*, 138. André Feuillet (*The Priesthood of Christ and His Ministers*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 52-69) makes the observation that when Jesus prays in John 17—or at least, as John records it—the structure parallels Lev 16. Jesus first prays for himself (vv. 1-8), then for his priestly associates (vv. 9-19), and then for those who would believe in his message (vv. 20-26). In this way, Jesus—though not needing atonement himself—functions as a high priest carrying out the duties of *Yom Kippur* for his covenant people.

<sup>167</sup>“The two [goats] were intended to convey but one idea, and are a mutual complement of each other, they gave a symbolical representation of the mode of taking away sin and merited punishment” (Smeaton, *The Apostles Doctrine of the Atonement*, 25). Amazingly, Ralph Wardlaw, a vigorous opponent of definite atonement, in an earlier work against Socinianism wrote about the efficacious nature of *Yom Kippur*: “This *goat of the sin-offering*, as we learn from the intermediate verses, was one of two, which Aaron was to take from the congregation of Israel—and after *it* had been thus offered in sacrifice, and its blood brought within the vail [*sic*], the remaining goat, with all the iniquities of the children of Israel laid upon its head, by the solemn vicarious confession of the high-priest, was to be sent off alive into the wilderness, bearing away, emblematically, as a devoted victim, this load of *atoned* and *acknowledged* guilt—The figure was necessarily *double*; the slain goat typifying the atonement of Christ, and the scapegoat representing its efficacy” (*Discourses on the Principal Points of the Socinian Controversy* (Glasgow: A. and J. M. Duncan, 1814), 190-197).

<sup>168</sup>On the relationship between purgation and atonement, see Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 105-59.

Finally, as with the sacrifices in Leviticus 1-7, there is no division between atonement and application, but rather for all who are in the assembly, the priest makes effectual atonement, so that the people of God can live with God for another year.<sup>169</sup> Now, as it was mentioned above, atonement in the OT is only according to the flesh. However, it should be remembered, God's election of Israel was also according to the flesh. Thus, in regards to typology, the atonement according to the flesh corresponded with the election according to the flesh, and in both of these types, God intends Israel to be an example and a tutor for later generations (1 Cor 10:6, 11). In the OT system of sacrifice, God's dwelling depended upon fleshly offerings, not because they would ultimately save, but in order to purify the place where YHWH resided and in order to show the remnant of Israel and new covenant believers what God was going to effect in the Messiah's death.<sup>170</sup>

To conclude this section, it should be reiterated that the Pentateuch presents the priest as taking the blood offered for the people and applying it to the altar of God. This axiomatic truth is fundamental to the whole ministry of the priesthood. In the case of *Yom Kippur*, once the high priest made the necessary sacrifices on the bronze altar, it is inconceivable that he would refuse to apply the blood to the mercy seat. Likewise, in the

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<sup>169</sup>The priests protect the congregation of Israel by purging the tabernacle of any defilement that might offend their benevolent deity. As Sklar observes, "the major pollutions do not only *defile*, they also *endanger*, and thus the *kipper*-rite must cleanse the impurity (purgation) and rescue the endangered person (*koper*)" (*Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*, 130).

<sup>170</sup>Space requires us to press ahead, but it is worth noting another place in Leviticus where sacrificial typology is suggestive of definite atonement. In Lev 23, three annual feasts are mentioned. Taking the position that Christ, as the lamb of God (John 1:29; Rev 5:6, 8, 12, 13), fulfilled all these festival sacrifices, it is legitimate to argue that the Passover (vv. 4-8), the Feast of Firstfruits (vv. 9-14), and Pentecost (vv. 15-22) respectively typify Christ's atoning death (1 Cor 5:7), justifying resurrection (John 12:24; 1 Cor 15:23; cp. Lev 23:11 and Rom 4:25), and blessed gift of the Spirit (Acts 2). Significantly, in each festival, the scope of the participants is the same. It is always and only those in Israel. Moreover, since all three festivals are required by God, they could not be divided without breaching the Law. Applied to Jesus and his community of faith, Jesus became the Passover lamb for those whom he would raise to new life, the same ones who would receive the Spirit. Clearly, the scope of Christ's atonement, resurrection, and Pentecost was coterminous.

daily offerings of sacrifice and incense, the corresponding altars (the bronze altar for sacrifices and the golden altar for incense) indicate that what was offered in the courtyard anticipated the priest's intercession, while the priestly intercession depended on the previous sacrifice.<sup>171</sup> In other words, Israel's Law always conjoined sacrifice, intercession, and application. This unified complex of priestly activities, led William Symington to observe,

Unless a sacrifice had been previously offered on the brazen altar, he [the priest] could not enter within the veil, [or] at least his entering could serve no purpose whatsoever. But if a sacrifice had been made, then the blood of the burnt-offering had to be carried by him into the holy place and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat. The one was as much a part of his priestly function as the other; and if the latter prefigured Christ [i.e., the appearance and application of the blood] in any part of his sacerdotal service, so also did the former [i.e., the vicarious sacrifice]; *to separate them is to put asunder what God has joined together.*<sup>172</sup>

Applied to the extent of the atonement, it is evident that the particular location of the sacrifice, the unity of sacrifice and application, and the close relationship between the priests and the people all prefigure a definite atonement.

### Summary

In this chapter, I have traced the lines of the typological mold (*Vorbild*) set forth in the Pentateuch. I have argued for three distinct orientations of the priestly office, and named them *Kohen Victor*, *Kohen Teacher*, and *Kohen Mediator*. Each of these orientations argues for definite atonement in its own way. Together, they make a compelling case that the office of the high priest only atones for the covenant community, the same people whom he teaches, and that all encroachers are forcibly removed. While it will need to be clarified how

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<sup>171</sup>This will developed further in chap. 7, when I discuss John 17.

<sup>172</sup>Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ*, 112. Emphasis mine.

these apply to Christ, it is necessary to apply each of them to his person and work, as well as to examine how the priestly office might undergo some ‘reengineering’ in the Prophets.

Therefore, in the next chapter, we will see how the prophets used these molds to evaluate the priests of Israel, and how over time these duties coalesced with the royal office, to provide a better, stronger priest-king, a Messiah, who would come to embody the eschatological hope of a better priesthood. What we will see is that while the outreach of the priesthood increases from Israel to the nations, the shape of the priesthood remains particular and limited to the covenant people of God. While it would miss much of the texture of the priestly type by skipping to the NT at this point, by now in the biblical account, the major design of the priesthood has been established. And from its original *Vorbild*, it is evident that the priesthood according to Moses is intended to represent a particular people with absolute efficacy. How Christ will fulfill and super-fulfill this typological structure will be worked out over the next three chapters.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE DISFIGUREMENT OF THE PRIESTLY TYPE

The last two chapters formulated a multi-faceted priestly mold from the text of the Pentateuch. In chapter 3, I observed how the Patriarchs functioned as covenant mediators, defenders of God's dwelling place, teachers of the law, and "sacrificers" who secured God's favor for those their family members. This anticipated the primary duties of the priests of Israel explicated in chapter 4. In Exodus-Deuteronomy, the typological mold was formed as I presented the priest as *Kohen Victor*, *Kohen Teacher*, and *Kohen Mediator*. Combined, those roles shaped all that he did, and provide for the rest of Scripture a priestly *Vorbild*.<sup>1</sup>

Moving from the Law to the Prophets, it becomes important to remember this prototypical pattern of priesthood, as we examine how the priests functioned in the time between Sinai and Zion. More specifically, this chapter will argue that what is observed of the priests between Joshua and Malachi is a progressive, undulating "fall" of the office. Repeatedly, the errant priests of history disfigure the legislated ideal. Yet, at the same time, there begins in 1 Samuel 2:35 a promise of a greater priest who will keep the covenant and secure blessings for God's people. Accordingly, this chapter will trace the "fall" of the priestly type; chapter 6 will present the greater eschatological priest.

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<sup>1</sup>Admittedly, the Aaronic priests and the Levites had differing spheres of service, but each exercised duties respective to defense, instruction, and sacrifice.

Instead of taking a book-by-book approach, this chapter will trace the longitudinal themes of the priest as guardian, teacher, and sacrificer. It will show how the priests failed in each area, and it will apply the prophetic criticisms to current theological constructions of Christ's person and work, with specific application for the atonement's extent. Listening carefully to the Prophets, it will be possible to evaluate the biblical fidelity of general atonement.

In the Former Prophets (Josh-2 Kgs), there are over four hundred priestly references (*kohen* or *lewi*),<sup>2</sup> and in the Latter Prophets, priests are mentioned in all but four books (Obad, Jon, Nah, Hab). In these later chapters of Israel's history, Klingbeil rightly observes that "the biblical picture of priests and Levites . . . is complex and multifaceted, but generally it seems to be in agreement with pentateuchal legislation."<sup>3</sup> It is in agreement with the writings of Moses, but sadly, the history of the priesthood is marked by covenantal disobedience and immorality.<sup>4</sup> To grasp the variegated failings of the priests, I will show how the priests failed in guarding God's temple, in teaching God's people, and in offering effective sacrifices. Theological application will follow each evaluation.

### **The Priests as Guardians (*Kohen Victor*)**

As was set out in the last two chapters, one of the primary duties of the priest was to "serve" and "guard" (Gen 2:15; Num 3:1-8). In the Law, the priests were commissioned to guard the altar, while the Levites guarded the house of the Lord. This arrangement is

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<sup>2</sup>G. A. Klingbeil, "Priests and Levites," in *DOTHB*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 811-12.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 818.

<sup>4</sup>A "history of the priesthood" (i.e., an historical survey of what the Bible says about the priests) should be distinguished from 'P,' a purported priestly history that stands behind the texts.

reiterated in 1 Chronicles. Most explicitly, 1 Chronicles details priestly service in God's house (23:1-26:32), which includes the creation of "4,000 gatekeepers" (1 Chr 23:5; 26:1-19; cf. Ezra 2:70; 7:7; Ps 84:10). Likewise, in the Latter Prophets, "Priests were responsible for controlling behavior in the temple area (Jer. 29:26) and were given the authority needed to do it (Jer 20:1-2)."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, when Jehoshaphat was anointed king, 2 Kings 11 records "that the head priest oversaw an armed patrol unit."<sup>6</sup> Verse 11 even includes the fact that weapons were stored in the house of the Lord, evidencing the guardian role of the priests.<sup>7</sup> All in all, the OT witness is clear: Priests functioned as the guardians of God's holy place.

Unfortunately, such devotion was inconsistent at best. While there would be high points, such as the time that Azariah and eighty priests stood against King Uzziah (2 Chr 26:16-21), more often the priests defiled themselves, failed to withstand encroachers, and even recruited Gentiles to serve in their place. As a result, God sent prophets to call the priests and the people back to covenant faithfulness (Jer 7:25; 25:4). In what follows, we will listen to what the prophets say about the priestly failure to guard God's sanctuary.

### **Prophetic Criticism**

In the book of Hosea, there are a number of statements addressed to the priests. The most prominent is found in Hosea 4:6, which condemns the priests for the people's destruction due to a lack of knowledge. This verse will be considered under the priest's role

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<sup>5</sup>Richard D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 47.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. Peter Leithart observes how God used the heroism of Jehoida, the chief priest, to bring about the successful installation of a Davidic king (*1-2 Kings* [Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005], 225-31).

<sup>7</sup>Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 838; see also, Richard D. Patterson and Hermann J. Austel, *1-2 Kings*, in vol. 3 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 215-19.



as teacher, but the seriousness of the crime mentioned here sets the tone for the rest of the book. In Hosea 5:1, the priests are addressed, along with the king, and they are indicted for ensnaring the people of Israel. From the content of the chapter, it is evident that the priests have failed to guard the people of Israel. Their idolatrous ways have caused them to lose God (v. 4), and worse, God has abandoned them (v. 6). In verse 8, the priests are called to blow the horn in Gibeah and the trumpet in Ramah.<sup>8</sup> In Israel's history, it was the priest who interceded on behalf of Israel, but in this instance, the priest's prayers are silent.

Next, in Hosea 6:9, Hosea compares the priests to a band of robbers. The priests were forbidden from even approaching death (Lev 21:1-3), but now they were the cause of death and defilement (Hos 6:10). Whereas the priests were given to Israel as a gift (Num 18:6-7) in order to protect them from God's wrath (17:12-13), now the priests and Levites have returned to their previous violent ways (cf. Gen 34:1-31; 49:5-7), and their hands are defiled with blood.<sup>9</sup> Instead of using their authorized use of force to prevent encroachers from entering God's presence, the priests have used force for their own advantage.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, in close proximity to Hosea 6:7, the priestly failure may help explain Israel's breach of covenant that Hosea compares with Adam. While the use of "Adam" continues to pose problems for interpreters, the priestly indictment in verse 9 adds weight to the arguments that Hosea is comparing Israel's breach in covenant to that of the historical

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<sup>8</sup>"According to Numbers 10:8; 31:6, only the priests blew trumpets" (H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, WBC, vol. 16 [Waco: Word, 1985], 374).

<sup>9</sup>J. Andrew Dearman, *Hosea*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 198; Thomas E. McComiskey, "Hosea," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas E. McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998).

<sup>10</sup>If M. Daniel Carroll R. (*Hosea*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 260) is correct to associate Hos 6:7-9 with the insurgency recorded in 2 Kgs 15:23-25, the indictment becomes more clear, even if the historical

Adam. Just as Adam failed to keep God's priestly command and guard the garden from the defilement of the unclean serpent, so too, Israel failed to keep the covenant because its priests failed to fulfill their duties. All in all, whatever one decides about Hosea 6:7,<sup>11</sup> the presentation of the priests in Hosea is that they have failed to protect Israel from defilement.

Moving to the post-exilic prophets, Jeremiah recounts the way that the priests "rule at the [false prophets'] instruction."<sup>12</sup> Instead of maintaining loyalty to YHWH as they did in Exodus 32, the priests have been led astray and empowered to do wrong.<sup>13</sup> According to the stipulations of Deuteronomy 17-18, the priests (along with other leaders in Israel) had the right and responsibility to put to death false teachers (17:1-7) and remove fortune-tellers and diviners from the land (18:9-14).<sup>14</sup> The presence of such false teaching in Israel (Jer 6:13; 8:10, 18-19; 23:9ff) indicates how the priests failed to oppose falsehood. As a result, the whole nation was corrupted (5:30-31).

Israel's corruption is seen most dramatically in the book of Ezekiel. As a priest himself (1:3), Ezekiel is uniquely qualified to receive oracles from God pertaining to the temple, the sacrificial system, and the priesthood.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, his prophecies often focus on

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details are hidden. Instead of using their priestly swords to defend God's ark from highway robbers (Num 3:14-39), they have become highway robbers themselves.

<sup>11</sup>For defense of reading Hos 6:7 as a reference to the first covenant with Adam, and one that understands Adam as a priest-king, see John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19:6* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 202-03; Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 217-20; and Thomas E. McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 215-16.

<sup>12</sup>J. A. Thompson, *A Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 250-52.

<sup>13</sup>Michael L. Brown, *Jeremiah*, in vol. 7 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 144-45.

<sup>14</sup>Tremper Longman III, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 60.

<sup>15</sup>Terry J. Betts, "Ezekiel the Priest: A Custodian of Tôrâ" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002), 105.

the leaders of Israel (Ezek 33-34), especially the priests and Levites (7:26; 22:26; 40-48).<sup>16</sup> However, the greatest indictment of not guarding the temple is witnessed in Ezekiel 8-11. In this, the first of two temple visions, Ezekiel recounts the “divine abandonment” of the temple.<sup>17</sup> Left unprotected by the priests, unclean worshipers have infiltrated its walls (cf. 44:6-8), and now God is bringing judgment on Jerusalem by abandoning his sanctuary (8:6).

What is described in the vision explains why YHWH is departing, and it is intrinsically related to the priests. Ezekiel 8 chronicles four scenes, each occurring in various parts of the temple complex. The first “abomination” Ezekiel encounters is an “image of jealousy,” probably a replacement of Manasseh’s statue which Josiah had destroyed (2 Kgs 23:6),<sup>18</sup> located at the entrance of the temple (Ezek 8:5). Next, after digging through the wall,<sup>19</sup> Ezekiel sees engravings of unclean animals and seventy elders offering incense. Block notes the irony of this scene,<sup>20</sup> with the number seventy recalling “the group that assisted Moses in governing the nation during their wilderness wanderings (Exod 24:1, 9; Num 11:16, 24, 25)” and the “civic officials usurping priestly prerogatives by encroaching on the sacred site and taking charge of cultic rituals” (Ezek 8:9-13).<sup>21</sup> It becomes clear that the

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<sup>16</sup>For a full treatment of Ezekiel’s critique of the leaders in Israel, see Iain Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994).

<sup>17</sup>Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 274-76. Likewise, Adam Johnson offers a perceptive theological insight into the “abandonment motif” in the death of Christ (“A Temple Framework of the Atonement,” *JETS* 54 [2011]: 225-37).

<sup>18</sup>Betts, “Ezekiel the Priest,” 106-07.

<sup>19</sup>While the command to dig through the wall is admittedly enigmatic (Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 289), it clearly indicates that something is wrong with the temple complex and the custodians of God’s house.

<sup>20</sup>The irony is increased when it is observed that one of the priest’s tasks was to keep the fires burning in the temple (Lev 24:1-4), and that these elders are worshiping false gods in the dark.

<sup>21</sup>Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 289-90.

priestly abandonment of their cultic duties triggers God's abandonment of the temple. Third, Ezekiel observes women weeping at Tammuz's death (vv. 14-15). Two problems are immediately apparent: (1) In the house of God, the women offer lamentation for a foreign god,<sup>22</sup> and (2) "Priests were not permitted to mourn the dead except in the case of a close blood relative because of their close association to Yahweh, the God of life."<sup>23</sup> It was the responsibility of the priests to drive these false worshippers from the temple, but alas they were part of debacle. Last, between porch and altar, the place of prayer (Joel 2:17), twenty-five men (priests?) have their backs turned to the temple in order to worship the sun (Ezek 8:17).<sup>24</sup> Still worse, the crimes of violence spilling into the land offend God and provoke his wrath.<sup>25</sup> All in all, the temple is filled with vile abominations (vv. 9, 13, 15), acts that should have roused the anger of the priests. Tragically, these defilements become four exhibits of the priestly failure.

Ezekiel 8 concludes with YHWH's announcement to vindicate his name and purify his temple. This sets up the context of Ezekiel 9, which recounts the kind of action that the priests should have performed.<sup>26</sup> In verse 1, God calls for executioners, and six men

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<sup>22</sup>Daniel Bodi, *Ezekiel*, in vol. 4 of *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*, ed. John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 422.

<sup>23</sup>Betts, "Ezekiel the Priest," 111. He continues, "Instead of worshipping Yahweh the source of life within his sanctuary, these women were mourning the dead within the Temple of the living God!"

<sup>24</sup>In support of the priestly character of these men, see Peter C. Craigie, *Ezekiel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 63; Robert Jenson, *Ezekiel*, BTCLB (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009), 80.

<sup>25</sup>Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 298-99.

<sup>26</sup>If the Levites were praised for turning the sword on their brothers (Exod 32) and Phineas received a perpetual covenant for the zeal he displayed in putting Zimri and Kozbi to death (Num 25), the priests in Ezekiel's day should have cleansed the house of the Lord. But failing to do so, God would now act in judgment against his idolatrous people. He would raise up another faithful priest in their place (Ezek 44:10-14).

and a “man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his waist” respond (v. 2).<sup>27</sup> Together, under the orders of the Lord, these seven execute judgment on Jerusalem. They begin with the sanctuary, and presumably all those seen in Ezekiel 8. Then they enter the city. Regardless of the nature of these seven—angels or priests—it is evident that they do the work of the Lord, a work that should have been done by the priests. Allowing for deviations in the interpretation of Ezekiel’s vision, the main points are clear: Because the priests abandoned their duties at the temple of the Lord, the Lord abandoned his temple.<sup>28</sup> Ezekiel 10 and 11 describe the glory of the Lord departing from Jerusalem, not to be seen again until Ezekiel 40-48.

In that context (Ezek 40-48), the prophet receives an eschatological vision of the new temple, which is replacing this corrupt, abandoned version. In that vision, God reveals a temple that is pure and holy and a priesthood that is free from iniquity. In one section, the prophet records why God abandoned his first temple. In Ezekiel 44, YHWH charges people and priest with breaking covenant and permitting the temple to be defiled.<sup>29</sup> Verses 6-8 read,

Say to the rebellious house, to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: O house of Israel, enough of all your abominations, in admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary, profaning my temple, when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood. You have broken my covenant, in addition to all your

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<sup>27</sup>Interpreters disagree on the nature of these seven men. The most common view is that they are all angelic beings (Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 304-05; Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1-19*, WBC, vol. 28 [Dallas: Word, 1994], 146-47). Some have suggested that the “man clothed in linen” is dressed as a priest, but this is a minority view. Nonetheless, based on the normal conception of the priests as guardians of the temple, set in the context of Ezek 8-11, which aims to indict false priests, and observed by Ezekiel, who is a priest, it is worth considering the priestly nature of these seven (Iain Duguid, *Ezekiel*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999], 133-35; Steven Tuell, *Ezekiel*, NIBC [Peabody, MA: Peabody, 2009], 49-55).

<sup>28</sup>While not directly faulting the priests, Jeffrey Niehaus explains that in Ezekiel “the Lord abandons his temple . . . because of idolatry and the spiritually ‘detestable things’” (*Ancient Near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008], 127). Niehaus also shows how Christ’s judgment on Israel in Matt 23 mirrors the pattern of judgment in Ezek 8-11 (ibid., 128).

<sup>29</sup>We will return to the eschatological restoration of the priesthood below, but for now it is worth observing the retrospective indictment upon the Levites.

abominations. And you have not kept charge of my holy things, but you have set others to keep my charge for you in my sanctuary.

Going back to Wellhausen, this passage has historically been used by critical scholars to establish a negative evaluation of the Levites.<sup>30</sup> However, R. K. Duke is more correct to see the restorative notion of Ezekiel 44. The Levites are not being punished in Ezekiel; they are being restored to a temple system that has greater restrictions.<sup>31</sup> Still, these verses point out the sins of the priests. The Levites were the ones called to prevent foreigners from encroaching upon the holiness of the Lord, and Ezekiel 44 clearly states that they failed in this task. By admitting foreigners and the uncircumcised into the Lord's sanctuary, they profaned God's holiness and broke the covenant.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, it is clear that one way in which the priests broke covenant with God was by disobeying his commands to guard his holiness.<sup>33</sup> Like Adam, the priests of Israel led the nation of Israel into death and destruction because they failed to uphold God's law. Therefore, by contrast, the new temple will have thicker walls and greater protection against uncleanness "to make a [greater] separation between the holy and the common" (42:20). At the same time, there will be a priesthood that

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<sup>30</sup>For a defense against the critical views which pit priests *against* Levites, see Betts, "Ezekiel the Priest," 20-23; J. Gordon McConville, "Priests and Levites in Ezekiel: A Crux in the Interpretation of Israel's History," *TynBul* 34 (1983): 3-31.

<sup>31</sup>R. K. Duke, "Punishment or Restoration? Another Look at the Levites of Ezekiel 44:6-16," *JSOT* 40 (1988), 61. Citing the Levitical instructions (Lev 3:12-17), Duke comments, "Any person unauthorized to perform the sacred functions of the priests or Levites who presumes to do so shall be put to death by those set apart to guard against such violations (cf. Num. 1:51; 3:10, 38; 18:7). Some such similar regulations are in mind here. Lay people encroached upon the sacred; they took over duties which belonged to the cultic personnel" (ibid., 64). In this way, priests and people are both guilty. Still, Duke's unqualified acquittal of the Levites fails to consider the part they played in permitting the encroacher to come near to God's holiness.

<sup>32</sup>More specifically, Duke ("Judgment or Restoration," 64) and Duguid (*Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, 79-80) argue that the Levites recruited foreigners to take over for them as guardians in the temple.

<sup>33</sup>Duguid, *Ezekiel*, 501-02; idem, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, 79-80.

will not permit what Nelson calls “the unclean-holy fusion reaction.”<sup>34</sup> We will see the particulars of this priest(hood) emerge in the next chapter.

### **Theological Significance**

Applied to the doctrine of the atonement, there are two things to note. First, the priest is in the business of making distinctions.<sup>35</sup> This is true at the cultic level, where the priest must distinguish clean and unclean (Lev 11-15), but it is also true at the personal level. None who are uncircumcised, who are unclean, or who teach falsely are permitted entrance into the temple complex. Only those who are in covenant with God, who are ceremonially clean, and who come with the appropriate sacrifice are permissible. To all others, the priest has the responsibility to prevent uncleanness from approaching God’s presence. Failure to keep such distinctions led to disaster and the prophet’s indictment.<sup>36</sup>

Applied to Christ as high priest, it is essential to observe the way that he made distinctions. For instance, Matthew 10:34 records his words, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” Unlike the false prophets and priests proclaiming “peace, peace” in Jeremiah’s day (Jer 6:14; 8:11), Jesus came to bring peace, but not at the expense of purity. In fact, his commitment to purity is evidenced in Matthew 15. In an enigmatic encounter with a Canaanite woman—one that comes after Jesus discusses “the question of purity” with Pharisees and scribes (vv. 1-20)<sup>37</sup>—Jesus distinguishes Jew and Gentile and refuses (at first) to serve her (vv. 21-28). What

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<sup>34</sup>Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 113.

<sup>35</sup>Distinction-making is the “the essence of the priest’s job” (Jo Bailey Wells, *God’s Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology* [Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], 114).

<sup>36</sup>“To make a mistake in these matters provokes God’s judgment and could lead to death” (ibid.).

<sup>37</sup>R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 573-87.

becomes evident in this encounter is that Jesus is shifting the standards of purity from the flesh (Jew/Gentile) to a purity that comes from faith (v. 28). In this way, Jesus retains the priestly task of separating pure and impure hence fulfilling the law (Matt 5:17), but in the same dramatic moment, he also sets a new standard by permitting this Gentile “dog” to draw near to God through faith in Christ. As greater priest and true temple, Jesus is “implementing the kingdom among the impure,”<sup>38</sup> but never at the expense of God’s purity. This reality must inform the way we think about Christ’s priesthood and atonement.

On this point, generalists are suspect, because they argue that Christ’s death accomplished propitiation for “all sinners in all times and all places.”<sup>39</sup> Certainly, they are right to expand the scope of Christ’s death beyond ethnic Israel, but should such “internationalizing” come at the expense of the priest’s task of making distinctions? It should be asked how general atonement coheres with the priest’s defensive posture to guard God’s holiness. In Israel, the priest sacrificed for the community of Israel alone, and he withstood encroachers who had no right to enter the house of God.

It may be that generalists have a way of incorporating this defensive posture into their system, but at the mercy seat (i.e., in the act of propitiation) they cannot. Because they argue that Christ died for (i.e., propitiation) and against (i.e., a greater condemnation) the same person in the same death, they confuse and conflate the holy and the profane when they

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<sup>38</sup>Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 149-82.

<sup>39</sup>Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 191. David L. Allen clarifies further, saying that the atonement “refers to the expiatory and propitiatory act of Christ on the cross whereby satisfaction for sin was accomplished” (“The Atonement,” in *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism*, ed. David L. Allen and Steve W. Lemke [Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010], 62).



speak of Christ offering a universal propitiation.<sup>40</sup> R. S. Candlish is more accurate when he observes *how* Christ's death purchases all men, but with different ends. He states,

In right of his merit, his service, and his sacrifice, all are given into his hands, and all are his [John 17:2]. All mankind, therefore, may be said to be bought by him, inasmuch as, by his humiliation, obedience, and death, he has obtained, as by purchase, a right over them all—he has had them all placed under his power, and at his disposal. But it is for very different purposes and ends. The reprobate are his to be judged; the elect are his to be saved. As to the former, it is no ransom or redemption, fairly so called. He has won them—bought them, if you will—but it is that he may dispose of them as to glorify the retributive righteousness of God in their condemnation<sup>41</sup>; aggravated, as that condemnation must be, by their rejection of himself. This is no propitiation, in any proper meaning of that term. . . . It is rather an office or function which he has obtained for himself by the same work—or has had intrusted [*sic*] to him for the sake of the same shedding of blood—by which he expiated the sins of his people. . . . It is an office or function, moreover, which he undertakes on his people's behalf, and which he executes faithfully for [his people's] highest good, as well as for his Father's glory.<sup>42</sup>

In sum, Christ's death simultaneously provides penal substitution and gains divine authorization to subdue all those who refuse to worship the Father. In the NT, the apostolic witness clearly affirms the defeat of God's enemies at the cross (John 12: 31; Col 2:14-15; Heb 2:14-15), and it leads to the conclusion that Christ died *for* his people on the cross and *against* those who will ultimately die in unbelief. Indeed, when all the biblical data about the priestly office is examined, it should be stated that the view commonly known as *Christus*

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<sup>40</sup>For a defense of a universal propitiation, which also intends to bring greater condemnation on the non-elect, see Gary Shultz, "A Biblical and Theological Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008).

<sup>41</sup>Incidentally, if this sounds callous, it is the same position held by John Davenant, a hypothetical universalist (*A Dissertation on the Death of Christ as to Its Extent and Special Benefits*, trans. Josiah Allport [London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1831-32]) but with one sizable difference. In Davenant's system, God is far more capricious, for after propitiating the sins of every man and holding in his power the gift of salvation, he yet has the divine prerogative to give salvation to the elect alone (*ibid.*, 513-558). By contrast, there is no such feigning with Candlish. For him, all those for whom Christ substituted, he would and will save in time (R. S. Candlish, *The Atonement: Its Efficacy and Extent* [Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1867]).

<sup>42</sup>Candlish, *The Atonement*, 193-94. Of note, Candlish's views do not extinguish his evangelistic fervor. After arguing for Christ's absolute authority over all flesh, Candlish insists on the universal proclamation of the gospel (*ibid.*, 195-208; cf. *idem*, *The Cross of Christ, The Call of God, Saving Faith: An Inquiry into the Completeness and Extent of the Atonement* [Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1845]).

*Victor* would be improved by cohesion with priestly office. While it may seem more fitting to make *Christus Victor* a function of Christ's royal office, the unity of Christ's *munus triplex* and the warrior-like aspects of the priestly office militate against such division. More on this will be expounded in chapter 6 and 7. For now, it is enough to say that avoidance of prophetic criticism requires Christ as *Kohen Victor* to maintain a defensive posture against uncleanness, even as he makes propitiation at the mercy seat of God.

### **The Priests as Teachers (*Kohen Teacher*)**

The history of Israel's priests as covenant teachers is marked by compromise and carelessness. While the book of Joshua begins with Eleazar allotting inheritance to the tribes of Israel (14:1; 17:4; 19:51) and his son Phinehas adjudicating the misunderstanding related to the altar built by Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in Israel (22:10-34), things denigrated quickly. Indeed, the whole history of Israel is one elongated fall for the priests.

### **Prophetic Criticism**

In Judges, after the downward spiral of Spirit-empowered deliverers (ch. 1-16), a man named Micah hires a Levite from the family of Judah to replace his own son as a priest (17:1-13).<sup>43</sup> Clearly, in contrast to the law of God, Micah did what was right in his own eyes. And instead of reproving him, this Levitical priest abandoned the law and the Lord at Shiloh (Judg 18:31; cf. 1 Sam 1:3, 9, 24) in order to seek an "opportunity."<sup>44</sup> While Judges does not

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<sup>43</sup>James B. Jordan (*Judges: A Practical and Theological Commentary* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999], 279-84) rightly observes that the Jews in Judg 17 establish a false sanctuary (vv. 1-6) and a false priesthood (vv. 7-13): "This story is a parody of the story of the establishment of true worship at the exodus from Egypt. Virtually every detail found here is also found there, but here it is perverted" (ibid., 280).

<sup>44</sup>"Instead of denouncing Micah for his aberrant cult and warning him of the dangers of his course of action (cf. Deut 13:6-11), he capitalizes on this glorious opportunity" (Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, NAC, vol. 6 [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999], 489-90).

explicitly condemn the priests, the nation's ignorance of YHWH (2:10) is an indictment against the ones commissioned by God to teach the people (Lev 10:11; Deut 33:10).<sup>45</sup> Block provides cogent reflection on the failure of the priests in Judges.

In the words of Malachi, the heirs of the "covenant of Levi," have corrupted their high calling. Instead of serving as an agent of life and peace, revering Yahweh and standing in awe of his name, offering truthful and righteous instruction, walking with knowledge, and serving as a messenger of Yahweh of hosts, this Levite has himself apostasized. He has lent his support to the perversion of his countryman, failed to keep Yahweh's ways, and demonstrated partiality to this man with money (cf. Mal 2:1-9).<sup>46</sup>

Tragically, this incident in Judges 17 is followed by more of the same in Judges 18-19.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, all that is recorded about priests in the period of the Judges highlights the wickedness of these priests. While they retained the authority and position to teach and lead, the examples which Scripture records are all anti-heroes. This continues in 1 Samuel. In 1 Samuel 1-4, the reader is introduced to Hophni and Phinehas, the wicked sons of Eli, who "did not know the Lord" (2:12), "treated the offering of the LORD with contempt" (v. 17), abused the people they served (vv. 15-16), defiled themselves by having sexual relations with "the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting" (v. 22), and disobeyed their father when he confronted them in their sin (vv. 22-25). Even Eli was spiritually unfit to serve as Israel's high priest.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Jordan (*Judges*, 301), commenting on the Levite in Judg 19, says that "biblically speaking what happened was his own fault and the fault of his brethren. Had [the Levites] been sounding forth the law of God clearly in every place, Gibeah would have been a clean, hospitable city. This nightmare [the rape and murder of the Levite's concubine] resulted precisely from the failure of the Levites to preach and to guard Israel from sin."

<sup>46</sup>Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 490.

<sup>47</sup>See Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu (*An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007], 614-17), for a summation of the Levites' disastrous effect on Israel.

<sup>48</sup>Evidence demonstrating Eli's unfitness is profuse. In 1 Sam 1:14, he confuses Hannah's prayer with drunkenness. Later, he is slow to recognize God's voice to Samuel (3:4-9). And throughout, he is passive and weak to defend Israel from the contemptuous sins of his sons. God's judgment comes on him and his sons for this reason: "On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning

Still, what is most shocking about the account in 1 Samuel, and what relates to the priestly role of teaching, is that in those days “the word of the Lord was rare” (3:1). While under a dispensation of revelation, the wickedness of the priests included the failure to make God known. That Samuel could be described as someone who “did not yet know the Lord” (3:7), *even as he lived in the house of Israel’s priest*, is a shocking statement about how far the priests had fallen. The priests of Levi were commissioned to teach the people of God, but in this epoch of their history, they were guilty of a capital crime. Not only were Hophni and Phinehas disobedient sons deserving death, they subjected the entire nation to the curses of God through their didactic negligence.

Priestly disobedience continued to plague Israel’s history. While there are moments of brilliance, such as David’s establishment of the priesthood in 1 Chronicles 22-26 and the season of renewal recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, it was more often the case that the priests were shown to be unfaithful.<sup>49</sup> In 2 Chronicles, the priests were characterized as those “who taught all Israel” (35:2) and “went about through all the cities of Judah” teaching the people (17:9), but in this very context, the discovery of the “Book of the Law” incriminates the priests as ones who forgot God’s law. Therefore, as time progressed, prophets were sent to call the priests of Israel to repentance.<sup>50</sup> It is to these writing prophets that we turn.

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to end. And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them” (3:12-13).

<sup>49</sup>One example includes the Jews under Hezekiah being forced to keep the Passover in the second month, “for they could not keep it at [the appointed time] because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient number, nor had the people assembled in Jerusalem” (2 Chr 30:2). Another instance of the priests negligence comes in the period of Josiah. While 2 Chr 33-35 focuses on the revival of the Passover, it is worth asking: Who lost the “Book of the Law” (34:14-18)? Was it not the priest’s duty to instruct the people to keep covenant with God (Lev 23)? Indeed, episodes like this anticipate their later censure in Mal 2.

<sup>50</sup>While Joseph Blenkinsopp wrongly dismisses judgment of the prophets as “the standard rhetoric of abuse,” he rightly chronicles the egregious sins of the priests, which included “venality (Mic 3:11; Jer 6:13; 8:10), drunkenness (Isa 28:7; Jer 13:13), negligence and ignorance (Zeph 3:4; Jer 14:18; Ezek 22:26), and even

Amos writes a generation before the exile of Northern Israel (760 B.C.).<sup>51</sup> While materially prosperous, the Northern tribes added ethical injustice (Amos 3-6) to Jeroboam's heterodox religion (1 Kgs 12-13).<sup>52</sup> Interspersed in Amos are indictments against Israel's sacrificial system (3:14; 4:4-5; 5:21-24; 8:3, 14), while Amos 7:10 includes a priest by the name of Amaziah (cf. 1 Kgs 12:31-32), whose birthright disqualifies him from service.<sup>53</sup> More importantly, though, Amaziah discloses his blindness to the things of God when he attacks God's prophet. In verses 12-13, the false priest abuses Amos and entreats him to leave the North because he prophesied against Jeroboam II (7:9-11). In return, Amos defends his calling (vv. 14-16) and issues a curse on Amaziah (v. 17).<sup>54</sup> Even though this prophetic rebuke is only directed at one Northern priest, it sets a course for the rest of the prophets. When priests, who are charged with protecting and proclaiming God's law, fail to receive or perceive God's law, the nation itself will go hungry for God's word (2:4; 8:13-14). In time, all such priests were removed from office.

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murder (Hos 6:9)" (*Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995], 83).

<sup>51</sup>Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, WBC, vol. 31 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 374-78; Jeffrey J. Niehaus, "Amos," in *The Minor Prophets*, 459-75.

<sup>52</sup>Dale Ralph Davis, *1 Kings: The Wisdom and the Folly* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2009), 141-42. Leithart shows how Jeroboam functions as a new "Aaron"—he even names his children after Aaron's sons! (1 Kgs 14:1, 20). But as an "Aaronic restorationist," he only leads the people into greater idolatry (*1 & 2 Kings*, 96-102). As a point of clarification, Amos rebukes Jeroboam II for his wayward leadership (7:9-11); however, he also addresses the false religion established by Jeroboam I in Amos 3:14; 4:4-5; 5:21-24.

<sup>53</sup>Stuart perceptively discerns that Amaziah's unqualified status as priest heightened his disregard for God's prophet: "Amaziah, a non-Aaronic priest (1 Kgs 12:31, 32) at a heterodox sanctuary, certainly had a vested interest in seeing Amos back in Judah where his attacks would not make Israelite officials nervous" (*Hosea-Jonah*, 375).

<sup>54</sup>In addition to God turning his wife over to prostitution and his children to the sword (Amos 7:17)—two acts which would respectively defile the priest and end his priesthood (Lev 21:7)—McComiskey observes the irony of Amos' judgment upon Amaziah: "The priest, whose task it was to maintain the purity of the cult, would die in a Gentile land" (Thomas E. McComiskey, *Amos*, in vol. 7 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985], 323).

Prophesying in the same era as Amos, Hosea is more explicit in his condemnation of the priests. For instance, when Israel breaks the Law of Moses, YHWH holds the priest's responsible (4:1-6). Their sin has a "ripple effect" on the community,<sup>55</sup> one that even causes the cosmos to suffer.<sup>56</sup> In covenantal terms, the breaking of the Mosaic covenant invites the curses of God (cf. Lev 26-27; Deut 27-28) and endangers creation (Hos 4:3).<sup>57</sup> Still, despite all Israel's harlotry, God holds the priests responsible for introducing his bride to other husbands.<sup>58</sup> Because the priesthood was commissioned by God to teach the law, YHWH "accost[s] the priest with charges of failure."<sup>59</sup> The language is emphatic.<sup>60</sup> Compared to the prophet, who received occasional visions in the night, the priest who walked in the light of the Lord, is condemned for rejecting covenantal "knowledge" that was supposed to be on their lips (Mal 2:6).<sup>61</sup> As a result, the people died for lack of knowledge.<sup>62</sup> As verse 9 states,

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<sup>55</sup>The priests are rejected because they "failed in their task as mediators of divine instruction, and the ripple effect permeates the community" (Dearman, *Hosea*, 158).

<sup>56</sup>Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 199; Dearman, *Hosea*, 154-55.

<sup>57</sup>Instead of *emet* and *hesed* (Hos 4:1), there are five infractions of the Decalogue: swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and adultery (v. 2). Cf. William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 204-06.

<sup>58</sup>I am indebted to James Jordan for this insight. Though he writes in relation to the false Levites in Judg 17-19, his words apply to Hosea: "It was the job of the Levites [and priests] to manifest God's Husbandly attentions to His Bride. Just as an ignored women may seek attention elsewhere, so Israel sought other lovers. She was in sin, but the Levites were in greater sin" (Jordan, *Judges*, 279).

<sup>59</sup>Dearman, *Hosea*, 157. Following F. I. Anderson and D. N. Freedman (*Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980], 346-50), Dearman (*Hosea*, 155-57) argues for the direct address of one priest in v. 4, within the following outline: priest (vv. 4-6), priesthood (vv. 7-10), people (vv. 11-19).

<sup>60</sup>Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 77.

<sup>61</sup>Knowledge here should be defined in terms of the covenant (ibid., 75; Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel*, 175).

<sup>62</sup>To forget does not necessarily mean to be unable to recall something, as if a priest is unable to make reference to divine instruction and covenant stipulations. To forget something means to fail to bring something to conscious focus or to ignore its significance, so that it no longer guides a person to the proper response. Correspondingly, if one remembers, then the matter is brought to mind in such a way that a proper

“It shall be like people, like priest,” and this is seen in the fact that the sins of Israel reflect two priestly roles—divination (Deut 33:8) and sacrifice (v. 10). In verse 12, Hosea mocks those who “inquire of a piece of wood,”<sup>63</sup> and in verses 13-15, he describes the idolatrous sacrifices to which Israel has turned. In principle, the spiritual decline of the people is attributed to the priests. While the people were guilty of willful idolatry and spiritual adultery, Hosea establishes a causal relationship between the service of the priest and the condition of the people (cf. Isa 24:3-5).<sup>64</sup> This ‘law of the priesthood’ (Heb 7:12) will provide a means of determining the extent and effect of Christ’s priestly service.

Micah joins the chorus of pre-exilic prophets, when he says that priests of Jerusalem “teach for a price” (3:11). Micah groups the priests with the other blind leaders of Israel (e.g., leaders, rulers, prophets) and says that they presume upon the Lord. The priests had abandoned the covenant law (Exod 23:8; Deut 27:25), and they had turned their holy calling into a “moneymaking racket.”<sup>65</sup> Verse 5 uncovers the attitudes of the prophets, which in context with all the leaders of Israel, parallels that of the priest. These religious leaders would pronounce a blessing when they received food, but when they went hungry, they declared war (cf. 1 Sam 2:12-17).<sup>66</sup> Observing the corruption of the priesthood, Waltke writes, “Honoraria and royalties now dictated where and what was taught by the priests, who

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response then ensues” (Dearman, *Hosea*, 159). This has massive implications for Christ’s priestly work. He does not forget those for whom he died.

<sup>63</sup>Carroll R., *Hosea*, 248.

<sup>64</sup>Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel*, 175-76.

<sup>65</sup>Leslie C. Allen, *Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 318.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

evidently wanted to enrich themselves beyond their tithes.”<sup>67</sup> Deviating from their original calling to serve God and trust him for their provisions (Num 18:21-32; cf. Matt 6:19-34), the priests have now sought God and money. By contrast, Jesus lived on the Word of God (Matt 4:4), always doing his Father’s will (John 4:32). Hence, it becomes clear: A true priest is one who is undeterred in taking God’s word to God’s people. Self-interest does not impede his mission. He comes to serve, not to be served, and to ensure that God’s people hear the Word.

A century and a half later, the problems with the priests resurface in the book of Jeremiah. Scattered throughout his long book, there are accusations against the priests for their failures to faithfully teach God’s Word. First, in Jeremiah 2:8, the prophet remarks that those who handled the Law (i.e., priests and Levites) did not know the Lord.<sup>68</sup> As Brown comments, the priests “whose whole ministry was built around the presence of God, failed to take note of his absence.”<sup>69</sup> Next, in Jeremiah 6:13-14, God charged the priests (and prophets) with falsehood because their ears “have foreskin” (v. 10).<sup>70</sup> Inability to hear from God has direct bearing on the priests’ ability to teach God’s Law. The priests can offer “a placebo” but “with no power to cure.”<sup>71</sup> Again, in Jeremiah 14:18, the weeping prophet announces that when he goes through the land and witnesses the devastation—those cut down in the country or diseased in the city—he recognizes that the prophet and priest are

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<sup>67</sup>Bruce K. Waltke, “Micah,” in *The Minor Prophets*, 672. Waltke adds, “As ministers of sacred things the priests were custodians and administrators of the law and had responsibility to keep the received law available and alive for legal matters as they arose in the ongoing life of Israel (Deut 17:8-10; 33:10; Hos 4:6).”

<sup>68</sup>Demonstrating the spiritual barrenness of worship in Judah, Jeremiah indicates that the priests and Levites who were “specialists in the law” failed to have any emotional attachment or relational knowledge of YHWH (Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 168-69).

<sup>69</sup>Brown, *Jeremiah*, 87; cf. Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 30.

<sup>70</sup>Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 64-65.

<sup>71</sup>Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr., *Jeremiah 1-25*, WBC, vol. 26 (Dallas: Word, 1991), 104.



ignorant when they “ply their trade” (i.e., “do business”). Surely, in regards to the priest, their business is to know the Lord and to teach his people the *torah*, so that such national disasters would be averted. But through ignorance of God’s law (Jer 2:8; 5:4-5), the prophets and priests have become “allies in misleading the people” (see 5:31, 6:13, 23:11, 33-34).<sup>72</sup> All in all, when we look at the testimony in Jeremiah, we must agree: “It is the prophets and priests who are primarily to blame for the sinful condition of the people.”<sup>73</sup>

Ezekiel expands on Jeremiah’s condemnation of the priests. In Ezekiel 7:26, the priestly prophet states that “the law perishes from the priest,” which carries the connotation expressed elsewhere that the priests had rejected the law (Hos 4:4-6), and that the office alone is not sufficient to keep alive God’s blessing (cf. Jer 18:18).<sup>74</sup> Then in Ezekiel 22:26, Ezekiel lists five indictments against the priests: They have (1) “done violence to my law,” (2) “profaned my holy things,” (3) “made no distinction between the holy and the common,” (4) “neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean,” and (5) “they have disregarded my Sabbaths.” In regards to the Law, the priests have neither kept it themselves, nor instructed the covenant community to keep it. Block comments on the result of such negligence: “The priests’ betrayal of their calling ultimately affects Yahweh himself. Their irresponsibility reflects not only on his character, since he had appointed them to his office, it also inhibits the nation as a whole in its performance of his will.”<sup>75</sup> Together, these

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<sup>72</sup>Brown, *Jeremiah*, 235.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>74</sup>John B. Taylor suggests that Ezek 7:26 “may well be a riposte to the arrogance of Jeremiah’s contemporaries who thought that ‘the law shall not perish from the priest’” (*Ezekiel: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1969], 95).

<sup>75</sup>Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 726.

two verses (7:26; 22:26) suggest that people have abandoned God, *because* the priests have abandoned God. In a word, the priesthood had become utterly disfigured. The *Vorbild* had caved in on itself, and as a result the nation was ensnared in idolatry. Still, to get a full understanding of how disfigured the priesthood was, it is necessary to consider Malachi's entreaty against Levi and his failure to keep the covenant.

Of all the prophets, Malachi proffers the strongest prosecution against the priests.<sup>76</sup> The first charge, which I will treat below, relates to the priest's dishonor of YHWH through the sacrificing of blemished animals (1:6-14). The second states that the sons of Levi are in jeopardy of losing their role as priests because they have broken covenant by failing to instruct Israel (2:1-9). In Malachi 2:1-2, Malachi calls the senseless priests to listen, and tells them that their blessings will be cursed.<sup>77</sup> Because priests were the human benefactors of divine blessing (Num 6:24-26), such a curse would render their service useless and effectively end their ministry.<sup>78</sup> Verses 3-4 confirm that Malachi is not speaking hyperbole.

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<sup>76</sup>Paul R. House suggests that the "root of Israel's sin" is the "lack of spiritual leadership the nation by the priests of the new temple" (*Unity of the Twelve* [Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990], 157-58; cf. idem., *Old Testament Theology* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998], 393-98).

<sup>77</sup>For an exhaustive analysis of the curses and blessings in Malachi, see Douglas Stuart, "Malachi," in *The Minor Prophets*, 1258-62. On the priestly role of blessing, he writes, "The priests served as the intermediaries between the people and God (Exod 28-29; cf. 1 Sam 2:28) and in that sense were authorized to pronounce his blessing on the people. . . . It was their job, on request, to say blessings for the people who came to them. . . . Were [the priestly blessing] to fail, to be withheld, or to be reversed in effectiveness so that it functioned like a curse . . . this priestly key role would be rendered futile" (ibid., 1311). To curse the blessings of the priests would render their words and their work utterly useless.

<sup>78</sup>It should be kept in mind that Malachi's oracle against the priest is not the final word. As Stuart relates, "virtually immediately after Malachi's ministry, the priesthood was reformed by Ezra (arrived 458 B.C.) and Nehemiah (arrived 444 B.C.), who set the course of worship properly back where it should have been . . . They removed rebellious priests and purified worship in Jerusalem" ("Malachi," 1313). Thus, in the short term, God's judgment on the priests was averted, but in time, the corruption of the priesthood returned, and a whole new order was needed (cf. Heb 5-10).

He cautions that unless things change, the priests offspring would be cut off,<sup>79</sup> their purity would be defiled, and their covenant broken.<sup>80</sup>

Next, in verse 5, Malachi gives a general statement regarding the covenant God made with the Levites in Numbers 25:11-13.<sup>81</sup> Then, in 2:6-8, Malachi supplies an idealized job description of the priest. Summarizing the seven clauses found in these verses, Stuart suggests true and accurate teaching, obedient service to the Lord, and leading the people into holiness as the “three principal elements that constitute what a priest . . . is supposed to be like.”<sup>82</sup> Yet, there is one issue that stands above the rest—Levi’s ministry of teaching. Entitled the “messenger of the LORD of hosts” (v. 7), the priest was to fill his mouth with truth, so that his lips would guard knowledge and protest evil. His feet must pursue peace and uprightness as he walked with the Lord, in order to model what he taught.<sup>83</sup> And as a gift from the Lord to the people (Num 18:1-7), he was supposed to be a source of instruction in righteousness and blessing. Sadly, the priests in Malachi’s day had abandoned all of that.

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<sup>79</sup>Stuart suggests nine possible translations of v. 3, with the most probable being related to the priests offspring: “I am going to diminish your descendents” (“Malachi,” 1312-13). Baldwin is probably correct to understand a double entendre between the cutting off the offspring, the harvest, or even the arm, all of which would disqualify the priests from service (Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1972], 233).

<sup>80</sup>The language Malachi uses is vivid, and the warning is harsh. For a full explication, see Stuart, “Malachi,” 1312-18.

<sup>81</sup>It is true that the Pentateuch makes no mention of a “covenant with Levi” (Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, WBC, vol. 32 [Waco, TX: Word, 1984], 317-18); however, from the terminology employed in Malachi, it is evident that there are strong linguistic connections with Num 25:11-13 and Deut 33:8-11. Stuart notes 12 “vocabulary connections” between Mal 1:6-2:9 and Deut 33:8-11, but ultimately, though subjectively, concludes that Moses’ blessing is “less directly determinative” on Malachi, than that of Num 25:11-13, which has nine lexical correspondences (“Malachi,” 1316-17). In connection with the priests’ role as mediators of blessing, it seems reasonable to conclude that the priestly covenant to serve the covenant. They were the ones who were set apart to keep Israel faithful. The only problem is that they broke their covenant, and thus led Israel to break theirs.

<sup>82</sup>Stuart, “Malachi,” 1320.

<sup>83</sup>The priests “act on behalf of Israel, representing how Israel, as a people, may be holy before God and providing a model to which others may aspire” (Wells, *God’s Holy People*, 108).

Verse 8 gives three main accusations: (1) Instead of walking with the Lord in peace and uprightness, the priests have “turned aside from the way,” (2) instead of “turning many from sin” and providing pure sacrifices (cf. Mal 1:6-14), the priests had “caused many to stumble by [their] instruction,” and (3) instead of fearing the Lord and keeping covenant (v. 5), the priests had corrupted the covenant and acted against God’s “treasured possession.”<sup>84</sup>

Malachi’s words give us a strong indication of what God expected of the priests, especially as it relates to their role within the covenant community: The priests failed to guard and to teach *torah*, and thus they broke covenant with YHWH (2:8-9). In turn, the people of Judah broke their covenant as well (v. 10).<sup>85</sup> Judah had profaned the sanctuary of the Lord (v. 11), covered his altar with unrepentant tears (vv. 13-16), and wearied God with vain promises and senseless questions (v. 17; cf. 1:2, 6, 7; 2:10, 14; 3:7, 8, 13, 14). Still in Malachi, it is the priests who are the root of the problem (cf. Jer 18:18; Ezek 7:26; Mic 3:11). As a result, Malachi records that God will send his “messenger” who will prepare the way for true “messenger of the covenant” (3:1), the one who will once and for all resolve all the problems enumerated here in Malachi and the other prophets.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Stuart, “Malachi,” 1322-25. Commenting on Malachi’s theology, Willem VanGemeren (*Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990], 205-07) observes that priests deviated from God’s will by neglecting God’s “treasured possession” (3:17). By contrast, true priests serve and sympathize with YHWH’s covenant community (Heb 2:14-18; 4:5; 5:2).

<sup>85</sup>The covenantal motif is foregrounded in Malachi (Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 216-17). In Mal 1:2-5, Israel is introduced as God’s chosen nation; throughout the book, the Father-son relationship between YHWH and Israel is evident (1:6; 2:10; 3:17); in Mal 2:8 and 10, covenants with Levi and Judah are mentioned; and in Mal 2:13-16, YHWH confronts Israel’s marital infidelity as a covenantal infraction (2:14). Cf. Stephen L. McKenzie and Howard N. Wallace, “Covenant Themes in Malachi,” *CBQ* 45 (1983): 549-63.

<sup>86</sup>Significantly, the ones who fulfill these twin promises—John the Baptist and Jesus Christ—are both priests. In history, Jesus takes the mantle of John’s ministry and fulfills all the promises of a better priesthood. And in typology, Jesus, a son of Judah, comes to establish a priesthood that is not based upon “godly offspring” according to the flesh (Mal 2:15), one regularly corrupted by sin and constantly in jeopardy of being “cut off” (2:3). Rather, as Hebrews will intimate, Jesus becomes a greater high priest on the basis of his sinless and indestructible life. For historical and textual support that the Baptist and Jesus are both priestly

## Theological Significance

The priests did not merely fail in their sacrifices; they failed in the proclamation of the message of the old covenant. Taking a survey of the Former and Latter Prophets, at least five judgments stand out. In the history of Israel, (1) the priests left God's dwelling place to minister in false sanctuaries; (2) they often "forgot" or "rejected" God's law; consequently, (3) they failed to model and teach God's people how to be holy; (4) driven by self-interest, they sought personal gain more than community holiness; and ultimately (5) they disqualified themselves from service because they failed to teach the whole counsel of God to the whole community of faith.

While overlooked in systematic formulations of Christ's priesthood, the role of teacher (*Kohen Teacher*) is primary for the OT priest. Accordingly, as a better priest, Jesus comes to ensure that the covenant people of God are instructed with the Word of God. From start to finish, his earthly ministry consisted of teaching.<sup>87</sup> Each evangelist highlights his teaching ministry, often using the Christological title "Rabbi" to "describe the outward form of his ministry"<sup>88</sup>—a ministry wholly devoted to impressing upon his disciples a new temple ethic.<sup>89</sup> Going further, Jesus' teaching ministry intensified as he approached his death. In his final hours (John 13-16), Jesus assures his followers that as he was going away, his Spirit would come to lead them into all truth (John 14:13, 26; 16:24). To say it another way, under the new covenant, Jesus, the exalted high priest, continues to teach.

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figures, striving against the corrupt temple system, while announcing an eschatological temple, see Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*.

<sup>87</sup>R. Riesner, "Teacher," in *DJG*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 807-11.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 808.

<sup>89</sup>Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 79.

It is at this point that generalists err. While a few consider the priestly ministry of Jesus,<sup>90</sup> none consider the role of Christ's priestly instruction as a delimiting factor in the extent of the atonement. However, in light of the prophetic condemnation of the priests' didactic negligence and Christ's clear emphasis on communicating the message of the law and gospel to his covenant community, this is a vital consideration.

Theologically, it is my contention that Christ *teaches* (i.e., brings the message of the gospel) and *blesses* (i.e., effectively seals his name on the hearts of his people) every single person for whom he died. According to generalists, Christ died for all people without exception, but brings the message of salvation and applies it to only the elect.<sup>91</sup> This happens in two ways. First, if it is true that Christ died for the sins of all people without exception, this would include the unreached peoples who die never hearing the gospel. In such a case, (hundreds of) millions of men and women, according to generalists, received the benefit of Christ's priestly sacrifice, but without his ministry of teaching. And because they never heard the message of his atoning death, they perished in their sins. It is this missiological problem that led Terrance Tiessen to construct a new understanding of judgment and humanity's standing before God.<sup>92</sup> Just the same, it is the notion of universal atonement

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<sup>90</sup>Norman Douty, *Did Christ Die Only for the Elect? A Treatise on the Extent of the Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998), 32-38. Gary Shultz will also speak of Christ's priesthood in vague, universal terms ("A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement," 100, 155, 206, 248, 280). That is, when Shultz speaks of Christ's priesthood in the context of the extent of the atonement—which is rare—he does so without any appeal to specific exegesis or typological structures. Indeed, while generalists would not deny Christ's priesthood, they do not adequately consider how the priest's didactic ministry necessarily requires instruction of all those who are under the blood of the covenant.

<sup>91</sup>Demarest describes this distinction in the terms of *universal provision* and *particular application* (*The Cross and Salvation*, 193).

<sup>92</sup>Terrance L. Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved? Reassessing Salvation in Christ and World Religions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 13-14.

without universal instruction that brings general atonement under prophets' censure.<sup>93</sup> They railed against the priests for failing to bring the message of the covenant to all Israel. The people perished for lack of knowledge. *The same is true of the new covenant, if, and only if, Christ dies for all people without exception and in turn only informs some of them.*<sup>94</sup>

Second, the problem is compounded by the fact that under the new covenant, many more *do hear the gospel and still fail to believe*. The gospel message has been heralded around the world and is “bearing fruit and increasing” (Col 1:6).<sup>95</sup> The Great Commission is international (Matt 28:18-20). However, in contrast to the old covenant, which was written on tablets of stone, the new covenant seals the message of the covenant on the heart itself.<sup>96</sup> The former covenant was for the flesh; the new covenant cleanses the conscience and changes the heart. Therefore, the kind of teaching that is brought about by the new covenant is not simply a wider announcement—although that is true. Rather, Christ’s teaching writes his law on the hearts of his covenant people by the Spirit and the bride whom he sends out

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<sup>93</sup>Going back to John Owen (*The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, 126-28), advocates of definite atonement charge generalists with failing to address this missiological problem.

<sup>94</sup>Many who advocate a multi-intentioned view of the atonement argue that Christ’s priestly prayer is particular, not universal (Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 192-93). They overlook the fact that as *Kohen Teacher*, Christ’s new covenant announcement is also particular and infallibly effective. His priestly work—which includes sacrifice, instruction, and prayer, not to mention guarding—is delimited by the bounds of the membership of the new covenant, which in turn is determined not at the end of time (based on man’s response), but before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4-6; 2 Tim 1:9; Rev 13:8; 17:8). At that time (in eternity past), God in Christ predestined the elect to hear the message and be saved (Rom 9:22-23; 10:13-17), while at the same passing over others, who would not hear or who would not be given ears to hear.

<sup>95</sup>While dry seasons exist, Scripture always presents the Word of God and the gospel as entirely successful (Isa 55:10-11) and unstoppably powerful (Rom 1:16). The source of their strength comes not from God’s divine omnipotence alone, but from the better promises of the new covenant and the sending of the Spirit, both of which come from the priestly ministry of Christ.

<sup>96</sup>Borrowing imagery from the ANE and the common practice of depositing covenant documents in the sanctuary (Exod 25:16, 21; 40:20; Deut 10:2) (cf. Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1989], esp. 113-30), Jesus, in the new covenant, deposits his law in the heart of all those who are temples of the living God (1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19-20) (cf. Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 67-69).

(Rev 22:17).<sup>97</sup> In this way, the efficacy of his teaching is totally unlike that of the OT.<sup>98</sup>

Whereas many in Israel who heard the priests' teaching failed to receive the promises of the covenant; in the new covenant, everyone whom the Lord teaches will be brought to glory (John 6:37ff.; Heb 2:10-18).<sup>99</sup>

To develop this crucial point further, it is vital to understand: The priestly service determines the efficacy. Under the old covenant, the fallible and unfaithful priests could only remind the people of their sin. While the priests were responsible for reading the law to the whole nation of Israel every seven years (Deut 31:9-13), this liturgical reading was at best a reminder of what the people could not do. The Law had no power in itself and neither did the

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<sup>97</sup>Russell D. Moore ("The Theology of the Great Commission," in *The Challenge of the Great Commission: Essays on God's Mandate for the Local Church*, ed. Thom S. Rainer and Chuck Lawless [Pinnacle, 2005], 49-64) is undoubtedly correct to argue for the centrality of Christ in the doctrine of atonement. Salvation comes not from an assenting to a series of doctrines; it comes from the person of Christ himself. Nevertheless, Moore errs when he delimits the cosmic scope of Jesus' death by appeal to "union in Christ." Without regard to covenantal categories or Christ's priestly office, he is subject to the same critique that he offers against J. L. Dagg—theological abstraction. Following Demarest, Moore assumes that the work of Christ can be divided into a universal provision and a particular application, but as it will be more clearly elucidated below, the Scriptures do not permit such division.

The freeness of the gospel, which Moore seeks to defend, is not upheld by union in Christ. Union in Christ is the graduated relationship (in eternity, at the cross, and in time) that God has with his elect, by means of a covenant relationship (Robert Letham, *Union with Christ: In Scripture, History, and Theology* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011]). To speak of union in Christ apart from God's election in eternity past (Eph 1:3-6), the new covenant which includes forgiveness of sins (1:7-12), and the particular work of the Spirit who brings God's elect into covenant relationship with the Father, through the Son (1:13-14), makes "union in Christ" a cipher for a relationship that results from man's decision to believe in time. The effect of Moore's proposal unwittingly shifts the weight of the atoning work of Christ from Jesus to the man who responds—presumably by the help of the Spirit. Such a conception of union in Christ does not do justice to the ongoing work of Christ's priesthood—who sends forth his Spirit to "teach" his covenant people to walk in his truth. In this way, Moore, like every other generalist, fails to consider the unified ministry of Christ's priesthood.

As to the free offer of the gospel, it is upheld by Christ's (priestly and kingly) authority, which commands all men without exception to come to him. For a cogent defense of definite atonement *and* the free offer of the gospel—one coincidentally that Moore commends—see Robert Hall, *Help to Zion's Travellers*, ed. Nathan A. Finn (Memphis: Borderstone, 2011), 79-131.

<sup>98</sup>David G. Peterson, *Transformed by God: New Covenant Life and Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 61-76, 110-22.

<sup>99</sup>The reason for this change is tied to the work of the Spirit, but also the Word of God. Under the old covenant, the law could only prescribe holiness (Exod 10:16; cf. Rom 8:2-3). But under the new covenant, God's word is performative, effecting inward circumcision (Exod 30:6), new life (Ezek 37:1-14), and definitive forgiveness (Jer 31:34) (Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 17-43). So, when the gospel goes forth, it effects all that it demands in all those for whom the shepherd-priest is calling by name (Zech 9-14; John 10:1-30).



priests. By contrast, when Christ was raised from the dead and seated at God’s right hand, he became “a life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor 15:45). By that Spirit, which he sends from his priestly throne, Christ writes the law of God on human hearts. Consequently, this priestly instruction, theologically labeled as “effectual calling,” always comes through the gospel *and is always effective*.<sup>100</sup> Accordingly, for everyone whom he atones, he also instructs; all those for whom he dies, he calls. To widen one sphere (atonement) larger than the other (calling)—as generalists do—militates against the pattern in the Law and invites repudiation on Christ.

Therefore, when Jesus Christ came as a new priest, the NT records that the law changed (Heb 7:12). The covenant he mediated consisted of better promises (8:1-13). Because of his sinless character, he did not need to make atonement for himself, and because he lived to intercede for the people he represented, he was able to make perpetual prayer before the Father, *and* he was able to write the law of God on their hearts. According to the stipulations of the new covenant, the law no longer existed outside the covenant community. Now, every member of the covenant community had the law written on their hearts. In theological parlance, Christ purchased “faith” for his people (Eph 2:8-9; Phil 1:29),<sup>101</sup> but in biblical language, he effectively taught every person for whom he died (Isa 54:13). Or to use temple imagery, his words generate obedience when he deposits the law of the covenant by means of the Spirit in the hearts of his new temple (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19).<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), esp. 243-66; Matthew Barrett, “Reclaiming Monergism: The Case for Sovereign Grace in Effectual Calling and Regeneration” (Ph.D. diss, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011).

<sup>101</sup>John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 141-45.

<sup>102</sup>If we take seriously the language of Paul, that each new covenant member is a living temple (Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 65-70), it is not too much to say that Christ vouchsafes his covenant law in the heart of every person purchased by his new covenant sacrifice (Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, 76-88).

Generalists do not support this view. They make the benefits of Christ's death contingent on the application of the Spirit or the personal exercise of faith. However, by shifting the locus of salvation from God to man, they ignore Christ's priestly office. Yet, such priestly oversight necessarily distorts a biblical soteriology.<sup>103</sup> Worse, in terms of Christ's unified work, failure to communicate blessing—by means of the Spirit—to those for whom he made covenantal sacrifice would result in God's judgment.<sup>104</sup>

Not surprisingly, when the NT, especially Hebrews, speaks of Christ as the mediator of a better covenant, his teaching comes with better promises and greater power. Indeed, Vanhoye rightly observes that the priestly letter of Hebrews begins by establishing his authoritative, priestly word.<sup>105</sup> In other words, while the weak priests in the OT effectively caused Israel's downfall because of their failure to administer the Word,<sup>106</sup> Christ's omnipotent priesthood causes the rising of many in Israel (Luke 2:34). Indeed, as a

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<sup>103</sup>It jeopardizes the objective work of Christ (Michael Horton, *For Calvinism* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011], 87-89).

<sup>104</sup>On the "very close relation" between Christ's work of atonement and his sending the Spirit, see George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1871; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953), 342-51.

<sup>105</sup>Albert Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, trans. J. Bernard Orchard (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's, 1986), 91-109. Vanhoye argues for Christ's unified work, in his sacrifice and in his speech. He writes, "We see in all this how wrong it would be to think that the author [of Hebrews] has separated the Word of God from the priesthood and that he has forgotten, in describing Christ's priesthood, the priestly function of teaching. On the contrary, this is the first point he insists" (ibid., 105).

<sup>106</sup>At this point, someone might interject the notion that "free will" was the cause of Israel's sin. Certainly, the volitional choices of the nation did lead to Israel's judgment; however, that is not the language of the OT prophets. Further discussion about God's sovereignty and human freedom must be set aside, because this dissertation aims to understand how the whole Bible presents the priesthood. On the subject of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, see John Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 119-82; D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002); Jonathan Edwards, *The Freedom of the Will* (London: 1845; repr., Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1996).

new Moses, a better Aaron, and the resurrected cornerstone of a living temple, Christ's word brings to fruition all that he commands in the lives of his covenant community.<sup>107</sup>

To turn this into a syllogism based on the biblical text, Galatians 3:13 exclaims that on the cross Christ became accursed in order to eradicate the curse. Significantly, when Paul speaks of blessings and curses, he is not speaking in the abstract.<sup>108</sup> Leviticus 26-27 and Deuteronomy 27-28 enumerate what these curses are. Stuart enumerates 27 different curses found in these chapters.<sup>109</sup> One of them is the curse of futility, which is vividly described in Deuteronomy 28:30. Moses records, "You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall ravish her. You shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it. You shall plant a vineyard, but you shall not enjoy its fruit." Under the old covenant, when the people of Israel obeyed, God prospered the work of their hands; but when they sinned, God could and would sentence them to futility. However, when Christ died on the cross, he reversed the curse, so that nothing he did would ever experience futility. Thus, in the language of Deuteronomy 28:30: The bride Jesus betrothed (Eph 5:25-27), he would marry (Rev 19:6-10); the temple Jesus sought to build (Matt 16:18), he would complete (Rev 21-22); and the vineyard Jesus planted (John 15:1-8), he would enjoy the fruit of its vine (Matt 26:29; John 15:7-8).

By contrast, general atonement builds futility into its very system, or at least, it stresses the universal nature of the atonement so much, that it renders much of Christ's blood as nugatory. Speaking anthropomorphically, if general atonement is correct, then for all

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<sup>107</sup>Timothy Ward, *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009).

<sup>108</sup>In Gal 3:10-14, Paul quotes three passages from the *torah*, including Deut 27:26 which functions as a summary of all the curses in the law (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 203).

<sup>109</sup>Stuart, "Malachi," 1258-62.

those for whom Christ died but did not save, he would taste the bitterness of Deuteronomy 28—not in his death, but in his resurrection and ascension. This overturns Galatians 3:13. In the terms of the prophets, if Jesus did not get the message to his people, he would be an incompetent priest.

In the end, if Christ dies on the cross for anyone for whom he does not apply the blessings of the covenant, it must be asked: Has Jesus really escaped the curse of futility pronounced in Deuteronomy 28:30? By Scriptural testimony, Jesus does remove all the curses, even the ineffectiveness of the old covenant. Therefore, on the basis of the better covenant which he mediates—one without weakness—Christ provides absolute assurance that all those for whom he died, he will also teach. And thus, unlike all the priests excoriated in the prophets, Christ will bring blessing to all those for whom he died, namely “one from every family and two from every nation” (Jer 3:14), until all the elect have been brought to God, through the Law that goes out from Zion (Isa 2:3), the gospel that never returns void (55:10-11).

### **The Priests as Atoning Mediators (*Kohen Mediator*)**

So far, I have observed how the OT priests failed as guardians and teachers, and how Jesus’ priesthood stands in radical contrast to these errant priests. Now, we must consider the priests as intercessors and sacrificers, what I have labeled *Kohen Mediator*. As with the other two roles, there is in Israel’s history a progressive degradation of the priests’ service at the altar (cf. Amos 5:25).<sup>110</sup> What is idealized in the Law is incrementally disfigured as ectypes deviate from the archetype. In what follows, I will consider a handful of false “sacrificers” in Israel’s history, before spending ample time assessing the Latter

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<sup>110</sup>McComiskey, *Amos*, 316.

Prophets. By assessing how Scripture critiques its own system of sacrifice, these prophets show how any priest who fails to serve according to God's Law is disqualified, and that in regards to sacrifices, obedience to God's particular designs is more important than increasing the number of sacrifices—which I will argue is an analogous argument against generalists who increase the extent of the atonement at the expense of God's stated design.

### **Prophetic Criticism**

**The Former Prophets.** When the twelve tribes left the plains of Moab and entered Canaan, there was great sensitivity to the building of altars and offering of sacrifices. For example, Joshua 22 records what happened when Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh constructed an altar of witness on the banks of the Jordan (vv. 10-34). When word reached Phinehas, the one who earlier extinguished the plague at Peor (Num 25:1-9; Josh 22:17), he led ten chiefs to inquire about the spurious altar (vv. 13-14). Verse 19 records his words, "Do not rebel against the LORD or make us as rebels by building for yourselves an altar other than the altar of the LORD our God." The people responded faithfully, "If it was in rebellion or in breach of faith against the LORD, do not spare us today for building an altar to turn away from following the LORD. Or if we did so to offer burnt offerings or grain offerings or peace offerings on it, may the LORD himself take vengeance" (vv. 22-23). Such was the attitude toward God and his Law when Israel entered Canaan. It grieved Israel to think of replacing God's altar with a rival. Sadly, such faithfulness faded fast.

In Judges, the generation after Joshua turned their hearts from YHWH to false gods (2:10-15). While Judges demonstrates Israel's need for a true king to subdue the unruly people (21:25; cf. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1), there are also indications she needed liturgical reform. For instance, when YHWH called Gideon, God instructed him to tear down his father's altar

to Baal (6:25-35).<sup>111</sup> Significantly, the whole book of Judges is devoid of authorized priests, sacrifices, or worship. Instead, the only place which speaks of a Levite offering sacrifice is in Judges 19, when the author uses sacrificial language to speak of the “concubine” who was cut into twelve pieces and shipped throughout the nation of Israel.<sup>112</sup>

Not surprisingly, when Israel turned away from YHWH, God’s covenant people opened themselves up to pagan sacrifices. Nowhere is this more evident or more tragic than in the case of Jephthah and his daughter. Block details the Canaanite influence on this man and his “outrightly pagan” vow. He suggests that it is preferable to see this vow as more than “rash and hastily worded,” but rather “another demonstration of [Jephthah’s] shrewd and calculating nature, another attempt to manipulate circumstances to his own advantage.”<sup>113</sup> Even more suggestive for the falsehood of this child sacrifice is the way that the author of Judges uses the language of “only child” in order to “link this account with the account of Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac.”<sup>114</sup>

In stark contrast, Abraham, as a patriarchal priest, was commanded by God to offer up his son, because God intended to intervene and provide a substitute, effecting Isaac’s resurrection (Heb 11:17) and blessing to Abraham’s offspring (Gal 3-4). Not so with

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<sup>111</sup>Commenting on God’s demand for Gideon to tear down his father’s altar, Davis writes, “Two altars cannot coexist side by side. You cannot have an altar of Yahweh (v. 24) and an altar to Baal (v. 25). They are mutually exclusive” (Dale Ralph Davis, *Judges: Such a Great Salvation* [Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2000], 97).

<sup>112</sup>Jordan, *Judges*, 301-02.

<sup>113</sup>Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 367.

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*, 371. Block, in fact, points out twelve different points of comparison and contrast between Gen 22 and Judg 11 (*ibid.*, 371-72). Obviously, the Jephthah narrative shows how far Israel fell from Abraham. Moreover, if we understand Abraham to be a priest, then Jephthah’s pagan sacrifice becomes another testimony to Israel’s failure to trust God’s priestly system to sacrifice and pronounce blessings. Moreover, this episode speaks to the way that Jephthah, a leader in Israel, attempted to manipulate God through the means of child sacrifice in order to secure his own success (cf. 2 Kgs 3:27).

Jephthah. His self-authorized child sacrifice smacks of pagan influence and invites the harshest judgment.<sup>115</sup> Whereas Genesis 22 announced the gospel beforehand; Judges 11 depicts an anti-gospel, with a false priest. As the whole book of Judges indicates, Israel needed a king to end the people's anarchy. However, they also needed a true priest, because without a true priest there would be no true sacrifice, no atonement for sin, and no final deliverance. It will take the rest of Israel's history to bring this true priest.

During the united and divided monarchies, the need for a greater priest continues. Like in Judges, unauthorized men in unauthorized places continue to make sacrifices according to their own interests and ideas. Three examples must suffice. First, Saul, who is chosen by the people to be Israel's first king, impatiently offers up sacrifices when Samuel is not present (1 Sam 13:8ff.). He is not a priest, but his burnt offering indicates a failure on the part of the Levites to instruct him (Deut 17:18-20) or prevent him from such an egregious sin (cf. 2 Chr 26:16-21). Second, when ten tribes of Israel are torn out of Rehoboam's hands, Jeroboam establishes a system of sacrifice in Dan and Bethel that offers illicit sacrifices (1 Kgs 12:25-33). Knowing that annual festivals (Lev 23) would require Israelites in the North to worship in Jerusalem, Jeroboam intentionally establishes a pair of rival sanctuaries. Third, the priests themselves fail to keep purity and thus are unprepared to offer sacrifices when called upon to serve (2 Chr 30:3). Consequently, the prophets from Amos to Malachi criticize the falsehood of the priests and their ineffectual sacrifices.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 368. On balance, Heb 11:32 ascribes faithfulness to Jephthah. This interpretation of his life cannot erase the error of his vow, but it does reiterate the fact that where sin increases, grace abounds all the more. Jephthah's vow displays the breakdown of Israel's religion during the Judges; his acceptance by God reiterates that the gospel truth that sinners are saved by faith and not by works (Eph 2:8-9).

<sup>116</sup>For a survey of the prophetic witness against the priests, see Lester L. Grabbe, "A Priest is Without Honor in His Own Prophet: Priests and Other Religious Specialists in the Latter Prophets," in *The Priests in the Prophets*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Alice Ogden Bellis (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 79-97.

In sum, the overarching problem of the priestly sacrifice during the Former Prophets was deviation from the Law.<sup>117</sup> The priests (and judges and kings) did what was right in their own eyes. They often expanded the sacrificial system and made it bigger than God had intended. Instead of strengthening the system of sacrifice, they weakened it. When the sacrifices were kept, they provided an effectual means of maintaining purity and enjoying covenantal blessing. However, when adjustments began, the sacrifices aggravated God's wrath. Therefore, as we examine the evidence, it is worth remembering these questions: Is a larger sacrifice better? Will more sacrifices provide a better atonement? Could a universal atonement actually offend God? How might modern theologies follow the pattern of the OT priests and unlawfully add to the atonement? We will return to these questions in time.

**The Latter Prophets.** While the priesthood is not mentioned by name in Amos, there exists throughout the book a comprehensive judgment against false worship (4:4-5; 8:3) and false altars (2:8; 3:14).<sup>118</sup> The prophet's strongest words against Israel's sacrifices are found in Amos 5:21-22, when he records God's words, "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them."<sup>119</sup> YHWH's anger was not directed at the institution of sacrifice,

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<sup>117</sup>When Hezekiah brought about reforms to Israel's temple worship (2 Chr 31:1-21), he required the people of Israel to "give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, that they might give themselves to the Law of the LORD" (v. 4). This needed provision hints at the fact that the priests were not previously giving themselves to the law, as they should have been (Richard L. Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles* [Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 1998], 619-20).

<sup>118</sup>Amos is methodical in his judgment against sin: "Over and over the prophet denounces sinful behavior, and with each succeeding section the text includes another group of people until all are under God's condemnation" (House, *Old Testament Theology*, 358).

<sup>119</sup>A parallel denunciation of false worship is found in Isa 1:11-17, of which Motyer comments that the temple worship offered by the priests had become "meaningless, detestable, and unbearable" (J. Alec



but at the unrighteousness of Israel (5:24).<sup>120</sup> Sacrifices from those who “rejected the law” of God (Amos 2:4) invited God’s covenant curse (Lev 26:31).<sup>121</sup> Therefore, what was intended to be a pleasing aroma in YHWH’s nostrils (Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16; 4:31) became a horrendous stench, because the sacrifices became ineffectual ends in themselves.<sup>122</sup>

If Amos was conspicuously silent about the “priests,” Joel was very vocal. In 2:17, the prophet urges the priests to make intercessions and weep for the nation. The prayer calls for the priests to position themselves between “porch and altar” (NIV), pleading a sacrifice before God,<sup>123</sup> calling on God to honor his covenant.<sup>124</sup> However, the fact that Joel

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Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993], 46-47). A new kind of atonement was needed and would be given (vv. 18-20), but it would not come from the bloody hands of Israel’s priests (v. 15). In Isaiah, this need is not resolved until the Suffering Servant comes to perform his priestly duty in Isa 53.

<sup>120</sup>McComiskey, *Amos*, 316. Stuart cogently observes that the sacrifices were “predesigned for a coming era of normal food production in a landed, settled situation” (*Hosea-Jonah*, 355). For forty years in the wilderness, the people dwelt with God on the basis of obedience, not sacrifice (5:25). Admittedly, this arrangement resulted in the death of an entire generation because of the people’s inability to keep covenant. Nonetheless, sacrifice was not the essence of covenant faithfulness, righteousness was (5:24), and thus the priest’s comprehensive ministry was the accomplishment of righteousness through his manifold duties (guarding, instruction, and atonement).

<sup>121</sup>Amos attaches blame to the sacrifices of Israel (5:20-21) and Judah (2:4) because in both cases, the priests failed to uphold their duties (Deut 33:8-11). “Covenant disobedience is the problem, including the heterodoxy in a nation whose capital [*sic*] is supposed to be the center of worship of the one true God (Deut 12)” (Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 316).

<sup>122</sup>Niehaus, “Amos,” 431-32. In Amos, the sacrifices of Israel are rejected, and what is shockingly absent is the mention of any qualified priest. Even worse, in Amos 7:1-9, the prophet takes up Moses’ mantle and begs God for mercy. He has a vision of God’s judgment on Israel, and he pleads with God to spare Israel. Amos’ actions are that of a faithful priest and covenant mediator. Because there was no one to intercede between porch and altar, Amos replaced the priest (cf. Joel 2:17).

<sup>123</sup>“The position of the priests between the porch and the altar (2:17) was essentially a mediatorial position, between the altar where sacrifice was made and the dwelling of God” (Richard D. Patterson, *Joel*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 283).

<sup>124</sup>Duane Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, NAC, vol. 19A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 349; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 83-84. Noticeably, the priest-people relationship is continued. The location of the prayer, the covenant, and leadership of the people of Israel speak of a particular act. Perhaps most significant is the fact that the answer to the prayer is the new covenant. The prayer is offered by Israel’s priests, for Israel, and when it is transposed into the higher key of the new covenant, the particular nature of the intercession remains. It is still for Israel, according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh: “Joel has been laboring to wean the people

calls for a priest to position himself between God and his people insinuates that the priests had gone “off the grid.” In fact, this assumption is confirmed in Joel 1.<sup>125</sup> There, Joel records the damaging effects of the locusts (vv. 2-12) and relates the crisis in the fields to the crisis in the temple (vv. 13-14). Essentially, because the grain is destroyed (v. 10), the priests cannot offer grain and drink offerings.<sup>126</sup> Due to Israel’s manifold sin,<sup>127</sup> God “has put an end to daily sacrifice” through the destruction of the land.<sup>128</sup>

While our focus is on the disfigurement of the priesthood in the Prophets, it is worth pointing out that the quotation of Exodus 34:6 in Joel 2:13 suggests that the priests are called to take the position of Moses, standing on Mount Sinai, between God and his people (cf. Ps 78:4, 8, 10), and that when the priest fulfills his duty, he has the God-given ability to put away God’s anger and elicit God’s covenantal blessings.<sup>129</sup> Significantly, as a result of the priest’s intercession in verse 17, verses 18-27 speak of God restoring his land and regenerating the sacrificial system.<sup>130</sup> Further, at the initiative of the priestly intervention,

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away from indifference and insensitivity to the things of God” (Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 84). Ultimately, this will take the Spirit of God, which is the answer to the priests’ prayer.

<sup>125</sup>Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 326; see also, Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 52-58.

<sup>126</sup>Patterson, *Joel*, 320.

<sup>127</sup>The cause of God’s judgment is pluriform, to which Patterson (*Joel*, 321) states: “The observance of these offerings [had] degenerated into merely routine ritual (cf. Isa 1:11; Hos 6:6; Amos 4:4-5; Mic 6:6-7),” as well as, drunkenness and false sacrifices (Hos 2:5; Amos 2:8).

<sup>128</sup>Garrett cites the verb tense of “cut off” as indicating the Lord’s doing: “The hophal implies a secondary agent: ‘grain offerings and drink offerings have been made to be cut off from the house of the LORD.’ This implies that God, through the agency of the locusts [1:4], put an end to the daily sacrifice” (*Hosea, Joel*, 321).

<sup>129</sup>Donald Gowan observes the vital role that priests play in public worship (Joel 1:13-14; 2:15-17) and that Joel 2:18-19 is the turning point of the book, but he does not put the two together (*Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Death and Resurrection of Israel* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998], 184).

<sup>130</sup>Observing the way that creation and cult are related, Patterson (*Joel*, 254) states, “The renewed rain thus becomes another outward symbol of an inward reality, a restored fellowship with God. Since the signs of the covenant—the offerings—had been cut off in God’s judgment through the locust plague, repentance of

verses 28-32 show that God's Spirit will be poured out on all flesh.<sup>131</sup> This prophecy is ultimately fulfilled in Christ's priestly sacrifice (Luke 22-24), ascension and session (Heb 1), and sending of the Spirit (Acts 2). Thus, in type and prophecy, Joel provides an important backdrop for understanding the relationship between priest and *pneuma*. Those for whom the priest intercedes (2:17) will enjoy the fruit of his sacrifice (2:18-27) and indwelling of the Holy Spirit (2:28-32).<sup>132</sup> While still working with types and shadows, Joel presents a priestly ministry that is particular and effective.

Hosea supplies further testimony against the priests in Israel. In Hosea 4:8, the prophet suggests that priests of Israel purposefully increased the sins of Israel, so that they might get more meat.<sup>133</sup> Like a dentist giving out candy to increase cavities, the priests gladly let Israel fall into greater sin, so that their business would increase and their bellies would be filled with the meat of sacrifices (cf. Jer 14:18). The result was a system of sacrifice that did not atone. Again in Hosea 8:11, Hosea speaks of Israel "multiplying altars," where "priests proliferated" and "these altars . . . became places to sin rather than

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the heart would bring restoration of fellowship, hence restoration of the covenant privileges. . . . *The revitalized earth would enable the forfeited right to offer sacrifices to be regained* (cf. Deut 6:24-25; 2 Chr 6:26-27; 7:14; Mal 3:3)." Emphasis mine.

<sup>131</sup>On the historical and eschatological fulfillments of Joel 2, which anticipate Pentecost, see Willem VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 123-24.

<sup>132</sup>Theological commentary is sparse on the significance of the priest's role in Joel 2:17. For instance, most OT theologies overlook this verse (cf. O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Prophets* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004]; House, *Old Testament Theology*; Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*; James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010]). One exception is Gerard Van Groningen. In *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), he notes the special intercessory role, but he turns around and elevates the king as the "main instrument . . . used by Yahweh to bring prosperity and well-being to the people" (446-47). While not downplaying the theocratic role of the king in Israel, the role of the priest should not be overlooked. In fact, Jesus establishes the kingdom through his sacrificial priesthood, thus providing a "kingdom through priesthood."

<sup>133</sup>Dearman, *Hosea*, 160-61. In context, the way in which the priests increased sin was to reject the Law of God and ignore teaching the people (Hos 4:4-6).

places to be forgiven.”<sup>134</sup> Once more, in Hosea 10:1-2, the prophet acknowledges the increasing size of Israel, and the increased number of altars; however, because these altars were not in accordance with God’s declared intention to locate his sacrifices in Jerusalem (Deut 12), the multiplication of blood increased Israel’s sin. In this context, God calls the priests of Israel “idolatrous” (v. 5) because they have attached themselves to a false system of worship.<sup>135</sup> Though the means in each case is different, the end is the same: The illegitimate sacrifices (4:8), the illegitimate locations (8:11), and the illegitimate altars (10:2) all result in offerings that are not only ineffective but offensive to God.<sup>136</sup>

Malachi adds his voice to the prophetic chorus denouncing vain sacrifice. When he rebukes Israel’s priests for despising the name of the Lord, he says, “Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand” (1:6). God’s judgment comes from the fact that priests were offering (or accepting) blind, lame, and sick sacrifices (1:8, 13). In this way, the priests disregarded God’s laws and permitted unholy sacrifices to burn on the holy altar. These impure offerings seem to be recurring problem in the Prophets. Zephaniah lays two related charges against the priests: (1) “they do violence to her law,” indicating the failure of the priests to revere, guard,

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<sup>134</sup>Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 136. Stuart plausibly conjectures that the Northern priests may have found ‘biblical’ support for their new altars, appealing to the “patriarchal period, when multiple altars were normal and proper . . . as if not Mosaic Law had intervened” (135). It is a reminder that atonement theology depends not on a few proof texts, but a canonical reading of Scripture that answers the question: What time is it? And what does the covenant stipulate?

<sup>135</sup> Simply described as idolatrous, the Northern priests have forsaken the sacred place. They are tragically serving a golden calf. Whereas, the Levites stood out as loyal to God because they turned the sword on their brothers for bowing to a golden calf, now they are mourning the loss of the calf. In this instance, the priests are not using their swords wrongly; they are not using them at all.

<sup>136</sup>Dearman, *Hosea*, 159, 230.

or disseminate God's law (Lev 10:10-11; Mal 2:5-7),<sup>137</sup> and (2) "her priest profane what is holy," particularly the altar to which the priests were called to attend (cf. Lev 19:8; 20:3).<sup>138</sup> Likewise, in Haggai 2:10-14, God rebukes the priests, who know the law (v. 11), for offering what is unclean (v. 14).<sup>139</sup> Also, in Zechariah, Joshua the priest is presented as defiled and in need of cleansing (3:3-4). Together, these prophets rebuke the mingling of the unclean and profane with the pure and holy. The whole ministry of the priests depended on separation (Lev 10:10). This was true in teaching the law, but it was equally true in the sacrificial system. The priests were forbidden to offer unclean animals or to make atonement for unclean Gentiles—those who stood outside the covenant as enemies of God. Failure to keep these regulations evidenced a corrupt priesthood and resulted in a defiled nation—people and place. Worst of all, God's presence was compromised and his condemnation earned. Interestingly, while many criticisms landed on the priests during Second Temple Judaism,<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>J. Alec Motyer, "Zephaniah," in *The Minor Prophets*, 943.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.

<sup>139</sup>Explaining the reason for the defiled sacrifices, Motyer writes, "The unbuilt temple was a source of spiritual contagion" (J. Alec Motyer, "Haggai," in *The Minor Prophets*, 996; cf. Baldwin, *Haggai*, 33). He continues, "Altar ceremonies without the house was religion without God, seeking benefits but shunning a relationship with the Lord from whom the benefits were sought. Such a religion is itself defiled and offers no cure for defilement" (Motyer, "Haggai," 996). Motyer's observation has theological implications. The relationship between temple and atonement is significant in the NT (cf. Paul Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007]). Essentially, Christ's death "closes" the old temple (Luke 23:45), even as his death creates a new temple (Eph 2:11-22). This covenantal transfer from Israel to the church, signified by the eclipse of one temple and the erection of another, indicates who Christ is and what he is doing as the greater priest (Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*). As the "Immanuel" who tabernacles with his people, he serves the living stones whom he has created (Eph 2:10) and he is fitting them into his holy temple (Eph 2:19-22). By contrast, his death gave Jesus authority to cleanse the ones given to him by the father (John 17:2ff.) and to cleanse his Father's cosmic temple, by removing all those who are unclean (Rev 5:5; Rev 19:10ff.). In this way, Jesus' atoning sacrifice was limited to the new temple he is creating, even as it simultaneously gave him the right to purify heaven and earth.

<sup>140</sup>For a discussion of the disfiguration of the priesthood in Second Temple Judaism, see Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," *JHSJ* 4 (2006): 155-75.

the final collapse of the Levitical system would not come until A.D. 70. For now, we can note a few theological reflections on the data presented in the Prophets.

### **Theological Significance**

From all that has been observed concerning the priests and their sacrifices, here is the major application: Any priestly service that does not conform to the Law is worthless and ineffectual. Hosea calls the priests ignorant, iniquitous, and idolatrous, because they rejected his law and thus removed any power from the blood. Accordingly, theological formulations of Christ's priestly sacrifice must agree with the specific contours of the biblical office (delineated in the Law), as well as, the stipulations and better promises of the new covenant. Following their teacher, NT writers assume a working knowledge of these typological structures (Luke 24:27), and by extension, only as theologians attend the Bible's own presentation of the typological structures does the atonement's intent, extent, and efficacy become evident.<sup>141</sup>

Generalists are not unaware of types prefiguring the atonement, but they rarely consult them in their systematic formulations or when they interpret individual texts.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup>Older exegetes made much use of these types. See Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, esp. 62-75, 145-46; Stephen Charnock, *Christ Crucified: A Puritan's View of the Atonement* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2002); Candlish, *The Atonement*, 121-42; Thomas J. Crawford, *The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 203-84; Patrick Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956), 2:201-405; George Smeaton, *The Apostle's Doctrine of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1870; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), 25-53. Even some who deny unconditional election have defended "limited atonement" on the basis of priestly and sacrificial typology (F. W. Grant, *Atonement: In Type, Prophecy, and Accomplishment* [New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1888], 108-10).

<sup>142</sup>Ralph Wardlaw, the most prolific universal Calvinist in nineteenth-century Scotland (N. R. Needham, "Ralph Wardlaw," in *DSCHT* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993], 854), was well-versed in priestly theology but did not apply the priesthood of Christ to the doctrine of the atonement's extent. In *Discourses on the Principal Points of the Socinian Controversy* ([London, 1815], 215) he speaks of Christ's priesthood, saying "He came in the character not only of a prophet, but of a priest; not to instruct merely, but to redeem; not only to set an example of obedience, but to atone for transgression—'to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself' [Heb 9:26]." Yet, such priestly attentiveness is entirely lacking in *Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ* (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1843).

More often, they begin with universal assumptions (e.g., that God's love or the universal offer of the gospel demands a universal atonement) and proceed to employ lexical studies to define universal terms that support their theology.<sup>143</sup> The problem with this theological method is that it ignores what Scripture says about the priestly office and his particular relationship with his covenant people. It bases its arguments on a thin reading of aggregated texts, instead of an integrated reading of the whole biblical corpus. As a rule, generalists do not even consider what the prophets say against vain sacrifice (i.e., sacrifice that does not atone),<sup>144</sup> nor do they relate the individual passages of Scripture to the larger intrasystematic structures like priesthood and covenant. Consequently, generalists misread the text.

And what do we find in Scripture? From all that the prophets inveighed, it becomes clear that there is in Scripture a kind of sacrifice that does not *effect* atonement. Such an 'atonement' is always repudiated by God. The atoning work that receives God's commendation is indubitably effective. Any atonement theology that permits a priest to fail in applying the blood of the covenant to some of the covenant community must give a convincing textual evidence to escape the indictment of the prophets. As it stands, generalists argue for a semi-vain sacrifice.

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<sup>143</sup>This is the method of Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 189-93; Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 841-58; and Gary Shultz, "A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement" esp. 161-275. This "mediating position" follows the approach pioneered by A. H. Strong (see Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 852), who simply compiled universal and particular texts and argued that the former related to the atonement, the latter to the application (Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Outlines of Systematic Theology* [Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907], 771-76).

<sup>144</sup>One might counter by saying that this manner of argumentation compares apples (OT sacrifice) to oranges (systematic formulae); however, if we are going to let the whole counsel of Scripture inform our theology, and a significant corpus of literature (i.e., the Latter Prophets) speak to the subject of vain sacrifice—the point at issue between generalists and Calvinists concerning the atonement's efficacy—it behooves all interpreters of Scripture (exegetes and theologians) to assess how and where the biblical data informs our theological formulations.

Bolstering this argument is the abominable idea found in Haggai 2:10-14, of mingling holy and profane things. There Haggai addresses the priests and asks the keepers of the law to explain the process of consecration and contamination. Rightly, they assert that holy meat cannot make other food holy, but unclean persons can transfer their uncleanness to others. His point is that the unclean people of Israel have infected God's altar with their vileness, but because the priests are also contaminated, they have no means of purification.

Haggai's dialogue exposes two truths about Christ's greater service—one of continuity, one of discontinuity. First, in contradistinction with the old covenant priests, Christ *is able* to purify the unclean. This is evidenced by Jesus' ministry of healing (Matt 15:30-31), which often included physical contact with the blind (9:29; 20:34), the leprous (8:3), and the sick (8:15; 14:34).<sup>145</sup> Even more, Jesus does not flee from death like the Levitical priests (Lev 21:1-2, 11). Rather, as the Resurrection and the Life, Jesus' approach to death is different (see John 11). Because he has the power to raise the dead to life, death does not defile him. His word makes men clean (15:2). He bestows holiness. In this way, Christ stands in radical discontinuity with the mortal sons of Levi (Heb 7:23).

However, there is also continuity. Jesus, as a faithful priest, does not mingle the holy and the profane. Tersely, he makes distinctions (Lev 10:10). He asserts as much in John 10:26-30, when he says that he knows who are his. His sheep hear his voice, and they follow him. The Pharisees do not hear his voice and they do not believe, because they are not his sheep (10:26). In this context, Jesus says that he dies for his sheep, and by implication, he does not die for the goats.<sup>146</sup> In fact, it is in this conceptual context that all

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<sup>145</sup>For further discussion, see Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 149-82.

<sup>146</sup>Describing Jesus' "exquisite and forcible parable" in John 10, missions-minded, particular Baptist Howard Malcolm writes, "If the Saviour had no more connection with these than with the rest of



the “particular” passages should be asserted. Christ, as a priestly mediator makes full atonement for his bride (Eph 5:25-27), his church (Acts 20:28), his people (Matt 1:21), all those whom the Father has given him (John 17:2ff.).<sup>147</sup>

As a faithful priest, who lives to make distinctions, when Jesus died on the cross, he did not abandon his priestly requirement to distinguish the holy and profane. Rather, his death served a twofold purpose: He died *for* his covenant people, such that (at the right time in redemptive history) they would be made holy; and he died *against* his enemies, such that he might (at the end of the age) remove them from his cosmic temple.<sup>148</sup> Never is his death general and unspecified. It is universal, but in its cosmic scope, it is particular for every person—either for life and salvation or for death and judgment.<sup>149</sup>

What generalists fail to include in their theology of the atonement is the distinctiveness that marks the priestly office. Usually, generalists strain at amassing individual texts and isolated words to support their universal views, while the weight of the

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mankind, the whole parable becomes absurd and false. All the passages which speak of our dying, rising, living, &c., in and with Christ, become nugatory. In short, to maintain a general atonement, the entire doctrine of the federal union between Christ and his people must be abandoned” (*The Extent and Efficacy of the Atonement* [University Press, 1840; repr., LaVergne, TN, 2010], 63-65). Indeed, the language of sheep is not simply a metaphor of convenience, Jesus’ language in John 10 highlights a special and particular relationship that God has with his elect, from before the foundation of the world (John 10:26; cf. Eph 1:3-6).

<sup>147</sup>Candlish, *The Atonement*, 86-122.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 188-94.

<sup>149</sup>James Haldane makes a similar argument. He explains that in the gospel, “the wheat is separated from the chaff; as both are put into the fan, so the Gospel is addressed equally to the seed of the woman and to the seed of the serpent. To the one, it is savour of life—to the other, the savour of death; hence it is represented as a two-edged sword, proceeding out of the Redeemer’s mouth.” Once again employing OT typology, he furthers his case, “[The gospel] resembles the pillar interposed between the Egyptians and Israel—‘It was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these.’ If our Gospel, says the apostle, be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; if men receive not the Atonement made upon Calvary, . . . there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour them as the implacable adversaries of God” (*The Doctrine of the Atonement* [Edinburgh: 1847; repr., Choteau, MT: Old Paths Gospel, n. d.], 86-87).

priestly office, with its particular shape is left unconsidered.<sup>150</sup> Yet, such is not the case in the prophets. The prophets accuse the priests of failing to make distinctions and thus polluting the altar of God. While it can be debated how this applies to Christ, the fact is that Christ's priestly service, at every point, must make distinctions. His life, death, resurrection, and ascension, as well as his sending of the Spirit and perpetual intercession must all distinguish between the holy and the profane. Otherwise, Jesus himself fails to keep the Law. It is indiscernible to understand how generalists, at the point of Christ's death, can maintain this distinction, when they advocate Christ dying in general for the sins of all people.

In the end, while the argument of this chapter is substantially original, it finds historical support in all those theologians who have argued that Christ's priestly work is completely efficacious.<sup>151</sup> Most exegetically, George Smeaton made the argument that Christ's priestly sacrifice was "causally connected" to every spiritual blessing in a "direct and immediate" way.<sup>152</sup> For instance, Christ's priestly work efficaciously delivered believers

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<sup>150</sup>For instance, in two book-length arguments for a multi-intentioned view of the atonement, Douy (*Did Christ Die Only for the Elect?*, 68-127) and Robert Lightner (*The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement*, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998], esp. 59-91) both compile universal and particular texts and seek to compare-and-contrast their way to a resolution. The problem is methodological: They fail to consider the intrasystematic categories of the Bible, especially Christ's priestly work, and they offer systematic propositions with insufficient attention to the framework of the Bible itself.

<sup>151</sup>Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, 70-88, 170-72; Candlish, *The Atonement*, esp. 123-67; William Symington, *The Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* (Pittsburgh: United Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1864), 194-96; Hugh Martin, *The Atonement: In Its Relation to the Covenant, the Priesthood, the Intercession of Our Lord* (London: Ames Nisbet & Company, 1870), 49-103; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 466-69; Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 677; Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 236-37.

<sup>152</sup>Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself, passim*. This view is further delineated in Smeaton's other volume (*The Apostle's Doctrine of the Atonement*, 21-25), where he states, "The sacred writers uniformly put the remission of sins in close connection with the death of Christ as its procuring cause. Man's standing before God, . . . is always deduced from the death of Christ as the direct cause" (ibid., 21). This does not deny the reality of time that exists between Christ's death and the individual's

from death,<sup>153</sup> sought and saved the lost,<sup>154</sup> ransomed with nothing left to pay,<sup>155</sup> assuaged divine wrath,<sup>156</sup> remitted sins,<sup>157</sup> secured the progressive sanctification of believers,<sup>158</sup> and ensured that the elect received spiritual life.<sup>159</sup>

Summarily, if the multiple intentions of Christ's atoning work are taken as a collection of discreet benefits, it is understandable how someone might assign some but not all of them to the non-elect. However, when all of these benefits—better understood as blessings of the new covenant—are understood as effects of Christ's priestly office, an office that extends through his life and continues to the present, then it seems impossible for there to be a division between provision and application. The notion of a universal offering and a limited application is a theological deduction based on collecting, arranging, and synthesizing different classes of texts. It does not do justice to the total package of Christ's priesthood and the unswerving efficacy of his new covenant.

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justification, but it does maintain Christ as the active agent in redemption accomplished and applied. Those who divide Christ's provision and application (e.g., Strong, Douty, Lightner, Erickson, Demarest, Shultz) fail to recognize the ongoing, active role of Christ's priesthood which sends the Spirit to all those for whom Christ died.

<sup>153</sup>Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*, 50.

<sup>154</sup>*Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*, 194. Smeaton goes on to explain from the OT that the "ransom" is always effectual (*ibid.*, 195-97). Commenting on Matt 20:28, he writes, "It is not enough to say that the death of Christ was for the good of others in some vague, indefinite, indeterminate sense; for that is not warranted by the meaning of the preposition used [*anti*], or by the connection of the sentence" (*ibid.*, 199).

<sup>156</sup>"The sacerdotal offering of Christ's life as the culmination of His obedience is further represented as the ransom; and it has a direct or causal connection with present and future deliverance from divine wrath" (*ibid.*, 205). Christ's death makes ransom presently possible, *and* it secures it for the future.

<sup>157</sup>*Ibid.*, 218, 221, 386, 391.

<sup>158</sup>*Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>159</sup>Reflecting on John 6:51-57, Smeaton declares, "This saying is more explicit than the former as to the connection between the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, and the communication of spiritual *life*. It plainly announces that the atonement stands in causal connection with life. The crucified flesh of the Lord, is

In truth, when *Kohen Victor*, *Kohen Mediator*, *Kohen Teacher* are held together, it becomes inconceivable that Christ would shed his blood for anyone outside the new covenant. Failure to do all three of these things for any new covenant member, would render the new covenant little better than the old, and would bring the prophets' reproach on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Therefore, in tandem with Smeaton who argued from every text in the NT that Christ's sacrifice is never offered in vain, I close with his words, which expound the efficacy of his greater priesthood and new covenant mediation.

Now this of itself decides on the extent of the atonement. . . . If a causal connection obtains between one man's disobedience and the sin, judgment, and death in which the world is now involved, a causal connection obtains, too, between the second man's obedience and the benefits in which all Christians participate. If the fall was pregnant with consequences which cannot be gainsaid, ramify so widely that they are everywhere apparent, the atonement of Christ in like manner produces and will continue to produce results which are as real, and shall ramify as widely, through time and through eternity.<sup>160</sup>

### Summary

In the Prophets, it is evident that faithful priests needed to guard God's holiness, instruct God's people, and offer pure sacrifices. Anything less than this three-fold service jeopardized the holy calling of Israel and invoked the prophets' ire. At the same time, careful attention to these prophetic words provide a detailed rubric for what must be included in any faithful theological formulation of Christ and his priesthood. While there are certainly ways in which the historical critique must be sensitively appropriated for evaluating competing points of doctrine, the aim of this chapter has been to show that there is enough continuity to merit serious reflection on the prophets of old.

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represented as possessing a life-giving influence, and constituting the new and sole fountain from which life can be derived" (ibid., 271). Accordingly, it is impossible for Jesus to die for anyone who does not receive life.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid., 366.

Thus, to conclude, let me summarize our findings. First, when priests failed to guard God's house and separate the holy from the unclean, they led the nation to break the covenant while they themselves became disqualified for service. By analogy, it was argued that any system of theology that fails to consider how the priest was to make distinctions at any point in his service would run the risk of proclaiming clean what God declares unclean. In the case of general atonement, the assertion that Christ died for all men without exception ignores the way in which Christ as a priest would make distinctions. Looking forward to the NT, Jesus' death not only secured propitiation for the elect, it also secured Jesus' authority over all flesh and the right to cleanse God's cosmic temple. The prophets do not provide the final word on the relationship between the twin intentions of salvation and judgment, but they do beckon advocates of the multi-intentioned view of the atonement to explain from Scripture how Christ can propitiate the sins of the reprobate in the very same act that he is dying for the right to evict them from his world. Therefore, the guarding (and spiritual warfare) aspect of priestly office sides with definite atonement.

Next, I observed that when priests failed to teach the people, they were blamed for the nation's spiritual ignorance and idolatry. Therefore, faithful priests must instruct all the covenant people. Those priests who failed to explain the Law and exhort the nation to keep the covenant were deemed unfit for priestly service. Adding insult to injury, the people of Israel not only suffered under truant priests, but they also suffered under the Law itself, because the Law could not provide the life and righteousness that it demanded (Rom 8:2-3). Enter Jesus. As a faithful priest, he would not only offer a better sacrifice, he would ensure that every person in the covenant community knew the Lord and called upon his name (Jer 31:34; Joel 2:32). Thus, he is exonerated from the accusations of the prophets. However,

general atonement presents Jesus as dying for everyone, but as teaching only some. Therefore, for generalists to keep their view, they either need to redefine the priestly requirements of Jesus, or find some way of allowing Jesus to instruct only a portion of those for whom he suffered death. Neither road looks permissible from the vantage point of the prophets. Therefore, the teaching role of the priest advocates for a definite atonement.

Last, in regards to the sacrifices themselves, the prophets articulate that larger and more sacrifices are not always better. More important than the size of the sacrifice was obedience to the law. God desired unblemished sacrifices offered by holy priests. In this way, Jesus perfectly pleased the Father (Matt 5:17; Heb 10:1-10). The sacrifice he offered perfectly met the requirements of the law, because in his life and death, he did everything the Father required. In this way, he perfectly extinguished the threat of the curse, and inaugurated a new covenant that required no further work of sacrifice or obedience. All that was required, Jesus as the great high priest accomplished. Therefore, unlike the vain sacrifices, which invoked the wrath of God, Jesus' sacrifice was perfectly efficacious. This again argues for definite atonement.

While generalists assert that Christ died for all without exception, many of those for whom Christ died will not enjoy the forgiveness that he purchased for them. Compared with the prophetic judgments, this equivocation on who Jesus blesses indicates that Jesus is comparatively better than the OT priests because it is for a larger population, but his sacrifice, like theirs continues to suffer the devastating curse of futility. By contrast, the priest whom the prophets commend is one that offers a sacrifice completely devoid of futility! Therefore, while the prophets criticize the priests of Israel for a different kind of vain sacrifice (that which is offered with unclean hands); the prophets condemn general

atonement for asserting that Jesus offered a partially vain sacrifice (one offered with pure hands but a short arm). Particularists have historically chastised generalists for this aspect of their view, and for good reason. Evaluated by the words of the prophets, a semi-vain sacrifice is offensive to God and not becoming of God's priest.

Ultimately, the prophets provide an important critique of what the priest should and should not be. And based on the evidence that has been presented in this chapter, the prophets clearly require a definite view of the atonement. Still there is more to be seen in the Prophets. In the next chapter, I will demonstrate how they describe an eschatological priest that will perfectly fulfill the duties of guarding, instructing, and sacrificing. As it will be seen, these types, shadows, and prophecies clearly anticipate Christ, and as we consider their development, another layer of evidence for definite atonement will be observed.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE PRIESTHOOD REDESIGNED: AN ESCHATOLOGICAL HOPE FOR A GREATER PRIEST

In the last chapter, I considered how the prophets criticized the priests and Levites for failing to perform their three duties—guarding, atoning, and instructing. Such priestly negligence led the nation of Israel into sin. The prophets did not ignore the guilt of the people, but they rightly perceived the unified relationship between priest and people, and they charged the priests with greater error (cf. Matt 18:6; Luke 12:48). Applied theologically, the prophetic criticism provided a rubric for evaluating various views of the atonement, and it showed how general atonement fails to make distinction at the altar and perform effective service before the Lord on behalf of God’s covenant people.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of the foregoing analysis of the prophet’s critique of the OT priesthood, it is reasonable to infer that general atonement is denied and a particular, efficacious atonement affirmed.

In this chapter, I will consider the other feature in the Prophets—namely, the eschatological promise of a greater priest who will perfectly succeed in all his sacral duties. In short, this chapter will show how the Prophets asserted a vision of better priesthood. To say it more specifically, while the Levitical priesthood suffered from sin and death, the new

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<sup>1</sup>In less exegetical terms, Hugh Martin makes the same case that the priesthood always “rests on personal relations” (*The Atonement: In Its Relations to the Covenant, the Priesthood, the Intercession of our Lord* [London: Ames Nisbet & Company, 1870], 53).



priesthood would be spiritual in nature, eternal in duration, and absolute in efficacy.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the coming priest would be the substance of everything that Aaron prefigured.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, because of the covenantal framework of the OT, there is not a direct type-antitype relationship between Levi and Jesus, or Aaron and Jesus. This is obvious in the fact that Jesus is not a Levite. Rather, he is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Therefore, to understand how the *Vorbild* of the Law relates to the *Nachbild* of Jesus Christ, we need to consider the Davidic influence on the priestly office. While it has been often assumed that in the OT, priest and king are incompatible, a close reading of a number of texts indicates a more complex relationship. In fact, while Jesus comes to super-fulfill all the duties of Israel's priesthood (i.e., guarding, atoning, instructing), he does so as a Davidic king.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, this chapter will demonstrate that the eschatological priest foretold in the prophets was more than a temple attendant. He was the king himself. In continuity with the law, the prophets announce a priest who will guard, atone, and instruct. However, they go further. In 1-2 Samuel, the need of a faithful priest is fulfilled through David's house (cp. 1 Sam 2:35; 2 Sam 7:14-15). In the Psalms, David describes a royal-priest whose military

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<sup>2</sup>Arguments for definite atonement on the basis of the atonement's efficacy are plentiful: John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 137-41; Lorraine Boettner, *Studies in Theology* (Philadelphia: P & R, 1947), 318-20; John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 63-72; James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken, *The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Evangelical Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 119-23; Sam Waldron, "The Biblical Confirmation of Particular Redemption," in *Calvinism: A Southern Baptist Dialogue*, ed. Brad Waggoner and Ray E. Clendenen (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2008), 146-47; Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 273; Michael Horton, *For Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 92-93.

<sup>3</sup>Martin, *The Atonement*, 108-10.

<sup>4</sup>Karl Deenick, "Priest and King or Priest-King in 1 Samuel 2:35," *WTJ* 73 (2011): 325-39. Likewise, in the NT, Albert Vanhoye (*Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, trans. J. Bernard Orchard [Petersham, MA: St. Bedes, 1986], 102), insists that the author of Hebrews unites "Davidic messianism and priestly christology" (cf. Heb 5:5-6).

might defeats his enemies and presents his people to the Lord in pure vestments (Ps 110).<sup>5</sup> In the Latter Prophets, Zechariah portrays the priest in royal vestments (3:1-10; 6:9-15); Jeremiah speaks of a prince approaching God's altar (30:21-22); and Isaiah describes the Lord's Servant offering a priestly sacrifice to inaugurate a new covenant and create a new community of royal priests. By considering these passages, we will be able to detect the typological shift from Levi to David.<sup>6</sup> Theologically, the particular shape of the royal priest will also inform how the priestly office retains its particular service for the covenant community alone, even as the covenant community shifts from Israel to all the nations.

In what follows, these passages will each be considered to ascertain the way in which God's covenant with David reshapes the priestly office, and how the new covenant depends upon a Davidic *priest-king*, one who comes to fulfill all the covenant promises to Abraham, Israel, and David.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, we will consider the question: For whom did Jesus serve as priest? Still, before considering the individual texts, a word must be given about how the prophets adapt the promises of the older covenants to form the basis of the new covenant which the forthcoming priest-king will inaugurate with his sacrificial service.

### **Hermeneutics in the Prophets**

In the Prophets, everything is in flux. Early on, the temple replaced the tabernacle, and later Solomon's temple was razed and replaced by the second temple. Over the course of

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<sup>5</sup>Likewise, Ps 2:7-8 depicts the royal son as a priestly intercessor (Martin, *The Atonement*, 101-02).

<sup>6</sup>If space permitted, we could also consider the priestly aspects of Dan 7:13-14, where the son of man is clothed in priestly attire and given royal prerogatives (cf. Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," *JSHJ* 5 (2007): 57-79). Likewise, in Dan 9:24-27, there is discussion of a coming sacrifice and a strong covenant offered by a coming Messiah who dies "vicariously to uphold a covenant with many and to deal decisively with sin," (Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 547).

<sup>7</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 434-49.

time, the location of worship moved from Sinai to Shiloh to Zion (Ps 78:67-72), not to mention the illicit altars erected in Dan and Bethel (1 Kgs 12:25-33). When David ascended to the throne, the Mosaic covenant was improved and supplemented by a royal covenant (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17).<sup>8</sup> In this covenant, the blessings promised to Abraham and legislated through the Law remained the same, but now the Davidic covenant widened to include Gentiles. Ethnic Israel retained its privileged position as God's son, but there is embedded in David's covenant "a charter for all mankind" (2 Sam 7:19).<sup>9</sup> Going further, in the Latter Prophets when the sons of David proved themselves unable to keep covenant with YHWH, the prophets began to emphasize the need for regeneration and resurrection.<sup>10</sup> Calls for repentance were surpassed by prophecies foretelling a new covenant (Jer 31:31-34) and a new creation (Isa 65-66).<sup>11</sup> Nested in this historical context, the expectations of the priesthood also changed, and they did so in three ways.

### **The Widening of God's Covenantal Mercies**

First, there is the ever-widening scope of the covenants. In the Mosaic covenant, boundary markers like circumcision and food laws separated Jew from Gentile. In this

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<sup>8</sup>For a full treatment of the Davidic covenant, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 389-432.

<sup>9</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, "The Blessing of David: The Charter for Humanity," in *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies Prepared in Honor of Oswald Thompson Allis*, ed. John H. Skilton (Nutley, NJ: P & R, 1974), 298-318. Similarly, Michael Barber argues that God's covenant with David was "widening" from Israel to the nations (*Singing in the Reign: The Psalms and Liturgy of God's Kingdom* [Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2001], 67-75).

<sup>10</sup>While hampered by critical presuppositions, Donald Gowan's basic thesis is correct: "Each of the prophetic books contributes to the drama of the death and resurrection of the people of God" (*Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Death and Resurrection of Israel* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998], 10).

<sup>11</sup>Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000), 189.

national covenant, male circumcision functioned as the defining mark of God's people. Concurrently, the covenant with Levi set Aaron and his sons as the designated priests for Israel (and not the nations). By contrast, the scope widens with David's kingdom. When David sought to build a house for the Lord—presumably according to his own understanding of the Mosaic law (cf. Deut 17:15-20)—God responds with a different plan and a different house. In Nathan's oracle (2 Sam 7:4-17), blessing is promised to David's offspring. In response, David praises God for his “charter for mankind” (7:19), a latent promise that David's kingdom is meant for more than Israel alone.<sup>12</sup>

Restoring Israel's original calling—to be a priestly nation that mediates blessings to the nations (cf. Exod 19:5-6)—there is a renewed possibility that the nations will experience divine blessings because of a Davidic royal priest. In history, many Gentiles benefited from the sons of David, and in the Psalms, the language of blessing begins to overflow the borders of Israel. Michael Barber elucidates this covenantal expansion,

The Davidic kingdom includes a place for *all* nations. Psalm 72 tells us that the Davidic king's reign extends to ‘the ends of the earth,’ so that ‘all nations serve him’ (Ps 72:8, 11). Through King David God partially fulfills His promise to bless the nations. Echoing God's promise to Abraham, the psalmist tells us in reference to the king: “May men bless themselves by him, all nations call him blessed!” (Ps. 72:17).<sup>13</sup>

Truly, the scope of David's kingdom and covenant is still restricted to Israel: The ark and the name of the Lord reside in Jerusalem (2 Sam 5; cf. Deut 12; 1 Kgs 8), the priests serve in Jerusalem's temple (1 Chr 22-26), and law commands the twelve tribes to regularly assemble in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, as Israel's cult moves from Sinai to Jerusalem (Zion), a

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<sup>12</sup>Indeed, this wider scope in God's covenant with David goes back to God's promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), and before that to Adam. In making this intratextual connection, it is vital to understand *how* God intends to widen (read: universalize) his particular blessings to Israel. How the new covenant is widened has massive implications for the language of Christ dying for the world. This will be discussed below.

<sup>13</sup>Barber, *Signing in the Reign*, 56.

“widening of the tent pegs” begins to occur (Isa 54:1-3).<sup>14</sup> While Israel was united under David and Solomon, Zion “remain[ed] a place where *all Israel*—that is, all twelve tribes—is gathered together.”<sup>15</sup> Importantly, when the twelve tribes disbanded, Zion continued to represent “the Davidic kingdom that, in its golden age, united all twelve tribes of Israel.”<sup>16</sup> Therefore, in the Prophets, “Zion represents both the reunification of Israel” and the place where the nations would stream (2:1-5).<sup>17</sup> In a word, Zion theology provides a necessary step between the nationalism of Moses and the international ministry of Jesus, between the old covenant and the new.<sup>18</sup> Even as David’s sons fail to bring the light to the nations, the mediatorial role and priestly service of Israel remains. So vital is this emphasis in the Prophets that when they speak of the new covenant, they do so in Davidic terms (Isa 55:3; Jer 23:5; 33:14-26; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hos 3:5; Amos 9:11-15).

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 67-71.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 70.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Gordon J. Wenham and Richard S. Hess, eds., *Zion: City of Our God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). Further support for this internationalizing can be observed in the shift from Moses’ Law to the Wisdom literature associated with David and Solomon. Again, Michael Barber’s observations are illuminating: “The Wisdom literature reflects the international quality of the Davidic covenant. It does not concern itself with the ritual laws of Sinai given exclusively to Israel; rather, it addresses anyone who seeks righteousness” (*Singing in the Reign*, 72). Barber goes further to explain the international character of God’s covenant with David. “Support for this claim can be found in 2 Samuel 7:19, where, upon receiving God’s sworn covenant oath to establish his dynasty, David declares: ‘You have shown me a *torah for mankind*.’ This is the law that goes from Zion, in Isaiah 2:3. This *torah for mankind*, the *torah for Adam*, is the Wisdom literature” (ibid., 75). The theological significance of this exegetical point is the way that it helps relate the particular and universal aspects of Christ’s messianic ministry. Fulfilling all the law, the prophets, and the writings (Luke 24:27), Jesus is the Wisdom of God, the one who will write his law on the hearts of his servants. In this way, the law-keeping Davidic king serves as the wise priest who perfectly leads his people into the dwelling place of God.

Still, there is not just continuity between the Davidic and new covenants. There is also radical discontinuity and substantial improvement.<sup>19</sup> For instance, in contrast to the Davidic covenant, the new covenant is perfectly successful, because the covenant mediator (a priestly son of David) will not stumble, but will effect salvation by the power of the Spirit.<sup>20</sup> Of course, this universal efficacy does not extend to all people without exception, but—as it will be argued—to all people without distinction. Men and women from every nation would be brought to faith by the sacrificial work of the priestly Servant (Isa 53) and through his effectual application of the law of God on the hearts of “reconstituted Israel, as [Jer] 31:34 implies with its promise of a definitive forgiveness of sins.”<sup>21</sup>

### **From Flesh to Spirit**

This leads to a second covenantal shift—the shift from national blessings in Israel mediated by circumcised fathers to individual blessings applied by the Spirit.<sup>22</sup> Commenting on the proverb in Jeremiah 31:29, “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge,” D. A. Carson writes,

The history of Israel under the Mosaic covenant has been characterized by the outworking of this proverb. The covenant structure was profoundly racial and tribal. Designated leaders—prophets, priests, king, and occasionally other leaders such as the seventy elders or Bezalel—were endowed with the Spirit, and spoke for God to the

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<sup>19</sup>David G. Peterson, *Transformed by God: New Covenant Life and Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 29-31.

<sup>20</sup>The Mosaic Law appoints blessing for Israel, but the new covenant promises to pour out blessings on all flesh (Joel 2:28-32), on all those who come to find refuge in the Davidic Son of God (Ps 2:7-12).

<sup>21</sup>Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 30.

<sup>22</sup>This is sometimes called the “democratizing” of the new covenant. On this point, Gentry and Wellum state, “The blessings do come to the nations, . . . because a new David who is an obedient son succeeds in bringing Yahweh’s Torah to all humans. If we follow through on the subjective genitive [in Isa 55:3], the kindnesses of David could involve sharing the victory of the one with the many (see Isa. 53:10–12) so that all are now sons and daughters of God, just as all are now servants. This might be a way in which the future David democratizes the covenant” (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 417).

people and for the people of God (cf. Exod. 20:19). Thus when the leaders sinned, the entire nation was contaminated, and ultimately faced divine wrath.<sup>23</sup>

However, as Jeremiah 31 indicates, a new era with a new covenant was coming. This covenant would be inaugurated and secured by a priestly mediator who removes the curse and secures blessing through his own priestly service (cf. Heb 9:15-17). Gentry and Wellum explain, “In the old covenant community, these covenant mediators sinned and the community suffered because of *faulty mediators*. In the new covenant, however, our covenant mediator is without sin and as a result, the community will never suffer because of a faulty mediator.”<sup>24</sup>

To say it another way, the shift from old covenant(s) to new is one from flesh to Spirit.<sup>25</sup> Joel 2:28-32 makes this transition clear. The new covenant comes with the power of God’s Spirit, and this Spirit is poured out on all flesh. However, “all” in Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17 does not mean, all without exception.<sup>26</sup> Rather, context clearly circumscribes the meaning of “all” to those who “know the Lord.” Indeed, according to the stipulations of Jeremiah 31:34, and its conceptual parallel in Isaiah 54:13, all members of the covenant “shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children.” Space does not

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<sup>23</sup>D. A. Carson, “Evangelicals, Ecumenism, and the Church,” in *Evangelical Affirmations*, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer and Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 359-60.

<sup>24</sup>Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 510.

<sup>25</sup>As Israelites grew up under the old covenant “some became believers in Yahweh and others did not. This resulted in a situation within the covenant community where some *members* could urge other *members* to know the Lord. In the new covenant community, however, one does not become a member by physical birth but rather by the new birth, which requires faith on the part of every person. Thus only believers are members of the new community: all *members* are *believers*, and *only* believers are members” (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 510).

<sup>26</sup>J. A. Alexander, *Acts* (1857; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1963), 86-87; Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 107.

permit a full explanation of these verses here.<sup>27</sup> Suffice it to say, the merisms of age, gender, and race listed in Joel 2:28-29 are not meant to indicate the Spirit's outpouring on every single person, but rather on every class of people—young and old, men and women, Jew and Gentile.<sup>28</sup> This leads to a third transition.

### **Universal Language as a Particular Genre**

In the Prophets, especially Isaiah, there is a distinct “genre” of language that is employed to describe the expansion of God's blessings.<sup>29</sup> To explain the change to the Jews, Scripture uses universal terms to expand the scope of God's redemptive work from Israel to the nations.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, this language fills Isaiah 38-66 and is found throughout the Prophets.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Peterson (*Transformed by God*, 179-80) rightly interprets Isa 54:13 in light of its quotation in John 6:45. He concludes that “all” in John 6:45, which is the “all” from Isa 54, is not “all without exception” but “all without distinction,” and therefore an expression of God's work of election, and by extension limited priestly service.

<sup>28</sup>Alexander, *Acts*, 86. Noting “a series of defining phrases” in Acts 2:16-18, which qualifies the quotation of Joel 2:28-29 in its fulfillment in Pentecost, David Peterson (*The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 140) cites R. P. Menzies (*The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, JSNTSup 54 (Sheffield, UK: JSOT, 1991): “The gift of the Spirit is given only to those who are members of the eschatological community of salvation” (218-19). A close reading of John Calvin also shows that the Reformer qualified the universal language of Joel 2:28-29 to the new covenant church (*Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, vol. 2, trans. John Owen [1843; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005], 91-96).

<sup>29</sup>Under the Mosaic covenant, only those circumcised Jews (and their offspring) enjoyed the blessings of God. Under the reign of David and his sons, there were many who took shelter under his wings and found salvation. (It is striking that many of David's “mighty men” were foreign born [cf. 2 Sam 28:3-29; 1 Chr 11:10-47]). However, this is qualitatively and quantitatively different from the internationalization of the covenant blessings that would come through Christ. While it was always part of God's plan to bring blessing to the ends of the earth (cf. Gen 12:3), this would only be possible with Christ, the Second Adam.

<sup>30</sup>Waldron has labeled this kind of speech, “prophetic universalism” (“The Biblical Confirmation of Particular Redemption,” 148). He is not alone in observing the ‘generic’ use of universal language. John Calvin assesses Joel's language as “hyperbolic,” when the prophet speaks of the advent of the Spirit. He comments, “For such is our stupidity and dullness, that we can never sufficiently understand the grace of God, except it is set forth to us in hyperbolic language” (*Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, 2:94).

<sup>31</sup>P. M. Cook, “Nations,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*, ed. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 563-68. C. J. H. Wright (*The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006], 222) is correct when he asserts, “[The] mission of God unquestionably has a universal horizon and an equally unquestionably particular historical method. Both are crucial in unlocking the Bible's grand narrative.” However, as he relates the two



In fact, it is arguable that the universal language used by Isaiah and other prophets classifies as its own sub-genre or biblical language.

Following the insights of Kevin Vanhoozer, it stands to reason that a “genre is much more than a device for classifying forms of literature.”<sup>32</sup> To apply speech-act theory to the Prophets, prophetic universalism is a way of “seeing and interpreting particular aspects of the world”<sup>33</sup>—namely the way the Prophets understand God’s dealings with Israel and the nations. Using “genre” in a more comprehensive sense, it is crucial for understanding the scope of the priestly work to know how the prophets thought about internationalization of God’s covenant blessings. It is quite possible that if we can discern how the prophets used “universal” language, we will be able to ascertain the way in which Peter, Paul, and John used “all” and “world”—a major point of disagreement in the atonement debate.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Prophets Redesign the Priestly Type**

To summarize: Only as we remember that architectonic plates (i.e., covenantal structures) are moving underneath the surface of the Prophets can we rightly engage them to discern what they say about the eschatological priest and the scope of his ministry.<sup>35</sup> Truly,

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poles of redemptive history (particularity and universality), it becomes evident that the latter disfigures the former in ways that are not exegetically acceptable (for a critique of this misreading, see John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19:6* [New York: T & T Clark, 2004], 94-98) or grounded in the covenantal framework of the Bible. For example, Wright boldly but wrongly asserts that “blessing is not limited to the covenant” (*The Mission of God*, 214). This will be treated in more detail later.

<sup>32</sup>Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 335-50.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 343.

<sup>34</sup>William Symington makes the same observation; he argues that one must consider the epochal shift taking place in the NT to understand how the apostles employed universal terms (*On the Atonement and Intercession of Christ* [Pittsburgh: United Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1864], 215).

<sup>35</sup>This is not the same thing as saying that we ought to read behind the text. Rather, it is simply recognizing what we find in the text of Scripture. The Mosaic and Davidic covenants are crumbling because of

these three shifts impact the priestly office, and they do so in three ways. First, the priest of the new covenant will not be a Levite but a son of David who will lay down his life to purify his bride, instruct his children, and defeat his enemies.<sup>36</sup> This does not add any new ‘duties’ to the Levitical office; it simply fortifies what is already there. The priestly *Vorbild* is ‘compatible’ with the Davidic king, such that the priest who emerges in the Prophets is a royal priest from the line of David (cf. Ps 110), one who resembles Adam in his state of glory, or better, the second Adam who is to come. In this way, there is continuity and escalation between the old priests and the eschatological priest.

Second, the extent of the priest’s service goes beyond ethnic Israel to include peoples from every nation. Typologically, Aaron atoned for and instructed the circumcised community of Israel, and in corresponding fashion, Jesus serves the circumcised community of True Israel (cf. Gal 6:16). The difference is that circumcision has changed from flesh to Spirit, but significantly, it is the priest who still performs the act of circumcision.<sup>37</sup> Last, because his priestly service is Spiritual in nature and not fleshly, he perfectly instructs his people to know the Lord. Seated at the right hand of God, he sends forth his Spirit to lead his people into all truth (1 John 2:27).<sup>38</sup> Thus, the extent of his atonement is coterminous with

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sin, but simultaneously, the light of the new covenant is dawning because through the Spirit-inspired oracles of the prophets, God is preparing the way for his Son’s arrival.

<sup>36</sup>Scripture uses a panoply of images to explain these covenantal realities. One other example is the shepherd-language that Ezekiel uses of Israel’s leaders (34:11-24), which intertwines with the new covenant in Jer 31: 1-3, 8-12, 31-34 and which Jesus applies to himself (John 10:11-14) as a metaphor for his sacral kingship (Zech 9-14). Cf. Timothy Laniak, *Shepherds After My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), esp. 207ff.

<sup>37</sup>The weight of this argument increases as we remember that circumcision was originally a ceremony for purifying priests (“The Meaning of Circumcision in Israel: A Proposal for a Transfer of Rite from Egypt to Israel,” *Adorare Mente* 1 [2008]: 14–29; cited in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 273).

<sup>38</sup> Vanhoye (*The Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, 91-109), reflecting on the priestly nature of the book of Hebrews, makes a compelling argument that the first four chapters of Hebrews should be

the extent of his covenantal instruction, or to put it in terms of the Spirit, the extent of the atonement is coterminous with the ones who are taught by the Spirit and know the Lord (Jer 31:34).<sup>39</sup>

Altogether, the priest who is described in the Prophets “updates” and “redesigns” the three duties explicated in the law. To borrow terms from the information age, what we find in the Prophets is not only the demise of the High Priest 1.0, but the announcement of a new and improved model—the High Priest 2.0.<sup>40</sup> Biblically-speaking, this priest is the Second Adam who resembles Melchizedek and supersedes Aaron. Therefore, we turn to the Prophets to discover their testimony about the coming messianic royal priest who will die in the place of his people and rise again to lead them to glory (Luke 24:44-49).

### **Prophetic Texts Predicting the Eschatological Priest**

#### **1 Samuel 2:35**

First Samuel 2:35 contains the first explicit mention of a better priest(hood). While 1-2 Samuel is usually understood as a narrative seeking a king, Deenick insists that priesthood is a central feature.<sup>41</sup> In the context of YHWH’s judgment upon Eli and his debauched sons (1 Sam 2:30-31),<sup>42</sup> 1 Samuel 2:35 offers hope: “And I will raise up for

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read in light of Christ’s priesthood (Heb 5:1-10:39). Applied theologically, Christ’s priesthood not only provides atonement but proclaims the Word of God with divine authority and saving efficacy.

<sup>39</sup>Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 157-84.

<sup>40</sup>For a compelling portrait of this priest, see Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1,” *JSHJ* 4 (2006): 155-75); idem, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2,” *JSHJ* 5 (2007): 57-79.

<sup>41</sup>Deenick, “Priest-King,” 325-39.

<sup>42</sup>Interacting with Robert Gordon and John Woodhouse, Deenick asserts, “The disobedience of Eli and his sons has consequences not only for Eli’s house, but for the whole house of Aaron. . . . The prophecy of the demise of the house of Eli [1 Sam 2:30] is seen as fulfilled in the Aaronic priesthood being eventually given over to Zadok and his sons” (“Priest-King,” 329).

myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever.” The point of this passage is that Israel’s success (read: covenantal blessing) depends on a faithful priest, one who will come from the family of David, not from the line of Levi or Aaron. This historical reality will have major implications on the expectation of the priesthood.

While it is generally accepted that Israel suffered during the Judges because they had “no king in Israel” (Judg 21:25) and their national condition improved little during the period of Saul’s monarchy, it would be reductionistic to attribute Israel’s national success to the rise of a *political* ruler alone (cf. 1 Sam 8:10-18). Indeed, a close reading of 1-2 Samuel shows that the king whom God requires is not a politically-motivated leader like Saul but a king after God’s own heart (1 Sam 16:7). In fact, as it will be argued, the narrative of 1-2 Samuel brings the offices of priest and king together. That is to say, the covenant with David refigures the priestly office in significant ways, and vice versa. David becomes a royal priest, and from his offspring will arise a Messiah who is both king and priest (cf. Ps 110).<sup>43</sup>

Interpretive history has typically assigned Samuel or Zadok as the “faithful priest” of 1 Samuel 2:35.<sup>44</sup> However, Karl Deenick is more persuasive. Considering a number of textual indicators (the language of “messiah” in the early chapters of 1 Samuel,<sup>45</sup> historical

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<sup>43</sup>The priestly dimensions of David, and even more his son Solomon, are most evident in 1-2 Chronicles. As Scott Hahn comments, “The Chronicler depicts David as a new-Moses figure and describes the kingdom of David and Solomon in terms that make clear the kingdom’s dependence on the covenant institutions established at Sinai—the ‘ark of the covenant of God,’ the central role of law, the Levitical priesthood, and the liturgical assembly of the *qāhāl*” (*The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire: A Theological Commentary on 1-2 Chronicles* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012], 31).

<sup>44</sup>See Deenick for the various positions (“Priest-King,” 327-29). R. K. Youngblood, in nuanced fashion, suggests that 1 Sam 2:35 is first fulfilled by Samuel, then Zadok, and ultimately by Jesus Christ (*1 Samuel*, in vol. 3 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 588). Ironically, Youngblood makes verbal connections between the faithful priest and David’s “faithful house” (2 Sam 7:27; 25:28; cf. 1 Chr 17:23), but he does not make the priestly connection with David.

context,<sup>46</sup> literary development,<sup>47</sup> and covenantal promises<sup>48</sup>), he argues that David is the fleeting fulfillment of 1 Samuel 2:35.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Eugene Merrill writes, “The strongest suggestion of Davidic royal priesthood occurs in 2 Sam 6” when “David himself was in charge [of] leading the entourage” to the temple, and he was “clothed in priestly attire, offering sacrifice and issuing priestly benediction.”<sup>50</sup> Going further, Merrill adds, “Neither the chronicler nor the author of Samuel mentions a priest in the whole course of sacrificing. Clearly David saw himself as a priest and was accepted by the people and the Levites as such.”<sup>51</sup>

Merrill is on solid biblical ground when he makes his assertion that David functions as a priest, but it should be recognized, as Deenick observes, that David’s fulfillment of 1 Samuel 2:35 is ephemeral. While 1-2 Samuel indicates that he is a “priest-

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<sup>45</sup>“Given the overwhelming interest in priesthood in these early chapters and the relative disinterest in kingship, and given that the entire context is bound up with priesthood, there seems little reason to understand *messiach* as meaning anything other than priest. And, as we shall see, Hannah’s remarks are simply a portent of what is to come in the rest of Samuel, and of the rather surprising direction from which this promise is fulfilled” (Deenick, “Priest-King,” 330).

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 329; Gordon J. Keddie, *Dawn of a Kingdom: The Message of 1 Samuel* (Welwyn, UK: Evangelical, 1988), 46-48.

<sup>47</sup>Deenick concludes that “the writer [of 1-2 Sam] is trying to make a strong link between David and the promised priest of 1 Sam 2:35” (*ibid.*, 334).

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 331-34.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 334-38.

<sup>50</sup>Eugene H. Merrill, “Royal Priesthood: An Old Testament Messianic Motif,” *BibSac* 150 (1993): 60. “David led the procession, clothed in the priestly linen ephod and sacrificing and dancing before Yahweh. When the ark was safely ensconced in the tabernacle, David and the Levites offered up burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before Yahweh, thereby attesting to the covenant union between Yahweh and Israel. . . . His sacerdotal function is seen also in his appointment of the religious personnel to attend to the tabernacle (1 Chron. 16:4-6). . . . That no mention is made of a priest at Jerusalem may imply that David himself fulfilled that responsibility, at least initially” (Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 283-84).

<sup>51</sup>Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 283-84.

king,” his own sin truncates his priestly service.<sup>52</sup> Consequently, by the end of David’s life what was promised in 1 Samuel 2:35 is still without fulfillment. The people of Israel must await another “anointed priest.”<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, 1 Samuel 2:35 adds to the composite picture of the eschatological priest.<sup>54</sup> Through the complex history of 1-2 Samuel, God refined and advanced the typological *Vorbild-Nachbild* of his priest.<sup>55</sup> God’s “faithful priest” will not stumble like the sons of Levi (Mal 2:1-9), but will perfectly succeed like the “king of righteousness” himself (Ps 110). In this way, “Yahweh has used David to demonstrate the kind of priest-king about which 1 Samuel 2:35 is prophesying. The flawed David is held up as a model, as a picture, albeit still a shadowy one, of what the ultimate priest-king would be.”<sup>56</sup> Using similar language to what has been advanced in this dissertation, Deenick speaks about the “mold” from which Jesus will be formed and fitted. He writes,

Perhaps most surprising to the careful reader is that it is a king who is intended to function as a priest not after the *mold* of Aaron, but, as Ps 110 and the writer of Hebrews make clear (Heb 7), after the *mold* of a superior priesthood (Heb 5:1-7:28), after the *mold* of Melchizedek. . . . In Heb 5:1-2 the “weakness” of the earthly high priests is identified as their sinfulness. In contrast, the oath of Ps 110:4 appointed Jesus as a priest who is without such weakness. This is the central thought of the Melchizedekian priesthood. So, although the books of Samuel show that the fulfillment

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<sup>52</sup>Deenick, “Priest-King,” 334-35. In this way, David is no better than the generations of Levites, who also broke covenant with God (cf. Mal 2:1-9). Perhaps, this is why David and Levi are both rehabilitated in the new covenant, through the greater priest-king, Jesus Christ (cf. Jer 33:14-26).

<sup>53</sup>“In the light of earlier biblical history those who heard this promise of 1 Sam 2:35 would surely have understood ‘anointed’ to refer to a priest” (ibid., 335-36).

<sup>54</sup>David G. Firth (*1 & 2 Samuel*, AOTC [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009], 377) observes, “David acquired a priestly role with Jerusalem’s capture, a theme hinted at in Ps 110:4. . . . His removal of the ark joins with the psalm in linking priestly and royal roles, and may also explain the fact that Jerusalem is never directly named in [2 Sam 6] but is always the ‘city of David’ (vv. 9, 12, 16).”

<sup>55</sup>On God’s “stubborn” commitment to bringing *his* priest into being, see Dale Ralph Davis, *1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2011), 38-39.

<sup>56</sup>Deenick, “Priest-King,” 338.

of the promise of 1 Sam 2:35 was to be found in the house of David, they also show that the ultimate fulfillment of the "anointed priest" lay not in David, but in Jesus Christ.<sup>57</sup>

Theologically, 1 Samuel 2:35 and its literary context escalates the typological structures of the priesthood, and it reiterates the point that God's chosen priest is not simply coming to generically remove the sins of the world, he is coming to fulfill a very specific set of laws and priestly requirements: He will provide atonement for God's covenant people (*Kohen Mediator*), but he will also fulfill all righteousness and ensure that all those people "know God" and obey God's law (*Kohen Teacher*), all the while exercising his royal authority to remove all evil from the kingdom and its temple (*Kohen Victor*).

In the lives of David and Solomon, emphasis on a particular sacrifice is found in tight relationship between David and Zion (Pss 78:67-72; 132:11-18). For instance, when David bought Mount Moriah, he offered an atoning sacrifice (2 Sam 24:18-25; 1 Chr 3:1). After God swore his covenant oath to David (2 Sam 7; cf. Pss 89:3, 28, 34, 39; 132:11-12), he installed Zadok as high priest (1 Sam 8:14) and established the Levites as temple servants (1 Chr 23-26). David also shaped Israel's liturgy by writing more than half the Psalter (1 Sam 23:1ff).<sup>58</sup>

Solomon, too, participated in the sacral functions of the temple. He built the temple (1 Kgs 4-7; 2 Chr 1-7) and offered sacrifices for the people—22,000 oxen and

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 337. Emphasis mine.

<sup>58</sup>For the 'Davidic cast' of the Psalms, see Stephen Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 194-202. The Psalms frequently assign priestly duties to the Davidic king. Consider VanGemen's observations: "The messianic King—as 'priest-king'—is the patron of the worship of Yahweh. Though not an Aaronic priest, the Davidic king has sacerdotal functions. He prays for his people and blesses them with God's blessing (20:1-5; 40:16; 72:19). He also serves as God's 'priest' in his concern with God's temple, sacrifices, and offerings (66:13-15; 69:9; 132); with set times of prayer (55:17); and with leading God's people in the worship of Yahweh (Pss 118; 144; 145)" (Willem VanGemen, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991], 586).

120,000 sheep when he dedicated the temple to YHWH (2 Chr 7:4-6). Moreover, Solomon's dedicatory prayer in 1 Kings 8 oriented the true worshiper to the temple. Keeping tension between the particular and the universal, it is striking that Solomon invites "the foreigner" to find favor at the place where the Lord's "name" dwells (1 Kgs 8:41-43). The particular nature of God's covenant with Israel is kept by making Zion the focus of attention. Yet, his inclusion of the Gentiles opens the door for an international worship of Israel's God.

Going beyond the sacrificial duties, David's defeat of Goliath (1 Sam 17) and subjugation of the nations (e.g., 2 Sam 8:1-14; 10:1-19)<sup>59</sup> is of a piece with Phinehas's priestly service (Num 25) and Israel's holy warfare.<sup>60</sup> Even more, his priestly instruction is seen in the way that he gathered and disciplined a band of undisciplined malcontents (1 Sam 22:1-2), turning them into a band of mighty warriors (2 Sam 23:8-39).<sup>61</sup> In the end, 1-2 Samuel's depiction of a Davidic priest-king develops this multi-dimensional priest, who fortifies the Aaronic 'mold' with David's royal authority and Solomon's heavenly wisdom (1 Kgs 3-4; 10:23-25).<sup>62</sup> Evidence of this Davidic royal priesthood could be developed in the

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<sup>59</sup>David's messianic anointing and military exploits are outlined by James M. Hamilton, "The Typology of David's Rise to Power: Messianic Patterns in the Book of Samuel," SBJT 16 (2012): 10.

<sup>60</sup>That David saw his military expeditions as holy warfare is evident in the way that he restrained his men from women so that they might be pure and holy (1 Sam 21:5). Likewise, when Jesus comments on David and his men eating the bread of the presence in Matt 12:3-4 (cf. 1 Sam 21:1-10), Jesus implicitly affirms the priestly service of David and his men (see Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 75-77). See also Hamilton's discussion of 1 Sam 21:1 and Mark 2:26, where he provides textual evidence for seeing Christ's legitimacy in eating the bread of the presence ("The Typology of David's Rise to Power," 13).

<sup>61</sup>Hamilton notes how David transformed his followers by his leadership and how he foreshadowed Christ's own ministry. He writes, "The people who gathered around David while he was in the wilderness were those who were in distress, those who were in debt, and those who were bitter in soul (1 Sam 22:2). This band of malcontents became the nucleus of David's kingdom. . . . Just as David restrained his men and cultivated virtue in Israel (it seems that some of those in distress and bitter of soul became the mighty men), so also Jesus restrained the wielder of the sword on the night he was betrayed (Matt 26:51-52), prayed for Peter before he was to be sifted (Luke 22:32), and announced that all who love him will obey his commands (John 14:15)" (Hamilton, "The Typology of David's Rise to Power," 10-11).

<sup>62</sup>Regarding the wisdom given to Solomon, Barber comments, "Wisdom is meant, therefore, to restore priesthood. . . . Hence, through the Davidic covenant, God brings His law to the nations, not through an



historical books (1-2 Sam, 1-2 Kgs, 1-2 Chr), but it is most clearly evidenced in Psalm 110.<sup>63</sup>

It is this passage that we now consider.

## Psalm 110

Under the Mosaic covenant, the offices of prophet, priest, and king were separated by law (cf. Deut 17-18).<sup>64</sup> When kings overstepped their bounds, God's judgment ensued (cf. 1 Sam 13:8-14; 2 Chr 26:16-20).<sup>65</sup> And yet, in spite of the separation of the priesthood from the kingship,<sup>66</sup> the OT, especially in the Prophets, suggests a coming conflation of the two offices.<sup>67</sup> Ps 110 shows the zenith of this eschatological unification.<sup>68</sup> As VanGemenen

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exclusive Israelite ritual law code, but through the universality of the Wisdom literature" (*Singing in the Reign*, 74). In connection with Deenick's argument for David's priesthood, we can conclude that when God endows Solomon with heavenly wisdom, it is for the purpose of ruling the kingdom and subduing nations (cf. Ps 72). Therefore, it is not surprising that 1 Kings records Solomon's reception of wisdom, followed by Israel and the nations submitting to and benefitting from his wisdom (cf. 1 Kgs 3:16-28; 10:23-25; cf. 2 Chr 9:1-12).

<sup>63</sup>For a history of the priests in the Former Prophets, see J. Gordon McConville, "Priesthood in Joshua to Kings," *VT* 49 (1999): 73-87.

<sup>64</sup>VanGemenen, *Psalms*, 699; 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, 42.

<sup>65</sup>Insightfully, Merrill observes, "[Uzziah's] infraction was not that of a king functioning cultically, but of a king undertaking cultic ministry limited to another order of priests" ("Royal Priesthood," 61).

<sup>66</sup>Merrill states that in the OT an alternative 'line' of priests is found moving from Melchizedek to David to Jesus ("Royal Priesthood," 59). This is generally correct, however, when Merrill states that there is "a straight-line extension that operates outside of and superior to that of Aaron and the nation of Israel," he goes too far. He places too much discontinuity between the priesthood of Aaron and that of Melchizedek. It would be better to assert that Christ fulfills the mold (*Vorbild*) of the Aaronic priesthood with the better substance of reverent life and perfect obedience (cf. Heb 10:1-10), which is characteristic of the Melchizedekian priesthood.

<sup>67</sup>It is too much to say, as John G. Gammie does ("A New Setting for Psalm 110," *AthR* 51 [1969]: 13-14), that priest-kings were normative in Israel's history. More cautiously, Gerard Van Groningen observes that prophet, priest, and king were designed to "complement one another" and were "vital to each the other two" (*Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997], 872-914). See also, C. A. Briggs and E. G. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1960), 2:374; J. W. Bowker, "Psalm CX" *VT* 17 (1967): 34-36; Eugene H. Merrill, "Royal Priesthood," 54-57.

<sup>68</sup>Douglas Farrow, *Ascension Theology* (New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 5.

observes, “Psalm 110 brings the offices of king and priest under one head. The Psalmist refers to the exalted position of the king,” who receives a “royal priesthood.”<sup>69</sup>

In canonical perspective, Psalm 110 is unique.<sup>70</sup> Retrospectively, it depends on the once-mentioned Melchizedek to introduce into Jewish liturgy and prophetic expectation the ideal savior—the priest-king.<sup>71</sup> Prospectively, it becomes the most quoted verse in the NT.<sup>72</sup> Set in the middle of redemptive history, it is a passage that magnifies one of the most obscure episodes in the Bible—the account of Melchizedek (Gen 14)—while becoming one of the most important passages for understanding Israel’s messianic hope.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, what Psalm 110 communicates is that the forthcoming priest would not be a Levite but a priest-king like Melchizedek. To say it another way, the priesthood would not depend on the law of Moses or the lineage of Aaron, but upon God’s sworn oath and the Messiah’s greater obedience.

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<sup>69</sup>VanGemenen, *Psalms*, 586.

<sup>70</sup>It is also challenging. For a survey of scholarship, see John C. Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context: An Interpretation of Psalms 107-118* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2011), 30-32. For a textual analysis with attention to the language of the Psalm, see Randy G. Haney, *Text and Concept Analysis in Royal Psalms*, SBL 30 (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 113-129; and James Kurianal, *Jesus Our High Priest: Ps 110,4 as the Substructure of Heb 5,1-7,28* (New York: Peter Lang), 2000.

<sup>71</sup>Commenting on the function of Ps 110 in the era of David, Haney writes, “What we have here in this reference to Melchizedek is employed for the intention of legitimating Jerusalem . . . and the priestly prerogatives of davidides. Melchizedek is comprehended as the ancient priest of Yahweh in pre-davidic Jerusalem. What we witness in Genesis 14 is the portrayal of the patriarch’s submission to Melchizedek that was designed to show the patriarch’s acceptance of Jerusalem as a sanctuary of Yahweh. Understood in this way, Yahweh’s king would then be understood as submitting to a *new* ‘Melchizedek’ [i.e., a new priest-king from Jerusalem] in the person of the davidide” (*Text and Concept Analysis in Royal Psalms*, 117).

<sup>72</sup>James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 350. Goldingay is correct that Ps 110’s “application to Jesus is part of NT study” (*Psalms, 90-150*, BCOT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 299); however, as it was argued in chap. 2, the whole OT anticipated a coming Messiah, and especially in the fifth book of the Psalter, the orientation of Ps 110 is not mere history. It is “a typological-prophetic oracle of the Lord from the preexilic time period” (cf. Herbert W. Bateman, “Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament,” *BibSac* 149 [1992]: 453).

<sup>73</sup>Merrill calls Ps 110 the “linchpin to the theology of the royal priesthood,” and “the most messianic of the psalms as far as the New Testament usage is concerned” (“Royal Priesthood,” 54). As to its primacy and importance, the author of Hebrews devotes 3 chapters unpacking what it means (Heb 5-7), and it depends exclusively on Ps 110 to explain why Jesus, a non-Levite, could be the long-awaited priest (cf. Kurianal, *Jesus Our High Priest*).

Truly, by the time of David, the people of Israel had recognized the weakness of Aaron's priesthood and were in need of something better.<sup>74</sup> The last chapter articulated the grave concerns of the prophets, and now Ps 110 provides the solution for Israel's failing priesthood.<sup>75</sup> Ps 110 offers a better priesthood—one that secures the hearts of the people of God (v. 3) and executes judgment against the nations (v. 6). Therefore, to understand the kind of priest that Jesus Christ would be, we must come to grips with two realities present in this Psalm, both of which fortify the priestly *Vorbild* and surpass the office of Aaron.

First, in the Bible's most important passage on the priesthood, no mention is made of temple worship or sacrifice.<sup>76</sup> Rather, Psalm 110 records two declarations from YHWH committing himself to his Messiah (vv. 1, 4),<sup>77</sup> along with the military victory YHWH will secure for his royal priest (vv. 5-7).<sup>78</sup> Consequently, the whole message of Ps 110 is one of

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<sup>74</sup>Reading the Psalms canonically, Ps 110 answers the cries for deliverance in Psalms 108-09 (Zenger, "The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Psalms 107-145," *JSOT* 80 (1998): 89-91). Recording the words of God, it also supplies the way in which YHWH is going to save his people and reign on the earth. After the collapse of the Davidic kingdom (Ps 89), Psalms 90-99 depict YHWH coming to the rescue to deliver his people (cf. Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998], 416-18). Where the kings of the earth failed, YHWH promised to succeed and reign (Ps 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1). Now, however, like in Ezek 34:23-24, God presents his proxy, a son of David, who will represent him and effect salvation for his people.

<sup>75</sup>Gammie, "A New Setting for Psalm 110," 17.

<sup>76</sup>Technically, the language of v. 3 should be understood as volunteering for warfare, not offering sacrifice (Briggs and Briggs, *Psalms*, 2:379; Van Gemeren, *Psalms*, 815; Goldingay, *Psalms, 90-150*, 295).

<sup>77</sup>While space does not permit a full discussion of the identity of "the Lord" (*adonai*) in v. 1 (for such a discussion, see Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston, *The Psalms As Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 512-17), it is enough to consider that Jesus applies the passage to himself in Matt 22:41-46.

<sup>78</sup>Close attention to who is acting in Ps 110 shows that the success of the king (v. 1) and the priest (v. 4) is always due to God's spoken word and his divine power. As Harold Wayne Ballard, Jr. explains, "Psalm 110 pictures Yahweh acting as a Divine Warrior, supporting either the warrior/priest or king/priest" ("The Divine Warrior Motif in the Psalms" [Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1995], 143). Ballard's vacillation on terms (warrior/priest or king/priest) comes from the fact that the word "king" (*melek*) is not found in Ps 110. For defense of a royal priesthood in Ps 110, see Bowker, "Psalm CX," 31-41, who overturns the arguments of Marco Treves, "Two Acrostic Psalms," *VT* 15 (1965): 81-90.

messianic warfare. As Merrill notes, “All but verse 4 speaks of the *adonai* in royal, militaristic terms.”<sup>79</sup> For instance, verse 1 says that the “enemies” of the Lord will become the Messiah’s footstool.<sup>80</sup> Verse 2 gives instruction to the king to “rule in the midst of your enemies.”<sup>81</sup> Verse 3 lists the men of Israel volunteering as “army of priests” for military service.<sup>82</sup> Verse 5 indicates that the Lord will “shatter kings on the day of his wrath.”<sup>83</sup> Verse 6 announces that his warfare will be universally successful, with the whole earth being filled with dead corpses (cf. Ezek 39:18-20; Rev 19:17-18). Verse 7 shows the king enjoying a drink from the brook at the conclusion of the battle.<sup>84</sup> However, while acknowledging the presence of verse 4, most commentators fail to unite the Messiah’s priesthood and kingship.<sup>85</sup> For instance, Van Groningen writes,

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<sup>79</sup>Merrill, “Royal Priesthood,” 56.

<sup>80</sup>Reading the Ps 110 in context with Ps 109, the “enemies” who are put under the Messiah’s feet are easily discernible (Crutchfield, *Psalms in the Context*, 32). They are the ones who accuse David (109:1-5), the ones that David prays will be replaced (v. 8) and cut off (vv. 13, 15). Indeed, by a comparison of Ps 109:31 and 110:1, it is evident that the announcement of the YHWH’s Messiah is an answer to the prayers of the “needy.” This bears further evidence that the work of the Messiah is not to bring universal redemption, but it is to separate the seed of the serpent portrayed as God’s enemies from the seed of the woman.

<sup>81</sup>The reference to the “staff of your strength” harkens back to Moses, where YHWH won the victory for the man Moses. Throughout Exodus it was Moses, staff in hand symbolizing God’s power that gave Israel the victory over Egypt (Exod 14:16).

<sup>82</sup>Briggs and Briggs, *Psalms*, 2:377; cf. Leslie Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, WBC, vol. 21 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 86-87. Briggs and Briggs explains that Ps 110:3 looks back on Exod 19:5-6, where God calls Israel “a kingdom of priests in the covenant of Horeb,” and it looks ahead to Rev 19, stating that John’s apocalypse displays a priestly army. Moreover, in contrast to Israel’s reticence in Judges 5:23 this generation approaches the battle with eager volunteerism (Ballard, “The Divine Warrior Motif in the Psalms,” 141-42).

<sup>83</sup>“It will be Yahweh who does the fighting and gains the victory, so that by implication all the glory must go to him” (Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 86; cf. Ballard, “Divine Warrior Motif in the Psalms,” 142-43).

<sup>84</sup>If we permit a divine warrior theme in this Psalm, then the “drink from the brook by the way” might indicate the quelling of the raging waters that oppose YHWH and his Messiah (Pss 74:9-17; 93:3; cf. Rev 21:1). Such imagery is suggestive, and sets the stage for Christ’s priestly victory in Revelation (19:14; 21:1).

<sup>85</sup>Crutchfield show that past scholars have focused attention on the royal nature of the Psalm, with little attention to its priestly aspects (Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context*, 30-32).

First, the same person is addressed, first as king and then as priest. Second, the statements which follow the pronouncements refer directly to the preceding: first the king, the second the priest. *The explanations, however, refer to the king and his work in both cases.* Third, the explanations are parallel. . . . Thus, the two offices are given equal status in the pronouncements, while the explanations highlight the royal office and task.<sup>86</sup>

Van Groningen's interpretation is commonplace,<sup>87</sup> but it should be asked: If the priestly office included a posture of defense and warfare, why is it necessary to make the second explanation (vv. 5-7) kingly *instead of* priestly?<sup>88</sup> Why not both? Should not the offices of priest and king in this Psalm interpret one another? More importantly, would not the priestly aspect of the warrior-king "sanctify" any terrestrial battles? Or theologically, is it not the case that the royal victory comes about because of Christ's priestly service?<sup>89</sup> Based on all that I have said about the priestly office, is it not plausible that verses 5-7 describe the military might of a royal priest?<sup>90</sup> Indeed, if our understanding of David as the fulfillment of 1 Samuel 2:35 is accurate, then it makes the most sense to read Psalm 110 on its own terms as describing a royal, Davidic priest who engages in spiritual battle.

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<sup>86</sup>Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 390. Emphasis mine.

<sup>87</sup>While describing Jesus as the "eternal priest," Mays mentions no priestly aspects in vv. 5-7 (*Psalms*, 350-55). Likewise, in their outline, Waltke and Houston attribute vv. 4-7 to the priest, but in their commentary, the priestly theme disappears after v. 4 (*The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 507-12). Kidner also makes a strong appeal for the messianic interpretation of Ps 110, but does not attribute any priestly aspects to his warfare (*Psalms 73-150*, TOTC [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975], 426-31).

<sup>88</sup>The strongest reason is that Ps 110:5b repeats Ps 2:5, which is a clearly a royal psalm (Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 395).

<sup>89</sup>This was Martin's contention (*The Atonement*, 45-48). He writes of the priestly office, "It holds the same place of priority and importance relatively to the kingly office. The scepter which He wields as a King, He earned as a Priest. The throne on which He now sits is the reward of His so acceptable discharge of His priestly office. And He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne (Zech 6:13). It is the throne of God and of the 'Lamb'" (ibid., 48).

<sup>90</sup>Another important factor to consider is that if David is the author of this Psalm, as Acts 2:34-35 states, David as king would be slow to speak about a role (priest) that was not granted to him (Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 397).

In light of Adam's royal priesthood, and the way that David comes as another Adam, there are strong canonical reasons to conceive of the Messiah as a high priest who goes to war (Num 25), even as he is also a Servant-king who atones for his people (Isa 53). Moreover, in Israel's history, there is ample evidence that the kings of Israel did function cultically. Therefore, it seems better to understand Psalm 110, in conjunction with 1 Samuel 2:35, Zechariah 3 and 6, and Isaiah 53, as reshaping the priestly office in light of the Davidic covenant. And if that is amenable, then what stands out in this messianic psalm is the lack of sacrificial language.<sup>91</sup> The emphasis is, instead, on a priest-king conquering his enemies on behalf of his people. This has led Kidner to describe the priest of Ps 110 in apocalyptic terms, "We have moved on from Hebrews to Revelation, where the picture of judgment and victory is no less terrible than that of verse 6 (cf. e.g., Rev 19:11-21)."<sup>92</sup> To speak with another biblical metaphor, the royal priest of Zion works to save the children of Jerusalem, even as he works to remove the children of Babylon.<sup>93</sup>

Second, the priest's work of salvation necessarily incorporates salvation and judgment.<sup>94</sup> This dual posture of the royal priest strongly argues for particular redemption in that the priestly work of the Davidic king is to fight *for* his people and *against* enemy

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<sup>91</sup>On balance, see Michael Rydelnik (*The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?* NACSBT [Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010], 174) who sees Ps 110:3 describing "'sacrificial feast' of slaughter on the mountains of Israel during the great eschatological war" (cf. Ezek 38-39; Rev 19:16-21).

<sup>92</sup>Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, 431.

<sup>93</sup>This multi-directional approach of the priest is in keeping with the imprecatory Psalms, which cry for salvation and judgment.

<sup>94</sup>James M. Hamilton has proven the primacy of this theme in *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009). While some elements of this "center" are harder to prove than others (see Andreas Köstenberger, "The Present and Future of Biblical Theology," *Themelios* 37 [2012]: 454), it corresponds with the dual orientation of the priesthood, and undergirds the argument that the priest saves his people from their sin and from their enemies. This idea also corresponds with

nations.<sup>95</sup> Still, as it relates to the systematic question of the *nature* of the atonement, it would be too much to make Christ's service a simple subjugation of the powers (i.e., *Christus Victor et non plus*).<sup>96</sup> Rather, since it is Messiah as a *priest* who wins the battle, his sacerdotal duties cannot be extinguished or ignored. Appropriately, since Psalm 110 fits into the larger framework of the Psalter, it is possible to see how the appointment of the Messiah in Psalm 110 answers the cry for salvation in Psalms 107-109. It is subsequently followed by two hymns of praise (111-12), and a series of "new exodus" Psalms (113-118) on a journey to Zion (120-34) that are informed by God's *torah* (119).<sup>97</sup>

Surely, this way of reading Ps 110 does better justice to the royal priesthood of the coming Messiah.<sup>98</sup> And it finds support in office of the priesthood itself. As demonstrated in chapters 4 and 5, the priests not only served at the altar, they also stood at the gate, ready to remove (by force, if necessary) anyone unclean from the presence of the Lord. As a result, there is a place in OT Israel for warrior themes attached to the office of the king *and* the

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the Bible's theme of exodus (cf. Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000]; David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002]).

<sup>95</sup>Of course, with the widening of the Davidic covenant and the international scope of the New Covenant, the "enemy nations" are now defined by their stance towards the Lord and his anointed (cf. Ps 2:1-6), not their ethnic identity. Nevertheless, particularity remains.

<sup>96</sup>Since Gustaf Aulén published *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), numerous theologians have argued accordingly. See Phillip Bethancourt ("Christ the Warrior King: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Analysis of the Divine Warrior Theme in Christology" [Ph.D. diss. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011], 21-54) for a survey of approaches. This is not what we are arguing. Rather, the priestly work of Christ is most closely related to the propitiation of the new covenant community, and as a necessary but auxiliary function, the death of Christ cleanses the world of sin and unrighteousness by defeating Satan and his armies (Graham A. Cole, *God the Peacemaker: How Atonement Brings Shalom*, NSBT [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009], 124-30, 81-84).

<sup>97</sup>See Erich Zenger for a well-developed outline and flow of thought for Ps 107-145 ("The Composition and Theology," 98-101).

<sup>98</sup>For a canonical reading of Ps 110 that complements this reading, see Crutchfield, *Psalms in the Their Context*, 98-136.

office of the priest. In Ps 110, both come together and “shape” one another. In all of these ways, it seems better to understand verses 5-7 not as a royal explanation hermetically sealed off from the Messiah’s priestly duties, but a royal victory accomplished by the holy warfare of a Melchizedekian priest-king (cf. Rev 19:11-16). In fact, what we will find later in Zechariah 9-14 and Isaiah 40-66 is that the *glorified* royal priest will have authority over all flesh (John 17:2), to grant eternal life to his own *and* to purge his kingdom and cleanse his temple of all those who are unclean. However, before relating the humiliation of the priestly work with that of his glorification, it is essential to relate the priest’s work to the covenant.

### **Jeremiah 30-33**

Set in the middle of Jeremiah, the “Book of Consolation” (30:1-33:26) provides a cornucopia of eschatological promises.<sup>99</sup> It is my contention that these promises, stipulated in Jeremiah 31:31-34, are brought to pass by the mediatorial work of a greater priest. Indeed, Jeremiah explicitly speaks of an eschatological ruler with access to the altar of God who plays a central role in securing the new covenant (30:21-22; cf. Dan 9:25-27).

**Jeremiah 30:21-22 and 31:31-34.** Getting to the heart of the new covenant, Jeremiah 31:34 says, “For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Forgiveness is the lifeblood of the new covenant, and like the old covenant to which it is contrasted (v. 32), the covenant will both be inaugurated by blood (Exod 25:8; Heb 9:18), and forgiveness will be proffered through the shedding of blood (Heb 9:22). But unlike the covenant mediated by Moses, this covenant will be perfectly successful because of the greater priest who mediates the covenant. To understand the relationship between priest

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<sup>99</sup>For background on the book of Jeremiah and how chapters 30-33 fit into the larger prophecy as a whole, see Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 17-43.



and covenant, we must see how the princely priest of Jeremiah 30:21-22 initiates the new covenant, and how the houses of David and Levi will be restored by it (33:14-26). The significance of making these connections is to show the relationship between the priest and covenant, and that the efficacy of the covenant depends on the efficacy of the priest.

First, in Jeremiah 30, there is an obvious conflation of kingdom and priesthood: “Their prince shall be one of themselves; their ruler shall come out from their midst; I will make him draw near, and he shall approach me” (v. 21). Citing the ANE background, J. A. Thompson states, “The ruler . . . appears to be undertaking a sacral or priestly function rather than one that is specifically political. The picture is of a ruler-priest performing both political and priestly duties.”<sup>100</sup> Likewise, Gentry quoting John Bright relates how “the ruler here discharges a sacral or priestly function, rather than one that is specifically political.”<sup>101</sup> Clearly, the title-holder is a king, but the action of drawing near to God’s altar is priestly.

This royal approach raises the question: “How does this royal priest, from the line of David, relate to the promise of the new covenant?” Despite the challenging interpretive details of Jeremiah 30-31, the answer arises from a clear textual connection between Jeremiah 30:22 and Jeremiah 31:33. In the former, the ruler’s priestly service at the altar results in covenantal union: “And you shall be my people, and I will be your God.” In the latter, this same phrase—one that harkens back to the Patriarchs (Gen 17:8) and is perennially used by YHWH to explain his relationship with Israel (Exod 6:7; 29:45-46; Lev 26:12; Deut 29:3)—is used to epitomize the reconciled relationship that God has with his

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<sup>100</sup> See J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 562.

<sup>101</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 514; John Bright, *Jeremiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 280.

new covenant people. Significantly, this covenantal formula serves as textual link between the Davidic priest and the new covenant. Moreover, it suggests that the *modus operandi* by which the new covenant is inaugurated is not simply by a change in the law but that the law itself is changed by the establishment of a new and better priesthood (cf. Heb 7:12). In fact, the strength of this new priesthood is made most clear when it is observed that God himself is the cause of the priest's success, for in Jeremiah 30:21 God, not man, is the acting agent in bringing the priest into his presence. Jeremiah records, "I will make him draw near, and he shall approach me." Indeed, as Hebrews develops the royal priesthood of Jesus Christ (a priest like Melchizedek), the author explains how Christ's incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and ascension each fulfill this priestly ideal, and contribute to the final product—a new covenant with better promises, based on Christ's priestly mediation.

Therefore, the contrast between this priestly ruler and the Aaronic priests of Jeremiah's day is the difference between success and failure, life and death. It is what makes the difference between the old covenant and the new. When we examine the new covenant in relationship to the new priesthood, as Hebrews does, we discover that the better promises of the new covenant are secured by this priest's greater service. Canonically, the dependence of the covenant on the priest is not unprecedented. It was observed in Abraham's priestly sacrifice on Mount Moriah. In Genesis 22:15-18, God swore an oath to him and his offspring on the basis of his priestly service. Likewise, Hebrews argues that the new covenant depends on a new priesthood (Heb 7:12), one that is sworn with an oath (6:16-17; 7:20-21).

Further support for this reading of Jeremiah 30-31 can be found in the final clause of Jeremiah 31:34 as well. It reads, "*For* I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember

their sin no more.” Semantically, this final promissory clause grounds all the others.<sup>102</sup> And this promise itself is not suspended in air.<sup>103</sup> It is sealed with blood. Since the entire sacrificial system was created to teach that forgiveness comes through the vicarious sacrifice of an unblemished lamb, it makes perfect covenantal sense that the new covenant is grounded on the priestly sacrifice of the Davidic king.<sup>104</sup> Even more, the strength of the new covenant depends on the strength of that priestly mediator (cf. Dan 9:24-27). Since in this case, the mediator is the incarnate Lord, the covenant is unbreakable. As exalted priest, Christ will apply the covenantal blessings to his people on earth, pleading the merits of his earlier sacrifice.<sup>105</sup> As Martin observed, “The propitiation transpires in the energy of intercession; and the intercession is transacted in the merit of propitiation.”<sup>106</sup>

**The priesthood and new covenant.** In this way, the priesthood and new covenant argue against generalists like Norman Douty who insist that “the cross does not effect its own application.”<sup>107</sup> In its thinnest reading, when the cross refers only to an historical event, the cross does not effect its own application. In this sense, the cross does not save, because

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<sup>102</sup>George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1871; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953), 214-24.

<sup>103</sup>*Contra* Charles L. Feinberg, who says, “the covenant shows no dependence on law, temple, sacrifices, ark, human priesthood, nation, or country” (*Isaiah* in vol. 6 of the *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986], 577). Such radical discontinuity is trademark of Feinberg’s Dispensationalism. It ultimately minimizes the importance of Christ’s incarnation and atonement.

<sup>104</sup>What is not seen in Jeremiah is evidenced in Isaiah—namely that the priest offers himself as a sin offering, not an animal (52:13-53:12).

<sup>105</sup>Martin, *The Atonement*, 96-160; Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ*, 268-83.

<sup>106</sup>Martin, *The Atonement*, 110.

<sup>107</sup>Norman Douty, *Did Christ Die Only for the Elect? A Treatise on the Extent of the Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998), 54.

events do not save. People save, or better: God saves in and through Jesus Christ.<sup>108</sup>

However, that is not the argument being made here. Men are not saved by a man's death on a Roman cross; they are saved because the man in question is God's Son, the shepherd-servant-priest-king who actively made atonement for his covenant people through his priestly act.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, following the views of Schreiner, Morris, and Ridderbos it is believed that the cross (especially in the Pauline Epistles) is a circumlocution for all that is entailed in Christ's person and work (e.g., life, death, burial, resurrection).<sup>110</sup> Therefore, in keeping with Paul's own understanding of the cross, the argument is that Christ as the great high priest effectually applies all the benefits to all the members of his covenant people. But since unbelief persists and the way to destruction is broad, this necessitates a limitation to the priestly service of Christ, and hence a limitation to the extent of the atonement.

In the end, personal application is the determining factor in salvation, but it is Jesus' personal, priestly action in atonement and intercession that determines the extent of atonement and hence salvation.<sup>111</sup> The sinner's cry for salvation is necessary—no man is

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<sup>108</sup>On this point Douty actually agrees. Affirming the personal activity of God in salvation, he writes, "It is the kind physician who applies the remedy" (ibid.). The problem arises when Douty urges human "co-operation" in the application of Christ's atoning death. He continues, "the blessings purchased by the blood of Christ do not become our own until, and unless, we put our trust in him" (ibid., 55). He rightly qualifies that faith "is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost," but he severs the sending of the Spirit from the death of Christ and the priest's ministry of teaching/blessing from the priest's ministry at the altar. Therefore, while Douty uses biblical terms, he composes his theological mosaic in a form different from than the biblical priesthood.

<sup>109</sup>On Jesus' priestly action in the cross, see Martin, *The Atonement*, 69-95.

<sup>110</sup>On a holistic understanding of Paul's theological description of Christ's death, see E. Brandenburger, "Cross," in *NIDNTT*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 1:397-403; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 189-92; Leon Morris, *The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1983), 11-13; Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 54-57, 206-14.

<sup>111</sup>Speaking theologically, Symington avers, "It is unreasonable to suppose Christ to make atonement for any for whom he does not intercede, so it were preposterous to allege that he intercedes for any but those for whose sins he has atoned, or that the matter of his intercession includes anything not purchased by

saved apart from faith and repentance—but it is not determinative for who the priest serves. Indeed, in keeping with the priestly idea that the priest teaches all those under his covenant (Isa 54:13), faith flows from the personal sending of the Spirit by the Lord Jesus Christ, seated on his royal-priestly throne. Resultantly, generalists make the mistake of assigning old covenant efficacy to the new covenant priest.

Evidencing this confusion that generalists have on this subject, Robert Lightner states, “Faith does not save; Christ saves and Christ alone,”<sup>112</sup> but on the very next page he criticizes “Strict Calvinists” because they “minimize faith” and “believe the cross secures its own benefits—the cross saves.”<sup>113</sup> Admittedly, speaking precisely on these matters is challenging, but it seems that Lightner is equivocating as he speaks about faith, Jesus, the cross, and salvation. He denies that the cross secures its own benefits, and yet he affirms that the Christ of the cross is the one who saves. In response, I would say that he is right to elevate Christ as the active subject of salvation, but he unnecessarily denies Christ’s work of initiating faith. While Lightner and other moderate Calvinists are quick to affirm God’s grace in salvation,<sup>114</sup> they simultaneously deny that Christ’s death—a major feature of his priestly ministry—actively initiates faith by means of his Spirit and his Word.

Ultimately, what causes problems for Lightner is the fact that his systematic theology is devoid of some important biblical-theological categories. When he considers the cross of Christ and its effects he uses biblical nomenclature, but there is no consideration of

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his blood. . . . *For whomsoever and for whatsoever he has procured by his blood, does he plead before the throne of God?* (On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ, 269). Emphasis mine.

<sup>112</sup>Robert Lightner, *The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 55.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 54-55.

Christ's priesthood. This disfigures his theological conclusions, because it is the priesthood that provides a biblical basis for corporate solidarity, which in turn, is the most natural (read: biblical) way of understanding how the death of one man can affect billions. At the same time, there is no consideration of the new covenant, and thus no discussion of the way in which a covenant mediator relates to those whom he seeks to bless. While rightly affirming the work of the Spirit, he misses entirely that the Spirit is a gift of the new covenant, which in turn, is procured and applied by the priestly mediator of that covenant. All in all, his discussion incorporates a great deal of biblical terminology and concepts, but without the larger framework of priesthood and covenant, his systematic conclusions founder because they overlook significant covenantal and typological structures in Scripture.

**Jeremiah 33:14-26.** Using different imagery, Jeremiah explains the enduring nature of the new covenant in 33:14-26. In that context, he speaks of the "everlasting covenant," which provides linguistic connections with Isaiah (55:3; 61:8) and the work of the Suffering Servant. Explicit in Jeremiah 33 is the reestablishment of the house of David and the house of Levi. Historically, both of these houses were revived after the exile: Zerubbabel was a Davidic governor, and Ezra and Nehemiah record the care taken to reestablish Levites serving at the temple. Nevertheless, the reconstitution of Israel never arose to the glory of Solomon. After the exile, no son of David sat on the throne, the Spirit of the Lord never returned to the temple, and the people of Israel never experienced peace in the land. Hence, dressed in the garb of old covenant Israel, it is clear that these promises of a new king and new priesthood had not occurred by the time of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, read through the lens of redemptive-history, it becomes apparent that the promises of Jeremiah 33:14-26 are not going to be fulfilled literally, just like the

reconstruction of the temple in Ezekiel is not meant to convey a brick-and-mortar temple.<sup>115</sup> Rather, using language and structures from the law, which was soon to be replaced by the new covenant, it becomes evident that the messianic royal priest fulfills the line of David and eclipses the line of Levi. Concerning the former, David would finally have a man to sit eternally on his throne, and this same man would draw near to the altar by the merits of his intrinsic righteousness. In this way, Jeremiah 33:14-26 is fulfilled in Christ, and like the relationship established between 30:21-22 and 31:31-34, this royal priest eternally secures the covenant.

At the same time, when Christ becomes the son of David who sits on the throne and intercedes at the altar of God, he also creates a new class of royal priests. This is the implication of Jeremiah 33, and it says more than what generalists say. The redeemed of the Lord are not just sinners saved by grace, they are new creations in Christ (Eph 2:10). Comparatively, what was promised to Israel and lost because of sin is now given to Christ and to his children (Heb 2:9-10). Jesus' priestly mediation secures the new covenant, which in turn gives rise to a new royal priesthood (cf. Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). In this way, the Levitical priesthood is not literally fulfilled, but in ways far better than Israel could have imagined, God was fulfilling in and through Jesus what he had promised to Israel centuries earlier. He was making a royal priesthood and holy nation (Exod 19:5-6; 1 Pet 2:5, 9).

Altogether, the prophecies recorded in Jeremiah 30-33 find their *telos* in Christ, and through Christ they create the kingdom of God. Rather, Christ fulfilling all that was promised of him and to him, creates the kingdom by way of the covenant. And in this, his service is absolutely effective. In contrast to the old covenant, where the nation of Israel was

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<sup>115</sup>G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 335-64.

called unto priesthood, but failed, Christ perfectly creates a kingdom of priests. He first embodies those priestly realities in himself and then confers them to his covenant people by the gift of the Holy Spirit. In this way, we see how the priesthood and covenant are related and how in Christ, neither will fail.

Applied to the extent of the atonement, it is impossible for Christ to offer a general atonement, because as the perfectly successful high priest, he cannot lose one member of his eternal covenant (Heb 13:20). All those for whom he dies as new covenant priest must receive the promised benefits, or else the new covenant is no better than the old. This results in a significant theological application for the intent/extent of the atonement. Namely, the contrast between the Levitical priests and Jesus is the same as the contrast between general atonement and definite atonement: In a general view of the atonement, like with the Levitical priesthood, the priest or priests stand at the altar to make eternal salvation possible for all people to receive.<sup>116</sup> However, under the new covenant, Jesus stands at the altar to make salvation permanent for his blood-bought, Spirit-promised covenant members. What the old covenant could not do, Christ does, securing the blessing of the Spirit for his covenant people by means of his atonement and intercession. In this way, a proper understanding of the new covenant requires a definite atonement. On this point, Sam Waldron argues forcefully,

The context of the atonement demands particular redemption. The covenant is the context of Christ's work. Christ's blood is covenantal blood. The covenant in view is explicitly and repeatedly identified as the new covenant, which is one of the most frequently, stated truths of the New Testament (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Eph 2:12-13; Heb 10:29; 13:20). Jesus' blood redeems and atones only in connection with this new covenant. Only by ratifying the new covenant and, thus, securing its saving benefits does Christ's death save.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup>In reality, the scope of the Levitical priests was only a percentage of the human race. They could only serve their brothers according to the flesh. As it will be argued below, Jesus stands at the altar for all those with whom he shares his Spirit.



In the end, attention to the typological and covenantal structures of priesthood, covenant, and atonement reveal how interdependent these three concepts are. While many purveyors of general atonement do not consider them together, Jeremiah 30-33 shows that the nature and extent of the atonement cannot be deciphered without their consideration. Still, Jeremiah is not alone in his concern for priesthood and covenant. Zechariah and Isaiah also bear witness to the eschatological priest and the atonement he will make to usher in a new era. Therefore, we must consider them in turn.

### **Zechariah's Messianic Royal Priest**

Zechariah is another place where priest and king converge to reform the messianic mold.<sup>118</sup> In *Glory in Our Midst*, Meredith Kline shows how the “messianic priest-king” is the “dominant” theme of Zechariah.<sup>119</sup> Likewise, Robertson notes, “The uniqueness of Zechariah’s particular messianism is dramatized in this merger of kingly and priestly roles.”<sup>120</sup> Narrowing our focus to three passages (Zech 3:1-10; 6:9-15; 11:1-17),<sup>121</sup> I will argue (1) that the priest in Zechariah is a Davidic priest who saves his people (*Kohen*

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<sup>117</sup>Waldron, “The Biblical Confirmation of Particular Redemption,” 147.

<sup>118</sup>Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 872-914.

<sup>119</sup>Meredith Kline, *Glory in Our Midst: A Biblical-Theological Reading of Zechariah's Night Visions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 256. He concludes, “The formal structure was evidently designed to highlight the figure of the coming Christ, ordained to priestly sacrifice and subsequent highest royal glory.”

<sup>120</sup>O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Prophets* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004), 388. Similarly, Barry Webb suggests a chiastic reading of Zech 1:7-6:18, which centers on priest (Joshua in 3:1-10) and governor (Zerubbabel in 4:1-14) (*The Message of Zechariah: Your Kingdom Come*, BST [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004], 106). Hamilton argues that Zechariah, similar to Ps 110, presents an eschatological priest-king (*God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 257-63).

<sup>121</sup>Kline has shown that these are the three central sections in Zechariah (*Glory in Our Midst*, 241-56), and that in each case they present a messianic royal priest.

*Mediator*) and subdues his enemies (*Kohen Victor*),<sup>122</sup> and (2) that the means by which he accomplishes his priestly work is through his own self-sacrifice, a sacrifice that effectively cleanses his covenant people. These observations cohere with 1 Samuel 2:35 and Psalm 110, and provide further biblical-theological support for the efficacy of Christ's new covenant mediation, and hence definite atonement.<sup>123</sup>

First, in Zechariah 3:1-10, the historical Joshua becomes a type of the coming Christ.<sup>124</sup> When he is introduced in Zechariah 3:1-4, he represents the sorry state of the Aaronic priests (cf. Mal 2:1-9). Because of the corporate solidarity between priest and people, his "filth" was indicative of the people and the priesthood.<sup>125</sup> However, judgment is not the final word. Rather the Lord holds out a promise of cleansing, covenant renewal, and

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<sup>122</sup>These are not the only places in Zechariah that the dual ministry of the priest-king is observed. Robertson comments that the "Angel of the Lord" in Zech 1 "judges the nations" (v. 11) and "intercedes on behalf of the suffering saints of Judah and Jerusalem" (v. 12). From Zechariah's first vision, he concludes that the Angel of the Lord, who he equates to a "preincarnate manifestation of the second member of the trinity," that he "possesses regal as well as priestly elements" (*The Christ of the Prophets*, 386).

<sup>123</sup>Space does not permit a thorough exposition of Zechariah. Instead, the approach taken here is akin to that of F. F. Bruce (*New Testament Develop of Old Testament Themes* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968], 100-14), who treats "the Shepherd King" in Zechariah under seven thematic headings.

<sup>124</sup>More exactly, Joshua "as the high priest . . . represented the covenant congregation. This representative relationship was signified by working into the design of the high priest's vestments a double set of the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. . . . While representing his contemporary Israelites, the highpriest [*sic*] also foreshadows the future in that he was a type of the coming true priest-king over the house of God, the mediatorial priest who would bring the people he represented to God through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Kline, *Glory in Our Midst*, 99). By contrast, McComiskey, appeals to 1 Pet 5:4 to suggest that this priest represents new covenant believers ("Zechariah," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas E. McComiskey [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998], 1073). Kline makes the same theological point, that Joshua represents "all the elect of God" (*Glory in Our Midst*, 99). However, to draw a straight identification between Joshua and the Christian minimizes the historical nature of Zechariah's visions (1:1, 7; 7:1). Likewise, it assumes a singular covenant of grace that runs through redemptive history, and it circumvents the necessary eschatological nature of this Christotelic type.

<sup>125</sup>Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, WBC, vol. 32 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 199; Thomas E. McComiskey, "Zechariah," in *The Minor Prophets*, 1070.

reinstatement into temple service (Zech 3:5-10).<sup>126</sup> Though not as explicit as Zechariah 6:9-15, this presentation of Joshua does conjoin the offices of priest and king.

Next, at the center of the book (6:9-15),<sup>127</sup> Zechariah records the coronation of Joshua the priest. Commenting on Joshua, Hamilton states, “In the same way that Psalm 110 portrays the Davidic king as a priest, Zechariah 6:9–15 portrays the crowning of Joshua the high priest as king and his ruling on the throne.”<sup>128</sup> In this messianic context, the historical Joshua becomes a type of a greater Joshua, and the priesthood passes from the polluted Levites to a righteous “Branch” (3:8; cf. 6:12; Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5; 33:15).<sup>129</sup> With this greater priest-king, the exiles will return (6:9-10, 15), the glory of the temple will be restored (6:12-13; cf. Ezek 40-48; Hag 1-2),<sup>130</sup> the covenant will be established and peace between God and man will be secured (6:13).<sup>131</sup>

Thinking in systematic categories (i.e., the person and work of Christ), the combination of royal, priestly, and servant language in Zechariah 3 and 6 corresponds with

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<sup>126</sup>Kline writes, “Joshua typified the coming Messiah in his twofold office, the Suffering Servant who undergoes extreme humiliation to accomplish a priestly sacrifice for sin and then experiences the highest exaltation as the royal Branch of David (cf. Isa 52:13-53:12; Jer 23:5; 33:15)” (*Glory in Our Midst*, 242-43).

<sup>127</sup>“The book of Zechariah is a diptych with 6:9-15 as its primary hinge or central spine” (Kline, *Glory in Our Midst*, 241).

<sup>128</sup>Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 259. However, there is something different about Zechariah. In Ps 110, YHWH swore a priestly oath to the Davidic king (v. 4), but in Zechariah, the merger of priest and king moves in the opposite direction. Joshua the priest is crowned and seated on the throne (6:13). The significance of this reversal may be found in the fact that Christ is equally priest and king. That is, he fulfills the royal promises as priest and the priestly prophecies as king. This conflation of roles may also provide an interpretive insight for Jeremiah 33:17-18 (cf. Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 38-39).

<sup>129</sup>Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 259; House, *Old Testament Theology*, 388-90.

<sup>130</sup>Space restrains a full consideration of Ezek 40-48 in this dissertation, but it is clear that Zechariah and Ezekiel are working with the same temple ideology: “Both prophets envision a renewed Jerusalem with a restored temple at its center” (House, *Old Testament Theology*, 386). Cf. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 142-44.

<sup>131</sup>On the importance of the covenant in Zechariah, see House, *Old Testament Theology*, 388.

other prophets who foretell of the messianic *person*.<sup>132</sup> Likewise, it provides a thematic anticipation of Zechariah 11:1-17, which describes the righteous and humble shepherd-king. At the same time, concerning the *work* of this priest-king, Zechariah typifies a Messiah who will subdue enemies (3:2) and cleanse God's people (3:9). Taken together, the priestly Messiah orients him toward his covenant people, while his royal status gives him authority to defeat his enemies.<sup>133</sup> Combined in one person, the priestly and royal prerogatives of the Messiah mutually inform one another; as a priest he makes atonement for his people and he purges the temple, and as a king, he builds the temple and engages in holy warfare. In this way, his royal priesthood, reinforced by perfect righteousness, is utterly different than the kings of the nations. When he is raised up, Christ will receive all that is foretold in Zechariah 3 and 6, but first he must suffer the humiliation of death (Zech 9-14).

In Zechariah 9-14, the prophet demonstrates the way in which God's work of salvation is necessarily positive and negative. In other words, working from a covenantal framework, God's salvation will bless the true offspring of Abraham and curse those who have opposed God's seed. Indeed, as a prophet of Israel, anticipating a new covenant (cf. 9:11; 11:10), Zechariah speaks of salvation in covenantal terms (cf. 13:9). This necessitates

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<sup>132</sup>“This imagery appears to unite the imagery of branch and root in Isa 4:2, 11:1, and Jer 23:1-8 with the Servant passages in Isa 42:1-4, 49:16, 50:4-9, and 52:13-53:12” (ibid., 389). The thematic and linguistic connection between Zechariah and Isaiah is important because collectively they inform the way we understand Christ's humiliation (incarnation and atonement) and exaltation (resurrection, ascension, and coronation).

<sup>133</sup>Commenting on the Lord's rebuke of Satan in Zech 3:2, Kline posits, “Jesus is the divine warrior who at last repels Satan's final antichrist attack by the Spirit-breath of his mouth, the rebuking of his nostrils” (*Glory in Our Midst*, 103). As God the Son, Jesus has authority to rebuke Satan and his followers; as the Son of God who is the messianic royal priest, Jesus carried out his priestly duties when he removed unclean spirits. Moreover, he will continue to carry out his priestly duties when, at the end of the age, he removes the impure, unbelieving sinners from his cosmic temple.

salvation *and* judgment, which as Hamilton rightly observes, there are at least ten “intermingled themes” of salvation and judgment in Zechariah 9-14.<sup>134</sup>

Still, in these chapters covenant is in the background.<sup>135</sup> It is Christ who is in the foreground, and what is emphasized is less the glorified royal priest, but more the crucified Lord, depicted as a humble king (9:9-11) and smitten shepherd (11:4-17). In these typological representations of Christ, Zechariah presents the coming day of the Lord as a day when the shepherd-king will die for his people, and the risen priest king will crush his enemies. And because the shepherd-servant is the exalted royal-priest, it necessitates that the people for whom he dies will be saved on the last day, even as the people whom he rejects on the last day are those who remain in their own uncleanness, not cleansed by his blood.

Indeed, a primary manifestation of salvation and judgment in Zechariah is depicted in the way the prophet speaks of (and embodies) the shepherds of Israel (10:2, 3; 11:3-5, 7-9, 15-17, 13:7). Understood in the ANE as a synonym for rulers,<sup>136</sup> the whole of Zechariah 9-14 is devoted to addressing the shepherds of Israel.<sup>137</sup> In Zechariah 10:3 and 11:15-17, God judges the shepherds of Israel. Then, in response to these bad shepherds, he appoints a “good shepherd” to come to Zion and suffer death (11:4-14), in such a way that he brings to his people repentance (12:10-14), cleansing (13:1), and a new creation (14:8ff). Significantly, the people who are saved are not ethnic Israel, but Jews and Gentiles who receive the Spirit

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<sup>134</sup>Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 262-63.

<sup>135</sup>William J. Dumbrell, *Creation and Covenant: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1984), 202-04.

<sup>136</sup>Laniak, *Shepherds After My Own Heart*, 42-75.

<sup>137</sup>Bruce says that “the portrayal of the shepherd-king” is the “one dominating principle . . . discerned through the whole section of [Zech 9-14]” (F. F. Bruce, *New Testament Develop of Old Testament Themes* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968], 108).

of grace and pleas for mercy (12:10). Therefore, while the terms change in Zechariah 9-14 from a royal priest to a shepherd-king, the message does not: God is bringing about salvation to a new covenant community served by the shepherd-servant-priest-king.<sup>138</sup>

Last, Zechariah's depiction of the "Branch" and the Shepherd-King is one of unmitigated success. Regarding the "Branch," Zechariah 6 promises him success in building his temple (vv. 12-13), ruling his kingdom (v. 13), gathering in the exiles (v. 15), and attaining peace with God (vv. 13, 15). In context, this temple-building project requires the twin offices of priest and king. In Israelite history, it was the king who built the temple (2 Chr 3-7), but it was the priest who sanctified its worship (1 Chr 24-26). This would be no different with the eschatological temple of the new covenant. Christ would perfectly fulfill both offices, effectively gathering his people (Matt 16:18), building his temple (Eph 2:19-22), and initiating true worship (John 4:24; 7:37-39; Heb 10:1-25). By way of analogy, Jesus, as a wise master builder, procured the materials—"living stones" (1 Pet 2:9)—so that he could finish what he started. In Zechariah, there is prophetic testimony to the success of Jesus' temple-building project and eschatological kingdom. There is no sense of a half-finished temple or covenant members who are not gathered. Therefore, the scope of Messiah's work must be specific and delimited because it must efficaciously accomplish all it set out to do (cf. 2 Chr 7:11).<sup>139</sup>

Likewise, the work of shepherd-king is definitive and successful (Zech 9-14). In a series of oracles replete with imagery foreshadowing the work of Christ, Zechariah shows the

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<sup>138</sup>For more on the priestly Messiah in Zechariah, see Herman Bateman IV, Gordon Johnston, and Darrell Bock, *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel's King* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 191-209.

<sup>139</sup>Martin, *The Atonement*, 96-119.

shepherd-king suffering unto death for the salvation of his people (9:9-10; 12:10-13:9),<sup>140</sup> while God brings judgment on all people. In the first section (9:1-11:3), which begins and ends with judgment on enemy nations (9:1-6; 11:1-3),<sup>141</sup> Zechariah records the promise of righteous king coming humbly into Jerusalem (9:9). This king was “everything Israel and her monarchy was called to be but was not.”<sup>142</sup> Even more, as a “king of righteousness” (9:9), there may be an allusion to Melchizedek.<sup>143</sup> Likewise, Bryan Gregory cites the thematic correspondence with Isaiah’s Suffering Servant.<sup>144</sup>

Finally, Zechariah 9-14 speaks of the “good shepherd.” More specifically, these chapters record Zechariah’s commission to become the “shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter” (11:7), as well as the final execution of the good shepherd (13:7).<sup>145</sup> Citing the personal involvement of the prophet Kline explains,

He is instructed to play the part of the messianic priest-king, specifically the good shepherd sent on mission to the flock—‘shepherd’ being a familiar image of kingship. In keeping with the shepherd motif, the imagery of coronation and royal investiture found in 3:1-10; 6:9-15 is translated into that of donning the outfit and taking accouterments suited to tending flocks. The shepherd’s staff (11:7, 10) replaces the scepter, but the basic theme of official investiture is present again in this passage.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>140</sup>Willem VanGemeren provides a helpful outline of Zech 12:10-13:9, which tells of the manner in which God will save his people: “Mourning for the pierced one, 12:10-14,” “Promise of cleansing and forgiveness, 13:1-5,” and “The shepherd struck, 13:6-9” (*Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990], 195).

<sup>141</sup>Bryan R. Gregory, *Longing for God in an Age of Discouragement: The Gospel According to Zechariah* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010), 170.

<sup>142</sup>*Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>143</sup>Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 900.

<sup>144</sup>Gregory, *Longing for God*, 164-65.

<sup>145</sup>On the relationship of the shepherd in Zech 13:7 with earlier instantiations, see Stephen L. Cook (“The Metamorphosis of the Shepherd: The Tradition of 11:17 and 13:7-9” *CBQ* 55 [1993]: 453-66), who writes, “The shepherd of 13:7-9 is now to be interpreted not as the anti-David in 11:15-17, but as a figure within the context of a more positive messianic expectation (as in Zech 3:8; 6:12-14; 9:9-10; 10:4)” (*ibid.*, 461).

<sup>146</sup>Kline, *Glory in Our Midst*, 245; cf. Timothy Laniak, *Shepherds After My Own Heart*, 162-70.

In the details of these verses, we find the selling of the good shepherd for thirty pieces of silver (11:12),<sup>147</sup> the division of the monarchy (11:14), the dissolution of the old covenant (11:10),<sup>148</sup> and God’s judgment on Israel for rejecting the shepherd-king (11:15-17). Like with Isaiah’s Suffering Servant, God’s plan is not thwarted by his shepherd’s rejection; it is actually accomplished (cf. Acts 2:23; 4:27-28). Through his rejection unto death (13:7), God provides a way of salvation, even as he solidifies his case against his enemies. Concerning the former, Zechariah 13:1 records that “on that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.” With incredible precision, Zechariah foretells much of Christ’s atoning death and its saving efficacy.<sup>149</sup> At the same time, Zechariah 11-14 anticipates the final assize, when all enemies of God will be judged (14:12-15) and the cosmos will be cleansed of all impurity (14:16-21).

While many of the details offered in Zechariah’s apocalyptic prophecies await the coming of the Lord himself, it is evident that there is nothing general about the work of the priest-king-shepherd-servant.<sup>150</sup> God’s Messiah will come and die to bring about an efficacious redemption for his covenant people, and through the means of God’s vindication

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<sup>147</sup>For a linguistic and theological analysis of Zech 11:12 and its use in Matt 27:9-10, see Gregory, *Longing for God*, 182-88.

<sup>148</sup>Whereas the two staves in Ezek 37:15-28 anticipated the reunion of Judah and Israel, the staves in Zechariah represent the reverse: “God will no longer show his covenant favor upon them since they have rejected the good shepherd” (Gregory, *Longing for God*, 180).

<sup>149</sup>For a full explanation of the way in which Zech 9-14 informs the passion narratives (especially Matthew), see Clay Alan Ham, *The Coming King and the Rejected Shepherd: Matthew’s Reading of Zechariah’s Messianic Hope* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006).

<sup>150</sup>There are benefits that the non-elect receive from the cross, but these are indirect and non-salvific (cf. R. B. Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die? A Study of the Divine Design of the Atonement* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1959; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003], 78–103).



of this shepherd-servant, he will exalted to the right hand of God as priest-king.<sup>151</sup> While his humiliation and exaltation do not happen at the same time, the former (his death) causes the latter (his resurrection).<sup>152</sup> To put it the other way, Christ as a priest is crowned with glory and honor and enthroned at God's right hand *because* he obeys all of God's law (Heb 2:9; cf. 5:7-10; 10:5-14).<sup>153</sup> In this glorified state, Christ is not wearing a robe fashioned by human hands (cf. Exod 28); he is robed in divine glory. Nevertheless, if typology means anything, Jesus, like his priestly prototype Aaron, reigns in glory with the names of his covenant people affixed to his glorified humanity.<sup>154</sup> What is the significance?

Christ's priestly service, as presented in Zechariah (and the rest of the Bible), is only completed for those people with whom he is in covenant. In Zechariah 9:1-8, YHWH faithfully rescues the people of his old covenant, and now in Zechariah 9:9-11 a new covenant is being established, through the priest-king who humbles himself as a shepherd. In this context, the prophet transcends ethnic boundaries, such that foreigners will benefit from this Messiah's service (9:5-7). Van Groningen nicely captures the sentiment.

Indeed, Yahweh, remembering his past covenant, is now busily planning and preparing a new one. Zechariah continues to proclaim the blessed results of the sure coming and present of the Priest-King. The covenant will be upheld; . . . [and] one can see how Zechariah picks up elements of Yahweh's past promises, weaves them into a more compact pattern, and thus makes more clear what the Messiah will come to achieve.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup>The whole book of Hebrews argues for Christ's exaltation as a glorified priest-king (Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest, passim*).

<sup>152</sup>This is confirmed in Revelation. There, the Lamb who was slain (5:12-14) has authority to open the seals and enact the judgments of God (6:1). It is surely not coincidental that the visual imagery of Rev 6 arises from Zech 6:1-8.

<sup>153</sup>As the righteous one (Zech 9:9; cf. 9:5-6; 11:4-5; Jer 23:6), "the messianic king will meet and execute all covenantal requirements: he will be the perfect covenant keeper and administrator" (Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 900).

<sup>154</sup>Martin, *The Atonement*, 108-10.

<sup>155</sup>Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 902.

And what he comes to achieve is far more than a covenant renewal. The new priest-king is ushering in a new era, with a new covenant, and new people. Therefore, like Israel imprisoned in Egypt, the shepherd-king (a New Moses) will save a New Israel (made up of people from every nation), by offering up a greater sacrifice and defeating a greater enemy (Satan [Zech 3:2] and all in allegiance to him [12:1-9]). By consequence, the enemies of God (i.e., the non-elect) do not have sacrifice made for them. As gruesome as it sounds, they, because of their treasonous rebellion, are the sacrifice (Ezek 39:4-5; Rev 19:17-21).<sup>156</sup>

This covenantal reading of Zechariah is reinforced by bi-focal attention to salvation and judgment. As with all covenants, blessings and salvation come as a result of covenant faithfulness, while judgment and curses come as a result of lawlessness and impurity (Lev 25-26; Deut 27-28).<sup>157</sup> Therefore, the refrain of salvation and judgment in this prophecy strongly suggests that the priest-king is not just bringing a generic salvation, but a new exodus, that inaugurates a new covenant, with a new law, that leads to a new creation.<sup>158</sup> And all this is effected through his perfect priestly service. As Robertson comments, the “ultimate end” of the shepherd’s priestly sacrifice is the establishment of a new covenant.

The only viable explanation of this attack on the Good Shepherd initiated by the Lord himself is that the shepherd-king also fulfills the role of priestly sacrifice—or, as he

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<sup>156</sup>Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 462-63; G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 964-71.

<sup>157</sup>In light of recent covenantal discussions (e.g., the debate most recently flamed by Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*), it is significant that in Zech 3:7 (“if you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then . . .”) and 6:15 (“All this will come to pass, if you will diligently obey my voice of the Lord your God”), the success of the new covenant is based upon the condition of the priest-king’s successful covenant mediation. Clearly, the grace of God is monergistic, but because the new covenant is ultimately ratified in the person and work of Christ, it is a conditional covenant, one in which the Son of God perfectly fulfills all righteousness, thus attaining the blessing of God, which he shares with his particular people.

<sup>158</sup>On the eschatological nature of Zechariah’s visions culminating in a new creation, see Keith Mathison, *From Age to Age: The Unfolding of Biblical Eschatology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 302-07.

may be properly perceived—the sacrificial priest. As a consequence of his being smitten, the sheep will be scattered, chastened, purged, purified. . . . But eventually the sufferings of the humble shepherd-king on behalf of his flock will accomplish the Lord’s ultimate end: “They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Covenant LORD is our God.’”<sup>159</sup>

This conflation of shepherd language and priestly action adumbrates John 10, where Jesus calls himself the self-sacrificing Good Shepherd. Relying on Zechariah (and a bevy of other OT passages),<sup>160</sup> Jesus articulates a particular relationship with his sheep. He lays down his life for them, and them alone (vv. 17-18, 26). Despite arguments to the contrary, the biblical-theological background of John 10 requires a shepherd who lays his life down for his sheep, while simultaneously destroying the wolves and separating the goats (Matt 25:32).

The generalists’ counter-argument that denies John 10 as a proof text for definite atonement appeals to logic (i.e., the negative inference fallacy), but it ignores the larger literary structures of the Bible.<sup>161</sup> Under the guise of being *biblical*, this appeal to logic secures a thin reading of John 10 in isolation from the rest of the Bible. We must read Jesus’ language of sheep and shepherd as an extension of the typological categories found in Zechariah and the rest of the OT. When we do, it favors definite atonement.

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<sup>159</sup>Robertson, *The Christ of the Prophets*, 385.

<sup>160</sup>For a comprehensive list of the OT passages that undergird John 10’s use of “Good Shepherd,” see Andreas Köstenberger, “John,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 461-64.

<sup>161</sup>The intra-textual connection between John 10 and Zech 9-14 provides exegetical support for the assertion that Christ only died for his sheep. Contra David Allen, who argues that proof texts like John 10:14 commits a “negative inference fallacy” (“The Atonement,” in *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism*, ed. David Allen and Steve Lemke [Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010], 93), Jesus’ dependence on Zechariah provides valuable insight into the two-fold orientation of the Good Shepherd’s priestly sacrifice. Jesus simultaneously lays down his life for his sheep and seeks to remove the vipers; he reveals himself to his children but he hides himself from the wise (Matt 11:25-27). Thus, whenever Jesus makes a statement that he is for his own (sheep, bride, children, church), he is plainly indicating that he is covenantally committed to bringing them into his kingdom in a way that he is not committed to those who are not his (vipers and goats, men who have given themselves to the Babylonian whore, the wise, and the world *qua* enemies of the church). We will develop this argument further in chap. 7, when John 10 is discussed.

Zechariah not only informs our Christology; it also addresses new covenant pneumatology. Part the new covenant is the gift of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Zech 12:10 as “the Spirit of grace and pleas for mercy.”<sup>162</sup> Stressing the monergistic work of the Spirit to produce repentance unto salvation (i.e., “mourning”), the context makes this gift of the Spirit tied directly to the death of the shepherd-servant—“when they look on me, the one they have pierced.”<sup>163</sup> Likewise, set in the context of salvation *and* judgment (12:1-13:1), this gift of the Spirit cannot be universal, because the Spirit is given to separate God’s people from their enemies. It is not *universally* gracious; it is delimited to the “eschatological remnant” whom the “pierced one” cleanses.<sup>164</sup> Therefore, because the pouring out of the Spirit is caused by the priestly work of the Messiah, it necessarily follows that the extent of atonement and the extent of salvation is one and the same.

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<sup>162</sup>McComiskey (“Zechariah,” 1214) cautions “about identifying [the spirit of grace] with God’s spirit,” because elsewhere in Zechariah, the prophet is more explicit in identifying the Spirit of the Lord (cf. 4:6; 6:8; 7:12), and in closer proximity, *ruach* is used in reference to man’s spirit (12:1; 13:2). However, this does not deter the argument here; it may bolster it. Van Groningen comments, “Zechariah does not refer to the Spirit himself . . . but to the result of his presence: a new attitude of heart which is evidenced by *hēn* (grace) and *tahānūnīm* (supplications)” (*Messianic Revelation*, 906; cf. Kenneth L. Barker, *Zechariah*, in vol. 7 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin [Grands Rapids: Zondervan, 1985], 683). Exegetically, it is more likely the case that the Spirit of the Lord (4:6; 6:8; 7:12) quickens the spirit of men (12:1; 13:2), effecting inner regeneration—i.e., the cleansing of their consciences—which in turn causes them to walk in God’s statutes (cf. Ezek 36:25-26; Heb 9:14). This begins in Zech 12:1-14 when the regenerate repent and mourn for their sins against God.

Now it should be observed that the historical details are sketchy in Zech 12-13 (Bruce, *New Testament Development*, 110-13), but it is very clear that what is described here is on par with Isa 53, Ezek 36, and Joel 2. Concerning the latter, R. L. Smith writes, “The fact that the spirit of ‘grace and supplication’ (repentance) is poured out on women as well as men reminds one of Joel 2:28-29; 3:1-2” (*Micah-Malachi*, 278). Likewise, in Zech 13:2, the prophet echoes the language of Ezek 36:25 when he speaks of God removing the “spirit of uncleanness from the land” (Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1972], 190-95). Furthermore, Bruce, following Lamarche, “finds an association of ideas” between the pierced one, the smitten shepherd, and the Servant of Isa 53 (*New Testament Development*, 112).

<sup>163</sup>Rex Mason, “The Relation of Zech 9-14 to Proto-Zechariah,” *ZAW* 88 (1976): 232-33.

<sup>164</sup>S. L. Cook, “The Metamorphosis of the Shepherd,” 462, 66.

In the end, Zechariah is filled with Christological types that point to a particular and efficacious atonement. However, Zechariah is not the only prophet who presents the priestly work of Christ in this way. Isaiah does as well, and like Zechariah, he prophesies about a new covenant community that is redeemed by the priestly sacrifice of the Suffering Servant. Simultaneously, he expands the effects of the covenant beyond Israel to incorporate people from every nation (cp. Zech 14 and Isa 65-66). In the next section, we will consider both of these features—the particularity of the priesthood and the universality of the new covenant.

### **Isaiah 38-66**

In Isaiah, two passages require consideration. First, Isaiah 53 is the high point of all OT revelation concerning the death of Christ, and includes facets of the priesthood. Second, as a result of the Servant's sacrifice, resurrection, and intercession, there proceeds the ratification of the "everlasting covenant," which in turn results in a new class of priestly people (Isa 61). Significantly, in both sections the scope of the priest's work is far greater than that of Israel's physical offspring. Yet, with all that Isaiah says about salvation reaching the ends of the earth, there is not sufficient grounds for concluding that Isaiah supports a general atonement. There is a "universalizing" of the people whom the priest represents, but always the relationship between priest and people is stipulated by the new covenant. To demonstrate this, we will consider Isaiah 53, a text frequently cited by generalists, and argue that Christ's sacrifice is clearly limited to the covenant people. Additionally, Isaiah 61 will be examined to show that the internationalization of the new covenant is particular, not general.

**Isaiah 53-55.** In his dissertation, Gary Shultz insists that “general benefits of the atonement can only be grounded in the atonement’s universal sufficiency if this sufficiency refers to an atonement that sufficiently pays for the sin of all people.”<sup>165</sup> To support his case, he expounds a number of texts from the NT and one from the OT—Isaiah 52:13-53:12 (henceforth, Isa 53).<sup>166</sup> With most commentators, Shultz observes that Isaiah 53 traces the career of the Suffering Servant, but concerning its central stanza (vv. 4-6), he debatably concludes that this passage “support[s] an unlimited extent of the Servant’s sacrifice.”<sup>167</sup> In making this doctrinal conclusion, Shultz bypasses the epochal and canonical contexts of Isaiah 53, along with the eschatological nature of the Servant songs and their relationship to the new covenant described in Isaiah 54-55 and the remainder of Isaiah. The result is a mislabeling of the beneficiaries of the Servant’s atoning death because he does not read the passage with regard to covenant or priesthood, eschatology or epochal horizons. Consequently, he misappropriates the text to support unlimited atonement.

In its original context, Isaiah 53 is referring to the covenant people of God in the OT, but the question is, “Which Israel does Isaiah 53 describe?” Is it historic, ethnic Israel?

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<sup>165</sup>Gary Shultz, “A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement,” 99. The scope of this chapter does not allow for a discussion concerning the purported need for a general atonement to underwrite a genuine offer of the gospel. For a response to this argument, see John Murray, “The Atonement and the Free Offer of the Gospel,” in *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1976), 1:59-85; and Roger Nicole, “Covenant, Universal Call, and Definite Atonement,” in *Creator, Redeemer, Consummator: A Festschrift for Meredith G. Kline*, ed. Howard Griffith and John R. Muether (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 193-201.

<sup>166</sup>Shultz writes, “The idea that Christ paid for the sins of the elect and the nonelect is necessary in order to account for the general intentions that God had in the atonement. It is therefore central to the multi-intentioned view . . . The Scriptures that express this truth are Isaiah 53:4-6; John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 6:51; 12:46-47; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 18-21; 1 Timothy 2:4-6; 4:10; Titus 2:11; Hebrews 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2; and 4:14” (“A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement,” 100).

<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*, 104. He is not alone; Millard Erickson states concerning Isa 53, “This passage is especially powerful from a logical standpoint. It is clear that the extent of sin is universal; it is specified that *every one* of us has sinned. It should also be noticed that the extent of what will be laid on the Suffering Servant exactly parallels the extent of sin. It is difficult to read this passage and not conclude that just as everyone sins, everyone is also atoned for” (*Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998], 847).

Or is it a future, eschatological Israel? On this point, Shultz assumes the former.<sup>168</sup> However, the prophetic genre of Isaiah, with its unmistakable eschatological framework,<sup>169</sup> suggests that the Servant's descriptions are not simply textual observations about ethnic Israel or an historical figure.<sup>170</sup> Rather, Isaiah 53 speaks of a forthcoming Servant who will usher in a "new era."<sup>171</sup> One of the key features of this new era is a new kind of people, created by the

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<sup>168</sup>Shultz, "A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement," 103. Shultz, in his exegesis, makes much of the universal language found in Isa 53:4-6, saying, "Isaiah states that all have gone astray, that all have sinned. He then states that God caused the sins of all to attack the Servant. The "all" who have sinned is here equated with the "all" whose sins God caused to attack the servant" (ibid., 104). The problem with Shultz's exegesis is threefold. First, he interprets the passage on the basis of one contested word, "all," instead of understanding the "all" in light of the entirety of Isaiah's argument. This kind of atomistic interpretation is suspect because of how it redefines the meaning of the larger context by the singular meaning of one word. D. A. Carson calls this kind of maneuver an "unwarranted associative jump" (*Exegetical Fallacies* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 115-16).

Second, after identifying the Servant as a substitute for Israel, and saying "the normal referent for 'we' throughout the book (e.g., 16:6; 24:16; 42:24; 64:5-6) is the nation of Israel," Shultz expands the identification of the possessive plurals in vv. 4-6 to all people everywhere ("The Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement," 103). However, in light of the Isaianic context, which is explicitly Jewish, it does not make sense to extend these pronouns in such an unqualified fashion. Third, in defending this position, Shultz appeals to John N. Oswalt, quoting, "The entire people is compared to a flock of sheep. *All of us* both opens and closes the verse, emphasizing the extent of the problem, and by its lack of specificity inviting an extension to the whole human race" (*Book of Isaiah*, 389). The problem is that Oswalt and Shultz fail to see that "sheep," when used metaphorically, especially in the prophets, is predominately spoken of in relationship to God's people (cf. Jer. 23:1; 50:6; Ezek 34:1-31; Mic 2:12; 5:1-8; Zech 10:2; 11:7, 11; 13:7). Consequently, the expansion of the "all sheep" to be all people everywhere goes against the typical use of sheep-language (cf. "Sheep-Shepherd," in *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, ed. Leland Ryken et al. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998], 782-85) and the bi-partisan nature of humanity (cf. Gen 3:15).

<sup>169</sup>Mathison, *From Age to Age*, 178-204; William J. Dumbrell, *The Search for Order: Biblical Eschatology in Focus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 80-94.

<sup>170</sup>"As a result of the ministry of the Servant (Isa 53), the nations will gather around a new Israel (Isa 54) and a New David (Isa 55:5). The Servant is thus a mysterious figure of the future" (William Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002], 124).

<sup>171</sup>Citing Rikki Watts, Dumbrell writes, "the great bulk of the salvation promises in chapters 49-55 are future-oriented proclamations of salvation oracles. . . . In Isaiah 49-55, the prophet looks forward to the future, when the servant will be fulfilled by a personality as yet unknown. The pronounced notes in the Servant presentation, especially in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, indicate that the remnant community, meant to be the idealized servant community in Isaiah 40-48, upon whom Israel's hopes reposed, has been reduced to one. At some time in the future, this Servant figure will redeem Israel and extend the revelation of God to the world at large. . . . The logic of the placement of Isaiah 54 and 55 suggests that all has been achieved by the suffering and death of Yahweh's Servant (Isa 53). He will do nothing less than usher in the new era, the new creation" (*The Faith of Israel*, 123, 126).

redeeming work of the Servant.<sup>172</sup> In other words, if it is true that the Servant is an eschatological figure, then it must also be true that the Servant's redeemed community is not merely the historical, covenant-breaking Israel but rather an eschatological Israel that will be comprised of converts from every nation. As we read the surrounding context of Isaiah 53, this truth is further proven.

First, in Isaiah 49:1-6; 50:4-11; and 52:13-53:12 the anointed Servant (Isa 42:1-4) is set over against the historical Cyrus (Isa 45:1), who in the providence of God was the anointed Servant, the historical king raised up by YHWH to re-establish Israel's occupancy of Jerusalem (44:24-13).<sup>173</sup> The juxtaposition is important to notice because what Cyrus was unable to accomplish, namely spiritual renewal and universal peace (Isa 48:22), the Suffering Servant will accomplish by his own blood (53:5). Shultz is right to ask "who" receives this peace, but he does not read far enough to discover that Isaiah 54-55 tells us that this eschatological peace is reserved only for the new covenant people of God.<sup>174</sup>

Second, the suffering that takes place in Isaiah 53 purchases a peace that is described in Isaiah 54-55. In fact, "peace" which the Servant dies to achieve (53:5) is

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<sup>172</sup>O. Palmer Robertson speaks of the universal nature of this new covenant people: "While the theme of the inclusion of the Gentiles nations may be found throughout the prophetic writings, nothing quite matches the extensive elaboration of the theme as it appears consistently throughout the book of Isaiah. The influx of the Gentiles, attached in Isaiah so regularly to the theme of the return of the exile, *represents* a new phase in the development of the concept to of Israel's restoration. This anticipated experience in the history of the anticipation will create a new era for God's people. By this process, the very idea of a people of God is *redefined* to include people from all nations of the world" (*The Christ of the Covenants* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1980], 224). Emphases mine. In short, the people spoken of in Isa 53 "represent" the new covenant community, redeemed by the mediator of the new covenant, as they together anticipate the new creation.

<sup>173</sup>On the comparison of servants in the context of restoration from exile in Isaiah, Gentry writes, "There are two issues in the return from the exile: physical return and spiritual deliverance from bondage and slavery to sin. And corresponding to these two issues there are two distinct agents of redemption: Cyrus and the Servant. The former will bring about the first task: physical return to the land of Israel (44:24-48:22); the latter will bring about the second task: the forgiveness of sins (49:1-53:12)" (Peter J. Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song [Isaiah 52:13-53:12]" *SBJT* 11 [2007]: 22).

<sup>174</sup>Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel*, 125-26; idem, *The Search for Order*, 121-23.



mentioned three times. First, Isaiah 54:10 describes the “covenant of peace” that God is going to establish with those whom he is redeeming. He describes these people in verse 3 as those who will “possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.”<sup>175</sup> In verses 4-8, Isaiah uses bridal imagery to describe the reunion of YHWH with his people.<sup>176</sup> In this context, the language of “Redeemer” (v. 8) reflects the kind of redemption pictured in Hosea, that of a loving husband reclaiming his wayward bride.<sup>177</sup> If this is what is in mind, the marital metaphor only adds to the particularity of the Servant’s suffering. Finally, in verses 9-10, the unrestrained compassion and kindness of YHWH towards his redeemed is hardly the general disposition of kindness that God offers the non-elect. The “love language” is covenantal. Isaiah uses the technical term *hesed* to describe the kind of “steadfast love” that God has for those with whom he is making covenant.<sup>178</sup> Therefore, the peace that is purchased in Isaiah 53:5 is a covenantal peace given to God’s new covenant people who are

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<sup>175</sup>This description in vv. 2-3 harkens back to God’s covenantal promise to Abraham in Gen 22:17-18: “I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (cf. J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993], 444-47; Dumbrell, *The Search for Order*, 121).

<sup>176</sup>Heightening the significance of marital reunion in Isa 54, Motyer writes, “[Isa] 50:1-3 pictured a broken marriage relationship in which the alienated came and ‘called’ (50:2) his erring wife to be restored. Since she would not respond, it became part of the work of the Servant to ‘bring back’ to Jacob (49:5-6). The Servant has now finished his work and restoration has been accomplished. This new situation is summed up as a *covenant of peace* (10), which refers to the making of peace by the punishment which fell on the Servant” (*The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 447).

<sup>177</sup>This particular, marital love is picked up in Eph 5:25-27, when Paul writes, “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for her.” Christ, as the Suffering Servant, does not betrothe himself to all people, everywhere in his death, but rather as a husband commits himself to one woman, Christ dies for his bride (cf. 2 Cor 11:2). To say otherwise would have stultifying effects on the ethical import of Eph 5:25-27, and it would confuse the marital imagery running throughout the Bible, which depicts Christ’s particular redemption. Arguing this point theologically, see R. S. Candlish, *The Atonement: Its Efficacy and Extent* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1867), 112-14.

<sup>178</sup>D.A. Baer and R.P. Gordon, “*Hesed*,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 2:211-18.

awaiting the new creation.<sup>179</sup> It is universally offered (Isa 55:1-3), but not universally applied.

Isaiah 54:13 reinforces this idea. In fact, it confirms that the particular application coincides with a particular purchase (i.e., definite atonement). In verses 1-12, Isaiah uses new creation and temple imagery to describe the benefits to those who are participants in God's covenant of peace.<sup>180</sup> Then in verses 13-14, he describes the peace that will be given to the children of Israel, and he uses new covenant language.<sup>181</sup> More than that, as we have argued previously, the notion that "All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children" argues for the efficacy of the Servant's work and the sure application that all for whom he dies, he will also instruct and bless with peace.

Finally, verses 15-17 promise protection to those who are at peace with God (cf. Isa 26:3). Isaiah concludes, "This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, declares the Lord" (Isa 54:17). This last statement is perhaps the most impressive because the offspring of the Servant mentioned in 53:10 are now identified themselves as "servants of the Lord." It seems from the context that the Suffering Servant's

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<sup>179</sup>Of Isa 54, Dumbrell writes, "All this imagery prepares us for the covenant of peace (v. 10), which indicates that the period of the exile is a temporary check but not a negation of God's promises and which seems to be a reference to the new-covenant theology of the exilic period" (*The Search for Order*, 121).

<sup>180</sup>According to Beale, "Revelation understands Isaiah 54, partly at least, to be a prophecy of a grand end-time city-temple" (*The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 132-33).

<sup>181</sup>When Isa 54:13-14 is compared with Jer 31:31-34, it becomes apparent how the covenant of peace mirrors the new covenant. Isa 54:13 says, "All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children. In righteousness you shall be established;" while Jer 31:34 says, "And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me. . . . For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." The parallel here is twofold. (1) Both texts speak of the "universal" knowledge of the Lord, yet the universality is limited by the boundaries of the covenant. (2) Both passages speak of the moral effects of the covenant. Isa 54 speaks of an establishment in righteousness, whereas Jer 31 describes it as a forgiveness of sin, but the overall effect is the same; and for our purposes of extent, it is worth denoting that the universality is restricted to those in the covenant.

benefits purchased in Isaiah 53 and detailed in Isaiah 54 are only effective for those who themselves are made servants of God *by God himself*.<sup>182</sup>

Finally, moving into Isaiah 55, the efficacy of the new covenant is reaffirmed as it speaks of “an everlasting covenant” (Isa 55:3). Unlike the old covenant, which was composed of a “mixed multitude,” the new covenant would last for all who are in the covenant. Simultaneously, Isaiah uses universal language to invite people from all nations.<sup>183</sup> Yet, as John Owen points out, this use of universal terms reflects the eschatological widening of God’s new covenant, not a theological explication of general atonement. He states,

This [new covenant] is so opposite that dispensation which was restrained to one people and family, who were God’s peculiar, and all the rest of the world excluded, that it gives occasion to many general expressions in the Scripture; which are far enough from comprehending a universality of all individuals, but denote only a removal of all such restraining exceptions as were before in force. . . . For it being only this enlargement of the visible kingdom of Christ to all nations in respect of right, and to many in respect of fact (God having elect in all those nations to be brought forth, in the several generation wherein the means of grace are in those places employed), that is intended, it is evident that they import a *distribution* of men through all differences whatsoever, and not a *universal collection* of all and every one; the thing intended by them requiring the one and not the other.<sup>184</sup>

This manner of speaking fills the oracles of Isaiah 40-66, and to understand the scope of Servant’s priestly service, we turn to Isaiah 61.

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<sup>182</sup>The grammar of v. 17 is important. Men do not choose to become servants of the Lord; they are themselves chosen (cf. John 15:16). In this case, Isaiah says that their vindication originates with God himself (cf. Rom 4:25). Thus, it goes against the grain of this covenantal to logic to insist that the triune God procures salvation that he does not apply.

<sup>183</sup>Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 194-97.

<sup>184</sup>Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, 186.

**Isaiah 61-66.** In Zechariah, we considered brief evidence that the new covenant will expand from Israel to the nations (8:20-23; 9:6-7; 14:16-21).<sup>185</sup> However, in the book of Isaiah, we find the primary loci for “prophetic universalism.”<sup>186</sup> Like Zechariah who moves from the shepherd’s death to the cleansing of the nations, Isaiah moves from the Servant’s atoning and covenant-ratifying death to a new creation. While the notion of universal expansion permeates the whole book of Isaiah (cf. 2:1-5; 19:18-25; 49:1-7; 56:7), it is after the death, resurrection, and coronation of Jesus in Isaiah 53 that the language of universalism reaches its acme.<sup>187</sup>

The argument being advanced here is that this universal language does not supply generalists with proof texts for a universal propitiation. Rather, through a careful reading of Isaiah 55-66, I will argue that the ‘universalism’ in the Prophets retains a particular shape because the expansion of the new covenant is determined by the priestly ministration of Christ and his new covenant priests (61:6). Theologically, the importance of understanding how the prophets employ universal terms will prove essential to understanding the universal language of the NT. Indeed, while most generalists appeal to the “all” and “world” passages to overturn definite atonement, the argument in this dissertation is simply that Christ’s priestly office—not lexemes—should determine the scope of the covenant, and by extension the meaning of the universal offer of the gospel.

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<sup>185</sup>Mason, “The Relation of Zech 9-14 to Proto-Zechariah,” 233-34.

<sup>186</sup>“Within the context of the present discussion, ‘universalism’ does not refer to ‘Christian universalism’ [i.e., salvific universalism] . . . Rather, the concept of universalism in the OT begins with the belief that Yahweh is not the God of the Israelites only, but is sovereign over all nations” (P. M. Cook, “Nations,” 566).

<sup>187</sup>*Ibid.*, 566-67.

Theologically, what makes Isaiah 61 significant is the way that it forms a bridge from the singular priest-king-shepherd-servant to the servants of the Lord who take on the same ministerial roles.<sup>188</sup> This prepares the way for the NT. As Jesus becomes the fulfillment of Isaiah 61, quoting verses 1-2 in Luke 4, and applying the text to himself, it is obvious that the rest of chapter is fulfilled in the new covenant community established by Jesus' death.<sup>189</sup> Indeed, the followers of Christ are not merely recipients of salvation; they become priests and ministers in their own right. This is explicit in Isaiah 61:6, and it describes a new stage in redemptive history. For under the old covenant, priests were condemned for permitting "foreigners" to approach the Lord, but now it is "strangers" and "foreigners" who are enlisted as priests (v. 5-6). Clearly, a new day has dawned, one that is defined by a new and "everlasting covenant" (v. 8) and a democratization of the new covenant.

This change in priesthood comports with the change from the Levitical priesthood to the Davidic priesthood found in Psalm 110, as well as, the widening of the tent pegs poetically described in Isaiah 54. Indeed, the whole tenor of Isaiah 56-66 reflects the universalization of the new covenant, which is a new arrangement in the world that culminates in a new creation.<sup>190</sup> It would not be too much to say that the priests of the new covenant are the Spirit-born sons of God who serve the Lord by proclaiming his particular

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<sup>188</sup>Mixing the language of salvation, priesthood, and marriage, Isa 61 describes the eschatological glory of God's final salvation. As savior, priest, and husband, Christ's covenant members become "oaks of righteousness" (v. 3) and "priests of the Lord" (v. 6), who are clothed with "garments of salvation" (v. 10) and whose beauty is that of a bejeweled bride (v. 10).

<sup>189</sup>This still allows for the gap in time between Jesus' salvation ("proclaim[ing] the year of the Lord's favor"), which continues to take place in this day and age (cf. 2 Cor 6:2), and his judgment ("the day of vengeance of our God"), which will come with his return to earth (cf. 1 Thess 4-5).

<sup>190</sup>See Robertson, *The Christ of the Prophets*, 222-24.

message of salvation and judgment to all the earth, preparing the world for the final Day of Judgment.<sup>191</sup>

Moreover, the priestly calling of the redeemed argues for a particular atonement, in that the head of the body, who is also the husband of the bride, shares his priestly vocation with his covenant people. Just as Christ came to serve as a royal priest, he invests his posterity with the same calling. Against general atonement (which argues that Christ died for everyone and later applies the benefits to some) a priestly conception of Christ's atonement asserts that when Christ performed his full priestly service, he did so for all of his brothers and sisters who would become Spirit-born priests. In this way, priestly service—for Christ and for Christians—does not depend on personal response but divine calling (cf. Heb 5:1-4). In his priesthood, Christ was creating a new community of priests—spiritual offspring from every nation whom he would not only die for but call to himself as laborers in his kingdom.

The second way Isaiah argues for definite atonement is that in the same context where universal terms are used with high frequency, the particular nature of salvation never changes. Isaiah 61-66 explicitly mentions salvation and judgment. Indeed, the priests who proclaim redemption also announce judgment (66:15-24). This is evident in the climactic scene of Isaiah where there is both the promise of new creation (v. 22-23) and eternal judgment (v. 24). Irrefutably, when God gathers “all flesh” (v. 16), “all nations and tongues” (v. 18), and “all your brothers from all the nations” (v. 20), only “some of them” will be taken by YHWH for priests and Levites (v. 21).<sup>192</sup> As with Jeremiah 3:14, God's intention is

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<sup>191</sup>This is not an attestation to postmillennialism, but simply the reality that the priestly calling of the church is conceived of in evangelistic terms (cf. Rom 15:16; 1 Pet 2:9-10).

<sup>192</sup>This foreshadows John 17:2, which says of Jesus, “you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.” What is striking is the personal emphasis of this verse. Christ personally possesses all flesh and he has the personal prerogative to give eternal life to those persons whom God has given Christ, those who were elect in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:3-6).

to save a remnant from among Israel and the nations. Even as God intends to bring salvation to the whole world, his design is always personal and particular. It is never impersonal and indefinite. Thus, the universal scope of the gospel offer retains its particular message of salvation and judgment throughout the Bible.<sup>193</sup>

**Prophetic universalism, particular atonement, and priestly mediation.** It is at this point that C. J. H. Wright's view of biblical universalism should be addressed.<sup>194</sup> In *The Mission of God*,<sup>195</sup> Wright makes many keen observations on the subject of missions in the Bible.<sup>196</sup> However, when he relates God's particularity and universality, he missteps by elevating God's universal agenda over his particular intentions and by pitting biblical theology against systematic theology.<sup>197</sup> Reviewing a few of his arguments will help show

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<sup>193</sup>Describing the particular contours of the gospel offer, James Haldane, in his classic work on the atonement, makes repeated usage of this argument. Going back to Gen 1-11, he writes, "'Not only did God, by the division of mankind into two families [Gen 3:15], plainly show that salvation was to be limited to a part of the human family, but He declared that He would put enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. . . . Very shortly after the flood, the two families into which mankind had been divided, were again brought to view in the curse pronounced on Ham, while Shem and Japhet were blessed. Soon afterwards, Abraham was taken out from his kindred, . . . while all other nations were plunged in ignorance and idolatry, and suffered to walk in their own ways'" (Haldane, *Doctrine of the Atonement*, 96-97).

<sup>194</sup>Even though Wright does not specifically deny definite atonement, his use of Gen 12:1-3 makes God's universal passages overshadow others that speak of God's particular love for his people. For this reason, I have chosen to interact with his work instead of another more expressly dogmatic theologian. Moreover, Wright is working at the level of biblical theology, and his work regarding God's relationship with Israel (particularism) and the nations (universalism) is more comprehensive than other theologians who merely cut and paste texts with all and world passages. For a criticism of this kind of faulty theological argumentation, see R. S. Candlish, *The Cross of Christ, The Call of God, Saving Faith: An Inquiry into the Completeness and Extent of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1845), ix-xlvi.

<sup>195</sup>C. J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 264.

<sup>196</sup>For instance, he rightly argues that the Abrahamic covenant is both based on God's unconditional commitment to bless Abraham and his offspring, while also recognizing that God's covenant implies conditionality as well (ibid., 206).

<sup>197</sup>Ibid., 262.

how God's particular priesthood better integrates God's particular and universal intentions, which then supports definite, not general, atonement.<sup>198</sup>

In his chapter "God's Particular People: Chosen for All,"<sup>199</sup> Wright seeks to correct the errors of salvific universalism on the one side and "chauvinistic exclusivism" on the other.<sup>200</sup> Citing a bevy of texts from both testaments, he attempts to prove that the Bible describes God's universal and particular purposes with Israel and the nations. In all of this, I fully affirm Wright's point that the "universal horizon" and the "particular historical method" of salvation "are crucial in unlocking the Bible's grand narrative."<sup>201</sup>

Nevertheless, when Wright systematizes his biblical findings, a number of problems arise. First, concerning his theological method, he states that between election in the Bible and election in theology "there sometimes seems to be a great gulf fixed."<sup>202</sup> He points to the "violent history of controversy" between Calvinists and Arminians and he laments that most discussions of election have been carried out on the field of systematic theology. His representation of systematic theology as a discipline with needless abstractions and ignorant of how the OT speaks, caricatures the history of Christian thought and the way in which systematic theology and biblical studies should relate.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>198</sup>For a fuller treatment on the universal effects of God's particular intentions, see Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*, 283-364; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 470-75.

<sup>199</sup>Wright, *The Mission of God*, 222-64.

<sup>200</sup>Ibid., 222.

<sup>201</sup>Ibid.

<sup>202</sup>Ibid., 262.

<sup>203</sup>For a balanced view of these disciplines, see D. A. Carson, "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology," in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 89-104.



Second, his skepticism towards dogmatics leads him to make “seven affirmations” from the biblical text alone.<sup>204</sup> Some of his points include: “The election of Israel is set in the context of God’s universality. . . does not imply the rejection of other nations. . . is instrumental, not an end in itself . . . is fundamentally missional, not just soteriological.”<sup>205</sup> These statements affirm Israel’s missiological calling, but they go too far as they elevate God’s universal purposes over what the Bible teaches about judgment, individual election, and the typological purposes of Israel’s election. We will take these points in order.

First, to make God’s universal intentions greater than his particular actions may alleviate “accusations that election is intrinsically partial, unfair, and incompatible with God’s love,”<sup>206</sup> but it does not do full justice to the storyline of Scripture or God’s intentions with humanity. God is seeking to create a new humanity from the race of men who fell with Adam (Rom 5:12ff). This of necessity makes particularity at least an equal partner in his program of salvation. Unless salvific universalism is true, there must be at the center of God’s redemptive purposes a plan to distinguish, to separate, and to save some and not others. Jesus himself spoke this way when he said that he came to bring a sword that divided families (Matt 10:34; cf. Jer 3:14). Historically, theologians following Augustine have found compelling biblical evidence to prove this.<sup>207</sup> So it is not that prophetic universalism is more

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<sup>204</sup>Wright, *The Mission of God*, 263. Ironically, for all his disapproval of systematics, Wright engages in the discipline when he lists seven systematic affirmations.

<sup>205</sup>Ibid., 263.

<sup>206</sup>Ibid., 262-63. It seems that a predilection for egalitarianism, something that is common today, makes biblical interpreters quick to apologize for God’s particularity.

<sup>207</sup>Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974); Robert Peterson, *Election and Free Will: God’s Gracious Choice* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007); Andy Davis, “Unconditional Election,” in *Whomever He Wills: A Surprising Display of Sovereign Mercy*, ed. Matthew Barrett and Thomas J. Nettles (Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2012).

true than particularism. Rather, they are mutually interpreting.<sup>208</sup> And if John's words give any indication, Jesus' death ransomed a people "out of" (*ek*) every nation (Rev 5:9),<sup>209</sup> not to make atonement for every person without exception but to effect forgiveness for his own.<sup>210</sup>

Wright's next argument, that Israel's election does not imply the rejection of other nations, defies numerous biblical texts.<sup>211</sup> Historically, everything leading up to Israel's flight from Egypt was designed to save Israel and destroy Egypt.<sup>212</sup> In the Psalms, God's steadfast love is defined in terms of saving Israel *by destroying other nations* (see Ps 136:10-22). It is true that God's choice of Israel was "not warranted by any special feature in them" (another one of Wright's points), but that is exactly the point. God chose Israel, when he did not have to. Still, in choosing them, he left other nations and every individual in those nations (at least temporarily) in their sins.<sup>213</sup> Of course, God's ultimate purpose was to bring

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<sup>208</sup>"A careful examination of the OT and NT's will show that while the universal compassion of God toward sinful men is plainly and frequently taught, yet it is the relation of God as Saviour of his people that constitutes the larger proportion of the teachings of the Prophets, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Epistles. These parts of the Bible are full of God's dealings with his covenant people" (W. G. T. Shedd, *Calvinism: Pure and Mixed* [1893; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1986], 102).

<sup>209</sup>Tom Barnes, *Atonement Matters: A Call to Declare the Biblical View of the Atonement* (Webster, NY: Evangelical, 2008), 89-92.

<sup>210</sup>Smeaton, *The Apostles' Doctrine of the Atonement*, 471-78.

<sup>211</sup>Exegetically, Davies protests that God's election of Israel in Exod 19:5-6 "simply contains no direct reference to Israel's responsibilities towards the nations" (*A Royal Priesthood*, 97). He explains, "The thrust of Exodus 19 is about the promise of a divine grant, a great privilege which is being bestowed on Yhwh's treasured people, provided that they continue to be faithful to him. That grant is preeminently one of relationship with him. The other nations are not in view as objects of Israel's service. . . . The nearest reference to the nations in relation to Israel as an active agent in the wider context is at Exod. 17:14-16, which concerns the obliteration of the memory of the Amalekites!"

<sup>212</sup>Even considering the mixed multitude that left Egypt with Israel (Exod 12:38), the Passover was only for circumcised Israelites (v. 43-49). Moreover, the plagues were explicitly designed to distinguish Israel from Egypt (9:4, 25-26; 10:12, 21) and the final defeat of Pharaoh at the Red Sea was to save Israel and destroy their enemies (15:1ff.).

<sup>213</sup>This reality is not easily explained. How should one make sense of God protecting Abimelech from his sin (Gen 20:6)? Nevertheless, eviscerating God's particularity with an endless list of qualifications will not divine the right solution, either.

salvation to every nation (Gen 12:3), but historically and eschatologically, God’s intention to save some and not others requires a theological doctrine of election. Wright’s seven affirmations give something of a theological doctrine, but without the explicit teaching of the NT (cf. John 10:26; Rom 9-11; Eph 1:4-6; 2 Tim 1:9; Rev 13:8; 17:8).

Taking the last two points together, it is clear that Israel is called by God to play a special role in redemptive history. Wright is correct to describe their election as “instrumental” and “fundamentally missional.”<sup>214</sup> Of course, their election is not an end in itself, but neither is their election devoid of theological meaning. Salvation comes through the Jews (John 4:22), which means that in every generation between Abraham and Jesus, salvation was only available to those in Israel. Of course, not everyone in Israel was eternally saved (Ps 95), but only those who were in the covenant of circumcision (by birth, by marriage, or conversion to Judaism) could even qualify for salvation.<sup>215</sup> Thus, in this way, Israel’s election, like every other feature of their historical ontology, typologically foreshadowed future salvific realities.

It was typological because God was shaping Israel to be the *Vorbild* from which his priest-king-shepherd-servant would come and save the world. Thus, Israel’s persons, events, and institutions—and not Egypt’s or Babylon’s—were the ones necessary for ‘seeing’

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<sup>214</sup>Wright, *The Mission of God*, 263. However, the view that Israel was supposed to be a missionary people in the OT is not uncontested. For instance, Graeme Goldsworthy objects, “It does not appear that being a nation of priests was ever understood as meaning a nation of evangelists and foreign missionaries” (Graeme Goldsworthy, “The Great Indicative: An Aspect of a Biblical Theology of Mission,” *RTR* 55 [1996]: 6). Likewise, Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O’Brien argue that Israel as a missionary nation is an anachronism, and a result of confusing their historical and eschatological purposes (*Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, NSBT [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001], 34-37).

<sup>215</sup>At the same time, Köstenberger and O’Brien point out that even marriage was not a safe haven for foreigners to find a way into a covenant relationship with God, for “Nehemiah forbade intermarriage with foreigners . . . (Neh 13:23-27) and Ezra broke up mixed marriages (Ezra 9-10)” (*Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 35-36).

salvation. But in truth, in order for anyone to know such a salvation required knowledge of Israel's language, history, law, and customs. The nations did not know YHWH, because God had not revealed himself to them (Ps 147:19). Israel knew God through types, shadows, promises, and covenants (Rom 9:4-5), or at least, they had the opportunity to know God if they united their knowledge with faith (Heb 4:2). In all of these ways, the election Israel had as God's son was typological of the personal, individual salvation that Paul describes in Romans 9.<sup>216</sup> There Paul looks at the principle of election that stands out repeatedly in Israel's history (vv. 11-13), and he argues that in Israel and in the world, God has the sovereign right to elect whomever he wills, and to harden whomever he wills (v. 16-23). And his proof? The people of Israel, a nation set apart by God's sovereign grace and particular election.

The major difference that stands between God's election of Israel and God's election of an individual is covenantal. Under the old covenant, the elect of God participated in a fleshly, national, ineffectual covenant. Thus the election they had did not secure their eternal salvation. By contrast, under the new covenant, elected individuals enjoy every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph 1:3) because God the Father has bestowed upon Christ every covenant blessing based on his perfect life and has removed every covenant curse because of his atoning death. In this way, the elect of God enjoy the fruits of a covenant that they never kept, but because they were predestined by God before the foundation of the world to be in covenantal union with Christ, God the Father applied Christ's blessings to their account (2 Cor 5:21) and removed their curses (Gal 3:13), that they might at the right time hear the

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<sup>216</sup>For a defense of this personal, individual election in Rom 9, see Thomas R. Schreiner, "Does Romans 9 Teach Individual Election Unto Salvation?" in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 89-106.

gospel and respond in faith when Christ the priest instructs them by means of his Holy Spirit. In all these ways, the concepts, the types, and the blessings are anticipated in OT Israel. Therefore, Israel's OT election typifies the individual believers experience.

In the end, Wright's disassociation of historical election and individual election fails systematic theology and biblical theology. It misses the typological nature of election in Israel because it opts for Israel's functional, instrumental role of salvation *instead of* Israel's soteriological role. In truth, both are needed to rightly make sense of God's history and Christian theology.

Returning to the relationship between priest and covenant, I judge that Wright's construal of Israel as a nation of priests who are essentially witnesses to the world, fails to consider what an Israelite priest was. As I have shown in this dissertation, every priest functioned toward God's dwelling place (*Kohen Victor*), toward the altar (*Kohen Mediator*), and toward the covenant people (*Kohen Teacher*). In Wright's conception of Israel's priesthood, he only considers the last aspect. He minimizes the ontological reality of Israel being called unto God.<sup>217</sup> And he overlooks the typological reality of Israel being a holy people, set apart from the nations. Therefore, he misses a crucial bridge between biblical theology and systematic theology. By contrast, a priestly conception of Israel's calling helps integrate the particular aspects of God's plan of salvation, while extending itself to the nations along the lines of the new covenant. Accordingly, God's plan of salvation is not

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<sup>217</sup>“We ought not to be looking then for a *functional* definition of priesthood, but for an *ontological* one. What is it that priests *are*, in their relation to God, and in the eyes of the community?” (Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 98). Davies' statement, which stands on thick reading of Exod 19, prioritizes priestly ontology without denying priestly service (see *ibid.*, 94-98). In this dissertation, his point of view has been developed in the three-fold service of the priesthood, beginning with the priest's orientation toward defending the dwelling place of God, while at the same time ministering to the covenantal community.

intended for Israel alone, but for everyone whom the priest is calling by means of the Spirit and the church—who are themselves a band of royal priests.

Just like with the priests of old, the message of the covenant includes blessing and curses; only now the word of the new covenant is perfectly effective. When the priests of the new covenant preach the gospel, Christ blesses *his children* with absolute efficacy and he hardens his enemies with the same specificity. One vitally important difference may resolve some of the tension that Wright feels when he hears theologians speak about predestination and reprobation—this difference comes through asymmetrical agency. That is, God positively acts to save his elect, and he simply lets the course of (fallen) nature take effect in the case of the non-elect.<sup>218</sup> In time, the triune God brings the message of salvation to the elect (i.e., the covenant community) through the means of Christ's priestly work, while at the same time, God permits men enslaved to their sin to make a lifetime of choices that will result in eternal condemnation, because they were unmoved by the priestly work of Christ.<sup>219</sup> All in all, for salvation or judgment, the Word of God always accomplishes its purposes in the hearts of the elect or non-elect (cf. Isa 6:9-11; Matt 13), and in this way, the salvation that comes through the priest is always personal, covenantal, definite, and delimited.

### Summary

In summary, it is reaffirmed that the expected priest-king would come and fulfill all the promises outlined in the Prophets (cf. 2 Cor 1:20). More specifically, an intratextual

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<sup>218</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 317-31. On the efficacy of God's speech-acts and his sovereign relationship to man's freedom, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* (New York: Cambridge, 2010), 338-86.

<sup>219</sup>Included in this group would be those who are impressed by Jesus' other ministries—his healing power or his ethical teaching—but who never avail themselves of Christ's priestly sacrifice for sin. Only those who trust in Christ's priestly work, indeed only those who are cleansed and called by the priest, will experience the eternal redemption that Christ achieved for his covenant community.

reading of 1 Samuel 2:35 suggests that God will “raise up” a faithful priest from the line of David. Harkening back to the original priest-king Adam (Gen 2:15) and the intended royal priesthood of Israel (Exod 19:5-6), 1 Samuel 2:35 introduces the idea of an eschatological priest-king. This idea finds explicit support in Psalm 110; Jeremiah 30:21-22; Zechariah 3:1-10 and 6:9-15, as well as Zechariah 9-14.<sup>220</sup> Together, these texts argue for an eschatological priest-king who will establish a new covenant, with a new temple, by means of a new (final) sacrifice. In this way, the work of the priest-king is particularly *for* his new covenant people, and particularly *against* Jew and Gentile who have no part of the Spirit.<sup>221</sup>

But this particularity was then set in relationship to the “prophetic universalism” of Isaiah 38-66, where it was argued that the scope of the priesthood would extend beyond Israel to include people from every nation. Looking to the ends of the earth, Isaiah repetitively used universal language to describe the shift from the weakness of the old covenant under the Levites to the strength of the new covenant initiated and administered by the eschatological priest-king. In the same context, the Suffering Servant is portrayed as the human sacrifice that would initiate the change (Isa 53). Of the utmost importance, it was argued that this sacrifice was not a general atonement for all people without exception. Rather, in keeping with biblical-theological motif of salvation through judgment, and the eschatological setting of Isaiah 40-66, it was argued that the Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ

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<sup>220</sup>If space permitted, I could add Ezek 44-45 (esp. 45:17); Dan 7:13-14; and Dan 9:24-27 to the list of passages which anticipate an eschatological priest who both brings salvation for his new covenant people and who opposes those outside the covenant.

<sup>221</sup>The new covenant argument for definite atonement finds greater strength when bolstered by the fact that God in Christ monergistically sends the Spirit to all the elect. This argument is outside the purview of this dissertation, but can be found most extensively in Matthew Barrett, “Reclaiming Monergism: The Case for Sovereign Grace in Effectual Calling and Regeneration” (Ph.D. diss, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011).

(Acts 8:35), laid down his life for the sins of his particular people, so that he might perfectly teach them the knowledge of salvation (Isa 54:13) and bring them into covenant with him by means of the Holy Spirit.

Returning to the language that I have used throughout this dissertation, the messianic figure presented in the Prophets is the *Kohen Victor*, who separates the holy and impure, by means of dying to separate his elect from the impurities of this age and dying to cleanse the world of unclean enemies. He is the *Kohen Mediator*, who successfully applies the blood of the covenant such that all for whom he died will receive in time the blessings of the covenant (i.e., the Holy Spirit). And he is the *Kohen Teacher*, who ensures that all of his children have the law written on their heart through the ministry of the Word and the instruction of the Spirit.

While needing to finish this study in the NT, it should be evident from the biblical data considered in chapters 3-6 that the office of the priesthood is far more complex than most systematicians have realized, and that the doctrine of definite atonement is far more than a deductive doctrine based on a theological system or a collection of proof texts. Rather, a biblical typology of the priesthood is a massive subject with far-reaching theological implications. When considered in its biblical fullness, the priestly office demands a definite atonement.



## CHAPTER 7

### THE PARTICULAR NATURE OF THE NEW COVENANT PRIEST

A full biblical theology of the priesthood would examine the priestly motif presented by each NT author.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, this dissertation will narrow its scope in the NT to address the theological question of the atonement's extent, and how Christ's priesthood informs that doctrine. Consequently, it will not engage every book,<sup>2</sup> nor will it engage every theological loci informed by Christ's priesthood.<sup>3</sup> Instead, this chapter will argue that Christ perfectly guards God's holy place (*Kohen Victor*), successfully atones for his new covenant people (*Kohen Mediator*), and efficaciously teaches this same community (*Kohen Teacher*).

To prove this point, each aspect of Christ's priesthood will be considered from the most prominent places in the NT. However, instead of organizing the three functions of Christ's priestly ministry under the systematic headings of *Mediator*, *Teacher*, and *Kohen*, I

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<sup>1</sup>While such biblical-theological treatments are scant, there are a few worth mentioning. Richard D. Nelson takes a thematic approach to the priest and his duties (*Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993]). Albert Vanhoye gives a brief treatment of the OT priest and a thorough explanation of the priests in the NT, especially in Hebrews (*Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, trans. J. Bernard Orchard [Petersham, MA: St. Bede's, 1986]). André Feuillet focuses his priestly study on Jesus' high priestly prayer (*The Priesthood of Christ and His Ministers*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975]). And Scott Hahn, in his popular work on the priesthood (*Many Are Called: Rediscovering the Glory of the Priesthood* [New York: Doubleday, 2010]), moves quickly through the canon, finishing with an apologetic for the office of priest in the Catholic Church.

<sup>2</sup>For instance, it will not consider Paul's Epistles with the exception of Rom 15:16.

<sup>3</sup>Andrew Purves wisely suggests that the priesthood of Christ should inform numerous loci of systematic theology, including Christology, soteriology, and eschatology ("The Ministry of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ: A Reformed View of the Atonement of Christ," *Theology Matters* 3 [1997], 1; accessed 12 December 2012; available from <http://www.theologymatters.com/Julaug97.PDF>; Internet).

will argue for the progressive fulfillment of Christ's priesthood in his life, death, and ascension. Thus instead of a purely topical arrangement, this chapter will be laid out chronologically (read: redemptive-historically) to show how Christ becomes the priest *in time*. The reason for doing this is two-fold. First, it is believed that this is how the NT presents Christ as a priest. In the Gospels he is not called a priest but regularly functions as a priest. Then after his ascension he is called a priest because he has now received the title of God's son (Ps 2:7) and been given the priestly right to sit at God's right hand (Ps 110:4).<sup>4</sup>

Second, since a great deal of confusion concerning the extent of the atonement pertains to the question of time—When were the elect justified?<sup>5</sup>—I will show how Christ's unified work as a priest gives a more satisfactory answer to the question of *when* the elect are justified by noting Jesus' inaugurated priesthood. In contrast to eternal justification (which ignores the progressive nature of the *historia salutis*) and hypothetical universalism (which is suspect of dislocating justification and calling in the *ordo salutis*), this chapter will argue for the inaugurated establishment of Christ's priesthood, a priesthood that will effectively inaugurate a new covenant and *in time* envelope all those who were given to the Son before the foundation of the world.

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<sup>4</sup>The priesthood of Christ depends on the mutual fulfillment of Pss 2:7 and Ps 110:4, which are quoted together in Heb 5:5-6 (Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009], 290-92). It is the underlying assumption of this chapter that Christ is not *officially* a priest until after he is appointed the "Son of God" and seated at God's right hand. However, in the "days of his flesh" (Heb 5:7), Christ functioned as an obedient son and hence a faithful priest (v. 8). In this way, Jesus' priesthood is grounded not in the temporary constructs of the Mosaic law, but in the pattern of creation, where men made in the image of God were called to be priests. On this archetypal function, and God's intention to restore man's priesthood in Christ, see Alex T. M. Cheung, "The Priest as the Redeemed Man: A Biblical-Theological Study of the Priesthood," *JETS* 29 (1986): 265-75.

<sup>5</sup>On the history of this doctrine in Reformed thought, see Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 4, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 200-04. He explains the tight but distinct relationship between God's decree to justify and the actual application of that justification in time when "God by his Spirit announced this verdict in the hearts of believers" (ibid., 214-19). See also, Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 517-25.

In keeping with the NT's own terminology and the Bible's intrasystematic categories, I will argue that Christ as an obedient son earns the right to be a priest. His holiness is proven in his earthly life and perfect submission to his Father's will. In his death, he has the power to lay down his life and pick it up again for his own sheep. Then, vindicated by his resurrection, Jesus ascends to the right hand of God, where he builds his church, intercedes for his saints, and sends forth his Spirit, his army of angels, and his church to effect his will on earth. Finally, Christ's priestly service will return to earth when he comes in judgment to make final purification of his Father's macrocosmic temple. To show this redemptive historical-progression, I will supply a brief survey of this priestly work, and then select a number of NT passages to prove the validity of this argument with its implication for the extent of the atonement.

### **The Inaugurated Fulfillment of Christ's Priesthood**

Just as the priestly *Vorbild* was cast and recast over the long history of Israel, so Christ's priestly *Nachbild* developed in time. While some have rightly emphasized the importance of Christ's heavenly priesthood but simultaneously denied his earthly service,<sup>6</sup> others have defended his earthly priesthood but neglected the significance of his ascension.<sup>7</sup> Arguing for a *via media* between those two approaches, this outline will trace the progression of Christ's priesthood. In particular, Christ's priesthood developed in three distinct but

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<sup>6</sup>David J. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, SNT (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2011). In the history of Christian thought, Faustus Socinius and his followers were most adamant about denying Christ's earthly priesthood and priestly sacrifice, as well as, Jesus' eternal deity and membership in the Trinity (cf. Sinclair Ferguson, "Introduction," in John Owen, *The Priesthood of Christ: Its Necessity and Nature* [Fearn, Scotland: Christian Heritage, 2010], 20-22).

<sup>7</sup>Lamenting the place of "ascension theology" in modern theology, Douglas Farrow outlines the biblical-theological motif of ascension in *Ascension Theology* (New York: T & T Clark, 2011).

related stages,<sup>8</sup> associated with (1) his incarnation and earthly ministry, (2) his crucifixion and resurrection, and (3) his present session in heaven and his final glorious return.<sup>9</sup>

First, when Jesus was on earth he was an obedient son of Israel (Luke 2:51-52; Heb 5:8). Born under the law (Gal 4:4), Jesus was a son of Abraham and a son of David (Matt 1:1), both of whom performed priestly duties without a priestly title.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, as the son of a righteous man (Matt 1:20), Jesus learned the Scriptures (Luke 2:41-52) and dedicated himself to his Father's house (v. 49). So great was his obedience to his heavenly Father that, in the Gospels, zeal for this house consumed him (John 2:17). John notes repeatedly that the Son of God does all he sees the Father doing (5:19-24; 8:38). Metaphysically, this argues for Jesus' divinity.<sup>11</sup> Messianically, Jesus' sonship is a function of priesthood (and kingship).<sup>12</sup> In all these ways, as Jesus participated in the liturgical life of Israel (a priestly nation), the Gospels present Jesus performing priestly actions.

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<sup>8</sup>John Owen, *The Priesthood of Christ: Its Necessity and Nature* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Heritage, 2010), 282-88. Owen rightly observes three phases in Christ's priesthood, but fails to appreciate the significance of Christ 'becoming' high priest when raised from the grave. His disavowal of the Socinians' doctrine surely feeds into his polemic argument that Christ is a high priest in his life, death, and ascension. Ontologically, this may be true, but it misses the eschatological movement of Christ's priesthood and the fact that in his resurrection, God grants him sonship (Ps 2:7) and swears an oath to him (Ps 110:4) confirming his better priesthood (Heb 5:5-6).

<sup>9</sup>Perceptively, Nicholas Perrin observes that in the OT Israel's priesthood was intended to "evolve as the mode of Yahweh's presence was expected to evolve" (*Jesus the Temple* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010], 10). Hence, as Christ is born under the old covenant and lives and dies to effect the new covenant, it is only natural that his priesthood would develop over time.

<sup>10</sup>See chapters 3 and 6 for discussion.

<sup>11</sup>Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), esp. 111-33.

<sup>12</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 278-84. Hahn observes that "the inner unity of sonship, royalty, and priesthood is not readily apparent" to "the modern reader," but that in the worldview of Hebrews "Christ's threefold role as firstborn son, king, and high priest (i.e., Christ's royal priestly primogeniture) represents the restoration of an original and superior form of covenant meditation" (ibid., 278-79).

Admittedly, many scholars overlook Christ's priesthood because the title is missing,<sup>13</sup> but this is to ignore how Christ cleanses the temple, upholds the law, teaches the people, makes judgments about lepers, offers himself as a sacrifice, and mediates a new covenant.<sup>14</sup> For those who have eyes to see, Christ in his person and work, if not also in his self-identification as the "Son of Man,"<sup>15</sup> is a far better priest than the Israelite priests found in the Gospels.<sup>16</sup> The priests in Jesus' day defiled the temple with their impure hearts; Jesus with "dirty" hands (Mark 7:14-23) cleansed the temple and purified his people.

Second, in his death, Jesus becomes a priest suspended between heaven and earth.<sup>17</sup> More exactly, since Jesus offers in his death an unblemished sacrifice to God, it is probable that priestly language in the passion narratives is minimal because Christ's death is more often conceived of as a sacrifice (Matt 20:28; John 1:29), not a priestly action.

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<sup>13</sup>Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, 63-66.

<sup>14</sup>For a survey of how scholars understand Christ's priesthood in the gospels, see Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 4 (2006): 155-75; idem, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," *JHSJ* 5 (2007): 57-79.

<sup>15</sup>Fletcher-Louis argues that an intratextual analysis of the "Son of Man" in Dan 7:13 shows strong priestly connotations and that Christ's own use of the term is priestly ("The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7.13 as a Test Case," *SBLSP* [1997]: 161-93).

<sup>16</sup>One of the most insightful arguments for Christ's priesthood comes from John Paul Heil who contrasts the priestly character of Jesus and Caiaphas in John's gospel ("Jesus as the Unique High Priest in the Gospel of John" *CBQ* 57 [1995]: 729-45). Using a "narrative critical approach," he states, "the Johannine Jesus does function as high priest, not in the systematic and sweeping manner of the Letter of the Hebrews, but in a more subtle and symbolic way as part of the Fourth Gospel's well-established dramatic irony" (*ibid.*, 730).

<sup>17</sup>On the cross, Jesus was lifted up and literally suspended in air. Conceptually, as has been argued by G. K. Beale and others (G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004], 34-35; Vern Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1991], 13-18), the holy place typified the heavenly places that stood between heaven and earth. Therefore, typologically, the Levitical priest would bring the blood of the sacrifice into the holy place, where he would stand between heaven and earth, between God and Israel. Even more, since Hebrews portrayed Jesus' death as the great *Yom Kippur*, Farrow is correct to observe the regular pattern of ascension and descension in the life of the priest. He writes, "The high priest, by an elaborate series of steps, would ascend annually into the sanctuary of God, into the holy of holies, to present the blood of atonement at the mercy seat" (*Ascension Theology*, 4).

Nevertheless, since Christ is active in his dying, it is clear that he is functioning as a priest,<sup>18</sup> and not just a sacrifice.<sup>19</sup> More exactly, in his crucifixion, Jesus fulfills the role of sacrifice and priest,<sup>20</sup> but it is arguable that his priesthood should have precedence over his sacrifice, for Jesus is metaphysically a man and only metaphorically a lamb.<sup>21</sup>

This personal activity of the priest presses for a definite and particular atonement. Christ is not dying to remove the curse of an indeterminate humanity; he is personally laying down his life for his sheep (John 10:11-18). His death is ultimately God-ward in orientation. He perfectly fulfills the will of his Father (Isa 53:10; Matt 26:36-46) and dies specifically for those whom his Father gave him in eternity past (John 17:2ff.). Such priestly action led Martin to castigate as unscriptural all governmental theories of the atonement, with their advocacy of a public, universal death. Concluding his well-reasoned chapter on Christ's priestly sacrifice, he writes,

There was immediate action of Christ in His death; and it was official and public action. . . . He was not merely charged with a cause, but with an *office*, and with a people in that office to personate; . . . His action was priestly and representative action; representative of persons—of persons definitely, numerically, individually known: “I know my sheep.” And the representative priestly action *in itself* was simply what Jesus adds: “And I lay down my life for the sheep.” That is not *result*; result never can in the

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<sup>18</sup>In Jesus' day, the political climate made it perilous to speak of him as a priest. Fletcher-Louis suggests that the messianic secret is a 'priestly secret' ("Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 64, 77).

<sup>19</sup>Hugh Martin makes a convincing argument for Christ's priestly action (*The Atonement: In Its Relations to the Covenant, the Priesthood, the Intercession of our Lord* [London: Ames Nisbet, 1870], 69-95).

<sup>20</sup>This is in keeping with Isa 53, but there are other allusions of men suffering in the place of their people. For instance, the personal sufferings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are of a piece with afflictions of the Suffering Servant (Feuillet, *The Priesthood of Christ*, 86-87).

<sup>21</sup>A close reading of the gospels confirms this. The Evangelists regularly draw attention to Christ's priestly action, even if they refrain from ordaining him a priest. Feuillet observes that Christ's "consecration" in John's gospel (10:36; 17:19) is passive *and* active, sacrificial *and* priestly (*The Priesthood of Christ*, 37-48). He notes that "while the consecration must be as both priest and victim, and be in the line of the consecration of priest and sacrificial victims in the Old Testament . . . Consecration as priest logically and chronologically precedes consecration as victim" (*ibid.*, 42-43).

nature of things express the intrinsic causal again. That is not result: it is Christ's immediate dying action itself.<sup>22</sup>

This leads to the third stage of Jesus' priesthood. Perfect in his sonship and totally obedient as the Suffering Servant, Christ arises from the grave as the Lord of heaven and earth. Because he resisted the temptations of the devil on earth and obeyed the Father unto death, he was given the Davidic right to reign over all creation (Matt 28:18; John 17:2; Phil 2:9-11) and the priestly title "Son of God."<sup>23</sup> And now, because of his glorified humanity, he entered into the heavenly places to make perpetual intercession for his covenant people. All those whom he redeemed by his life and death, he now serves from heaven where he sits at God's right hand as a royal priest (Ps 110:4). More than that, as the Second Adam, the risen Christ is a life-giving Spirit who "applies"<sup>24</sup> all his benefits to the children whom the Father promised him in eternity and who are now benefitting from his heavenly session (Heb 7:25). In this way, Christ is ultimately an everlasting, heavenly priest. Since he has done all that the Father required, he has earned the right to "manage the affairs" of earth and apportion eternal life to his new covenant community.<sup>25</sup> In time, Jesus sends the Spirit at Pentecost and

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<sup>22</sup>Martin, *The Atonement*, 94-95. Bavinck says something similar with respect to justification: "In this connection the acquisition and the application are so tightly connected that the former cannot be conceived or exist apart from the latter and vice versa. The acquisition necessarily entails the application. Christ, by his suffering and death, also acquired the astonishing blessing that all his benefits, hence also forgiveness of sins, would be applied personally and individually to all his own" (*Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:218).

<sup>23</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 292-94; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 70. Although Thomas R. Schreiner does not posit priestly connotations to "Son of God," he affirms a corollary idea: "'Son' is often used to designate the atoning and saving work of Jesus" (*New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 322).

<sup>24</sup>"Applying" is a common term in theological discussions about the death of Christ. Unfortunately, its meaning varies and is not well grounded in the language of Scripture. Therefore, in this chapter we will speak more about Christ's priestly instruction and blessing, along with his church-building and Spirit-sending. Speaking with concrete, biblical terminology is better than the abstract notion of "applying benefits."

<sup>25</sup>Typologically, the OT priest wore the names of the twelve tribes on his priestly vestments; however, in keeping with the change from old covenants to new, with their attendant dissimilarities (e.g., disparate types unified in a single antitype; material blessings improved to new creation blessings), Christ the

empowers the church to go to the ends of the earth, proclaiming a gospel of grace and forgiveness—two new covenant realities!

In summary, what was argued in type and shadow in chapters 3-6 will now be argued in full form: Christ's priestly office denies a general atonement and effectively secures salvation for his new covenant people. More specifically, the rest of this chapter will demonstrate how in each phase of his priestly ministry (on earth, on the cross, and in heaven) Christ is a *Kohen Victor*, *Kohen Mediator*, and *Kohen Teacher*. Generally, following the outline of the NT, the rest of the chapter will consider Christ's earthly priesthood in the Gospels. Then, in Hebrews it will examine Christ's priestly mediation of the new covenant, where his death secures a definite atonement. Last, it will assert that Christ's priestly action in heaven will ensure a cosmic victory and a universal offer of the gospel.

### **The Earthly Priesthood of Jesus of Nazareth**

It is generally admitted that there is little emphasis on the priesthood of Jesus in the Gospels.<sup>26</sup> However, such agreement may have as much to do with interpretive presuppositions<sup>27</sup> as it does an academic aversion to the notion of "priest-craft."<sup>28</sup> Yet, setting aside historical and theological presuppositions, there is a great amount of evidence

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greater priest actually becomes "one" with his new covenant community (John 17:20ff.). As the head of a new humanity, he literally gives life, breath, and everything else to the body that he is raising from dead humanity. This is not a universal gift to all people everywhere; this is a covenantal bond that the priest shares with his betrothed.

<sup>26</sup>Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," 155-58. On the "apparent absence of priestly dimension in Jesus," see Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, 47-55.

<sup>27</sup>For instance, a word study of the Gospels and Acts finds 122 occurrences of "priestly terminology" (priest, high priest, priesthood, etc). However, the number of times that such language references Christ or Christians is *zero*, which would understandably lead anyone dependent on that method of research to abandon the effort (Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, 63-66).

<sup>28</sup>Peter J. Leithart, "Attendants of Yahweh's House: Priesthood in the Old Testament," *JSOT* 85 [1999]: 3-4.



pointing to Christ's priesthood in the Gospels. "We may be tempted to overlook Jesus' life as an expression of his priesthood and go straight to his death as a sacrifice. However, if we look at Jesus' life in light of the larger responsibilities of the priesthood, then we see Jesus as priest in much of his preaching and in many of actions."<sup>29</sup> Therefore, in this first section, I will consider the priestly actions of Jesus Christ while he was on earth.

### **Priestly Action without a Priestly Title**

Fletcher-Louis has argued convincingly that the first six chapters of Mark's Gospel intend to put Jesus' priestly actions on display.<sup>30</sup> He enumerates as follows: First, the title, "the Holy of One of God" (Mk 1:24), as used of Aaron (Ps 106:16), denotes Jesus' priesthood.<sup>31</sup> Second, Jesus' "contagious holiness" is a mark of his greater priesthood (1:41; 3:10; 5:25-34; 6:56).<sup>32</sup> Third, the use of the term "Son of Man" equally suggests a priestly figure.<sup>33</sup> This is evidenced by Jesus' offer of forgiveness (2:10)<sup>34</sup> and his "priestly prerogative over the Sabbath" (2:28).<sup>35</sup> Fourth, the language of Mark 1:15 and the

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<sup>29</sup>Jonathan R. Wilson, *God So Loved the World: A Christology for Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 51.

<sup>30</sup>Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 63.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 63-64.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 64-70; Bruce Chilton, *Jesus' Baptism and Jesus' Healing: His Personal Practice of Spirituality* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 58-97.

<sup>33</sup>Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 71-77. See also, Joel Marcus, "Son of Man as Son of Adam," *RB* 110 (2003): 38-61; *idem*, "Son of Man as Son of Adam, Part II: Exegesis," *RB* 110 (2003): 370-86, who argues that language of "Son of Man" carries priestly connotations.

<sup>34</sup>In systematics, Christ's forgiveness of sins is usually taken as evidence of his divinity (Robert L. Reymond, *Jesus Divine Messiah: The New and Old Testament Witness* [Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2003], 244). A priestly reading of this text does not deny this reality. As the Eternal Son and "Son of Man," Christ's offer of forgiveness comes from his whole person.

<sup>35</sup>Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 75. Corresponding to the way chap. 6 presented the effect of the Davidic covenant on the OT priesthood, Fletcher-Louis writes, "The behaviour of

announcement that the kingdom has “drawn near” suggests a sacral kingdom,<sup>36</sup> not merely a political one.<sup>37</sup> However, above all these priestly indicators, there is the reality that Jesus’ mission on earth included the express purpose to cast out unclean spirits and cleansing his Father’s house. Both of these actions are prominent in the Gospels. They show that Jesus’ priesthood is not reducible to sacrifice and intercession. Rather, as a priest, Jesus engages in holy warfare (*Kohen Victor*) and covenantal instruction (*Kohen Teacher*), even as he offers a final sacrifice and prays for his people. Therefore, while Jesus came to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45), he also came to defeat the evil one by cleansing creation from the pollution of Satan and his seed.<sup>38</sup>

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David and his men would provide a precedent therefore for Jesus and his disciples acting as priests *if the latter were in the temple in Jerusalem*. But they are in a Galilean cornfield. The David story only provides a precedent if the Galilean cornfield has the legal status of the Temple (or Tabernacle).” But indeed, the grain field in Galilee becomes a table holding the bread of the presence, because Christ, the greater temple, is in their midst. Fletcher-Louis concludes, “Jesus justifies his disciples’ breach of the Sabbath because he claims to be a sacral king and high priestly Son of Man. Where *he* is, in that place there is the transcendent liturgical space and time of the true temple in which his disciples can legitimately act as priests” (ibid., 77).

<sup>36</sup>“For Mark the point is that the reality of God’s presence that has hitherto been present primarily in the temple and her priesthood is now available not (just) in Jerusalem but also in the towns and villages of Galilee. Those who go to the temple to worship ‘draw near’ (to God) (Exod 16:9; Lev 9:5; Deut 4:11; Ps 65:5 [4]; cf. Exod 12:48; 4Q400 1 i 6). And those who are ordained are similarly drawn near (Priests: Exod 40:12, 14; Lev 7:35; 8:6, 13, 24; Levites: Num 3:6; 8:9, 10). So, in a narrow sense, only those ordained can draw near to God (Num 16:5, 9, 10; 17:5; Lev 21:17). Now, according to Mark’s Jesus, with the eschatological arrival of the Kingdom of God, the potent reality of God’s presence has proactively drawn near to his people. They no longer need to go to him in Jerusalem to encounter the Kingdom because its reality (forgiveness of sins, the temple’s experience of Sabbath rest and contagious healing holiness) are coming to them” (Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2,” 78).

<sup>37</sup>Noting the priestly nature of the kingdom and its gradual installation, Walter W. Wessel and Mark L. Strauss comment, “The kingdom is realized not through conquest but through sacrifice. It will be consummated when he returns in power and glory” (*Mark*, in vol. 9 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 711). Of course, theologically, Christ’s death on the cross achieves forgiveness of sins and subdues evil (Sinclair Ferguson, “Christus Victor et Propitiator: The Death of Christ, Substitute and Conqueror,” in *For the Fame of God’s Name: Essays in Honor of John Piper*, ed. Sam Storms and Justin Taylor [Wheaton, IL: Crossway], 171-89).

<sup>38</sup>This goes back to the original *protoevangelium* (Gen 3:15) and is at the forefront of Jesus’ mind when he says that he has come to bring a sword (Matt 10:34-35) and when he affirms the words of the demons who fear their destruction (Matt 8:29; Mark 1:24; cf. John 12:31).

In truth, because Jesus is born under the Law of Moses (Gal 4:4), he has no legal right to claim for himself the title of priest. Covenantal obedience meant affirming the priesthood of the Levites. However, by taking to himself the title “Son of Man,” Jesus shrewdly but innocently claims for himself the role of messianic priest.<sup>39</sup> From the recent works of Fletcher-Louis,<sup>40</sup> Pitre,<sup>41</sup> and Perrin,<sup>42</sup> it is evident that his messianic aspirations were priestly.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, in keeping with the priestly duties delineated in the OT, Jesus’ priestly actions would be for his people (*Kohen Teacher* and *Kohen Mediator*) and against his enemies (*Kohen Victor*). Indeed, the whole warp and woof of Jesus’ priesthood is intended to divide clean and unclean. With divine wisdom and power, Jesus would purify those whom he was separating from the world. In contrast to the old priesthood, boundary markers would not be ethnic (Jew-Gentile) or fleshly (male circumcision). Rather, Jesus would mark out his covenant people with a circumcision made without hands (Col 2:11-12).<sup>44</sup> Therefore, in what follows, I will argue that Jesus in an unofficial but real way acts as

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<sup>39</sup>Marcus, “Son of Man as Son of Adam, Part II,” 371-74.

<sup>40</sup>Fletcher-Louis, “The High Priest as Divine Mediator,” 161-93; idem, “God’s Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest: Towards an Historical and Theological Account of the Incarnation,” in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2004), 81-99; idem, “Jesus Inspects His Priestly War Party (Luke 14.25-35),” in *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honour of J. L. North*, ed. Steve Moyise, JSNTSup 189 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 126-43. For a full bibliography, see C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, “Part 1,” 158.

<sup>41</sup>Brant Pitre, “Jesus, the New Temple, and the New Priesthood,” in *Letter and Spirit*, vol 4., *Temple and Contemplation: God’s Presence in the Cosmos, Church, and Human Heart*, ed. Scott Hahn and David Scott (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2008).

<sup>42</sup>Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*.

<sup>43</sup>This assertion does not deny the royal and prophetic features of Jesus personhood. It only affirms what has often been minimized: Jesus the Christ is a priest.

<sup>44</sup>Citing the work of Clinton E. Arnold (*Colossians*, in vol. 3 of *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002], 385-86), Christ’s circumcision “is the removal of believers’ solidarity with Adam,” the priestly mediator of the first covenant. At the same time, Col 2:11-12 calls “believers to remember the meaning of their baptism as an identification with the death and burial with Jesus,” the priestly mediator of a better covenant, who both atones for sin (Col 1:21-

a *Kohen Teacher* when he teaches his covenant community with authority, a *Kohen Victor* when he cleanses the temple, and a *Kohen Mediator* when he physically restores men and women plagued by sin, when he offers to lay down his life as the good shepherd, when he intercedes on behalf of his covenant community, and when he officiates the covenant meal.

### ***Kohen Teacher: Jesus Teaches His New Covenant Community***

While I will argue that the most important aspect of Christ's didactic ministry comes after his resurrection and ascension, it should be observed that in his earthly life, he did manifest traits of a *Kohen Teacher*. In fact, one of the most prominent titles given to Jesus during his earthly life was "Rabbi."<sup>45</sup> In his Gospel, Matthew introduced Jesus as traveling in the northern parts of Israel "teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom" (4:23; 9:35).<sup>46</sup> Matthew records the way that Jesus was effectually calling disciples (4:18-22) and "teaching [the people] as one who had authority, and not as their scribes" (7:28-29). Indeed, the refrain in Matthew 5, "You have heard it said, but I say unto you . . ." (vv. 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43), indicates that Jesus possessed greater authority than Moses.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, as Jesus outlines his kingdom ethics, he explains that his royal citizens will manifest the character of their king, because his new covenant will be

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23) and "disarms" the angelic powers by "cancelling the written code" (i.e., the penalties of the first covenant) by his sacrificial death (Col 2:13-15).

<sup>45</sup>Judas (Matt 23:8; 26:25), Peter (Mark 9:5; 11:21), a blind man (Mark 10:51), Andrew (John 1:38), Nathanael (1:49), the disciples (4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8), and even Nicodemus (3:2) called Jesus "Rabbi."

<sup>46</sup>In fact, Matt 4:23 and 9:35 form an inclusio which emphasize the priority of Jesus' teaching ministry (R. T. France, *Matthew*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 371; Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, vol. 22 [Nashville: Broadman, 1992], 89).

<sup>47</sup>The Moses-Jesus typology illustrates the priestly nature of Jesus new covenant role (cf. Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The New Moses; A Matthean Typology* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 172-207).

“internalized” within them.<sup>48</sup> As Allison sums it up, Matthew “presents Jesus as the new lawgiver, the eschatological revealer and interpreter of Torah, the Messiah who brought the definitive, end-time revelation, a revelation for the heart, as foretold by [Jeremiah 31].”<sup>49</sup>

More exactly, by explicitly contrasting Jesus and the temple scribes (Matt 7:28-29), Matthew illustrates how Jesus is a superlative teacher. His didactic authority is reiterated in Mark (1:22, 27) and Luke (4:32, 36). In John’s gospel (5:27; 7:17-18; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10), the divine origin of Jesus teaching is highlighted. In Acts, Luke explains that the Jesus’ teaching ministry does not end with his ascension (Acts 1:1-11).<sup>50</sup> Just the reverse: Jesus’ ministry of teaching expands when he pours out his Spirit and the church becomes an army of priestly witnesses to the nations (Acts 1:8; cf. Rom 15:16; 2 Pet 2:9-10).<sup>51</sup>

Yet, the question remains: What did Jesus teach? Or what about his teaching might indicate didactic particularity, let alone a definite atonement? If we permit the whole counsel of Scripture to answer that question, we must affirm three truths that delimit his ministry of teaching to his new covenant community and not all people in general. First, that the priestly office included a ministry of teaching is clearly explicated in the Law of Moses (Lev 10:10-11; Deut 33:8-11) and is required by the prophets for the priests. Thus, by

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 189.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 190. Tempering the strong typology of Allison, France is correct to observe the dissimilarities between Moses and Jesus in Matt 1-5 (*Matthew*, 157). But that only increases the likelihood that Matthew is portraying Jesus as the better mediator of a greater covenant.

<sup>50</sup>John Stott, *The Message of Acts*, BST (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), 32-34.

<sup>51</sup>Of note, Allison argues that the mountaintop message of Jesus and the mention of his sitting in Matt 5:1-2 may allude to the “coronation or enthronement” of Moses that was common in Second Temple literature (ibid., 177). If this is true, Matthew’s Moses-typology may not only point back to Moses’ ascent on Sinai to receive God’s law (cf. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 148-62), but to Christ’s later exaltation to glory (Acts 1:8-11), where seated at God’s right hand (2:34-36) Jesus pours out his Spirit (2:1ff.) and writes the law of God on the hearts of his true disciples (cf. Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel’s Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 280-89).

fulfilling all the law, Jesus would be assuming this teaching role, as well (Matt 5:17-20). Second, if we permit Jesus a priestly function in the Gospels, then certainly he is a priest who teaches.<sup>52</sup> Third, when Jesus teaches, he speaks to the “crowds” (7:28-29), but he speaks in such a way as to reveal God’s will to some (“his disciples” in 5:1) and to hide it from others (Matt 11:25-27).<sup>53</sup> This is why Jesus spoke in parables. As a priest for his covenant community, Jesus designed to reveal himself to his own through the same message that will conceal himself from those who are not his. As pride-crushing as this is, Matthew 13:14-15 (quoting Isa 6:9-10) indicates that Jesus taught in parables to keep forgiveness from some.<sup>54</sup>

Put again in terms of cognitive understanding, some will understand what Jesus says and others will not. The basis of this understanding is not located in the mind of men, it is based upon the new covenant which Jesus Christ is establishing with those whom he chooses to reveal himself. Matthew 11:25-27 indicates that the Son reveals the Father to whom he wills, and he rejoices that the Father hides himself from the wise and reveals himself to children.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, Paul says that all things are imperceptible to the natural man; only the spiritual man is able to discern God’s mind (1 Cor 2:10-16). Put together, the elect of God come to know the mind of Christ when the Son asks the Father to send the Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13). In this way, the Spirit’s illumination is not divorced from the

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<sup>52</sup>In all that Jesus does, from casting out demons to dying on the cross, he is revealing his character and modeling the “Christian life” for his followers. Fletcher-Louis suggests that the contents of Mark 1-6 are for the purpose of modeling what Jesus expects of his disciples, sent out in Mark 6:6-13 (“Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2,” 62).

<sup>53</sup>On the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew records that Jesus’ teaching is aimed at his disciples (Matt 5:1-2), yet it is evident that others (e.g., the crowds) hear the words (Matt 7:28-29).

<sup>54</sup>On the use of the “hearing formula” employed by Jesus in Matt 13 (and Rev 2-3) with its divine design to call out the remnant of God, while leaving idolaters blind in their sin, see G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 244-48.

<sup>55</sup>For a thorough treatment of this mysterious reality, see John Piper, *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God’s Delight in Being God* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2000), 259-301.

Son's work; instead, the covenantal blessing of understanding and insight is directly tied to the death of Christ which inaugurates the new covenant. While this explanation borrows some of the concepts explicated later in the NT, it is apparent in Jesus' earthly ministry that as a priestly teacher of the new covenant, he intends to teach his own through the means of a general message (cf. John 6:35-64). In doctrinal categories, this is simply the differentiation between the gospel call and effectual call.<sup>56</sup>

### ***Kohen Victor: Jesus' Healing Restores Creation***

As a priest, Christ not only teaches, he also heals. The Evangelists frequently unite these ministries in Jesus (Matt 4:23-35; Mark 1:21ff., 39; Luke 4:38-44) and for good reason. Just as teaching is a part of Christ's priestly work, so is healing.<sup>57</sup> Now admittedly, there is no place in the OT which speaks of the priest cleansing lepers, opening the eyes of the blind, or raising the dead,<sup>58</sup> but this does not remove the priestly nature of this ministry. It simply demonstrates the qualitative difference between the sons of Levi and the Son of God. Just as the Law instructed priests to judge lepers, declaring them "clean" or "unclean" (Lev 13-15), so the Gospels present Jesus' not only adjudicating leprosy, but actually making lepers clean.

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<sup>56</sup>Matthew Barrett, "The Scriptural Affirmation of Monergism," in *Whomever He Wills: A Surprising Display of Sovereign Mercy*, ed. Matthew Barrett and Thomas J. Nettles (Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2012), 121-46; Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved By Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 68-92.

<sup>57</sup>Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, esp. 168-70. For a taxonomy of Jesus' healings, see Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 61-62.

<sup>58</sup>Of note, the priestly prophet Ezekiel comes close when he is commanded to speak to the valley of dry bones and God creates new life by his word (Ezek 37:1-14).

The typological comparison between OT priests and Jesus as a greater priest is most clearly perceived in the way that they relate to lepers. For instance, the Levitical priests could remove unclean Israelites from entering God's holy place (Lev 21:16-24). However, like the Law itself (Rom 8:2-3), the priests had no power to cleanse the leper—or heal the blind or raise the dead. Not so with Jesus. As the last Adam, he was not merely a living soul (Gen 2:7); he was a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor 15:45). Since he had life in himself (John 5:26), Jesus had the power to command the Spirit as he willed.

Therefore, in a way that anticipated the kingdom he was inaugurating,<sup>59</sup> Jesus' earthly ministry came with power to (re)create life. As a greater priest, he did not simply evaluate the cleanness of a person; he made them clean. By the power of his word, he raised the dead (John 11:43), and by the touch of his hand (Matt 8:3, 15; 9:18, 25; Mark 8:22-26) or his garment (Matt 9:20-22), power went out.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, as the temple of God (John 1:14), from whom life-giving streams would flow (7:37-39), Jesus commanded the Spirit to bring restoration.<sup>61</sup> And thus, many of his healings were effected by the authority of his word (Matt 8:5-13), a word that restored life by the Spirit (Acts 10:38; cf. Isa 32:15) and reclaimed enemy territory (Matt 12:28). Sinclair Ferguson rightly describes Jesus' healing in royal,

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<sup>59</sup>On the relationship of the kingdom of God and the eschatological temple, and by extension Christ as king and priest, see Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 151-52.

<sup>60</sup>For discussion of Christ's "contagious holiness," see Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 64-71. He surveys the scholarly opinion, and concludes with Chilton that a scholarly consensus is emerging which understands the impure as "contracting holiness" through physical contact with Jesus (*Jesus' Baptism and Jesus' Healing*, 58-97). Perrin observes that the magical exorcisms of Jesus' day are replaced by Jesus' spoken word (*Jesus the Temple*, 169). Either way (by physical contact or verbal command), this turns the law on its head, and rightly so. Jesus comes with power, not lifeless prescriptions!

<sup>61</sup>Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 169-70. While Paul's description of Jesus as a "life-giving spirit" is eschatological and salvific, it is not immaterial (1 Cor 15:42-49). Thus, the physical healings in Jesus' earthly ministry anticipate his later, greater resurrection from the dead.



military terms,<sup>62</sup> but if Jesus' healing is only royal, it ignores the fact that Jesus as a priest exorcises *unclean* spirits. Thus, his healing miracles prefigure his eschatological regal authority *and* his priestly power to make all things new (read: clean).

Additionally, it is important to remember that the Spirit's work never happens apart from Christ.<sup>63</sup> New creation, like the first creation, is spoken by the Word of God (John 1:1-5; 2 Cor 4:6) and effected by the Spirit. This kind of regeneration is described in salvific terms later in the NT (Titus 3:5), but in the Gospels the power of Christ's new creation is most clearly seen in his healing miracles—miracles that are intimately related to his priestly role. Nowhere is this more explicit than in Matthew 8.

Coming on the heels of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 8 begins with the account of Jesus healing a leper (vv. 1-4). Interestingly, Jesus does not simply judge the man to be clean as the priests were designated to do in Leviticus 14. He makes him clean (v. 3). Jesus' priestly speech is *performative*, something that was fitting for Jesus' divine character but also for his priestly office.<sup>64</sup> The priestly nature of this episode is plain to see. When Jesus heals the man, he sends him to the temple: "Show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded" (v. 4). In this episode, Jesus obeys the old covenant law,<sup>65</sup> while simultaneously demonstrating the new creation power of his greater priestly

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<sup>62</sup>Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit, Contours in Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 50.

<sup>63</sup>Graham Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 76-78, 199-202.

<sup>64</sup>Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 45, 51.

<sup>65</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 139.

mediation.<sup>66</sup> Under the old covenant priests shielded themselves from impurity, but now Christ comes with “contagious purity,” such that by his physical touch he is able to purify a man for worship in his Father’s house.<sup>67</sup>

Next, in Matthew 8:5-13 one finds a paradigmatic healing—paradigmatic in the sense that Jesus’ authority over human flesh is likened to a well-ordered military platoon. In that setting, Jesus heals a centurion’s servant by the power of his word. From this pericope, it becomes clear that Jesus’ power is equally present in his speaking and his healing. In Christ, there is no division between word and act, offer and efficacy. All that Christ commands is effective; nothing that he does fails.

Following that scene, Matthew generalizes the healing work of Jesus. Verse 16 says, “That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.” Like with other healings, the Gospels denote the uncleanness of the spirit, and thus situate Christ’s healing in a setting of purification. In this case, Matthew summarizes Jesus ministry of healing *qua* purification and quotes Isaiah 53:4: “This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.’” Two observations will help us understand the placement of this quotation.

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<sup>66</sup>The greater power of Christ’s priesthood may be seen in the shift between the Law of Moses in Lev 21:10-12 and the eschatological hope of a new priesthood in Ezek 42:14; 44:19. In the former, the priests were forbidden to approach death, for fear of polluting God’s temple. But in the latter, the priests were warned to remove their garments for fear of communicating holiness to those outside the temple precincts. When Christ came, he consecrated men and women for worship by healing them. In his day, Christ was not an legally qualified to be priest because he was from the tribe of Judah (cf. Heb 7:14), but in sanctifying these men and women for worship, it is evident that he functioned as a priest. In time, Jesus’ priestly authority would be the means by which he would purify God’s macro-temple, and bring shalom to heaven and earth.

<sup>67</sup>Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2,” 66-71.

First, Jesus excels at making distinctions, an essential quality for priestly service.<sup>68</sup> He not only removes unclean people from the presence of God, as in his temple cleansing (John 2:13-22),<sup>69</sup> he also demonstrates his power over “unclean spirits.” One of the recurring themes in Matthew and the other Gospels is the way Jesus exorcised demons. For example, Matthew 4:24 introduces Jesus’ ministry by saying, “His fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them.” Likewise throughout Matthew, as Jesus heals people (8:28-34; 9:1-8, 18-26, 27-31, 32-34), he cleanses them from “unclean spirits” (cf. 10:1; 12:43-45). This notion of *unclean* spirits is even more prominent in Mark’s Gospel (1:23, 26-27; 3:11; 5:2, 8, 13).<sup>70</sup> If we take seriously the temple cosmology that informs the whole Bible and which Perrin has shown to be at the foreground of Jesus self-consciousness, then Jesus’ healing ministry is more than an act of compassion. It is also an act of delivering creation from the evil one and destroying the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).<sup>71</sup> In other words, it is an early indication of Christ’s eschatological victory as *Kohen Victor*.

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<sup>68</sup>Jo Bailey Wells, *God’s Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 114.

<sup>69</sup>Make no mistake, the primary emphasis of Jesus’ priestly ministry in the NT is his role as covenantal advocate (1 John 2:1-2). He is the appointed priest to make the final sacrifice and to intercede for his own (Rom 8:32-34). This is the overarching message of Hebrews. Nevertheless, as a priestly prophet like Jeremiah, Jesus comes denouncing the leaders of Israel, bringing judgment on God’s house, and cleansing the temple. This adversarial role must not be neglected, if one is to understand his comprehensive ministry.

<sup>70</sup>Commenting on the Gospels use of “unclean spirits,” Perrin offers a convincing argument for tracing this term back to Zech 13:2 (*Jesus the Temple*, 159-63). He argues that Jesus’ power struggle with the demons reflects his eschatological priesthood, one which adumbrates his exalted status as a warrior-priest like Melchizedek.

<sup>71</sup>G. K. Beale, *The Temple and Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 46-79.

Second, Matthew unites Jesus' healing work to the sacrificial passage in Isaiah 53. As was argued in chapter 6, the elements of representation, sacrifice, and intercessory prayer make the fourth Servant song unmistakably priestly. Therefore, when Matthew uses the quotation, he is telling the reader that Christ's healing is intimately associated with his role as the Servant and priest.<sup>72</sup> He is presenting what the kingdom of God will be like, a place where sin, Satan, and corruption have been replaced by righteousness, Christ, and life (cf. Isa 27:1ff.). Jesus as a priest is healing his people and cleansing his place from all its unclean elements.<sup>73</sup>

Altogether, Jesus' ministry of healing has tremendous implications for understanding the extent of atonement in the work of Christ as priest. Jesus, who is the eschatological fulfillment of Isaiah 53 (cf. John 12:41; Acts 8:35), comes to lay down his life for his straying sheep (Isa 53:6; John 10:11ff.). He also comes as the priest who cleanses his temple (Matt 21:12-17; cf. John 2:13-22). He explains his actions as judgment upon the unfruitful vine of Israel (Matt 21:18-22, cf. John 15:2, 6) and promises to crush any and all who fail to receive him as the Messiah (Matt 21:43-44). Thus, as Jesus removes unclean spirits from the people he is saving, he is simultaneously invoking the ire of the Pharisees, whom he calls "a brood of vipers." In keeping with the messianic hope of a savior who

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<sup>72</sup>On the tight relationship between the Servant and priest, see F. F. Bruce, *New Testament Developments of Old Testament Themes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 112.

<sup>73</sup>Space does not permit a discussion concerning the relationship between physical healing and eternal salvation. However, it might be observed that as a regular pattern those who are healed by Jesus are the ones who exercise faith (see Matt 8:10; 9:2, 22, 29; 15:28; Luke 7:50; 18:42). Likewise, the absence of faith does prohibit his ability to bring healing to his own hometown (Mark 6:4-6). Therefore, it seems that there is a positive relationship between physical healing and eschatological salvation, but the argument presented here is not overturned if a person healed in the flesh is not raised unto life.

would save Israel and crush the heads of the enemies of God,<sup>74</sup> Jesus comes as a priest to atone for the sins of his elect (Isa 27:9) and concurrently to bring judgment upon the offspring of the enemy (Isa 27:1). Only to the shock of everyone in Israel, the people who Jesus is saving are not the “righteous” in Israel. Rather, Jesus is creating a new people who will receive his righteousness when he circumcises their hearts, and restores them to life.<sup>75</sup> In this way, his healing is complicit with definite atonement, not general atonement.

### ***Kohen Victor: Jesus Cleanses the Temple***

At the same time that Jesus is teaching, healing, and forgiving (see below), he is also bringing judgment against Israel and the center of its social, spiritual, and political life—the temple. In the Synoptics, the temple cleansing is placed at the end of their narrative histories to highlight the impending doom of ethnic Israel.<sup>76</sup> In John’s gospel, the episode is placed at the beginning, because it functions as a key to understanding John’s message.<sup>77</sup> Without entering into a harmonization of the accounts, we will focus on John’s gospel.

In his book, *Jesus the Temple*, Perrin nicely summarizes the scholarly options and classifies them as non-eschatological and eschatological.<sup>78</sup> Scholars of the former opinion make Jesus’ temple action “a temple cleansing,” one which seeks to redress the ethical problems in Second Temple Judaism. The latter position views Jesus’ action as a warning of

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<sup>74</sup>James M. Hamilton, “The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *SBJT* 11 (2006): 30-55.

<sup>75</sup>Faith comes as the necessary and subsequent result of this priestly act of spiritual cleansing. It is priestly, because circumcision was always the work of the priest.

<sup>76</sup>N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 320-68.

<sup>77</sup>Bill Salier, “The Temple in the Gospel According to John,” in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2004), 121-34. For a thorough discussion of John’s use of temple typology, see Paul Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock), 2007.

great apocalyptic danger—the temple is coming to an end.<sup>79</sup> Altogether, Perrin argues that there is truth in both perspectives. By comparison, he suggests that Jesus intended (1) to bring an indictment against the current state of the temple and its priesthood and (2) to proclaim that he was going to rebuild a new temple, hence John’s inclusion of Jesus’ statement in verse 19: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”<sup>80</sup>

For our purposes, it is significant to see that as a priest, Jesus does not simply come to provide atonement and intercession.<sup>81</sup> Rather, as a priest who fits the OT mold, he also comes to purify God’s dwelling place, which means establishing a new temple through his own death and resurrection (vv. 21-22; cf. Eph 2:11-22). While often Christians read the temple language in the NT as figurative or illustrative, it is more probable that Jesus, in the milieu of his day, is seeking to establish a new temple—but not a temple made of quarried rock. Rather, he is literally going to construct a temple of Spirit-born stones (“living stones” in 1 Pet 2:5). Hewn from the nation of Israel and all other nations (cf. Matt 10:34-35), these stones will be fastened to the cornerstone, once rejected but now serving as the genesis of the new temple (Eph 2:19-22).<sup>82</sup>

Theologically, this ministry of judgment does not cohere with general atonement. General atonement argues that Christ died for all men without exception (including the brood

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<sup>78</sup>Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 89-92.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>80</sup>Incidentally, this two-part message of judgment and restoration coincides with chapters 5 and 6, which delineated a similar message—that God was going to judge the system of sacrifice in Israel and replace it with a new priest, a new temple, and a new sacrificial system.

<sup>81</sup>This affirmation of Christ’s temple cleansing is not to deny the central role that making a sacrifice (i.e., penal substitution) plays in Christ’s priestly ministry. It is to affirm that interrelated to his atoning sacrifice is the work of temple cleansing. Cf. George Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1871; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953).

<sup>82</sup>Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 110.

of vipers that Jesus opposes) and then applies salvation to some of them—those who respond to the gospel (usually with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, or by means of a secondary step in God’s order of decrees, i.e., election). However, from what we observe in Jesus’ relationship to the temple and the people who worship there, he is unmistakably going to the cross in order to bring this impotent system sacrifice to an end. Accordingly, Jesus’ death does not purchase a universal, unspecified grace; instead, it destroys the works of the flesh, and brings to life a new temple. As has been argued from the start of this dissertation, there is nothing general or impersonal about Jesus’ death. His priestly work is cosmic, but it is not generic. He died in order to raze one temple, which had become a “den of robbers” (Jer 7:11) instead of an multi-national “house of prayer” (Isa 56:7), and to raise another temple in its place,<sup>83</sup> with a priestly family who delighted in his law because he put his Spirit within them—making them the new temple of God (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19-20).<sup>84</sup>

### ***Kohen Mediator: Jesus’ Particular and Efficacious Forgiveness***

Forgiveness is the heart of the new covenant (Heb 8:12; 10:17). Not surprisingly, Jesus’ priestly ministry centered on offering and obtaining forgiveness. In Luke, Jesus’ priesthood is evidenced, among other things,<sup>85</sup> by healing a paralytic *and* pronouncing him forgiven. Like the leper in Matthew 8:1-4, the paralytic was barred from the temple. Physically, he could not “walk with God,” and ritually, the Law disqualified him from

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<sup>83</sup>Perrin nicely summarizes the intratextual use of Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11 in Matt 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46 (*Jesus the Temple*, 83-88). Once again, the international notion of the temple in Isa 56:7 reflects the prophetic universalism of Isa 38-66.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>85</sup>Perrin also lists healing a leper (Luke 5:12-16), eating the bread of the presence (6:1-10), and offering a benediction (24:50-53) as priestly activities in Luke (*ibid.*, 62-63).

drawing near to God (Lev 21:18-20).<sup>86</sup> Under the Law, no cripple was permitted access into God's presence. Thus, when Jesus healed this man he changed his legal status before God and men. But even more, when Christ pronounced the man "forgiven," he offended his Jewish audience. They react, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone" (Luke 5:20)? The problem is simple: Only God can forgive sins, and thus Jesus is putting himself in the place of God. However, without denying the divine nature of Christ's pardoning pronouncement, the Pharisees and teachers of the law should have known the answer to their question. Who is "authori[z]ed on earth to forgive sins" (v. 24)? The answer, according to the old covenant, is the priests.

In Leviticus, the priests were the ones who pronounced forgiveness when the blood of the sacrifice was applied. Likewise, in Israel's history, the priests were always the ones responsible for preserving the well being of Israel by making atonement for sins. For this reason, Marcus comments on the divine prerogative and priestly authority that coalesce in Christ. He states, "For Mark, the heavenly God remains the ultimate forgiver, but at the climax of history he has delegated his power of absolution to a 'Son of Man' who carries out his gracious will in the earthly sphere; therefore '*upon the earth* the Son of Man has the authority to forgive sins.'"<sup>87</sup> Indeed, Jesus, whose priesthood depends on his greater sonship, not a temporary law (like the Levites), has divine authority to grant forgiveness.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>It might be argued that Lev 21 technically forbids crippled *Levites* from serving in God's courts, and not others. Yet, by way of comparing the lesser to the greater: If blemished Levites are prevented from God's presence (Lev 21:18), how much more the general Israelite who is blind, lame, or diseased?

<sup>87</sup>Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB [New York: Doubleday, 2000], 223.

<sup>88</sup>See Hahn's comments on the royal priestly primogeniture that goes back to Adam and is re-acquired by Jesus (*Kinship by Covenant*, 278-81).



Of course, there may be another issue at work here. Perrin observes that forgiveness was not simply the prerogative of the priests. Geography also played a part. Going back to the time of Solomon, the temple was the locus for forgiveness (1 Kgs 8:30, 34, 36, 39, 50). It was the place where sin offerings were made and where the priests plied their trade. Therefore, Perrin concludes that when “Jesus, like John the Baptizer, forgave sins outside the temple apparatus,” he was “signal[ing] his own sense of temple calling.”<sup>89</sup> Perrin’s reading complements the argument being made here. Jesus, as the new priest and new temple, could offer forgiveness anywhere because he embodied the substance to which the priesthood, the law, and the temple were shadows (Col 2:17; Heb 10:1).

In this pronouncement of pardon, we see how Christ functions as a better priest. Instead of demanding Israel to come to Jerusalem for the blessings of the covenant, Jesus was reversing the tide. By forgiving this paralytic, he was anticipating the centrifugal nature of the new covenant ministry of the church.<sup>90</sup> In truth, he offered forgiveness of sins outside Jerusalem because God’s Spirit of holiness and his word of promise were no longer contained in a temple made with human hands. Jesus is the new temple, and he is the new priest. Thus, in the episode with the paralytic, we see Jesus exercising his priestly authority to forgive sins and to extend the boundaries of the temple.

At the same, Jesus’ priesthood is working against those priests who are warring to keep the old system in place. To say it another way, when Jesus healed the paralytic, he simultaneously revealed the venom of his opponents. In keeping with the priestly task of

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<sup>89</sup>Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 140.

<sup>90</sup>See Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 135-37.

making distinctions (between clean and unclean, holy and profane),<sup>91</sup> Jesus would have to make distinctions in the way he related to people. He brought salvation to the paralytic and judgment on the brood of vipers who gnashed their teeth at him. Generally speaking, his ministry never aimed in a single direction. It always included salvation *and* judgment. For those who were sick, Jesus was a healing priest (5:31), but for those who diagnose themselves as healthy, Jesus came with a coroner's report, which is exactly what Jesus was doing when he cleansed the temple. Nevertheless, as a priest commissioned to purify a people for his own possession, Jesus' primary function was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Judgment was the auxiliary function that wisely came about because of Jesus' intention to give his life for his own. Applied to the extent of the atonement, Jesus new covenant offer of forgiveness is always particular and effective. In fact, in the case of the paralytic, the forgiveness of one party elicited the hardening of another. Though effected in different ways, Christ's priestly work is evidently for some (*Kohen Mediator*) and not for others (*Kohen Victor*).

### ***Kohen Mediator: Jesus Lays Down His Life for His Sheep***

In John 10, Jesus distinguishes his ministry as "good shepherd" from that of the hirelings who abandon the flock. He says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. . . . I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep" (vv. 11, 14-15). Drawing on the rich imagery of the OT shepherd, Jesus states the kind of relationship he has with his sheep. In verse 15, he goes so far as to compare his union with

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<sup>91</sup>R. K. Duke, "Priests, Priesthood," in *DOTP*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 651; Wells, *God's Holy People*, 114.

his sheep to that union which he has with his Father.<sup>92</sup> Apparently, the love that Father and Son share is akin to the love that Jesus has for his own sheep, which sets the stage for Jesus to make a statement about his sheep that sets them apart from the rest of the world.<sup>93</sup>

What is most pertinent in John 10 concerning his priesthood is that Jesus has the authority and power to lay down his life and take it up again. In verses 17-18, he insists that no one takes his life from him, but as a good shepherd, he will die for his sheep. Or, to focus on the reality to which Jesus is speaking (i.e., his sacrificial death) Jesus, as an active and obedient priest, will offer himself to God for the sins of his people (cf. Matt 1:21). The original audience, familiar with the parallel use of people and sheep (Pss 95; 100; Ezek 34) would have been sensitive to the theological meaning of his statement: Jesus as the shepherd-servant-priest-king died in the place of his covenant people, not for everyone at large.

As it was mentioned in chapter 6, opponents of definite atonement assert that a positive statement that Jesus dies for a certain class of people (e.g., sheep, children, bride, church) does not rule out his death for another class of people (i.e., the non-elect). This has been labeled a “negative inference fallacy,” and must be taken seriously.<sup>94</sup> However, what

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<sup>92</sup>Since “Father-Son is the dominant, controlling metaphor used for Jesus’ relationship with God in the Fourth Gospel” (Köstenberger and Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit*, 73), and since the union of Father and Son is “filial” (ibid., 111-33)—what others might call covenantal (Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 37-48)—it stands to reason that when Christ lays down his life for his sheep, he is only dying for the flock that the Father gave him before the foundation of the world. In other words, from the covenantal makeup of Jesus’ flock and from what we know about covenants in the Bible—that they simultaneously knit families and exclude strangers—Jesus’ statement that Christ died for his sheep indicates that while he was dying for sheep not of the fold of Israel (John 10:16), he was only dying for his sheep (John 10:26; cf. John 11:52-53).

<sup>93</sup>Howard Malcolm, *The Extent and Efficacy of the Atonement* (1840; repr., LaVergne, TN, 2010), 63-65.

<sup>94</sup>David L. Allen, “The Atonement,” in *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism*, ed. David Allen and Steve Lemke (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 93. For a direct response to David Allen, see David Schrock, “Jesus Saves, No Asterisk Needed: Why Preaching the Gospel as Good News Requires Definite Atonement,” in *Whomever He Wills: A Surprising Display of God’s Mercy*, ed. Matthew Barrett and Thomas J. Nettles (Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2012), 80-81; cf. Greg Wills, “Whosoever Will: A Review Essay,” *The Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 7 (2010): 15–18.

those who make this claim fail to appreciate when they dismiss John 10:14 as a proof text for definite atonement is the fact that John 10 is more than a set of logical propositions. It surely contains propositional truth, but it is a text woven into the fabric of Scripture.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, any true interpretation of this passage must take into consideration how Jesus' use of "Good Shepherd" is related to the larger canonical realities of shepherd and sheep.<sup>96</sup>

Fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy about a Servant-priest who would die in the place of his wandering sheep and Zechariah's prophecy of a shepherd-king who performs priestly duties, Jesus is not dying for all people without exception. Just the opposite, as a shepherd he is rescuing his little flock (Luke 12:32) from the threat of thieves (John 10:10) and teeth of wolves (10:26). To say it another way, Christ has come into the world not to make peace with all people, but to bring a sword (Matt 10:34)—a sword that has drawn a line in humanity dividing Cain from Abel, Shem from his brothers, Abraham from the nations, and the church from the world.<sup>97</sup> Just as Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt *as a shepherd-priest* (Ps 77:20)<sup>98</sup> and drowned Pharaoh and his followers to win the victory (see

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<sup>95</sup>Here again, the issue separating generalists and particularists is hermeneutical.

<sup>96</sup>See the earlier discussion on this point in chap. 6.

<sup>97</sup>Evangelist James Haldane writes, "The separation of mankind into two classes was not only foretold [in Gen 3:15], but exhibited in Adam's sons, Cain and Abel. The former was the seed of the serpent—he was 'of that wicked one;' the latter was the seed of the woman, an heir of promise, justified by faith; and the enmity which God had put between the two families, was manifested by Cain slaying his brother" (*The Doctrine of the Atonement* [Edinburgh: 1847; repr., Choteau, MT: Old Paths Gospel, n. d.], 96). And again, "Very shortly after the flood, the two families into which mankind had been divided, were again brought to view in the curse pronounced on Ham, while Shem and Japhet were blessed. Soon afterwards, Abraham was taken out from his kindred, . . . while all other nations were plunged in ignorance and idolatry, and suffered to walk in their own ways" (ibid., 97). Thus Haldane concludes, "We see that, in the limitation of the Atonement to the heirs of promise, the Lord only followed out that system of separation which had been coeval with the revelation of his purposes of mercy to sinners of mankind; and, in leaving the far greater part of the human race in darkness and ignorance, he is pursuing the same plan on which he has acted from the beginning" (ibid., 96).

<sup>98</sup>On the role of Moses as a shepherd-priest, see Timothy Laniak, *Shepherds After My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 88-90.

the context of Ps 77), so Jesus protects, provides, guides, and atones for his covenant people in history (John 10) and eternity (Rev 7:15-17).<sup>99</sup> Therefore, as Jesus uses shepherd language, he does not use it in a general way, as if to say that anyone who wants to be a sheep can come to him because he has made all men “salvable.”<sup>100</sup> Rather, John 10:26 says just the opposite. Jesus lays down his life, such that when he speaks to all, his sheep will hear his voice and come unto him (vv. 27-30). In this way, his pastoral vocation coincides with his priestly role of saving some and judging others.<sup>101</sup>

### ***Kohen Mediator: Jesus Prays for His Own People***

John 17 is commonly known as Christ’s high priestly prayer,<sup>102</sup> but in truth Jesus’ prayer is more than just a transcript from Jesus’ prayer life. Recording an intra-Trinitarian dialogue between the Father and Son, John 17 provides a window on the will of God.<sup>103</sup> In this passage, we find one of the strongest arguments for definite atonement.<sup>104</sup> Still, the tight

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 77-93.

<sup>100</sup>Contra Lewis Sperry Chafer, “For Whom Did Christ Die?” *BibSac* 137 (1980): 325.

<sup>101</sup>This two-pronged approach to the gospel was most clearly explicated by Haldane, *The Doctrine of the Atonement*, esp. 95-101. Against those who believe that definite atonement undercuts missions, the life of James Haldane and his brother Robert serve as a powerful counter-example. It is arguable that this outspoken advocate of definite atonement single-handedly changed the country of Scotland from gospel darkness to light with his preaching in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. See his biography, Alexander Haldane, *The Lives of Robert and James Haldane* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1990).

<sup>102</sup>Andreas Köstenberger takes exception to the use of the term “high-priestly prayer” because “this label hardly fits with Johannine thought” (*John*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 482). However, see Heil who shows how John’s gospel does portray Christ’s priesthood in contrast to Caiaphas (“Jesus as the Unique High Priest in the Gospel of John,” 729-45).

<sup>103</sup>Köstenberger and Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit*, 165-78.

<sup>104</sup>Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1994), 2:464-65; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 466; A. A. Hodge, *The Atonement* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Board of Publication, 1867), 150-61, 411-13; Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, 67-88; Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ*; and Martin, *The Atonement*, 96-160.

relationship between definite atonement and limited intercession from verse 9 is just as likely to be dismissed by generalists because technically it limits Christ's intercession not his atonement. Therefore, we must ask: Does Jesus' prayer only attend to his intercession, or does it also relate to his priestly sacrifice, as well?

Two preliminary points are in order: (1) It has been the working presupposition of this dissertation that the priestly actions in the NT take their shape from the unified office of the priesthood—an office that entails more than atonement and intercession, but certainly not less. Thus, if prayers and sacrifices are united in OT priesthood and directed only to the same covenant community (see Num 6:24-26), the burden of proof is to show that the scope of Christ's intercession in John 17 is different from that of his atonement. Without adopting a radical discontinuity between type and antitype, it is impossible to extend Jesus' prayer life to those outside of his covenant community. (2) We must determine if Christ's prayer includes a textual connection to his death. Since many generalists argue that Christ limits his intercession but not his death,<sup>105</sup> we need to consider whether the delimitation in verse 9 has any relation to Christ's death and whether Christ's "consecration" in verse 19 is describing his own death. From a reading of John 17 that considers its structure, its covenantal language, and the canonical background for Christ's priesthood,<sup>106</sup> it will be argued that Jesus

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<sup>105</sup>R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1997; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006); Norman Douty, *Did Christ Die Only for the Elect? A Treatise on the Extent of the Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998), 32-38; Robert P. Lightner, *The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 102-04; Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 192-93, 229; J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, vol. 4, *John 10:31-21:25* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 181-85.

<sup>106</sup>On the covenantal nature of John 17, see Rekha M. Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 130-37. Concerning the relationship between John 17 and the whole canon, Köstenberger and Swain (*Father, Son, and Spirit*, 166), observe that the "structure [of John 17] 'plots,' in seminal form, three great movements of redemptive history. . . . This redemptive-historical plot unfolds according to the logic of a great chain of 'gifting' . . ." from Father to Son to Holy Spirit.

prays for the success of his work to make known the will of his Father to those whom the Father gave him in eternity.<sup>107</sup>

Akin to the Day of Atonement, Jesus takes the role of high priest who prays for himself (vv. 1-5), then for his immediate family of disciples (vv. 6-19), and last for the international community who will believe the message of the gospel (vv. 20-26).<sup>108</sup> In verse 2, Jesus recognizes the universality of his authority, and yet throughout his prayer, he reserves his blessings for those whom the Father had given to him. In this way, as the prayer moves from Jesus, to the twelve, to the ends of the earth, we see particularity and universality in perfect harmony. Jesus' ministerial prayer anticipates the release of the gospel to the nations, but not in a way that subsumes God's particular designs under his universal ones.<sup>109</sup>

For instance, in verses 6-8, Jesus states that he gave "the words that [the Father] gave him" to the people the Father "gave [him] out of the world." Apparently, God gave Jesus a message and a people; thus, the success of Christ's mission was to deliver that

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<sup>107</sup>The 'prayer' in John 17 involves all three members of the Trinity and aims to apply the finished work of Christ to the covenant community that Jesus represents (ibid., 176-79).

<sup>108</sup>For an able defense of this priestly reading, see Feuillet, *The Priesthood of Christ*, 49-79.

<sup>109</sup>Note the difference between Christopher J. H. Wright (*The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006], 125) and Andreas Köstenberger and Scott Swain, (*Father, Son, and Spirit*, 165-79). The former states, "in truly priestly fashion, Jesus dispenses the knowledge of God, first to his immediate disciples and then through them to the world. . . . God's mission to be known to the world dominates the thinking of the Son even as he engages in prayer with his Father." Generally speaking, Wright's language is fine. There is in John's gospel (and all the Bible) a real universal design in the *Missio Dei*. But as with his understanding of "prophetic universalism," Wright fails to consider the particular shape of God's redemptive plans (*The Mission of God*, 222-64). Far better, Köstenberger and Swain discern the Trinitarian nature of Jesus' prayer and the relationship between God's eternal *pactum salutis* with its particular manifestation in history to save a particular people from every nation. They explain, "Jesus looks to the goal of his investiture and asks the Father to apply the eternal grant of the Holy Spirit to his brothers in time, that they might come to participate in the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit (so 14:17, 23). . . . The Spirit is the Gift of the Father to the Son, given for the sake of bringing his people into the perichoretic fellowship of the triune God" (*Father, Son, and Spirit*, 177). Köstenberger and Swain's careful attention to the Trinity in John's gospel enables them to pronounce a universal mission of the gospel, without flattening the particular designs of the Father's election, the Son's atonement, and the Spirit's gift to the members of the new covenant.

message to them. Next, verse 9 articulates that Jesus' intercession is limited, "I am praying for them." Who is "them"? Speaking to the Father, Jesus clarifies, "I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours." Because Jesus does not intercede for the world, neither will he die for the world.<sup>110</sup>

Still, many generalists disagree. Lightner protests, "It is assumed by those who insist Christ died only for the elect that because He did not pray for the nonelect, He did not die for them. This assumption is not only unwarranted logically, but it is also unscriptural. Limited redemptionists assume Christ did not die for everyone because He did not pray for everyone; and then they argue backwards."<sup>111</sup> He represents generalists when he abstracts Christ's sacrifice from its priestly context. The problem with Lightner's denial of the priestly argument is two-fold.

First, in the text itself, verse 19 states that Jesus intends to die for the ones given him by the Father.<sup>112</sup> Lightner pays no regard to the fact that in Christ's priestly prayer, he limits not only his intercession but also his crucifixion. Having prayed for God to reveal himself to them, to protect them from the evil one, and to sanctify them in truth (v. 10-18), Jesus prays, "And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they may be sanctified in truth." From the context of the prayer (the night before Jesus' death) and from the other uses of "consecrate" in John's gospel (10:36), it is evident that the idea of consecration concerns the

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<sup>110</sup>John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 70-88, 170-72; Martin, *The Atonement*, 49-168.

<sup>111</sup>Lightner, *The Death Christ Died*, 102-03.

<sup>112</sup>Owen, *The Death of Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, 98.



mission of Jesus, which is clearly his death, burial, and resurrection.<sup>113</sup> In short, according to John 17, Jesus prays *and* dies for his own.<sup>114</sup>

Second, with regards to the canon, generalists like Lightner misunderstand Christ's priestly office in that when Jesus fulfills all the functions of the priest, he necessarily prays for some and not others. In keeping with the priestly task of making distinctions, Jesus delivers his sheep from the goats; he initiates covenant relationship with some but not others; he teaches some while passing over others; and he guards his own from the world. Some, if not all, of these priorities are evident in John 17.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, Lightner's charge of being 'unscriptural' is ironic because he takes no time to examine Christ's priestly office in type. As with most generalists, he cites texts describing Christ's sacrifice without relating it to Scripture's own framework. By contrast, those who make priestly arguments for Christ's definite atonement do better justice to the whole counsel of Scripture than those who insist on Christ as a universal priest, who serves at the altar for whoever has interest in him. Of course, this is true, but it reverses the order of head and body, priest and people.<sup>116</sup> The terms

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<sup>113</sup>George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. WBC, vol. 36 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 301; D. A. Carson, *John*, 567.

<sup>114</sup>Köstenberger concludes his commentary on John 17:6-19 emphasizing the missionary impulse of Jesus' prayer: "The purpose of Jesus' self-sacrifice is that the disciples too may be truly sanctified, that is, set apart for their redemptive mission to the world" (*John*, 497). However, in his monograph on the Trinity, he explicates how "the disciples are consecrated to the Father's mission are twofold." He mentions two means of sanctification: "(1) They are sanctified by 'the truth' (17:17), the full revelation of the Father through the Son; and (2) by Jesus' own self-offering on their behalf (17:19) as 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (1:29). . . . And so Jesus prays that the Father will continue to apply the benefits of his finished work (cf. 17:4) to the disciples that they might be kept from the evil one for their mission" (Köstenberger and Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit*, 175).

<sup>115</sup>Robert Yarbrough, "Divine Election in the Gospel of John," in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 55.

<sup>116</sup>A case in point, Douty writes "Christ is a divinely provided priest for all mankind" but that he is only effectively a priest for those who come to him in faith (*Did Christ Die Only for the Elect?*, 32-33). Douty's point is correct in general but wrong in its specifics. He correctly affirms the universal offer of Christ's priestly mediation and that the priest comes for people from every race. The point of disagreement concerns the

of the covenant and the stipulations of priestly office must determine who it is that Jesus prays and propitiates.

In church history, this unified work of atonement and intercession was strongly defended by Hugh Martin, who intimated the “homogenous” nature of atonement and intercession. He writes, “The essence of the Intercession *is* Atonement; and the Atonement *is* essentially an Intercession.”<sup>117</sup> He explains,

The Atonement is real—real sacrifice and offering, and not mere passive endurance—because it is in its very nature an active and infallible Intercession; while, on the other hand, the Intercession is real Intercession—judicial, representative, and priestly intercession, and not a mere exercise of influence—because it is essentially an Atonement or substitutionary oblation, once perfected on Calvary, now perpetually presented and undergoing perpetual acceptance in heaven. . . . The Intercession, by which alone we are saved, even to the uttermost, is just the perpetual presentation of the ‘continual burnt-offering’ of Calvary, which, as an active *offering* subsists in perpetuity, and belongs to eternity, while the *suffering* of the cross belongs to history and the past, and the Atonement, had it been mere suffering, would have belonged to the past too.<sup>118</sup>

Indeed, Martin’s point stands on the typological unity of the altar of sacrifice and the altar of incense, both of which were requisite for atonement, and neither of which were ever exercised without the use of the other.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, in the light of the OT typology, a priest who offered a sacrifice on the one altar, but did not bring the blood of that sacrifice to the

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direction of the relationship between priest and people. Does the priest initiate the relationship? Or do the people of the new covenant? Douthett answers, “Even the elect do not possess Christ as their priest until they have received him. . . . Previous to that [reception], He contained these values for them, but only potentially, not actually” (ibid., 34). Douthett affirms a gracious salvation, but when he speaks about how a man might find refuge in Christ he requires the effort of men. This goes against the grain of the Christ’s priestly office. By requiring men to first approach the priest, Douthett opens a door for human effort and threatens the gracious nature of salvation. By contrast, the whole of this dissertation has argued that the priest takes the initiative and secures salvation for his people through his atonement and instruction, as well as, by his priestly intercession. This, in turn, empowers the man or woman to repent and believe, necessary features of any biblical soteriology.

<sup>117</sup>Martin, *The Atonement*, 106-07. The atonement and intercession are inseparable and necessarily conjoined in the priestly work of Christ, but they are not the same thing (cf. Gerrit Scott Dawson, *Jesus Ascended: The Meaning of Christ’s Continuing Incarnation* [London: T & T Clark, 2004], 127-28).

<sup>118</sup>Martin, *The Atonement*, 107-08.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 108-09.

other would have had no right to continue serving in God's house. So it is with Christ, for all whom he dies he intercedes, and for all whom he intercedes, he pleads the merits of his death. The two ministries are coterminous, and theologically they stand and fall together.<sup>120</sup>

Adding weight to Martin's argument, William Symington suggested that Christ's intercession envelopes his entire atoning ministry. Before, during, and after his crucifixion, Jesus prayed for his people.<sup>121</sup> Against generalists who conceive of atonement in chronological order—the atonement first and later the application—Christ's earthly life is filled with specific prayers (Matt 26:36-46; Luke 22:31-32; Luke 23:34; Heb 5:7). What Symington proves is that Christ's intercession is a part of his atonement, not a separate entity or a latter addition. Thus, it is impossible for Christ's atonement to come to the non-elect in any real way, because it would have to come with prayer, and if with prayer then with power and efficacy. But since, all generalists concede a limit to the application, it must be that as Christ went to the cross praying only for the elect, he was only dying for them too.<sup>122</sup> Symington writes, "Intercession and atonement are correlates, not merely in nature, but in extent. For whomsoever and for whatsoever he has procured blood, does he plead before the throne of God. This is the leading principle which may serve to guide us in the observations

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<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 110. "A more complete interblending cannot be imagined; and no doctrine of Atonement can be correct which does not provide for recognizing it, or which is not amenable to the conditions and considerations which it must necessitate and enforce" (ibid.).

<sup>121</sup>Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ*, 271.

<sup>122</sup>In agreement with Martin and Symington, John L. Dagg makes the atonement dependent on the intercession of Christ, and states, "The atonement or reconciliation which results, must be as particular as the intercessions by which it is procured" (*The Manual of Theology* [The Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1857; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1982], 330).

we have to offer on this department of our subject.”<sup>123</sup> Like Martin, Symington ties his theological conclusions back to priestly typology.<sup>124</sup>

More to the point, not only does Jesus pray for a particular people, the individual petitions are also specific. Describing Jesus’ prayer life, Symington writes that it is not “in the mass that the Saviour makes intercession.” Rather, “he prays for *each* by himself.”<sup>125</sup> No two cases are the same and thus Jesus prays with the infinite power of God now become flesh. Like the persons he creates and the words he speaks, each utterance has definite content and efficacious power.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, it is absolutely right to restrict Jesus’ prayer to his own. He does not take upon his lips the names of the wicked (Ps 16:4), and neither does he pollute his garment with the sin of the non-elect. If he did, he would of necessity purify them of their sins and qualify them for eternal life, just as he did the woman with an issue of blood. Consequently, the only reason that some remain in their unbelief is because Christ, as priest, did not make atonement or intercession for them.

### ***Kohen Mediator: The Lord’s Supper***

The last “key” passage where Christ’s priesthood, atonement, and new covenant intersect is the Passover feast recorded in the Gospels.<sup>127</sup> There, Jesus transmutes the

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<sup>123</sup>Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ*, 269.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 112.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 272.

<sup>126</sup>As Kevin J. Vanhoozer has more recently stated, Christ’s words are always “penetrative” and effective (*Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship*, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine [New York: Cambridge University Press], 361-66).

<sup>127</sup>Smeaton makes an important methodological observation on the nature of the atonement, when he says that the covenantal “phraseology” used in Matt 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20 “may be considered as a key to all those passages which announce a reconciliation to God through Him” (Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*, 207). The abundance of inspired atonement metaphors must find their fixed definition in the legal stipulations of the biblical covenants. Better attention to the

Passover of the old covenant into the Lord's Supper of the new covenant. Celebrating a Passover meal with his disciples, Jesus takes the role of the host. On the basis of type and antitype, we can argue that just as the Passover was a meal restricted to the circumcised Israelites and their offspring (Exod 12:43-44), so the new covenant meal is restricted to those who have faith in Jesus, i.e., those whose hearts have been cleansed (read: circumcised) and vivified by the Spirit and thus respond in faith.

Indeed, in his extension treatment of the Lord's Supper, George Smeaton observes the causal relationship between the forgiveness of sins and the blessing of faith.<sup>128</sup> His argument moves in three steps. He argues first that Christ's "blood was shed or poured out for many."<sup>129</sup> He compares this shedding of blood to the OT sacrificial system mediated by the priests of Israel, and reasons that the blood was for the covenant people alone.<sup>130</sup> Second, "the Lord Jesus declares that His blood was shed or offered in order to obtain for others the remission of sins."<sup>131</sup> He asserts that Matthew's words contain "Christ's own declaration as to the scope and effect of His death," thus proving "that His death was intended to be . . . the

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covenantal nature of Christ's atonement will help us navigate the questions concerning the nature of the atonement and its extent (cf. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* [Louisville: Westminster-John Knox, 2005], 380-94).

<sup>128</sup>Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*, 207-24.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 211.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., 212-13. *Pace* Smeaton, Douty rejects limited atonement on the basis of the Lord's Supper. He appeals to the use of the word "many" in Matt 26:28 and defines this term citing Charles Hodge's interpretation of the word in Rom 5: "Many, or rather the many evidently means the multitude, the mass, the whole race" (*Did Christ Die Only for the Elect?*, 74). Aside from the fact that Hodge is defining the term in another context, Douty overlooks the fact that most commentators see "many" as connected to the work of the Suffering Servant in Isa 53. In this connection, "many" actually becomes a semi-technical term for the covenant community, and therefore an argument against general atonement (e.g., see the treatment of Isa 53 in chap. 6).

<sup>131</sup>Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by Christ Himself*, 213.

cause of the remission of sins.”<sup>132</sup> This prepares the way for Smeaton’s third point: “The Lord Jesus . . . speaks of His blood as . . . constituting its fundamental condition.”<sup>133</sup> This is the most debatable point—namely, that Christ’s death procured its own application—but it is also the one with the strongest exegetical support.

Appealing to the final promise of Jeremiah 31:31-34, Smeaton observes “the peculiar nature of this covenant” as “its objective foundation and basis in pardon.”<sup>134</sup> In other words, the one thing that broke every previous covenant (namely, sin and covenantal disobedience) has now been taken care of through Christ’s atoning death, which effected the remission of sins (Heb 9:22). Next, Smeaton shows many of the ways that Scripture speaks of Jesus’ blood effecting forgiveness, and he concludes that “the remission of sins is here represented as the ground or reason of the other blessings contained in the covenant”<sup>135</sup>—blessings that include knowledge of God, volitional desire for the things of God, and personal interest in having a relationship with God (Jer 31:33-34). Accordingly, Christ’s priestly announcement of this new covenant indicates that covenantal blessings do not depend on the members of the covenant, but on the God-man Jesus Christ whose covenantal mediation secured the blessings of the covenant. As it was argued in type with Abraham, and as it will

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<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 213. One unique theme in Smeaton’s exegetical work on Christ’s atonement is the stress he puts on the “causal connection” between Christ’s objective work and its intended effect. Preserving the chronological (read: redemptive-historical) application of Christ’s death, Smeaton maintains that Christ’s death is the logical cause of every covenantal blessing, thus the extent of the atonement’s intent is observable in its effect over time.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., 214.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 215. Smeaton also observes how “its internal character” is superior to “economy of the outward letter” (ibid.).

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., 223. Speaking in terms of cause and effect, independent of space and time, he states, “[Jesus’] blood is the immediate cause of remission, and not a mere mediate causes; that is, it was not dependent for its efficacy on the amendments which are the concomitants or attendants of a religious life” (ibid., 222). More succinctly, grace creates faith; faith does pull down grace.

be argued in the section on Hebrews below, the priestly service of Christ is what secures the basis of the covenant. In other words, Christ's priestly service effects faith in all those who were elected before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:3-6).<sup>136</sup>

At this point it is worth making two observations about faith: First, faith is the first blessing that manifests itself when life is breathed into the elect sinner. Like Methionine, the "starter" amino acid which triggers and initiates all protein construction (the amassing of other amino acids), faith is both a necessary "starter" for all covenantal rewards (Heb 11:6) and is itself a God-given, blood-bought, Spirit-applied blessing of the new covenant. More specifically, since circumcision of the heart, which is effected by Spirit at Jesus' request, cleanses and enlivens the seed of God (1 John 3:9; 5:1), it follows that faith which is necessary to enjoy the blessings of the new covenant is also a covenantal provision.<sup>137</sup>

Second, in contrast to generalists who extend the new covenant blessing of forgiveness (alternately called "provision") to all people without exception,<sup>138</sup> I am arguing that faith cannot be the decisive factor in translating someone "in covenant" to being "in Christ." This posterior delimitation (i.e., a limited application after a universal redemption) fails to recognize how Scripture uses "in Christ" language. The problem is that Scripture equates being "in Christ" with being "in covenant,"<sup>139</sup> and unless the new covenant exhibits a

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<sup>136</sup>"Forgiving grace is set forth as the source of every other benefit. . . . [it] is represented [in Jer 31:31-34] as the *reason* why the other benefits are conferred, or as the *cause*, source, and origin from which they flow. . . . regeneration, illumination, and fellowship, is to be traced to the remission of sins" (ibid., 223-24).

<sup>137</sup>While faith is a condition of the covenant; it is also, a gift from the triune God (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 2:8-10; Phil 1:29). See also, Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, 141-45.

<sup>138</sup>Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 193; Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 851.

<sup>139</sup>So Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 129-52. It should be noted that Horton's theological "covenant of grace" is fundamentally

two-tiered system of blessing, there should never be a division between “in covenant” and “in Christ.”<sup>140</sup> To say it another way, the new covenant is coterminous with being “in Christ,” and since the new covenant promises forgiveness of sins through a covenant-ratifying death (Heb 8:8-13; 9:15-17), it holds that Christ, the priestly mediator of the new covenant, only atoned for the elect.<sup>141</sup> And to ensure that his people received their blessed inheritance, he sent out his Spirit to effect faith, which is also the condition of the covenant. This is why the apostle Paul concludes his gospel exposition in Romans 1-11 with the statement: “For from him and by him and to him are all things.”<sup>142</sup> In short, the free offer of the gospel is made to all men with the condition that any who would believe may come and find salvation (John 6:37), but only those for whom Jesus shed covenantal blood will indeed come, because these alone are the ones whom the Father will draw (vv. 44, 65), or to use priestly language, these alone are the ones whom Jesus will instruct (v. 45).

In summary, the earthly life of Christ provides at least six strong lines of evidence for advocating a definite atonement on the basis of Christ’s priestly action. The strongest

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different than the progressive covenantalism advocated here. Nonetheless, his point about “in Christ” and “in covenant” still stands (ibid., 181ff.).

<sup>140</sup>Ironically, this “two-tiered” system is exactly what most covenant theologians argue. Horton writes, “Whether we speak of being in Christ or being in covenant, Christ is the mediator, and there is a distinction between being internally united to Christ in a covenant of grace and belonging in merely an external and visible sense. . . . The covenant in its outward administration is wider than election” (ibid., 182). While space does not permit a full interaction with Horton’s view of the covenant, it is worth asking: Does not his view of the covenant make Christ’s atoning death for the visible church (according to the covenant of grace) less than definite? It is not a general atonement, but neither is it truly a definite atonement, for some in the new covenant who are not elect will not experience forgiveness of sins, only the non-salvific benefit of being near the covenant people of God.

<sup>141</sup>Even more, since the elect are “in Christ” before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4-6; 2 Tim 1:9), it grates against Pauline theology to make “in Christ” depend upon man’s faith (Horton, *Covenant and Salvation*, 147-48). Of course, faith and repentance are necessary for salvation, but these are the instrumental means given by God himself (faith: Eph 2:8-9; Phil 1:29; repentance: Zech 12:10; 2 Tim 2:24), by which men are saved.

<sup>142</sup>To put it in a Trinitarian formula: What the Father demands, the Son procures and provides, and then applies by the sending of the Spirit (Eph 1:3-14).



argument, which recurs in these priestly actions, is the fact that Christ represents a particular covenant people and that those who are not with Christ are against Christ, and thus, in time, will receive the judgment of Christ as he purges the cosmos of every unclean thing. Yet, before that day, Christ is said to love those who reject him (Mark 10:21) and to pray for those who persecute him (Luke 23:34).<sup>143</sup> Still, despite the godly love Jesus has for his enemies (Matt 5:44-45), the design of Christ's priestly sacrifice is particular. He dies *for* Christ's covenant people (*Kohen Mediator*) and *against* his enemies (*Kohen Victor*). This has been hinted at in the Gospels, but in order to see the inner workings of Christ's covenantal death, it is vital to consider the Everest of covenant theology, the book of Hebrews.

### **Christ's Priestly Sacrifice and Covenant Mediation: *Kohen Mediator* in Hebrews**

In Hebrews, the author writes, "Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood" (9:18), and "Under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (v. 22). What he states in those two verses arises from the covenantal argument of his letter and the covenantal structures, or "framework," of the Bible.<sup>144</sup> More specifically, the covenantal blood of which Hebrews speaks is always the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ who inaugurated the new covenant with his priestly sacrifice (cf. Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20).<sup>145</sup> At the center of the new

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<sup>143</sup>On the variegated nature of God's love, see D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000). For a biblical-theological treatment of Luke 23:34, a text often appealed to as evidence for universal intercession, see Stephen J. Wellum, "The New Covenant Work of Christ: Priesthood, Atonement, and Intercession," in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. Jonathan Gibson and David Gibson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, forthcoming).

<sup>144</sup>On the covenantal framework of the Bible, see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

<sup>145</sup>On the relationship of priest and covenant, see the discussion of Jer 30-33 in chap. 6.

covenant stood the sure promise of forgiveness (Heb 6:13-20; 8:8-13; 10:15-18), a forgiveness that Jesus effectively secured by his superior priesthood, sacrifice, and covenant mediation. In what follows, we will consider how Christ's blood effected forgiveness for his new covenant people, and how his priestly mediation results in a definite atonement.

To come to grips with the import of Jesus' death in the book of Hebrews, we will focus on three passages that give specific attention to his priestly mediation (Heb 8:6; 9:15; and 12:24). Scattered throughout this sermon-like epistle, these three verses include the term "mediator" (*mesitēs*) to describe how Jesus' priesthood (outlined in Heb 5:1-10; 7:1-25) relates to the new covenant (delineated in Heb 8:1-13, as well as Heb 9:1-10:18). Using this term (*mesitēs*) as an entry into the theology of Hebrews, I will demonstrate that Christ's priestly mediation is not for all people without exception. Instead, his priesthood is delimited to those who are in covenant with him, on the basis of his service and not their solicitation.<sup>146</sup>

This section will move in three steps. First, *mesitēs* will be defined. Next, each use of *mesitēs* will be examined in context. Third, in each of these contexts, the theological implications of Christ's priestly mediation will be shown, and their impact on the atonement adduced. In short, I will argue that Christ's role as new covenant mediator depends on his perfect priesthood, and his priesthood unassailably secures forgiveness for his new covenant community, not for those outside the covenant.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup>Dawson, *Jesus Ascended*, 124. Of course, faith is necessary for salvation (Heb 4:2; 11:1-40). Only those who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved, but the genesis of such a believing prayer originates with the covenant head, not from one of the lower extremities.

<sup>147</sup>In this argument, I am overlooking Heb 5-7, a critical locus for discerning how Christ as a non-Levite can be a priest (cf. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 292-305; Turretin, *Institutes*, 2:406-17). I will make frequent references to these chapters, but because chap. 6 treated Ps 110, which Heb 5-7 explicates, and because I am honing in on the Christ's priestly sacrifice, I am going to narrow my scope to the death Jesus died.

Regrettably, space restricts the exegetical examination of *mesitēs* to Hebrews. Yet, a word should be given about 1 Timothy 2:5. As it will be demonstrated from this covenantal epistle, and as it can be observed in Galatians 3:19-20—another passage where Christ’s covenant is in view—the term *mesitēs* in 1 Timothy 2:5 should be defined by the stipulations of the *new covenant* which Christ mediates. Since generalists often use the *prima facie* language of 1 Timothy 2:5-6 to reject definite atonement, this dissertation suggests that Paul’s language should be understood in light of the covenantal and priestly nature of *mesitēs*. However, before being able to assign such covenantal emphases to *mesitēs* in 1 Timothy 2:5, one must see how the rest of the NT uses the term, especially the book of Hebrews.<sup>148</sup>

### ***Mesitēs* Defined**

Becker defines *mesitēs* as “one who finds himself between two bodies or parties.”<sup>149</sup> More completely, BDAG describes it as “one who mediates betw[een] two parties to remove a disagreement or reach a common goal.”<sup>150</sup> In classical Greek, *mesitēs* was a term used regularly that had a “wide range of meaning.”<sup>151</sup> Becker suggests at least four ways classical Greek portrayed the mediator:

He could be the conciliator or arbitrator in cases that has not yet come before a court of law, so as to prevent this happening. He could be the administrator or trustee for something in dispute. He was also the witness to legal business that had been settled

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<sup>148</sup>Of course, the covenantal vocabulary of Hebrews must not be superimposed on Paul. However, with the most detailed use of *mesitēs* coming in Hebrews, it is fair to say that Hebrews, in contradistinction with extra-biblical uses of *mesitēs* (cf. William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, vol. 46 [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000], 516-17), sheds better light on the way Paul used the term 1 Tim 2:5.

<sup>149</sup>O. Becker, “Covenant,” in *NIDNTT* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 1:372-73.

<sup>150</sup>Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 634.

<sup>151</sup>Becker, “Covenant,” in *NIDNTT*, 1:373.

with the responsibility of guaranteeing that the decision would be carried out. He could be a pawnbroker and sometimes a guarantor... who guarantees the liabilities of another with his own property.<sup>152</sup>

Still, with such background information in place, it will be more profitable to look at the OT to define *mesitēs* in the book of Hebrews. The typology employed in Hebrews suggests that the meaning of *mesitēs* will find its closest adumbrations there.<sup>153</sup> In the OT, there are a number of “mediating figures” who prefigure Christ as the greater covenant mediator,<sup>154</sup> but as I have argued throughout this dissertation, the priestly role should receive serious consideration for defining the way in which Christ functions as a covenant mediator. This will be proven below.

Properly speaking, “the OT Hebrew has no word corresponding to ‘mediator’ (gr. *mesitēs*) to refer to these arbitrators or intermediaries.”<sup>155</sup> However, the concept of a mediator stands out in many places. For instance in each of the covenants, there is a mediatorial figure who receives God’s promises and stands to intercede for the people of the

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<sup>152</sup>Ibid. While these descriptions add color to the usage of *mesitēs*, none of them fully capture the biblical meaning. Thus, even while the word is not used in the OT, we are benefitted by considering the kind of “mediators” that existed in the biblical text.

<sup>153</sup>For a brief treatment of the typology in Hebrews, see Andrew H. Trotter, Jr., *Interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Guides to New Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 196-99. Likewise, the introductory comments of George H. Guthrie (“Hebrews,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 919-23), explain the use of the OT in Hebrews.

<sup>154</sup>While Becker (“Covenant,” in *NIDNTT*, 1:373) observes, “There is no single term for a mediator in the OT, either in Heb[rew] or G[ree]k,” John T. McNeill observes in Calvin’s *Institutes*, “the triple office [prophet, priest, and king] gives structure to the doctrine of the work of Christ as Mediator” (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles [Louisville: Westminster John Knox], 494). For a theological treatment of the three offices that coalesce in the NT notion of *mesitēs* see John Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:494-503; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 2:459-61; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 356-414.

<sup>155</sup>Andre-Alphonse Viard and Jean Duplacy, “Mediator,” in *DBT*, ed. Xavier Leon-Dufour, trans. William J. Young, (New York: Seabury Press, 1967), 344.

covenant (e.g., Noah, Abraham, Moses and later the priests of Levi, and David).<sup>156</sup> So while a “neutral third party” is not found, priests and prophets functioned as mediators between God and Israel.<sup>157</sup> Even in Job, God’s suffering servant pleads for a mediator (Job 9:33, LXX *mesitēs*).<sup>158</sup> Going one step further, Moses and the Servant in Isaiah serve as prototypical mediators,<sup>159</sup> the former serving as a typological figure who Christ supersedes (Heb 8:5-6), the latter functioning as an eschatological figure whom Christ fulfills. Thus, in type and shadow, the mediatorial office is seen in the OT.<sup>160</sup>

A special word should be mentioned about Moses, who we passed over in the OT. More than anyone else, Moses served as the greatest precursor to Jesus’ role as covenant mediator.<sup>161</sup> In fact, Moses alone shares the title “mediator” (*mesitēs*) with Jesus (cf. Gal

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<sup>156</sup>For an extended treatment on the mediating role that Abraham and Moses played in their respective covenants, see Gerard Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), 132-42 and 197-211. Likewise, O. Palmer Robertson (*The Christ of the Covenants* [Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980], 235-36) explains how David served as a covenant mediator. As it was argued in chapters 3-6, each of these covenant mediators possess priestly characteristics.

<sup>157</sup>Becker, “Covenant,” in *NIDNTT*, 1:373.

<sup>158</sup>In his illuminating work on Job, Robert Fyall argues that one of the main points of the book is finding “an advocate in heaven” (*Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job*, NSBT [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002], 31-55). Job 9:33-35 presents a major pillar in this argument. He comments, “In the developing drama of [Job], once the question of a mediator has been raised, it cannot simply be left. It is here a forlorn wish” that grows stronger in the remainder of the book (see Job 16:18-22; 19:20-27). Canonically, it also continues to grow until Christ is revealed as the priestly mediator from heaven who sympathizes with sinners (Heb 4:14-16).

<sup>159</sup>Becker, “Covenant,” in *NIDNTT*, 1:373-74.

<sup>160</sup>As Viard and Duplacy put it, “Throughout the history of Israel, God caused men to arise whom He made responsible for His people, and whose office it was to insure the normal working of the covenant. By these functions, personal relations between God and individuals were not suppressed, but they were placed in the framework of the people whose name and for whose benefit these different mediations were exercised.” (“Mediator,” 345). Likewise, these OT saints were put in place in order to serve as types pointing to Christ. As so many NT authors emphasize, Jesus is a prophet like Moses (Acts 3:22-26), a king greater than David (Matt 22:41-46), and a priest better than Melchizedek (Heb 5:5-10; 7:1ff.). For thorough treatment of this typology, see Reymond, *Jesus Divine Messiah*, 63-165.

<sup>161</sup>Moses served a number of capacities in the OT. Rene Motte and Marc-Francois Lacan list seven: servant of God, friend of God, liberator, mediator of the covenant, prophet, legislator, and intercessor

3:19).<sup>162</sup> This typological relationship (Moses-Jesus) is significant because of how often it occurs in the NT, especially in Hebrews.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, as will be developed below, Moses' ministry is explicitly contrasted with Jesus in Hebrews 8:5-6—the first time *mesitēs* is used in Hebrews.<sup>164</sup>

### **Hebrews 8:6: Christ's Priestly Mediation Secures an Unbreakable Covenant with Better Promises**

Hebrews is a priestly epistle.<sup>165</sup> Hebrews 5-10, in particular, is full of quotations, references, and allusions to the Levitical priesthood and Melchizedek's greater priesthood. For instance, Hebrews 4:14-5:10 introduces Jesus Christ as a sympathetic high priest who was appointed by God to be a priest in the order of Melchizedek. The author digresses in Hebrews 5:11-6:20 but continues his priestly description of Christ in Hebrews 7:1-28.<sup>166</sup>

From here, Jesus is contrasted with the ineffectual Levites. He is a priest like Melchizedek, one who serves “not on the basis of legal requirements but by the power of an

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(“Moses,” in *DBT*, 368-70). Cf. P.E. Hughes, “Moses,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 668-73.

<sup>162</sup>Viard and Duplacy, “Mediator,” in *DBT*, 345.

<sup>163</sup>Some of the significant types include the fact that Moses was a servant in God's house, while Jesus was a Son over God's house (Heb 3:1-6); Moses was the giver of the law, Jesus was the giver of grace and truth (John 1:17); Moses initiated the old covenant, Jesus inaugurated the new covenant (2 Cor 3). For a thorough treatment of Jesus as a new Moses, see Allison, *The New Moses*.

<sup>164</sup>On the priestly superiority of Jesus to that of Moses, see Vanhoye's discussion of Heb 3-4 (*Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, 95-109)

<sup>165</sup>Geerhardus Vos, “The Priesthood of Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos: Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1980), 126-161; Barnabas Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 58-84.

<sup>166</sup>James Kurianal (*Jesus Our High Priest: Ps 110,4 As the Substructure of Heb 5,1-7,28* [New York: Peter Lang, 2000]), does much to show how priesthood is the structuring principle undergirding the preceding context (Hebrews 5:1-7:28).

indestructible life” (7:16).<sup>167</sup> Thus, as a sinless high priest, he “lives to make intercession” and “he holds his priesthood permanently” (7:24-25). More importantly though, his priesthood supersedes the old “law-covenant”<sup>168</sup> and initiates a new covenant (7:12),<sup>169</sup> so that as a greater priest he offers a greater ministry, established on greater promises. As we examine Hebrews 8:6, these aspects will come to the forefront.

**Christ has obtained a better ministry.** Hebrews 8:6 opens by contrasting Jesus’ ministry against that of Moses. The emphasis of the contrast seems to make Jesus’ ministry better by comparison than Moses because he serves in a better place.<sup>170</sup> Likewise, to stress the permanence of Jesus’ ministry, Hebrews says that Jesus has “received” or “obtained” a better ministry. The perfect tense of the verb *tetuxen* carries the idea of a permanently appointed ministry (*leitourgias*).<sup>171</sup> As the argument of Hebrews is examined, it becomes apparent that Jesus is the better mediator of a better covenant. Both of these elements must be considered as they arise from the text.

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<sup>167</sup>It is worth noting that many commentators believe that the “indestructibility” of Jesus life refers to his resurrection. For a taxonomy of approaches to Heb 7:15-16, see Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 202-07.

<sup>168</sup>Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 259.

<sup>169</sup>John Dunnill conjoins the new law with the new covenant (*Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, SNTSMS [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 133, 147), saying, “The model presupposed in these passages is not so much the inauguration of a new covenant as the ordination of a new priesthood (7:12; 10:9-18)” (ibid., 147). In Hebrews, Christ as the greater priest fulfills all the laws of the old covenant, while simultaneously inaugurating a new covenant with the law now written on the heart. Supporting this understanding, Barry Joslin explains, “The law has been transformed in Christ, and this transformation involves both its internalization and its fulfillment in the New Covenant” (*Hebrews, Christ, and the Law: The Theology of the Mosaic Law in Hebrews 7:1-10:18* [Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2008], 134).

<sup>170</sup>Guthrie posits that the inclusion of Exod 25:40 in Heb 8:5 seems to come from the author’s design to “reinforce the theological thought that there is a heavenly tabernacle” (“Hebrews,” 969-70). Whereas, the Jews were able to see and experience the earthly sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem, Heb 8:5 recalls that this was merely a shadow of the substance and that Jesus now serves at the real dwelling place of God.

<sup>171</sup>Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 409.

First, we know that Christ’s ministry is priestly because of the immediate context (8:1-5), the preceding context (7:1-28), and the use of the term *leitourgias*.<sup>172</sup> In Hebrews 8:2, a nominal cognate (*leitourgikos*) is used to describe the priestly session that Jesus has in heavenly places. Unlike the Levites who serve a type of the true temple (v. 5), Jesus serves a tent made without human hands.<sup>173</sup> Likewise, since everything in the preceding context (Heb 7:1-28) aims to show the superiority of Christ’s priesthood, it is best to see Jesus’ ministry in verse 6 as priestly.<sup>174</sup> Finally, the term itself, *leitourgia* is constantly used in Hebrews, as it was in the LXX, as a priestly term.<sup>175</sup> The significance, therefore, is that Christ’s work as mediator is a priestly work. While it was observed previously that the office of mediator can be broader than that of the priest, it should be admitted that in his role as covenant mediator, he inaugurates and upholds the new covenant as the final priest.

Second, Christ’s ministry is superior because it is “enacted on better promises,” promises that cannot be broken because they depend on and are fulfilled by God.<sup>176</sup> These promises will be spelled out in Hebrews 8:8-12; however, the excellency of these promises is

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<sup>172</sup>Ellingworth raises the issue of primacy in Heb 8:6: Is ministry, covenant, or promise primary in the author’s thought? He answers, “The priestly ministry of Jesus is primary, in the sense that the new covenant is rarely if ever mentioned without reference, usually explicitly (7:22; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20; cf. 10:24), to the work of Christ” (*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 409).

<sup>173</sup>*Typōn*, which is normally used to speak of the shadow or the type, is used of the heavenly tabernacle in Heb 8:5 to speak of the “pattern” of the heavenly throne room from which the earthly tabernacle derives its “blueprint.” Richard Davidson has a helpful discussion on how this word is used in Heb 8:5 and how it fits into the argument of Heb 8-9 (*Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical TYPOS Structures* [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1991], 367-88).

<sup>174</sup>Commenting on Heb 8:6, Simon Kistemaker confirms this reading when he writes, “The word *ministry* relates to the work in the tabernacle or sanctuary” (*Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NTC [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984], 220). Jesus work as mediator is a priestly work.

<sup>175</sup>K. Hess, “Serve,” in *NIDNTT*, 3:551-52.

<sup>176</sup>Alexander Nairne (*The Epistle to the Hebrews* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922], 82) points to the paradoxical nature of the new covenant, that the Mosaic law is surpassed and improved by another law, the law of the gospel (cf. Rom 7:23; Jas 1:25).



already evident in 8:6.<sup>177</sup> While these promises of the covenant are described by many as unilateral,<sup>178</sup> it should be remembered that the unilateral promises are fulfilled by the active work of a theanthropic mediator.<sup>179</sup> The new covenant is entirely of God, accomplished by the incarnate Son (2:14-18) who guarantees the covenant through his priestly work (7:22).<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup>For consideration of the new covenant superseding the old, see William Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC, vol. 47A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 208-09; George Guthrie, *Hebrews*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 280-82; Michael D. Morrison, *Who Needs a New Covenant? Rhetorical Function of the Covenant Motif in the Argument of Hebrews*, PTMS (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2008), 146-52. Morrison makes a helpful clarification: The supersession does not concern the people of Israel but the old covenant with Israel (*ibid.*, 151). For the alternative understanding, that the covenant is merely renewed and the promises are not really ‘new,’ see John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews*, Calvin’s Commentaries, trans. John Owen [Reprint: Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005], 184-85. Likewise, Scott Hahn’s treatment of Hebrews attempts to suture the old and new covenants and make the new covenant a renewal of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants (*Kinship by Covenant*, 278-81). In opposition to Calvin and Hahn, Lindars points out that such renewal flies in the face of the whole letter (*The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, 80-81). Likewise, Lane posits that when God finds fault with the old covenant, it cannot stand to reason that the new covenant is simply a renewal (*Hebrews 1-8*, 209).

<sup>178</sup>Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 410. Likewise, O’Brien says, “The covenant is a gracious gift from God. So Jesus’ role as *mediator* is not in a strict sense that of an arbiter or intermediary of a bilateral agreement. The terms of the covenant are not in dispute or up for discussion, so that Jesus has to act as a mediator by bringing the two parties together to hammer out an agreement. He is an agent, or delegate invested with divine authority in God’s settlement, which Jesus realizes and guarantees” (*The Letter to the Hebrews*, 292). O’Brien is surely correct that Jesus’ mediation functions graciously to bring the promises of God to his covenant people, and he is also right to say that the offspring of Abraham (i.e., the elect) are in no place to dispute the covenant. However, it should be remembered that Christ mediates as a priest who has been made like his brothers in every way (Heb 2:14-18). In other words, Jesus mediates the covenant as a perfect man. Moreover, he mediates the covenant as a perfect priest, one “who is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin” (5:1). I say all that to say: Christ’s mediation does not simply impose God’s covenantal demands on a foreign people; rather, in his incarnation, ministry, and propitiating sacrifice, Christ brings—to use spatial terminology—an offering from earth to heaven.

Thus, as a flesh and blood priest, Jesus offers himself up to death to terminate the old (broken) covenant and to inaugurate the new (unbreakable) covenant, established on better promises (see Heb 9:15-17). In this way, the covenant is from God, through God, and to God. To call the new covenant unilateral as O’Brien flattens the reality that there are two parties involved in this covenant—God the Father and God the Son, who stands as covenant head for his people. In short, there is too much interpersonal complexity in the new covenant to call it unilateral. But by same token, because the new covenant is ultimately fulfilled from first to last by the triune God, it is gloriously monergistic. Therefore, the reason why the new covenant is better is because for the first time a (human) covenant-keeper has been found in Jesus Christ. O’Brien missteps when he calls the new covenant a simple unilateral covenant, because in so doing, he minimizes the importance of Christ’s active obedience and his priestly work which establishes the covenant, not to mention the way the Bible presents biblical covenants (cf. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*).

<sup>179</sup>W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. Alan W. Gomes (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003), 675.

<sup>180</sup>Lane comments, “Although the promises of the new covenant are not expressed in cultic terms and are silent concerning a new priesthood and sacrifice, the subsequent development shows the extent to which these promises have influenced the writer’s theology. The link between the themes of priesthood and covenant

In three ways, the author of Hebrews sets the new covenant above the old. First, at the start of the second clause, *hosoi* introduces a comparison between the older covenant and its mediation and Jesus' mediation as a new priest establishing a new covenant. From this comparison and the statement in Jeremiah 31:32 that the new covenant is "not like" the covenant with the fathers, it is evident God is doing more than simply renewing a broken covenant.<sup>181</sup> Second, *diaphoroteras* describes the kind of ministry that Jesus received, and in a simple, forceful way, the word means superior or more excellent.<sup>182</sup> Third, like the permanency of the ministry Jesus obtained, the new covenant is permanently and legally established (cf. Heb 7:11).<sup>183</sup> The perfect form of the word *nomotheteo* emphasizes the enduring nature of the Christ's covenant. In these ways, the superiority of Christ's mediation is evident. This superiority goes a long way in commending a definite atonement, but before making that theological conclusion, it is essential to see the promises of this new covenant.

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promise is provided in 10:15-18, where the basis of forgiveness pledged in the new covenant [e.g., the better promise] is shown to be the accomplishment of Christ as high priest" (*Hebrews 1-8*, 208).

<sup>181</sup>Hillers makes a fascinating observation in his work on covenants. Comparing the Essenes with first-century Christianity, he observes, "The Essenes had a covenant, but it was not new; the Christians had something new, but it was not a covenant" (Delbert Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press], 188). While, in the light of Hebrews, I believe he overstates his case concerning Christianity's lack of covenant, Hillers helpfully points out that Christianity was not just another sect of Judaism. Christ's new covenant was establishing something utterly new.

<sup>182</sup>O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 293.

<sup>183</sup>Esser relates how the author of Hebrews negatively uses *nomos* to contrast the old legal systems with the new covenant Christ mediates ("Law," in *NIDNTT*, 2:447-48). Yet, it is interesting that the term used in Heb 8:6 to employ the new covenant is the legal term *nomothetos*. The legal covenant is based on the better promises. On this point, Ellingworth is helpful. He posits that *legal* in this case must "be understood here in a broader sense than that of specific provisions of the Torah, which, as the quotation in v. 5 [Exod 25:40] has just shown, itself points to the inferiority of the old covenant" (*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 410). See also, Philip E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 298-99.

**The better promises of the new covenant.** While the focus of this section disallows extensive exegesis on Hebrews 8:7-12,<sup>184</sup> it is important to understand how his mediation installs a covenant with better promises.<sup>185</sup> First, after exalting Christ's ministry and calling him a superior mediator, the author of Hebrews presents, ostensibly, a negative view of the old covenant. He suggests its inadequacy by stressing the need for a "second" covenant. On this point, Joslin is surely right in his proposal that the covenant at Sinai was given with "purposed insufficiency."<sup>186</sup> God gave the covenant to Israel at Sinai through Moses, as a temporary, and even typological, covenant.<sup>187</sup> Therefore, to grasp the contrast that Hebrews is establishing, I must digress briefly to Sinai.

In the first covenant, the stipulations were given in such a way that Israel was offered life if they kept the law. Leviticus 18:5 states, "You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD." In covenantal fashion, blessings were promised for obedience (Lev 26:1-13, Deut 28:1-14) and curses for covenant-breakers (Lev 26:14-33; Deut 27:9-26; 28:15-68).

In fact, even in the very installation of this old covenant, there was the indication that Israel would break covenant and inherit God's curses (Deut 30:1-4; 31:27, 29). Yet, at the same time that covenant breaking was threatened so was the promise of a circumcised heart (Deut 30:6). What men could not do in their sinful nature—namely, circumcise their

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<sup>184</sup>For a thorough treatment of Heb 8:8-12, see Joslin, *Hebrews, Christ, and the Law*, esp. 173-223.

<sup>185</sup>See also the discussion of Jer 30-33 in chap. 6.

<sup>186</sup>See Joslin, *Hebrews, Christ, and the Law*, 183-85. God designed the old covenant to eventually fail so that Christ could inaugurate a new covenant. However, the covenant that Christ mediates has no such insufficiency, and therefore secures salvation for all those for whom Christ died (i.e., all covenant members).

<sup>187</sup>Lane's comments are helpful when he suggests that God's intention from the start was eschatological. "That God took the initiative in announcing his intention to establish a new covenant with Israel (v. 8a) indicates that he fully intended the first covenant to be provisional" (*Hebrews 1-8*, 209).

hearts (Deut 10:16), God promised to do. Jeremiah's words picks up this early promise of spiritual circumcision and states explicitly, "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts" (31:33; cf. Ezek 36:26-27). So too, the NT in many places affirms the inauguration of the new covenant (Luke 22:20; 2 Cor 3:6ff) with its spiritual circumcision (Phil 3:3; Col 2:11; cf. Gal 6:15).<sup>188</sup> And now in Hebrews, the old covenant which in the end could only produce death, is being replaced by the new covenant, which is finally and fully able to atone for sin, provide forgiveness, and establish once and for all God's relationship with his people.<sup>189</sup>

Thus, Hebrews 8:8-12 delineates the "better promises" of Jeremiah 31:31-34. These include: (1) a legal promise: "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts;" (2) a relational promise: "I will be their God, and they shall be my people;" (3) a revelatory promise: "no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me;" and (4) a redemptive promise: "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Together, these four promises solve the fourfold problem of Israel (and all mankind)—disobedience, alienation, ignorance, and sin-debt. Even more, the new covenant provides for the one thing that destroyed the old covenant—sin! Therefore, "unlike the old covenant, there will be no possibility of breaking this new covenant...Sin cannot imperil the divine-human relationship guaranteed by this new

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<sup>188</sup>The NT also employs the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to demonstrate the transition from old to new covenant, from a covenant of the flesh to a covenant of the Spirit. This develops the language and imagery of Ezek 36-37 and Joel 2, in a corresponding fashion to Jer 31.

<sup>189</sup>For an excellent treatment of the relationship between the old covenant and the purpose of its law and the new covenant with its infinitely improved efficacy, see Joslin, *Hebrews, Christ, and the Law*. For a similar treatment of Paul's Epistles, see Jason C. Meyer, *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology*, NACSBT (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2009).

covenant, for sin will not be brought into account: *God will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.*”<sup>190</sup>

In the end, Hebrews 8:6 teaches us that Christ’s priestly work permanently secures the promises of the new covenant for those whom Christ mediates. The efficacious nature of his priesthood, coupled with the promise of forgiveness, leads to the conclusion that Christ does not simply make possible forgiveness for all humanity. Rather, as the efficacious mediator of a new covenant, all that he accomplishes as priest he seals to the hearts of the people God has given him to represent. This is just one of the superlative features of the new covenant. At the end of Hebrews 8 there remains a need for greater explanation on how Christ ratifies the new covenant. This leads to the next mention of *mesitēs* in Hebrews 9:15.

### **Hebrews 9:15: Christ’s Blood Ends the First Covenant and Inaugurates a New Covenant**

Hebrews 9 is filled with blood.<sup>191</sup> Eleven times the word *haima* is used.<sup>192</sup> It provides the important explanation left unanswered in Hebrews 8—namely, *how is the new covenant inaugurated?* As Hebrews 9:15 explains, Jesus as the *mesitēs* establishes the new covenant through the shedding of his own blood. Yet, we need to unpack the whole chapter to discern what this means, and what it means for the extent of the atonement.

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<sup>190</sup>Paul Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Plan*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 157. Emphasis mine.

<sup>191</sup>More comprehensively, Albert Vanhoye (*Structure and Message of the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1989], 38), notes that Heb 8-9 are filled with priestly vocabulary: “‘offer’ (8 times), ‘blood’ (11 times), ‘sanctuary’ (8 times), ‘tent’ (8 times), ‘covenant’ (12 times).”

<sup>192</sup>Technically, *haima* is only used ten times, but *haimatekchysias*, which can be rendered “the shedding of blood,” is used in v. 22.

The framework of Hebrews 9:1-22 is straightforward, even if some of the interpretative matters are not.<sup>193</sup> In verses 1-5, the author digresses to the first covenant with its regulations for worship. He lists a number of the cultic instruments involved in worship, and he refers to the tent where God dwelled and where priests served. Attention towards the first tabernacle continues in verses 6-10, where the author speaks of the priestly service in the “first section” (v. 6) and the high priest’s entrance into the second section each year on *Yom Kippur*. In these verses, the author aims to distinguish the outdated ministrations of the flesh from Christ’s spiritual ministry.<sup>194</sup> The old tabernacle with its ineffectual gifts and sacrifices (v. 9) is contrasted with Christ’s better redemption in verses 11-14.<sup>195</sup> This superior sacrifice provides forgiveness from the curses of the old covenant, but it also inaugurates the new covenant, promising an eternal inheritance for all those in covenant with Christ (vv. 15-22).

In this covenantal context, Hebrews 9:15 has a two-fold relationship with the pericopes that precede (vv. 11-14) and follow (vv. 16-22) it.<sup>196</sup> It first looks back and culminates all that the author has said about Christ’s better redemption in verses 11-14; then, it looks ahead to the new covenant to show how Christ’s death also initiates the new

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<sup>193</sup>Vanhoye (*Structure and Message of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 38) provides a plausible structure for Heb 8-9. He suggests that these chapters are subdivided into six sections arranged in concentric order to highlight three contrasts: (1) the earthly location of the first tabernacle (8:1-6) versus the greater location of the heavenly tabernacle (9:24-28), (2) the superiority of the new covenant over the old covenant (8:7-13 and 9:15-23), and finally the axis on which all of these features swing is based on (3) the superior priestly work and “personal sacrifice of Christ” that outstrips the Levitical priesthood (9:1-10 and 9:11-14).

<sup>194</sup>It should be noted that this distinction between earth and heaven, earthly and spiritual, in Hebrews is not dependent on Platonism. Writing on the cosmology of Hebrews, Edwards Adams insists, “While [Hebrews] uses Platonic-sounding language in [its] comparison and contrast of the earthly and heavenly shrines, there is no hard evidence to suggest that Platonic dualism influences his understanding of the structure of cosmic reality.” Instead he posits that readers who see Platonic dualism in Hebrews import that into their reading (“The Cosmology of Hebrews,” in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, 138).

<sup>195</sup>Advancing an argument from literary structure, Vanhoye shows how Christ as high priest in Heb 9:11 is the central feature of 8:1-9:28 and 5:1-10:39 (*The Structure and Message to the Hebrews*, 36).

<sup>196</sup>Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 459; William Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, WBC, vol. 47B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 241-42.

covenant, with its promises of eternal inheritance.<sup>197</sup> To fully grasp this passage we will need to look at Hebrews 9:15 in its relationship with 9:11-14 and 9:16-22.<sup>198</sup>

**Hebrews 9:11-15.** In Hebrews 9:11-15, the author explains how Christ's role as covenant mediator is based on his priestly work (v. 11).<sup>199</sup> This includes (1) passing through a more perfect tent to enter the very presence of God, (2) securing redemption with a superior offering, and (3) providing purification for the conscience, not merely the flesh. In these three ways, Christ exceeds the old covenant priest and rightly qualifies him to be the mediator of the new covenant. To better understand what Hebrews is saying about Christ as *mesitēs*, we will consider these improvements in turn.

First, Christ's intermediary position is greater. Unlike the Levites who ministered in the first section of the temple and the high priest who entered the Most Holy Place once a year, Christ "[passed] through the greater more perfect tent" and "entered once for all into the holy places" (v. 11). The location of Christ's ministry receives a great amount of attention in Hebrews (6:19-20; 8:1-2; 9:23-24), and it is significant for his mediatorial role.<sup>200</sup> While commentators have presented various interpretations concerning the meaning of "through the

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<sup>197</sup>O'Brien points out the theological significance of this transition. Speaking of v. 15, "Now . . . our author brings the atonement and covenant themes together as he declares that through Christ's sacrifice the mercy promised under the new covenant is given" (*The Letter to the Hebrews*, 327).

<sup>198</sup>Lane states that "the internal logic of the argument indicates that vv. 16-22 should be regarded as a parenthetical explanation of v. 15, which in turn is the climax of vv. 11-14" (*Hebrews 9-13*, 234).

<sup>199</sup>While most commentators rightly make the literary connection between 9:11-14 and 9:15 (Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 241; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 327), it should be remembered that Heb 5-10 is one unified argument. The author intentionally reiterates Christ's priestly role in Heb 9:11, all that the author of Hebrews says earlier about his priesthood should not be forgotten—e.g., his incarnation (2:14, 17), selection and representation (5:1), and intercession (4:14-16; 7:25). Cf. Albert Vanhoye, *The Structure and Message of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 40.

<sup>200</sup>Edward Adams ("Cosmology in Hebrews," 132) suggests that some ancient Jews believed that Moses received a vision of heaven, but in greater fashion, Jesus as the greater mediator is now "in heavenly

greater and more perfect tent” (*dia tes meizonos kai teleioteris skenes*),<sup>201</sup> Guthrie, who follows Hughes, seems correct to assert, “What [the author] of Hebrews has in mind is simply Christ’s passage into the very presence of God in heaven (8:1).”<sup>202</sup> Unlike any fallible priest, Jesus is able to successfully intervene.<sup>203</sup> Why? Because Jesus has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (9:24).<sup>204</sup>

Second, Christ’s offering is superior to that of the Levitical priests because the blood that he sheds is superior. Like his priesthood, Christ qualifies to be covenant mediator on the basis of his sinless and indestructible life. Only in this case, his blood is shed as he lays his life down. In Hebrews 9:12, the author makes a lesser-to-greater comparison between the blood of goats and calves<sup>205</sup> and the blood of Christ. Speaking about spiritual

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places.” For an in-depth look at the tabernacle in Hebrews, see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 293-312.

<sup>201</sup>Interpretations range from making the tabernacle Christ’s body (Owen), to describing the temple as the church (Westcott and Bruce), to making the physical heavens the first section of the tabernacle on the way to the dwelling place of God in the heavens (Spicq and Koester). This last option is the most plausible, but it seems that the vivid language is not looking for a concrete referent, so much as it means that Jesus’ ministry takes full effect in heaven not on earth. Cf. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 283-90.

<sup>202</sup>Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 310; Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 289-90.

<sup>203</sup>In Job 9:32-35, Job cries out for a mediator (*mesitēs*), “For [God] is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. There is no arbiter (*mesitēs*, LXX) between us who might lay his hand on us both. Let him take his rod away from me, and let not dread of him terrify me. Then I would speak without fear of him, for I am not so in myself.” What Job could not do (approach God without fear) and what he feared (approaching God without a mediator) have now been overturned. In Christ, Christians are instructed to approach God with confidence because of the new and living way that Jesus opened in his flesh (Heb 4:14-16; 10:19-21).

<sup>204</sup>Another important question concerns the timing of this entrance: Was it on the day of Christ’s crucifixion? Or perhaps on the day of his ascension? Moffitt’s consideration of this question in *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* is the most detailed, and he rightly emphasizes the place of resurrection and ascension in Hebrews. However, in advocating the important role that resurrection and ascension play in Christ’s heavenly presentation, he minimizes the central emphasis of Hebrews—the covenant-ratifying, conscious-cleansing death of Christ.

<sup>205</sup>Lane observes, “The goat was provided for the sacrificial offering of the people, and the calf for the sacrifice offered by the high priest for himself and his household” (*Hebrews 9-13*, 238).



realities, the author of Hebrews is not crassly comparing animal blood to human blood. Rather, he is stating that when Christ died on the cross, his blood provided a sacrifice of infinitely greater value than any animal offered under the old covenant (cf. 1 Pet 1:18-19). Considering the whole argument of this section, Lane writes, “The superiority of the Christ’s cultic action derives from the uniqueness of the sanctuary that he entered and from the uniqueness of the sacrifice he presented.”<sup>206</sup> Christ’s superior sacrifice permitted him access into heaven, which secured redemption, and his better blood purified the conscience of all those in the new covenant. This leads to the last point.

In its own right, the old covenant was effective.<sup>207</sup> However, it could only cleanse the flesh. On the contrary, Jesus’ blood successfully cleansed the souls of all those for whom he died. Consequently, the third aspect of Christ as *mesitēs* is that he mediates a gloriously successful covenant. While every other mediating leader (e.g., priest, king, and judge) failed before Christ; Jesus has entered heaven *once for all* (9:12); he suffered and died to put away the sin of Abraham’s offspring *once for all* (9:26); and he now lives to intercede for those whom he died to sanctify (10:14).

In these three ways, Christ successfully supplies “those who are called” with the “promised eternal inheritance.” Whereas, human sinfulness broke the old covenant, Christ in his priestly office has perfectly established the covenant because he himself “is the

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<sup>206</sup>Ibid., 237.

<sup>207</sup>Discussing this very passage, Vos notes, “The Old Testament sacrifices sanctified unto the purity of the *sarx*, because they themselves belonged to the sphere of the *sarx*; as they were external, ceremonial, so their effect was confined to the sphere of the external, ceremonial. Nevertheless in their own sphere they were truly effective, and from this the author derives *a fortiori* the confidence that the blood of Christ, who offered Himself *dia pneumatos* will be equally effective in the sphere of the spirit” (“The Priesthood of Christ in Hebrews,” 151). He adds, “Intertwined with this is the other thought, that the purification effected by the blood of Christ will be eternal, i.e., absolute, not standing in need of repetition.”

fulfillment of the covenant.”<sup>208</sup> As Hebrews 9:15 is considered in light of 9:11-14, one comes away with the unmistakable notion that Christ is glorious because he is the perfect mediator of an unbreakable covenant. In this way, Hebrews 9:11-14 is one of many lines of defense for definite atonement in the book of Hebrews.

**Hebrews 9:15-22.** Hebrews 9:15 not only looks back to verses 11-14; it also introduces the subject for the next seven verses. Functioning as a parenthetical expansion to Hebrews 9:15,<sup>209</sup> verses 16-22 explain how Christ’s death ends the first covenant and redeems the “called” from the curses of the broken covenant (vv. 15-17) and qualifies them for blessed privilege in the new covenant (vv. 18-22). In what follows I will show from these verses how Christ’s mediation terminates the old covenant and inaugurates the new.

To understand Christ as the mediator of the new covenant (v. 15), it is first necessary to see how *diatheke* should be translated in Hebrews 9:15-17. Lane, in his translation notes, gives a pluriform argument for translating *diatheke* as “covenant” in Hebrews 9:16-17 (as the NASB does), not “will” (ESV, NCSB, NIV) or “testament” (KJV, NKJV). Concerning the historicity of the word usage, he writes, “A recent review of this argument [for translating *diatheke* as will or testament in Heb 9:16-17] has demonstrated that it is impossible to translate *diatheke* in vv 16-17 as “will” or “testament” and to harmonize the writer’s statements with any known form of Hellenistic, Egyptian, or Roman legal practice. There is no evidence in classical or papyriological sources to substantiate that a will or testament was legally valid only when the testator died.”<sup>210</sup> He follows this with the fact

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<sup>208</sup>Calvin, *Hebrews*, 207.

<sup>209</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 234.

<sup>210</sup>*Ibid.*, 231.

that in ancient Israel, parents did not have to die first in order to give an inheritance.

Moreover, based on the surrounding context, *diatheke* makes the most sense to retain its covenantal understanding. Lane continues,

Syntactically, the tightly knit use of participles in 9:15-18 militates against the assignment of a different meaning of *diatheke* in vv. 16-17 from the one it has in vv. 15 and 18. The meaning of *diatheke* in vv. 16-17 is qualified by its meaning in v. 15, since vv. 16-17 parenthetically explains the necessity of Christ's death. Moreover, the *opou . . . gar . . . gar . . . hothen* ("for where . . . for . . . this is why") construction in vv. 16-18 requires that v. 18 be read as the logical conclusion of the argument in vv. 16-17. Since *diatheke* clearly means "covenant" in v. 18, it must have the same meaning in vv. 16-17.<sup>211</sup>

Lane's interpretation finds more support in a number of other recent interpreters.

For instance, Hahn argues for reading *diatheke* as "covenant" in all three uses in Hebrews 9:15-18. He also supplies a reading of the text that explains how Christ's death, which is the primary focus of Hebrews 9-10, serves as a janus connecting old and new covenants. He states,

The particular covenant occupying the author's thought in 9:15-22 is the first Sinai covenant, seen as *a broken* covenant after the calf incident . . . Thus, our understanding of the references to "covenant" in 9:15-18 as describing a "broken" covenant is entirely in keeping with the author's own thought pattern. It is not covenants in general, but this broken, lethal Sinai covenant that forms the context within which the statements of vv. 16-17 should be understood.<sup>212</sup>

Lane and Hahn are joined by O. Palmer Robertson. Like Lane, Robertson argues from the surrounding context that *diatheke* is properly rendered "covenant" in verses 16-17.<sup>213</sup> And like Hahn, he argues "a testament (singular) is not made firm 'over dead bodies' (plural). Only one body is required for the activation of a last will and testament. But a multiple of

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<sup>211</sup>Ibid.

<sup>212</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 317.

<sup>213</sup>Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 138-41.

dead bodies is associated immediately with the inauguration of a covenantal relationship. Many beasts are slain to symbolize the potential of covenantal curse.”<sup>214</sup>

According to this reading, it is evident that Christ’s death redeems “the called” from the curses of the broken covenant. With a Deuteronomic understanding of blessings and curses, the curses are replaced with the blessing of an “eternal inheritance.” This inheritance is not merely promised, it is awarded to those in covenant with Christ based upon his mediation.<sup>215</sup> Thus Christ’s death closes the book, so to speak, on the old covenant and moves God’s elect into a new covenant, which leads us to verses 18-22.

Conjuring up the scene at Sinai (Exod 24:3-8), Hebrews 9:18 explains Christ’s new covenant mediation by appealing to the first covenant: “Not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.” In verse 19, the author recounts the inauguration ceremony conducted by Moses, where the blood of the covenant was sprinkled on the “book itself and all the people.” Then, he quotes Exodus 24:8, to emphasize the necessity of blood to inaugurate a covenant.<sup>216</sup> Hebrews 9:21-22 closes with an argument that uses Moses covenantal mediation as an example for understanding Christ’s mediation. Just as Moses mediated the first covenant and sprinkled “almost everything” with blood, so Christ inaugurates the new covenant by his blood, which leads Hebrews 9:22 to conclude, “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>214</sup>Ibid., 142.

<sup>215</sup>Cf. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 328.

<sup>216</sup>Hughes points out that one aspect of continuity between old and new covenants is the common need for blood to initiate them (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 366).

<sup>217</sup>This theme of Christ’s application is continued in Heb 9:23- 28. Due to space, these verses are not being considered, though in the larger argument of Christ’s priestly work, they are essential to understand the efficacy of Christ’s atonement.

Like at the end of Hebrews 8:12, the focus of Hebrews 9 returns explicitly to forgiveness. Forgiveness is at the forefront of what the mediator accomplishes, for in Hebrews 8:12, forgiveness is the highest new covenant promise. Now in Hebrews 9, the death Christ died effectively redeems “the called” from the curses of the broken covenant, and more than that all sins committed under the new covenant have the foregoing promise of forgiveness because of Christ’s better blood. While the old covenant required much bloodshed to atone for sin and to provide “forgiveness” (see Lev 4:26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7), forgiveness under the old covenant was merely a passing over of sins. It was not yet the full removal of sin.<sup>218</sup> Only the true scapegoat, Jesus Christ, could remove sin once for all and put a stop to the endless cycle of sacrifices offered at the earthly temple. This is what Christ the *mesitēs* accomplishes according to Hebrews 9:15.

At this juncture it is necessary to pull back from Hebrews and see how Christ’s priestly mediation compares to that of the Levitical priests. Comparatively, we find one aspect of continuity that suggests that God’s priestly activity is follows the pattern of type-antitype and one aspect of discontinuity that highlights the greater efficacy of Christ’s priestly mediation. First, drawing on a typological parallel, the Levitical priests were always commanded to apply the blood of the offerings that they made (Lev 1:5, 11, 15; 3:2; 4:5-7, 17, 25, 30). If they failed to do so, or stopped in the process, they would be rebelling against their office and their God.<sup>219</sup> Likewise, as evidenced from Hebrews 9, Christ successively applies the blood of the new covenant, achieving more than a thin forgiveness: Christ’s

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<sup>218</sup>Arguably, the imagery of Ps 103:12 and Mic 7:18-20 is proleptic of the way Christ perfectly removes sin to the other side of the universe or buries it at the bottom of the ocean, such that God’s people would be qualified to stand in his presence (cf. Heb 10:19-25).

<sup>219</sup>See the discussion in chap. 4.

atonement sacrifice “encompasses the entirety of salvation,”<sup>220</sup> thus ensuring that the ones called of God “receive the promised eternal inheritance” (v. 15), beginning with forgiveness and continuing until every spiritual blessing is enjoyed by Christ’s new covenant community.

A counter-argument could be made that many in Israel perished under these OT sacrifices, just like Christ’s offering for all humanity is only effectual for the elect. But this only proves that general atonement is little better than the old covenant. Hebrews uniformly testifies to the unfailing efficacy of the new covenant, in contradistinction to the old. The old covenant had “purposed insufficiency.”<sup>221</sup> The new covenant has purposed infallibility.

Second, in radical discontinuity with the weakness of the OT priests, Hebrews 10:14 records how Christ’s superior sacrifice effects purification for the called. Contrasting the number of sacrifices to the single offering made by Jesus (10:11-13), the author of Hebrews asserts, “For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (v. 14). Like in the introduction of the sermon epistle (1:3), the author again refers to the session of Christ at the right hand of God (10:12-13), and concludes that his single offering has “made purification for sins.” Yet, his wording is more specific than Hebrews 1:3; for he indicates that perfection (i.e. eschatological wholeness/holiness) will unquestionably come to all those “who are being sanctified.”<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>220</sup>Tom Barnes, *Atonement Matters: A Call to Declare the Biblical View of the Atonement* (Webster, NY: Evangelical, 2008), 93.

<sup>221</sup>Joslin, *Hebrews, Christ, and the Law*, 183-85.

<sup>222</sup>On the definitive nature of forgiveness and its corollary effect of sanctification, see David G. Peterson, *Transformed by God: New Covenant Life and Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 83-85. The unified relationship between forgiveness and cleansing in the work of priestly sacrifice was also observed in the work of Jay Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions*, Hebrew Monographs (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005)

Like Hebrews 9:14, the scope of Christ's priestly work is definite, and in this case his work comes with the guarantee that he will complete that which he started. Generalists cannot say the same. While they may assert multiple intentions from the start, they must still account for the fact that not all those for whom Christ propitiates are ever sanctified. Some will never hear the message to be cleansed; some will not believe; and many for whom Christ died, were already confined in Sheol when Jesus died.<sup>223</sup> Therefore, on the basis of Christ's priestly mediation, the doctrine of general atonement seems untenable. Still, there is one more passage to consider as it relates to Christ's priestly mediation.

### **Hebrews 12:24: Christ's Priestly Mediation Speaks a Better Word**

Hebrews 12:24 is the third passage that speaks of Christ as the mediator of a new covenant. From Hebrews 8:6, I argued that Christ's priestly mediation established a new covenant with better, unbreakable promises. Then from Hebrews 9:15, I contended that Christ's mediation put an end to the old covenant and inaugurated a new arrangement where forgiveness of sins has been atoned for in the blood of Christ.<sup>224</sup> Now, one will see that the message of Christ is also better, because it is a message of grace and forgiveness, not justice and condemnation. In this way, Christ's blood speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

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<sup>223</sup>John Owen asks, "[Does] it become the wisdom of God to send Christ to die for men that they might be saved, and never cause these men to hear of any such thing; and yet to purpose and declare that unless they do hear of it and believe it, they shall never be saved? What wise man would pay a ransom for the delivery of those captives which he is sure shall never come to the knowledge of any such payment made, and so never be the better for it?... Was this the mind and will, this the design and purpose, of our merciful high priest? God forbid" (*The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959], 126-27).

<sup>224</sup>"With the argument of chaps. 9 and 10 behind him, the author can now assume that the only true purification . . . is by means of the sacrifice of Christ" (Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 682).

In Hebrews 12:24, a contrast is drawn between the blood of Abel and the blood of Jesus.<sup>225</sup> Clearly, the former is remembered as the tragic victim of Cain’s violence. Genesis 4:10-12 records Cain’s unjust slaughter of his brother, and speaking of the blood, it says, “The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground.” Traditionally, this has been taken up as a cry for vengeance and of course the context of Genesis 4 proves such a fear in Cain’s words.<sup>226</sup> Likewise, in the context where Jesus refers to Abel’s “righteous blood,” Jesus indicates that Abel’s blood begins a long history of testimony against the generation who kills the prophets (Matt 23:34-36). In other words, Abel speaks a word of justice.<sup>227</sup> Following this biblical theme, when Jesus’ blood is contrasted to that of Abel’s blood, it becomes evident that the superiority of Christ’s blood is that it speaks a different word. Whereas the blood of the old covenant led to the death of God’s people, the blood of the new covenant leads to reconciliation, life, and in the words of Hebrews, access to God.

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<sup>225</sup>Textually speaking, the word blood does not appear in the best manuscripts; however, most interpreters insert the word and the idea into Heb 12:24.

<sup>226</sup>So Calvin, *Hebrews*, 335; Bruce, *Hebrews*, 361; Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, 365; Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 682; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 488-91. Likewise, Lane comments, “According to Gen 4:10-12, the blood of Abel cries out to God for the avenging of his murder, and this motif was frequently echoed in the later Jewish tradition (e.g., *Jub.* 4:3; *1 Enoch* 22:6-7; *T. Benj.* 7:3-5; 4 *Macc* 18:11; *Ps.-Philo, Bib. Ant.* 16.2; *Tg. Neof.* 1 Gen 4:10; *m. Sanh.* 4:5; *b. Sanh.* 37b)” (*Hebrews* 9-13, 473).

Alternatively, Kiwoong Son (*Zion Symbolism in Hebrews: Hebrews 12:18-24 as a Hermeneutical Key to the Epistle* [Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005], 100-02) argues that the “bloods of Abel and Christ represent symbolically the significances of the Sinai and Zions revelations respectively” (101). Comparing the former to the sacrifices of the old covenant, Son maintains that Abel’s blood—like the blood of bulls and goats—functions prophetically to remind sinners of the sin that separates them from the presence of God. His presentation is worth considering, but it does not overturn, in my mind, the reality that the sin that disallows Israel and all humanity from entering God’s presence, is yet crying out for God’s vindication. Sin shattered the world in all directions and must be resolved from multiple angles.

<sup>227</sup>Like Kiwoong Son, G. R. Smillie argues that the traditional reading should be reconsidered in light of Heb 11:4 and the usage of *laleo* 12:25 (“The One Who Is Speaking” in Hebrews 12:24,” *TynBul* 55 (2004): 275-287). See O’Brien for a response (*The Letter to the Hebrews*, 488-91).



Set in the context of seven glorious images from heaven (12:22-24),<sup>228</sup> Jesus is described as “the mediator of a new covenant” and the one whose “sprinkled blood speaks a better word than Abel” (v. 24).<sup>229</sup> In this setting, Jesus, who is simultaneously priest and sacrifice, sheds his own blood, not to destroy his brother, but to save his brothers from their own sin (cf. 2:14-18). In this way, “he has by his own blood transformed the right of vengeance (Abel) into the right of forgiveness.”<sup>230</sup> Commenting on the superiority of Christ’s blood, Lane says,

Christ’s blood accomplishes what Abel’s blood could not achieve. It is in this sense that it “speaks more effectively” of accomplished redemption and reconciliation. . . . It speaks in the idiom of grace rather than of vengeance (2:9). It “speaks” of Jesus’ adequacy in securing full salvation for all who draw near to God through him (7:25; 9:15). It declares that the way into the heavenly sanctuary is open so that God may be approached now through faith (4:16; 10:19-21). . . . The voice that “speaks” at Zion, in sharp contrast to the frightening “sound of words” at Sinai (12:19b), provides a strong incentive for Christians to hold fast their confession “without wavering” (3:6).<sup>231</sup>

Significantly, the work of Christ’s blood in this passage is not atonement but announcement.<sup>232</sup> While the blood of Christ redeems sinners (9:11-14) and inaugurates the new covenant (9:15-22), it also declares a word of forgiveness.<sup>233</sup> Conjuring up the imagery of Sinai (12:18-21) and contrasting it with Zion (12:22-29), the author of Hebrews captures

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<sup>228</sup>O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 483-91.

<sup>229</sup>On the priestly nature of Christ’s “sprinkled blood,” see Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 551-52.

<sup>230</sup>Becker, “Covenant,” in *NIDOTTE*, 1:375.

<sup>231</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 474.

<sup>232</sup>See James Swetnam, who posits Christ’s crucifixion as a “medium of divine revelation” (“Sacrifice and Revelation in the Epistle to the Hebrews: Observations and Surmises on Hebrews 9:26,” *CBQ* 30 [1968]: 233).

<sup>233</sup>In context, this message is being given to a church tempted to forsake Christ and to return to Judaism. Thus, the message that Christ offers a full and final forgiveness and unhindered access to God by

the reality that at both mountains a word was spoken and covenant was given (cf. Gal 4:21-31). Yet, only the word proclaimed from Mt. Zion is ultimately able to forgive sins.<sup>234</sup> The word of Sinai was gracious but ineffective because it relied upon the works of the flesh; however, the word from Zion is superlatively gracious *and* effective. It offers, once and for all, forgiveness to all who are in covenant with God through Jesus Christ, the *mesitēs*. In this way, the word of the covenant, portrayed as Christ's blood speaking not only offers forgiveness, it effects forgiveness, when the heavenly priest sends his word to call his own.<sup>235</sup>

Taken together, Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; and 12:24 present Christ's priesthood as unmistakably effective. From its heavenly location, its perfect sacrifice, and the nature of the new covenant, which his priesthood mediates, it is evident: All whom the Son represents as priest will receive the salvific blessings of his ministry. The whole landscape of Hebrews, with its cadre of definitive terms for salvation, reflects this efficacy. Whereas theologians speak of Christ making possible the way of salvation, Hebrews speaks with unreserved affirmation that Christ's priestly service brings salvation to his covenant people. Schreiner nicely summarizes the "Melchizedekian priesthood" of Jesus, outlining the greater efficacy of his service, in comparison with the OT priests.<sup>236</sup>

The superiority of Jesus' priesthood is evident, for Jesus is the only priest who has conquered death, and doubtless a living priesthood has preeminence over one that presides over death. The superiority of Jesus' priesthood is confirmed also because the Melchizedekian priesthood is ratified by an oath, whereas the Levitical priesthood lacked one (Heb 7:20-21). The Levitical priesthood was instituted by God, but it never received a divine oath that it would remain forever like the Melchizedekian priesthood

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means of faith in his mediator (cf. Heb 11:6) far exceeds the message of Sinai that demands absolute obedience and is mediated by Moses who died before he entered the land of promise.

<sup>234</sup>Son, *Zion Symbolism in Hebrews*, 100-101.

<sup>235</sup>This idea of priestly calling will be developed in the next section.

<sup>236</sup>Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 383-93.

of Jesus. For God to take an oath is highly unusual because his word alone is truth. An oath is added with respect to the Melchizedekian priesthood to underline its perpetuity and superiority. If Jesus' priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood, we are not surprised to learn that Jesus' sacrifice is better than Levitical sacrifices, and in particular the sacrifices offered on the Day of Atonement, because his sacrifices accomplished forgiveness once for all. Jesus' priestly sacrifice accomplished 'eternal redemption' (Heb 9:12) and cleanses the conscious from sin (Heb 9:14). He did not merely secure access to God's presence in the tabernacle by his death; he has entered God's presence in heaven in accomplishing forgiveness (Heb 9:12, 24). OT sacrifices, such as on the Day of Atonement, were offered repeatedly or at least yearly, *but Jesus obtained final forgiveness of sins with one sacrifice* (Heb 9:25-28).<sup>237</sup>

Accordingly, in debates regarding the extent of the atonement, the point at issue is the extent and effect of the atonement. And from all that has been observed in Hebrews, Christ's priesthood is effective in all he does. Therefore, in accordance with the stipulations of the new covenant (8:6), Jesus only mediates a covenant for those whom he makes a sacrifice (9:15), and then instructs with authoritative word (12:24).

All in all, Hebrews' priestly and covenantal use of *mesitēs* teaches that Christ's covenantal mediation is coterminous with his efficacious priesthood. Theologically, it advocates a definite atonement on the basis of Christ's successful, priestly mediation of the new covenant.<sup>238</sup> At the same time, Hebrews use of *mesitēs* calls into question the predominate interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:5. Generalists state that Paul's universal language must include all people without exception. Advocates of definite atonement are quick to point to the preceding context (1 Tim 2:1-4) where Paul speaks of all kinds of people. However, from Paul's use of *mesitēs*, there is also reason to let the particular nature of his covenantal mediation qualify the universal language of 1 Timothy.

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<sup>237</sup>Ibid., 385. Emphasis mine.

<sup>238</sup>Sam Waldron, "The Biblical Confirmation of Particular Redemption," in *Calvinism: A Southern Baptist Dialogue*, ed. Brad Waggoner and Ray E. Clendenen (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2008), 147.

## Seated in Glory: The Exalted Priesthood of Christ

Before closing this chapter, there is one more aspect of Christ's ministry that must be considered. It is the ministry of the priesthood that Jesus retains in perpetuity—namely, his exalted status as a Spirit-sending, church-building, enemy-defeating priest. Technically speaking, Jesus did not officially receive the title of priest until his resurrection. Upon his resurrection and ascension, God gave him the name above every name (Phil 2:9-11), pronounced him the Son of God (Rom 1:4) and raised him to sit at his right hand (Ps 110:4).<sup>239</sup> Indeed, all that Hebrews says about his priestly office indicates that Christ enters a new phase of priestly service when he presents the blood of the offering in the temple not made with human hands and when sits down at God's right hand after making purification for sins. In this way, Christ is truly a glorified priest, one who lives to intercede for his covenant people (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25). However, the question arises: Since Christ's sacrificial offering is completed, what now? What is Christ doing between his ascension and his return? And what relationship does Christ's priestly sacrifice have with his priestly duties of temple guarding and covenant teaching?

In this next section, I will answer these redemptive-historical questions and show how Christ's exalted priesthood continues and ensures the results of his sacrificial death. I will demonstrate from the rest of the NT how Christ's suffering unto death and penal substitution establish his role as *Kohen Victor* and *Kohen Teacher*. Therefore, I will first consider the idea of Christ's victory in Hebrews and Revelation; then, I will show how Christ's priestly sacrifice gave him the authority to send out his church and his Spirit to complete the finished work of Calvary.

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<sup>239</sup>On the importance of Ps 110 for NT Christology, see David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 130-53.

## Christ's Priestly Victory

***Kohen Victor in Hebrews.*** The book of Hebrews stresses the atoning work of Christ for the new covenant believer. It is a book about the sacrificial and intercessory work of Christ far more than it concerns some of other priestly duties—teaching and guarding.<sup>240</sup> Nevertheless, the ministries of guarding God's temple and teaching God's people are not absent in the book of Hebrews. The latter is seen in part in Hebrews 12:24 where Christ's blood "speaks a better word," but also in the first five chapters of the book which highlight the authority of Christ's word.<sup>241</sup> However, it is the former—Christ's priestly service of guarding his Father's temple and engaging in spiritual warfare—that we will address first.

In terms of Christ's priestly ministry of warfare and guarding, Christ's *Kohen Victor* is most plainly seen in the places where the author of Hebrews mentions Psalm 110. As is evident from a cursory reading, Hebrews depends heavily on Psalm 110.<sup>242</sup> Yet, it only cites two verses from the Psalm: verse 1 in Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; and verse 4 in Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21. In its usage, the author of Hebrews collates Psalm 110:1 into his panoply of OT references exalting the Son of God over and above the angels (Heb 1:13). However, he also develops the high priestly office of Christ with an intricate typological explanation for how Jesus could be a priest when he was not from the tribe of Levi, nor a son of Aaron (7:14). The answer he gives is that Jesus is a priest from the order of a

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<sup>240</sup>Vos, "The Priesthood of Christ in Hebrews," 159.

<sup>241</sup>For an excellent treatment of Christ's verbal authority as a priest in Heb 1-5, see Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*.

<sup>242</sup>For a full treatment of this Psalm in Hebrews, see Simon Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

Melchizedek, a greater priestly order as demonstrated by his theological reading of Genesis 14 (Heb 7:1-10).<sup>243</sup>

In this development of Christ's priestly office, the author of Hebrews singularly aims at the atoning work of Christ. All throughout, the focus of Christ's priestly mediation is advocacy for God's covenant people. However, there exists an auxiliary feature to Christ's covenant mediation in Hebrews and it is seen in a couple of places.

First, at the culmination of Christ's priestly work, Hebrews 10:12-13 introduces the imagery of warfare into the time between Christ's crucifixion and return.<sup>244</sup> In other words, drawing from the imagery of Psalm 110, the author of Hebrews concedes the fact that Christ's death not only propitiates the wrath of God for the offspring of Abraham; he simultaneously provides the means of escape for all those children who are being persecuted by the offspring of the enemy.<sup>245</sup> As Lane comments, Jesus, enthroned in heaven, awaits "the complete subjugation of every power that resists his gracious redemptive purposes of God."<sup>246</sup> As it was outlined from the OT, the priest who draws near to the altar to make atonement for his people, also stands guard to defend God's holy dwelling. Or in redemptive history, Jesus whose blood purifies his people has also won the right to purify heaven and earth at the end of the age. Until that day, he awaits the subjugation of the opposing powers.

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<sup>243</sup>For a theological comparison of Christ and Melchizedek, see Turretin, *Institutes*, 2:406-17

<sup>244</sup>Significantly, Heb 10:11-14 make a cumulative contrast between the Levites and Jesus (Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 328-29; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 266-68). In this section, the author of Hebrews theologically conflates Jesus' priestly sacrifice and heavenly session (Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 152). At the same time, in ways that exceed the Levites, Christ's *Kohen Mediator* is efficacious and final, while his *Kohen Victor* perfectly procures and preserves God's holy place. Yet, in both respects, the application of covenant blood and the purification of God's cosmic temple are still in process.

<sup>245</sup>O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 354-57.

<sup>246</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 267. In this way, Christ sits in heaven, but his session is not inactive. "The seated Christ powerfully intercedes for his people and saves them completely (7:25; also 4:14-16; 9:24)" (O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 356).

Hebrews 10:12-13 is not the only place where Christ's *Kohen Victor* surfaces. Hebrews 2:14-17 says something similar. In this compact passage, the author of Hebrews intertwines the corollary ideas of penal substitution and *Christus Victor*.<sup>247</sup> In verse 17, he makes the point that Christ became "like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (v. 17). While at the same time, he had to "deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (v. 15), and he did this also as a high priest. Verse 14 indicates that he took on flesh so that he would be able to offer a blood sacrifice, and that by his "death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil." In this way, Hebrews 2:14-17 paints the same picture as the OT only in more splendid colors: Christ is the royal priest who comes to save the seed of the women, while destroying the serpent and his offspring.<sup>248</sup> This is exactly what Psalm 110 foretold.

As evidenced in chapter 6, Psalm 110 plays a major role in informing the person and work of Christ.<sup>249</sup> Accordingly his two primary offices in the NT are priest and king.<sup>250</sup> As Hebrews repeatedly stresses, Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb 5:1-10;

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<sup>247</sup>Henri Blocher helpfully delineates the details of how Christ wins the "victory through vicarious punishment" ("*Agnus Victor: The Atonement as Victory and Vicarious Punishment*," in *What Does It Mean to be Saved? Broadening Evangelical Horizons of Salvation*, ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr. [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002], 86-89). See also, Sinclair Ferguson, "Christus Victor et Propitiator," 181-83; Phillip R. Bethancourt, "Christ the Warrior-King: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Analysis of the Divine Warrior Theme in Christology" (Ph.D. diss. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 167-68.

<sup>248</sup>Ferguson also makes connection to Gen 3:15 ("Christus Victor et Propitiator," 181).

<sup>249</sup>This verse is explicitly quoted in Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:34-35; Heb 1:13. Likewise the imagery of the "right hand" is oft-repeated in the NT (Luke 22:29; Acts 2:25; 2:33; 3:7; 5:31; 7:55-6; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22), and almost always applied to the ascension and session of Christ, where he governs his church and awaits the day of his earthly enthronement.

<sup>250</sup>This is not to deny his status as prophet, but to simply maintain that Ps 110 portrays Christ's royal priesthood, not his role as prophet.

7:1-28), and because of filial obedience, God swore an oath to Jesus in order to secure his place at his right hand in glory. Functionally, Jesus' glorious session gives him the official capacity to rule the nations (cf. Matt 28:18). It is this aspect of Christ's blood-bought right to rule that is on display in Psalm 110, and one that must be considered as a vital aspect of his exalted priesthood.

It is my contention that in shattering kings and executing judgment (Ps 110:5-6), Jesus, as a priest-king like Melchizedekian functions as the perfect agent of cleansing in God's cosmic temple. He is clearly not an earthly priest to a temple made by human hands (Heb 8:4). He is better. He is the long awaited royal priest who has now been exalted and permitted to sit at God's right hand. Because his atoning work is complete (Heb 1:3), he has been given the keys to the kingdom and an iron scepter to rule the nations. Thus, from heaven, he cleanses his people and clothes them in holy attire (Ps 110:3), but he also purges the heavens and the earth of every defiling creature. Just as the law of the covenant instructs the people of Israel to "devote to destruction" all those who are devoted to idolatry and wickedness (Exod 22:20; Lev 27:29; Num 21:23; Deut 7:1-2; 20:17; Josh 2:10ff.), so Christ will finally purge the world of all its defiling inhabitants.<sup>251</sup>

More exactly, at the end of the age, Jesus will cast Satan and his offspring into the lake of sulfur, destroying death once and for all (Rev 19:11-21; 20:7ff.). In this way, Jesus Christ is a greater high priest, because he redeems all those given to him by the Father, *and* he dies to gain the authority to remove his enemies who pollute his Father's world. As Paul

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<sup>251</sup>YHWH's command to Israel to devote the nations to destruction typifies Christ's greater role of cleansing the earth. Recall the words of Lev 18:24-25: "Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things [i.e., sexual perversions], for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants." What was commanded in Israel becomes the final rule on earth. Christ is purifying all creation. He cleanses the church as his virgin bride, and he removes the harlot of Babylon with the unclean offspring of her immorality.



puts it, Jesus through his death “disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them” (Col 2:15). This cosmic pacification includes fallen angels and human agents who follow the course of their master, Satan.<sup>252</sup> And nowhere is this “storyline” seen more clearly than in the final book of the Bible—the Revelation of John.

***Kohen Victor in the Book of Revelation.*** In the book of Revelation, the word “priest” is used only three times (1:6; 5:10; 20:6), and each case is a plural reference to the saints of God. Nevertheless, there are striking priestly elements attached to Christ’s service throughout John’s vision.<sup>253</sup> These are associated with Jesus’ mediating role,<sup>254</sup> his sacrificial identity as the “Lamb of God,”<sup>255</sup> and his service in the “world-encompassing temple.”<sup>256</sup> To understand Christ’s priestly work along with the extent of its mediation, we need to see how John depicts Jesus.

First, Jesus is seen as the eternal God (Rev 1:8) and the earthly ruler of all kings (Rev 1:5; cf. Ps 2, 72). As the incarnate Son of God, he is the chosen mediator between God and man. Jesus stands between the Creator and his creation (5:6), in order to mediate

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<sup>252</sup>In this way, Col 1:20 is a cosmic statement about the two-fold work of the cross—propitiation for the elect and “pacification” of the (angelic and human) enemies of God (Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, WBC, vol. 44 (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 53-57). Moreover, Douglas Moo is right to add that Col 1:20 has implications for the way interpreters understand Christ’s death and the restoration of creation (*The Letters to the Colossians and Philemon*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008], 136-37). For once the sons of God are revealed and set to rule over creation, there will be the restoration of all things—restoration which began at Calvary and is completed at the end of the age.

<sup>253</sup>Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, 280-82.

<sup>254</sup>“In its scope and structure [Revelation] is adapted to delineate the mediatorial dominion of Jesus . . . Christ’s official power is throughout exhibited as a dominion based on the atonement” (George Smeaton, *The Apostle’s Doctrine of the Atonement* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1870; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957], 468).

<sup>255</sup>Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 70-76.

<sup>256</sup>Beale, *The Temple and the Mission*, 313-34.

between God and men. This presentation of Jesus as God's mediating Messiah continues throughout John's vision. Regarding three major themes in Revelation (e.g., messianic warfare, eschatological exodus, Christ's work of witnessing), Bauckham observes how everything in Revelation is in keeping with Israel's messianic hope.<sup>257</sup> Thus, even without calling Jesus a "priest," the whole book presents Jesus as the messianic priest-king.<sup>258</sup>

Next, Revelation portrays Jesus as a greater messenger. The very first verse reads, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must take place" (Rev 1:1). While this ascription carries prophetic overtones (1:3; cf. 22:6), it is also priestly.<sup>259</sup> As I showed in chapter 4, the priests functioned as the covenantal teachers. This ideal is present in Revelation, as the introduction and conclusion relate the covenantal blessing that come to those who hear and obey its word (1:3; 22:7; cf. 22:18-19). Indeed, since blessing in the Bible is always associated with the covenant,<sup>260</sup> it is clear that Revelation, like the rest of the NT, is promulgating a new covenant theology based upon the priestly service of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>257</sup>Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 67-73.

<sup>258</sup>Derek Tidball, *The Message of the Cross*, BST (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 310.

<sup>259</sup>Framing the prophetic theme in terms of "witnessing" and "witnesses," Bauckham writes, "The theme of witness is connected with Revelation's dominant concern with truth and falsehood. The world is a kind of court-room in which the issue of who is the true God is being decided" (*The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 73). Without subsuming the role of prophetic witness in Revelation under that of priest, there remains good OT evidence to support a priestly understanding of judging, witnessing, and calling the world to embrace the stipulations of the new covenant (i.e., the universal gospel offer). For instance, by way of typological analogy, it was the task of the OT priest to guard true knowledge and teach the truth of God's covenant (Mal 2:6-7). In OT Israel, it was the priest who was commissioned to judge the (socio-liturgical) affairs of Israel (Lev 11-15). And it was the priest's responsibility to instruct the nation of God's covenant stipulations (Lev. 10:10-11; Deut 33:10). Add to this, the priestly role of the church (Rom 15:16; 1 Pet 2:5, 9-10), and a very strong case emerges for understanding the mission of the church in priestly terms.

<sup>260</sup>Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 294-95.

Third, the blood of Christ splatters the pages of the Apocalypse. John describes Christ as the one who “has freed us from our sins by his blood” (1:5).<sup>261</sup> The twenty-four elders sing praise to Jesus, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (5:9). Purification of God’s people comes through Christ’s blood. The survivors of the tribulation are depicted as those who “have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (7:14; cf. 12:11).

The priestly nature of Christ’s blood is confirmed by John’s recurring appellation. Twenty-eight times, the beloved disciple calls Jesus the Lamb of God.<sup>262</sup> For him, it is a technical term that provides insight into the finished work of the cross. In Revelation, Jesus is the Lamb who has accomplished salvation (7:10) and stands between the throne of the uncreated God and all other creation (5:6; 7:11-17). As the Lamb, Jesus receives glory, honor, and praise that God alone is due (5:8-13; 7:10; cf. 4:11). He shepherds his people—feeding, guiding, and comforting his own (7:15-17)—and he conquers the raging serpent (12:11), redeeming only those whose names were written in the “Lamb’s book of life” (13:8).<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>261</sup>“The words teach the priestly dignity of Christ; for the priest’s work was to sprinkle the sacrificial blood (Heb 9:22)” (Smeaton, *The Apostle’s Doctrine of the Atonement*, 469).

<sup>262</sup>For a short but illuminating treatment of the “lamb” in Revelation, see Robert L. Reymond, *The Lamb of God: The Bible’s Unfolding Revelation of Sacrifice* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2006), 103-08.

<sup>263</sup>This single designation, “the book of life of the Lamb who was slain,” is arguably reason itself to deny general atonement. Christ, who is the co-eternal God, came into the world to accomplish his Father’s will, and as Revelation puts it, he dies in order to redeem all those whose names were written down “before the foundation of the world” (13:8; 17:8). It is difficult to understand, how Christ could die for those who would not be saved but are his unmitigated enemies. For instance, in the Book of Revelation, the ‘earth-dwellers’ are consistently depicted as the enemies of God. The solution to the problem is not atonement, but pacification. Jesus, as priest-king, comes to redeem his people from the clutches of the woman of Babylon and to destroy the works of Satan. In other words, *Christus Victor* over Satan and Satan’s offspring denies a general atonement.

Likewise, Revelation 14:1 reads, “Behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.” While generalists could argue that these are the ones who are finally saved after a general atonement, verses 2-5 do not permit a disjunction between redemption accomplished and redemption applied. In fact, the power of Christ’s priestly office is in its perfection! For all those who he makes atonement, he applies the blood. He dies for 144,000 and 144,000 are saved. While, opponents want to reject a commercial transaction at the cross, Scripture quantifies the work of Christ when it speaks of a particular number who are saved by the blood of the lamb.<sup>264</sup>

Finally, as the Lamb, Jesus has the authority to open the scrolls (6:1; 8:1) and to pour out his righteous wrath (6:16). Here again, we turn to consider the adversarial role of Christ’s atonement.<sup>265</sup> Addressing the forthcoming defeat of the beast, John records the terrifying judgment for all who worship the beast. He writes of these individual idolaters,

He also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. (Rev 14:10-11)

In this verse, it is the Lamb who has the authority and the right to bring righteous judgment on unbelievers—those who die in ignorance of the gospel (Rom 1:18ff.) and those who

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<sup>264</sup>On the exact meaning of the 144,000, see Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 77-78. Similarly, Rev 6:11 recounts the cries of the martyrs, to which John records, “Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, *until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete*, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.” While denying a crude, mechanical view of the atonement where so much suffering equaled so many souls, and more suffering would have purchased more people; Scripture does speak about redemption in numerical terms (cf. Exod 30:11-16; Num 3:40-51).

<sup>265</sup>Frederick S. Leahy, *The Victory of the Lamb: Christ’s Triumph over Sin, Death, and Satan* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2001).

explicitly reject the gospel (2 Thess 1:5-8). In either case, Jesus' judgment is based on the deeds done in the flesh,<sup>266</sup> not an individual's rejection of the gospel—though it may include that. The second death is ultimately based upon his or her failure to keep the first covenant.<sup>267</sup> When the Bible speaks about the condemnation of the unbelievers, it is not rejection of the gospel that ultimately condemns them to eternal judgment, for unbelievers “are condemned *already*” (John 3:18).<sup>268</sup> Rather, final judgment comes upon a man's lawless deeds, and is exacerbated, but not created, by the rejection of Christ's atonement (3:16).<sup>269</sup> In this way, the wrath of the Lamb comes upon those who have rejected God's first covenant, regardless of their standing with the new covenant.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>266</sup>This is the overwhelming testimony of Scripture: Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6; 14:12; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 9:27; 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 18:6; 20:12; 22:12.

<sup>267</sup>Reformed theologians might read this as the “covenant of works,” but I have in mind the stipulations for ‘covenantal’ obedience found in Gen 2:17 (cf. Rom 5:12ff.).

<sup>268</sup>Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 130-31. John 3:16-17 says God gave his Son to save the world, not to condemn it. For as B. B. Warfield observed a century ago, “The already condemned world needed no further condemnation, it needed saving” (“Predestination,” in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* [New York: Oxford, 1932; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003], 6:36). This helps explain the relationship between John 3:18 and John 5:27 and 9:39 (Köstenberger, *John*, 131), which state that God gave Jesus authority to judge the world—the point Revelation is also making. Indeed, God's plan of salvation intended to bring a gracious gospel to the world, in order to sift humanity, saving those who believe while permitting unbelievers to abide under God's wrath (John 3:36) (Fred G. Zaspel, *The Theology of B. B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 426).

<sup>269</sup>This understanding of salvation and judgment is a small but significant difference with Gary Shultz's argument that a general atonement provides an additional basis for condemnation (“A Biblical and Theological Defense of a Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement” [Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008], 178-83).

<sup>270</sup>Of course, hearing the gracious promises of the gospel heighten awareness and condemnation. As Jesus teaches in Luke 12:47-48, God requires more from those who have been given more (cf. D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002], 174-75). Nevertheless, when Jesus as God's priest-king stands in judgment, it is the Law that accuses Israel (John 5:45) and the law-making conscience of the Gentiles that condemns them (Rom 2:12-16). Therefore, the notion that Christ must have died for someone in order to judge them, as Shultz labors to explain (“A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement,” 203-22) misunderstands the relationship between the first covenant (with Adam) and the new covenant (with Christ).

In the next chapter, John records the “song of the Lamb,” a war anthem that celebrates the triumph of the crucified lamb (Rev 15:3-4). Progressing toward the Lamb’s climactic victory, John declares of God’s enemies, “They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful” (17:14). While shepherd-warrior and royal motifs are present in these passages, the significance of the priesthood should not be lost. It is through the priestly offering of the lamb that Jesus is able to defeat the enemies of God.

Revelation 18-19 furthers this notion of priestly victory. In these two chapters, John forewarns the nations of the judgment that is coming upon them. In Revelation 19, Jesus serves his bride, “the wife of the Lamb” (21:9), and prepares a feast for those whom he has atoned (19:6-10). Conversely, Jesus destroys his enemies and feeds them to the birds (19:11-21).<sup>271</sup> Significant for the priestly background of this victory is the fact that the imagery of the birds engorged on the flesh of the earth-dwellers (19:21) is covenantal (cf. Gen 15:11; Jer 34:17-22) and that the one who slays them wears priestly apparel.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>271</sup>On the priest as warrior theme, see Fletcher-Louis, “God’s Image, His Cosmic Temple, and the High Priest,” 94-96.

<sup>272</sup>Commenting on Rev 19:13, G.K. Beale (*The Book of Revelation*, NICGT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 957-60) points to John’s dependence on Isa 63:1-3, a passage which speaks about garments “sprinkled with blood.” In the context of Isaiah, it should be noted that while Isa 63:1-3 speaks of “garments” (*behged*) in the context of war, just a few verses earlier (61:10), the same word (*behged*) is used to speak of priestly “garments of salvation.” In such close proximity, and united by the fact that the same person who brings salvation also brings judgment, it is clear, that the same “anointed” priest who “sprinkles the nations” to purify them in Isa 52:13-15 (see Peter J. Gentry, “The Atonement in Isaiah’s Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13-53:12),” *SBJT* 11 (2007): 26-31), and adorns priestly garments in a covenantal setting (Isa 61:10-11), is also the one whose robes are sprinkled/splattered (*nzh*) with the blood of the nations in Isa 63:1-6.

All in all, the divine warrior who is witnessed in Rev 19 is the same servant-shepherd-priest-king prophesied in Isaiah, the one who lays down his life for his sheep (Isa 53) and has been given the divine authority to judge the nations (Isa 63:1-6; cf. Pss 2; 110). Further priestly elements in Rev 19:11ff. are observed by J. M. Ford, *Revelation*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 313-14, 320-25; Meredith Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996), 47-50, 121-31; G. K. Beale and Sean McDonough, “Revelation,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1143.

Finally, in Revelation 21-22, the priestly motif elides easily with the idea of God's eschatological temple. Recapitulating the pattern in Exodus, where Moses saves the people of Israel through substitution (e.g., the Passover sacrifice) and conquest (e.g., the Red Sea event), on his way to Mount Sinai where the covenant is ratified (Exod 19-24) and the tabernacle is constructed (Exod 25-40); so Jesus purifies a people with his own blood—a greater Passover—and purges from his cosmic temple any hint of impurity or uncleanness.<sup>273</sup> This mirrors in a more final and exalted way what Moses did in the Exodus (cf. Rev 15:3). John glories in the priestly ministry of Jesus in his statement in Revelation 21:23-27.

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. *But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

In Revelation, like in Hebrews, shadows have been replaced by substance. No longer do the covenant people have to approach God through a weak priest and an ongoing and often corrupted system of sacrifice in a temple made by human hands. Now in Jesus Christ, those “who are written in the Lamb's book of life” shall enter into the temple of God where the light will never go out and wrath has been removed. Even more, the apocalyptic genre of Revelation portrays a conquering lamb, a heavenly priest-king, who has conquered his enemies through faithfulness endurance, and now calls his royal priests to do the same.<sup>274</sup>

In summary, Jesus is the Lamb of God who has taken away the sin of the world (John 1:29), and he has done so in two ways. First, his death accomplished the efficacious

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<sup>273</sup>For a brief survey of the “new exodus” in Revelation, see R. E. Watts, “Exodus,” in *NDBT*, 487.

<sup>274</sup>D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 483-84; Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, 306.

purification of his elect; second, his death gave Jesus the right to receive authority over heaven and earth and thus the priestly commission to “serve” and “guard” God’s macro-temple. Only, since God’s original creation was polluted with sin and sinners, this cosmic temple service would require the creation of a new temple, where everything and everyone who is unclean must be purified or purged. The first (purification), I have argued corresponds to penal substitution for the elect of God; the latter (purgation), I have argued corresponds to the defeat of the enemies of God and the cleansing of the cosmos (e.g. *Kohen Victor*). In short, Christ accomplishes both in his priestly office (better: his whole *munus triplex*). Or, more precisely, Jesus makes particular redemption for those whose names are written in his book of life; while at the same time, he pacifies all who are destined for corruption and death.

Corresponding to the unfolding plan of God’s salvation and the concentric effects of the cross, this cosmic cleansing will come at the end of the age. Because of the nature of God’s character—being slow to anger and desiring all to be saved (2 Pet 3:9)—and because of the decree of God, Jesus’ final act of judgment and cleansing has not occurred. In God’s perfect timing, this will happen when all the elect have been gathered from the four corners of the earth (Isa 11:12). At that point, Christ will return to separate the sheep and the goats (Matt 25:31-46) and to make a final sweep of God’s creation—not unlike his enacted parable at the earthly temple in John 2. While this final assize is part of any orthodox eschatology, the priestly approach proffered here helps relate the final judgment to cross of Christ, and to show how Christ’s death reconciles all things on heaven and earth (Col 1:20). Still, there is one more aspect of Christ’s heavenly priesthood that must be covered—namely, his heavenly authority to send his Spirit-filled church into the world with the gospel of the kingdom.

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## Christ's Priestly Witnesses

Until all creation is put under the feet of Jesus, our great high priest will wage spiritual warfare. In fact, the Lord is more active today than at any time in the OT. Since Pentecost he has expanded his omnipotent rule from Israel to the nations, and he has sent his “anointed ones” (i.e., Christians) to call the nations to obey the gospel. Therefore, as a priest whose office is defined by the OT, Jesus is doing what the priests of Israel never did—he is ensuring that all his people hear the good news of the new covenant. Through his church and their evangelistic witness, he is sealing his Spirit on the hearts of all those for whom he died.<sup>275</sup> It is to these evangelistic matters that we turn, in order to show how Christ's priestly service, through his body and his Spirit, provides the best answer for understanding how the universal offer of the gospel is “undergirded” and not undermined by definite atonement.<sup>276</sup>

**1 Peter 2:5, 9-10.** In the NT, there are six explicit references to Jesus' priestly army (Rom 15:16; 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). In 1 Peter 2, the leading apostle tells the “elect exiles” that they are individually “like living stones” who “are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a *holy priesthood*, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (v. 5). Then, just a few verses later, he reiterates the same point, “But you are a chosen race, a *royal priesthood*, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

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<sup>275</sup>While Robert Sherman denies penal substitution, on this point, he helpfully observes the interior nature of Christ's new covenant priesthood: “If Christ is the true and final sacrifice, what better place to ‘locate’ that work than where it actually accomplishes its purpose, namely within believers, through the efficacious power of the Holy Spirit? (cf. 1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16b; Eph 2:19-22).” He continues, “Christians truly become temples of God,” where the Spirit dwells and applies “the benefits of [Jesus'] sacrifice” (*King, Prophet, Priest: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement* [New York: T & T Clark, 2004], 175).

<sup>276</sup>Roger Nicole, “Covenant, Universal Call, and Definite Atonement,” in *Creator, Redeemer, Consummator: A Festschrift for Meredith G. Kline*, ed. Howard Griffith and John R. Muether (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2000), 199.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (vv. 9-10).

Significantly, the priestly role in verse 5 is related to two other cultic structures—the tabernacle/temple and the atoning sacrifices. And of even greater interest is the priestly role in verses 9-10, where the priesthood of the church is defined in terms of gospel proclamation.<sup>277</sup> The priests are here depicted as those who pronounce the good news to those who were once not a people (i.e., the Gentiles estranged from the covenant promises of God, cf. Eph 2:11-13). Thus, the ministry of these priests is not defined by sacrificial offerings, but in gospel proclamation.<sup>278</sup> This priestly proclamation coheres with the biblical typology delineated in chapters 3-6, especially as it relates to the role of *Kohen Teacher*. While it is understandable to think of Christ’s ministry of teaching as occurring during his earthly ministry, a greater ministry is carried on by his Spirit in his churches (cf. Rev 2-3). Notably, Peter understand this ministry of proclamation as being a priestly service.

**Romans 15:16.** Peter’s view of the priesthood is confirmed in Romans 15:16, when Paul calls himself, “a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God.” Here, perhaps more than any place else in the NT, we find Paul equating the ministry of the gospel with that of a priestly ministry. As John Stott comments,

Paul regards his missionary work as a priestly ministry because he is able to offer his Gentile converts as a living sacrifice to God. . . . All evangelists are priests, because

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<sup>277</sup>Contrasting the NT church with OT Israel, Thomas R. Schreiner observes that “now God’s kingdom of priests consists of the church of Jesus Christ. It too is to mediate God’s blessings to the nations, as it proclaims the gospel” (*1, 2 Peter and Jude*, NAC, vol. 37 [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003], 114-15).

<sup>278</sup>Notably, the nature of the ecclesial priesthood as proclamation and not propitiation is a measure of discontinuity that the Catholic Church misses. In truth, sacrificial living is not found in the mass, but in suffering for the sake of the gospel (Col 1:24; 2 Tim 1:8-12; 2:10). The priesthood in the church is not atoning in any way; it always announces the once for all atonement of Jesus Christ.

they offer their converts to God. Indeed, it is this truth more than any other which effectively unites the church's two major roles of worship and witness. It is when we worship God, . . . that we are driven out to proclaim his name to the world.<sup>279</sup>

Therefore, looking at the context of verses 14-21, we find a number of related statements that develop the ministry of the church as a band of gospel-proclaiming priests.

First, in the preceding verses (vv. 1-13), Paul details how the gospel has been confirmed to the Jews and offered to the Gentiles (v. 8). This is explicit in verses 9-13 which quote four OT texts, all of which affirm the gospel reaching the "Gentiles" (Ps 18:49 in v. 9; Deut 32:43 in v. 10; Ps 117:1 in v. 11; Isa 11:19 in v. 12).<sup>280</sup> Accordingly, verses 1-13 function as the foundation of Paul's own ministry to the Gentiles.<sup>281</sup> The significance for our considerations is that the context of Romans 15 speaks directly to the issue of the gospel moving from Israel to the ends of the earth. In other words, this crucial passage explicates the relationship between priestly service and the universal offer of the gospel.

Next, transitioning from the redemptive-historical fulfillment of the Holy Spirit coming to the Gentiles (v. 13), Paul begins to describe his own personal ministry (v. 14-21). Interestingly, after spending the letter developing the theology of the gospel, "Paul returns to the theme and mood of [Rom] 1:8-15."<sup>282</sup> Why? Because, Paul is not writing Romans as an

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<sup>279</sup>John Stott, *The Message of Romans*, BST (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 379-80.

<sup>280</sup>Mark E. Seifrid ("Romans," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 686-91) comments that Paul "treats the Scripture typologically," and thus Paul defines his "priestly" ministry in the light of Christ's embodiment of the priestly service of Isaiah's Servant.

<sup>281</sup>Of the utmost importance for understanding the unity between Christ's heavenly priesthood and Paul's priestly service is the way Paul defines his ministry as taking the mantle of the Suffering Servant (ibid, 691). Stephen Dempster comments, "The apostle Paul viewed himself as continuing the work of the Servant of Isaiah, in particular in his role as an emissary to the Gentiles" ("The Servant of the Lord," in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 173). Applied to the new covenant priesthood, Christ serves his people through apostolic witnesses like Paul and anyone else who takes on the title of *doulos* (cf. Jas 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1; Jude 1).

<sup>282</sup>James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, WBC, vol. 38B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 866.

exercise in theoretical theology; he is writing this occasional letter to help Jews and Gentiles unite in the gospel and to explain his own commitment to the expansion of the gospel.<sup>283</sup> Thus, the context gives us a clear indication of Paul's theology of mission and the universal proclamation of a particular atonement.

In verse 14, Paul employs covenantal language to describe his confidence in the church at Rome. That they are “filled with all knowledge” and “able also to admonition one another,” is indicative of the new covenant community. Whereas in the old covenant, only the priests had direct knowledge to God and ability to instruct and admonish, now all those indwelt by the Spirit are able to know God and make him known. Thus Paul speaks to them and “very boldly . . . remind[s] them of truths they already knew.”<sup>284</sup> His aim was not to rebuke them but to help them remember their common unity in the gospel (Rom 1:16-11:36) and to live as a community marked by love (Rom 12:1-14:23). It is in this context, that he begins to describe his own ministry and theirs.<sup>285</sup>

Verse 16 describes the ministry of Paul, which he says in verse 15 was his “because of the grace given me by God” (cf. Eph 3:1 ff.). Unique to this passage, Paul uses cultic language to describe his ministry. He writes that he is “a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles maybe acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” In short space, he makes four explicit

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<sup>283</sup>Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 342-45.

<sup>284</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 766.

<sup>285</sup>Paul is only speaking of himself in verse 16, but that does not remove the exhortatory implication of what he is saying. Just as Paul describes his gospel ministry as a “priestly service,” so every other believer has a priestly calling upon their lives (cf. 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6).

references to the OT cult,<sup>286</sup> including a reference to his ministry as that of a priest.

Commentators puzzle over exactly what to make of these terms, and to get a full appreciation of what Paul is saying, we must look at each term.

The first noun, *leitourgon*, is a *hapax legomena* that is not typically applied to priests, but in context is clearly referring to the priestly work. The priestly interpretation of “minister of Christ Jesus” comes from the unmistakable meaning of the participle *hierourgounta*. In context, Paul has clearly employed the cultic image of himself “perform[ing] the work of a priest” in order to explain how he thinks about his “missionary work.”<sup>287</sup> While it is likely that Paul uses the priestly language metaphorically, it does not change the striking character of what he is saying.<sup>288</sup> His gospel ministry supersedes the old covenant priesthood because it is based on the “gospel of God,” which he explains in chapters 1-11. Moreover, his priestly ministry reaches beyond Israel to include the Gentiles, because his new covenant ministry of preaching the gospel to all peoples fulfills the prophetic intentions of the Law and Prophets.<sup>289</sup> In fact, when he speaks about the Gentiles in relation to his priestly ministry, he is not trying to bar them from the altar of God (as with the old covenant). Instead, he describes the Gentiles that he has won to the Lord as the “*offering . . . acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*” That the unclean Gentiles are now described as acceptable and holy offerings before God is remarkable, but to appreciate what he means, we need to examine the other cultic terms.

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<sup>286</sup>These references include *hierourgounta* (“serving as a priest”), *prosphora* (“offering”), *euprosdektos* (“acceptable”), and *hegiasmene* (“sanctified”).

<sup>287</sup>Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 860; cf. Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 168-73.

<sup>288</sup>Schreiner, *Romans*, 766.

<sup>289</sup>Meyer, *The End of the Law*, 77.

Next, Paul describes the Gentiles as an “offering” (*prosphora*) to God himself. With Isaiah 66:20 as the likely backdrop to Romans 15:16, *prosphora* is most likely used to describe the Gentiles as an “offering” to God himself. “Paul brings the Gentiles as an offering to God,” because the new creation text at the end of Isaiah “envision[ed] an eschatological offering of the Gentiles.”<sup>290</sup> Filling out this cultic picture are *euprosdektos* and *hegiasmene*, both of which are fitting for a cultic setting. The former, which speaks of the Gentiles as an “acceptable” offering, is often used to describe prayers or sacrifices offered to God, as in the case of 1 Peter 2:5.<sup>291</sup> And the latter term, “sanctified,” which describes the way in which these Gentiles are made acceptable “by the Holy Spirit,” “denotes the act of setting apart” and “dedicating to God.”<sup>292</sup> It is a term that is often used to describe sacrifices, priests, or the temple itself.<sup>293</sup>

Finally, Paul’s use of *hierourgounta* defines the nature of his gospel ministry.<sup>294</sup> In relationship to Christ who called Paul and sent him to be an apostle, Christ’s priesthood works through Paul’s priestly service. In this way, as Paul proclaims the gospel, Christ brings Gentiles to willful obedience, by regenerating their hearts with the message of the gospel (v. 18). At the same time the exalted power of Christ works mightily through the Spirit to confirm the word with signs and wonders. And finally, the gospel of Jesus Christ

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<sup>290</sup>Schreiner, *Romans*, 767.

<sup>291</sup>Dunn, *Romans 9-13*, 861.

<sup>292</sup>Ibid.

<sup>293</sup>Ibid.

<sup>294</sup>Stott, *The Message of Romans*, 379; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 511.

goes to the ends of the earth—just as Isaiah 38-66 said that it would when it prophesied of Christ’s suffering and the extension of the new covenant from Zion to the ends of the earth.

Taken together, it becomes clear that Paul’s missionary service is a priestly ministry that reflects the priesthood of Jesus himself. Therefore, Dunn says,

By applying [the language of the priesthood] to his own noncultic ministry of preaching the gospel he confirms that for him the cultic barrier between sacred and secular has been broken through and left behind. And by speaking of the Gentiles as themselves the sacrifice, Gentiles who could not even approach the altar of sacrifice in the Temple, . . . Paul confirms that for him the cultically defined barrier between peoples, Jew and Gentile, had been broken through and left behind.<sup>295</sup>

Clearly, the priesthood of Christ, as the head of his body, is passed on and carried out by the saints that he calls to himself and sanctifies for his service. These are the ones for whom he died on the cross, and they are the ones who now carry the mantle of his holy priesthood into the world, proclaiming the gospel of his death, such that men from every nation might turn from their idols and serve the living God.

In sum, the priesthood of Christ preserves the nature of the atonement and impels missions and evangelism. As it pertains to the priestly sacrifice of Christ and the extent of the atonement, it becomes clear that if the ministry of evangelism and missions is a priestly service, then this is part of Christ’s heavenly priesthood. Paul and all those evangelists who come after him carry out the priestly ministry of Christ, such that people for whom Christ died come to know their savior and Lord in history, as Christ sends the gospel to them. He calls them “by name” (John 10:3), much like the priests of old remembered the nation of Israel by the names engraved on their priestly apparel. In this way, the priestly work of Calvary is united to the priestly ministry of preaching the gospel, and together they correspond to a definite and not a general atonement. As Paul says in another epistle, Christ

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<sup>295</sup>Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 867.

“came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near” (Eph 2:17). Through means of the Spirit-filled church (2:19-22), he continues to proclaim peace to those for whom he died to make peace (2:14-16).

**The Book of Revelation.** Finally, in Revelation Christ’s priestly servants are depicted three times (1:6; 5:10; 20:6). In the first two instances, John explicitly states that the “blood of Christ” is what qualifies them for their priestly service. In the last case, it is the resurrection from the dead that qualifies them for service.<sup>296</sup> Moreover, John, in contrast to Peter and Paul, uses eschatological terms to speak of the priesthood.<sup>297</sup> Thus, while Christ’s new covenant citizens function as priests on earth, their priestly service is oriented toward the new temple.<sup>298</sup> More specifically, the priesthood in Revelation is described in glorious terms. In Revelation 1:6, the priests are first called a “kingdom” and serve a God and Father who they actually see. Regarding this beatific vision, Beale likens the “entire people of God” to that of the “OT priest,” who have “free unmediated access to God’s presence” because of Christ’s priestly service.<sup>299</sup> Verse 7 states, “Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.” Thus, in the first instance, the priestly service appears to be in

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<sup>296</sup>In every case, stated or not, it is the death *and* resurrection that qualifies the saints to be royal priests (William J. Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning: Revelation 21-22 and the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985], 159-60; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 192-96).

<sup>297</sup>“Rev 1:6; 5:10; and 20:6 take priestly election of the church in a more individualized and eschatological direction that 1 Peter” (Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 169).

<sup>298</sup>In a short section relating the “priestly democratization” associated with the new covenant, G. K. Beale states, “New covenant and end-time tabernacle thus go hand in hand” (*A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011], 736).

<sup>299</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 193.



glory (“coming on the clouds”) because of his atoning death (“pierced him”).<sup>300</sup> Likewise, in Revelation 5:10 and 20:6, the priests are those who “reign” with God in heaven. Altogether, the priestly caste in Revelation seems to be qualitatively different than the kind of priestly service described by Peter.<sup>301</sup>

Nevertheless, there are textual reasons to believe that those who reign in heaven as priests are the same ones who serve on earth. In Revelation 5:10, John records the praise song in heaven, that says that by the blood of Christ (v. 9), the Lamb has “made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” And again in 20:6, John speaks of those who experience the blessing of the first resurrection as “priests of God and of Christ,” who “will reign with him for a thousand years.” Clearly, resembling the royal priesthood of Adam (Gen 1:26-31; 2:15-17), Israel (Exod 19:5-6), and Jesus (Ps 110), this priestly caste is reigning in heaven with the Triune God. How does this connect with their earthly priesthood and service of evangelism?

Notice how the term “reign” (*basileusousin*) is used in both instances. It speaks of a kind of co-reigning with the Lord.<sup>302</sup> Such a reign does not put the saints on the same level as the Lamb, but it does insinuate that those who have died with Christ (Rom 6:4-6; Rev 5:9-10) are raised up as co-heirs (Rom 8:17; Rev 20:6). Or as Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:12, “If we endure, we will also reign with him.” This is a key cross-reference. The word in 2

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<sup>300</sup>Beale rightly shows how Rev 1:7 conflates Dan 7:13 and Zech 12:10 (*The Book of Revelation*, 196). Theologically, this is one of many places where atonement and ascension are conjoined (cf. Robert A. Peterson, *Salvation Accomplished By the Son: The Work of Christ* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 183-205).

<sup>301</sup>On the relationship of 1 Peter and Revelation, the cosmic-temple building anticipated in those letters, and the role that the church plays as an army of priest-kings extending God’s sacral space, see Beale, *Temple and Church’s Mission*, 323-31.

<sup>302</sup>The exact timing of this reign is debated—is it present or future? Surely, the reign is experienced partially now by the Spirit, but not fully until the new heavens and new earth (see Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 360-64).

Timothy 2:12 is the same as Revelation 5:10 and 20:6, with the notable addition of a prepositional prefix (*syn-*).<sup>303</sup> Yet, more importantly, the notion of reigning in 2 Timothy 2:11 comes in the context of evangelistic ministry and suffering for the sake of the elect.

Based on the previous context (2 Tim 2:1-10), Paul is exhorting Timothy to remain faithful. In verses 1-7, he draws analogies with three rigorous occupations (the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer). In order, he motivates his son in the faith to be undistracted in the ministry, to work lawfully, and to trust that hard work will bear fruit. Then, in verses 8-10, Paul reinforces the need to remember Jesus Christ, and to observe how Paul himself “endure[s] everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (v. 10). The word Paul uses to describe his own perseverance in verse 10 (*hupomenō*) is the same word he uses in verse 12 to describe the kind of person who will “reign” with Christ. Thus, from the context it is obvious that those who reign are the ones who endure in believing *and* sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, which Paul elsewhere describes as a priestly service (Rom 15:16). This brings us full circle. Collectively, we find a teaching in Paul and John that Christian’s priestly service is to make known the gospel of Jesus Christ for the sake of the elect of God. At the same time, God’s witnesses are called to suffer well on earth as cross-bearing priests, so that they might enjoy the blessed honor of a heavenly service—reigning with Christ forever!

Altogether, how should we assimilate this data? Let me suggest three ways. First, the priestly ministry is different on earth than in heaven. While on earth, the call to publish the gospel requires the single-mindedness of a soldier, the integrity of an athlete, and the diligence of a farmer. However, in heaven, the priestly ministry is no longer that of bearing a

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<sup>303</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 516-17.

cross. After suffering with Christ, true priests will reign with him. In the same way that Christ humbly served as a priest on earth, so too will his sons and daughters. Priestly suffering precedes priestly glory.

Second, the number of earthly priests is the same as the heavenly priests and vice versa. In other words, all those who are bought with his blood on earth and serve him, will serve him in heaven. This point reiterates the truth that all those who are born again (John 3:3-8) will see the kingdom of heaven. As Paul teaches in Philippians, all who have genuine fellowship in the gospel (1:5) will be perfected on the day of the Lord (1:6).

Third, because this priestly caste is limited to believers, it of necessity limits the reach of the gospel. While God could have created Abraham's offspring from stones (Matt 3:9), or had angels serve as the messengers of the gospel (as he did with Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zechariah), it was the intention of God to make preaching the necessary means by which the gospel is proclaimed and people are saved (Rom 10:13-17). Thus, in terms of the priesthood of the believer, God designed for his message to be taken on foot by the very same people whom he called to himself. As 1 Peter 2:9-10 puts it, those who "proclaim the excellencies" of God are the ones who were "once not a people, but now are God's people." This new covenant people are now the priests of God. They have been saved through the instrumentation of human witnesses, be it the twelve apostles or someone else who has believed the apostle's message. Resultantly, the saving message of the cross is not yet universal, but it will be (Matt 24:14). Christ calls his priesthood of believers to take the gospel to all the nations (Matt 28:18-20). Therefore, the already but not yet nature of the church's expansion argues against a general atonement, because there are many who have never, nor will ever, meet a gospel-preaching, Spirit-anointed priest.

Christ as *Kohen Teacher* has created a priestly caste of gospel heralds who carry the new covenant message of forgiveness to the lost sheep of Israel, and who simultaneously announce judgment on unbelievers.<sup>304</sup> While this proclamation is usually associated with Christ's prophetic office, or the work of the Spirit to "apply" the benefits of the cross, it has been argued here that Christ himself is sending his Spirit and his church to fulfill his role as a priest who teaches all of his people—just like Isaiah 54:13 promised and just as Christ explained in John 6:35ff. Indeed, the reason why Christ could say emphatically that he would build his church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it was because of his efficacious priesthood. As *Kohen Mediator*, he died for his church; as *Kohen Teacher*, he would seal his law on the hearts of his children; and as *Kohen Victor*, his loyalty to his Father's house (which is now being constructed as the eschatological temple of God) included a posture of defense and opposition to the non-elect.

Therefore, in the context of the universal offer of the gospel, Jesus Christ is the one who guarantees the efficacy of his Word, and he does so with the blood he shed and the prayers that he daily lifts for his covenant people. From the unified nature of his priestly work, it is clear that Christ now serves in heaven applying the work he finished on the cross (John 19:30). In this way, Christ's three priestly duties perfectly harmonize the cosmic effects of the gospel—salvation and sanctification for the seed of the woman and judgment for the seed of the serpent. Missiologically, Christ's priesthood gives great impetus for proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to all men without exception. Still, theologically, the priesthood of Christ and his saints argue for a definite not a general atonement.

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<sup>304</sup>Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 733. Functionally, Christ alone knows the hearts of men. Churches are called to be witnesses of Christ to all men and to be judicious observers of men's character, so that they rightly handle the keys of the kingdom (Matt 18:15-17).

## Summary

All in all, the ministry of Christ's priesthood shows that while he was on earth, on the cross, and now in heaven, he was functioning as a priest. As a priest he served his covenant people with a particular passion that he did not extend to the non-elect. To say it differently, Jesus laid down his life for his own. Through his priestly sacrifice, he gained the right to send the Spirit and to seal the blessings of the new covenant on all those for whom he died. From the same office, Christ, as high priest, has called his army of priests to take the message of the gospel to the world, so that he may seal his new covenant law on the hearts of his particular people. In this way, Christ is a superior *Kohen Mediator* and *Kohen Teacher*.

At the same time, Jesus' death gives him the right to judge all those who refused to submit to him. Like the priests of old, he separates the holy from the profane, and by means of his gospel of grace, he is revealing the Father to his children and hiding the precious truths of the gospel from those who count themselves wise (Matt 11:25-27). In this way, Christ is the perfect *Kohen Victor*.

In everything he did and does (e.g., sacrifice and intercession, teaching, and spiritual warfare), Jesus has perfectly fulfilled the duties of the OT priest. Likewise, as he sends out Spirit and his church, he continues to serve as a priest today. Hence, Jesus did not undermine the Law by becoming a different kind of priest—one who died for all people indiscriminately. Rather, in keeping with the stipulations of the old covenant, he died for his new covenant community alone (Matt 5:17). Moreover, Jesus did not make sacrifice for everyone and then fail to apply the new covenant benefits (e.g., the Holy Spirit); rather as a wise and faithful priest, he has perfectly sealed his law on the hearts of his people, through means of the universal offer of the gospel. Last, Jesus not only saved his own, but he always

defended his Father's holiness and laid claim to the right to cleanse heaven and earth of every impure thing—man and beast, angel and antichrist.

Therefore, in keeping with the intrasystematic structures of the priesthood and new covenant, it is utterly impossible for the atoning work of Jesus Christ to be general or ineffectual. As Hebrews 7:25 relates, Christ as the long expected greater priest “is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God,” because through his full-orbed priestly service Jesus has earned the right to “always make intercession for them,” those blood-bought members of his eternal covenant, whom he is equipping with his Holy Spirit (13:20), and waiting to give the kingdom (Matt 25:34), when at last he exercises priestly dominion and makes all things new (10:12-13; Rev 21:5).

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

Over the last seven chapters, I have argued that a biblical-theological approach to the extent of the atonement, one that pays close attention to typological structures of the priesthood and new covenant, will result in the doctrine of definite atonement. In chapter 1, I observed how the absence of priestly typology negatively affects biblical studies and systematic theology. Of especial concern was the inattention of generalists—those who advocate a universal propitiation—to the priestly office of Christ. It was argued that at least one of the primary reasons why these otherwise Calvinistic evangelicals did not accept the doctrine of definite atonement was based on their failure to incorporate Christ’s priesthood into their theological formulation. Therefore, I defended the thesis that “a biblical theology of the priestly mediation of the new covenant is necessary for understanding the extent of the atonement and that such a study will result in a clear affirmation of definite atonement.”

In chapter 2, I proposed an approach to typology that stated the methodological commitments of this dissertation. It argued that typology should be prophetic, Christotelic, and covenantal. It explained these three facets at length, helping the reader to understand how this dissertation uses typology to formulate theological doctrine.

Chapter 3 introduced the priestly prototype in the person and work of Adam. It asserted that Noah and Abraham functioned as priests when they offered sacrifice, mediated covenants, and offered blessings. With each type, theological reflections were given, such

that Adam proved to be the priestly prototype. Noah was evidenced as a universal savior but also covenantal mediator for a particular people—namely, the sons of Shem. Last, Abraham’s priestly service showed how priests always functioned to serve the children of promise, and not all children in general. Together, these early priests adumbrated the kind of particular service that priests would take up later in the OT.

Moving from patriarchal priests to the priesthood legislated by Moses, chapter 4 examined the Levitical priests in the law. It asserted that three functions of the priesthood emerged in the *torah*. First, the priest was a *Kohen Victor*, who defended the holiness of God’s sanctuary and participated in the holy warfare of Israel; second, he was a *Kohen Mediator*, who offered sacrifice for atonement (i.e., forgiveness and cleansing); and third, he was a *Kohen Teacher*, who taught the covenant community the *torah* of God. This threefold orientation provided the authorized “mold” (*Vorbild*) by which the priestly type (*Nachbild*) would be formed and evaluated. In more detail, I examined the way the priests’ garments, location, and sacrifices typified Christ’s particular service for his new covenant community.

Chapter 5 argued that the Levitical priests were condemned by the prophets because of their failure to guard God’s holy place, to offer right sacrifices, and to teach the people the Word of God. The prophets’ criticisms functioned as a biblical rubric for evaluating the theological proposals for Christ’s priesthood. Particularly, this chapter evaluated general atonement. By way of analogous comparison, it argued that general atonement does not stand up to the prophetic scrutiny because it does not match the stipulations of the priesthood and is therefore liable to the censure of the prophets.

In chapter 6, I observed the prophetic expectations for the new covenant priest. I suggested that the fulfillment of the priestly type was a royal figure from the line of David.



This Davidic priest-king, anticipated in 1 Samuel 2:35 and prophesied in Psalm 110 and the prophets, would defend God's holiness, sacrifice himself for his people, and instruct the covenant community with absolute efficacy. In all these ways, it was observed that the prophetic expectation was a priest who would effect salvation for people from every nation, but not for every person. Thus, I concluded that the prophets support definite atonement and deny general atonement.

Last, chapter 7 examined the particular nature of the new covenant priest. It showed from selected texts in the NT how Jesus is the perfect *Kohen Victor*, *Kohen Mediator*, and *Kohen Teacher*. Consulting the Gospels, Hebrews, and Revelation, this chapter asserted that Christ super-fulfilled the priestly type and died *for* his people and *against* his enemies. In its consideration of Christ's priestly role of covenant teacher, I also asserted that the Spirit of Christ and the bride of Christ now function as the hands of the priest, sealing the blessings of the covenant to all those for whom Christ died.

Significant for understanding the role of Christ's once and for all sacrifice and his ongoing ministry of intercession, I argued that from his heavenly throne, Jesus' priestly service continues to this day. He lives to make intercession for his new covenant community, which means that he sends forth his Spirit and his church to effect on earth what is already true in heaven—namely, that all those for whom Christ gave his life as priest would inherit the blessings of his inviolable new covenant. In this way, the priestly role of Christ continues and is always and only for the elect. This chapter also mentioned in brief the way that Christ's priesthood is going to effect a cosmic purification when he returns to separate the sheep from the goats, the clean from the unclean. It argued that in all these eschatological activities, he is the fulfillment of the OT's shepherd-servant-priest-king.

In conclusion, it has been argued that a biblical theology of Christ's priesthood unquestionably affirms definite atonement and denies general atonement. This has been shown from the Patriarchs, the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, the Gospels, the Epistles, and Revelation. And thus, I conclude this dissertation by showing five ways that a priestly theology should inform theology, especially theological interpretation and the doctrine of the atonement.

## **Systematic Implications**

### **The Priesthood and Hermeneutics**

First, a biblical theology of Christ's priesthood informs the exegesis of individual terms and texts. Since every passage that relates to the death of Christ relates to his priestly office, it is necessary for the priestly office to inform individual texts. This is not to say that the interpreter of Scripture needs to force Christ's priesthood on the text. Rather, it is to recognize how Christ's priesthood informs all those passages that describe his death.<sup>1</sup>

**Individual exegesis.** For instance, Ephesians 2:11-22 powerfully describes the way in which Christ's death reconciled Jew and Gentile to the Father and to one another. In verse 13, Paul states, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." Coupled with verse 17, Paul is using spatial imagery from an OT temple cosmology to explain the promise of salvation.<sup>2</sup> However, if the context is that of

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<sup>1</sup>Drawing on the rich tapestry of OT types, the NT authors speak of Christ's death in a number of ways. Citing the various ways Christ's death is described, Robert Sherman rightly concludes that Jesus' "priestly sacrifice determines and in some cases transforms" all the other metaphors and terms (*King, Prophet, Priest: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement* [New York: T & T Clark, 2004], 169-72). In short, it is not too much to say that Christ's priesthood informs every passage which speaks about his atoning work.

<sup>2</sup>Adam Johnson rightly observes that "studies of the atonement draw relatively little from the OT," and that greater attention to the temple-typology will illumine "certain aspects of our sinful condition which we

the temple (as Eph 2:19-22 confirms), then it is Christ as priest who makes peace (v. 15), reconciles (v. 16), and brings his people into his Father's house (vv. 17-22). Therefore, even though the term priest is not found in Ephesians 2, or anywhere in Ephesians, the concepts are there.<sup>3</sup> Thus, to understand the soteriology of Ephesians 2, it is necessary to incorporate the larger categories of Christ's priestly humiliation and exaltation. This is just one example of the fruitfulness of relating passages describing Christ's death to Christ's priesthood.

Likewise, 1 John 2:2 is often quoted to defend general atonement,<sup>4</sup> because on the surface its universal terms seem to overrule any delimiting facets of Christ's death. However, in its immediate context, Christ is called an "Advocate" and is described as "interceding." The priestly action of mediating advocacy is explicitly mentioned in John's letter.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, interpreters must determine whether the single use of "whole world"—which is used in 1 John 5:19 to speak of less than everyone in the world—redefines the particular nature of Christ's priesthood? Or, if Christ's priesthood is being modified by the universalizing language of "whole world" in a way that comports with the priest's particular nature.<sup>6</sup> Space does not permit a full exegetical analysis, but following Robert Yarbrough

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might otherwise minimize" ("A Temple Framework of the Atonement," *JETS* 54 [2011]: 235-36). I would argue the same is true with Christ's priesthood.

<sup>3</sup>The priestly notions of Christ's priesthood in Ephesians are reinforced by the explicit imagery of sitting at God's right hand (Eph 1:20-22; 2:6) and the access believers have to God's throne (Eph 3:12), not to mention, the believer's spiritual armor (Eph 6:13-16) fits well with the idea of Christ as *Kohen Victor*.

<sup>4</sup>See Robert Lightner, *The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 78-85; Norman Douty, *Did Christ Die Only for the Elect? A Treatise on the Extent of the Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998), 122-25; Gary Schultz, "A Biblical and Theological Defense of a Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 112-20.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. J. Ramsey Michaels, "Atonement in John's Gospel and Epistles," in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 112-17.

<sup>6</sup>On the expansion of God's blessings to the nations in 1 John 2:1-2, see B. B. Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, ed. John E. Meeter (Nutley, NJ: P & R, 1970), 1:167-77.

and Gary Long,<sup>7</sup> I would contend on the basis of Christ's priestly office, that Christ's advocacy is coterminous with his priestly sacrifice. Thus, in the new covenant, Christ's death is for the "whole world," defined as a particular believing people taken out of the world.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, Hebrews 2:9 is a verse that is often used to deny definite atonement. It says of Jesus, the second Adam, that "he might taste death for everyone." Many advocates for general atonement have appealed to the universal language of this verse to defend their position.<sup>9</sup> Yet, Moses Stuart, by no means a five-pointer, rightly observes that such a view misappropriates the language of Hebrews and ignores the epochal shift occurring in the NT.<sup>10</sup> Other generalists appeal to Christ's human nature to unite Christ and humanity at large.<sup>11</sup> They reason that just as Adam shared his human nature with all people, Christ shares his

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<sup>7</sup>Robert W. Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 75-81; Gary Long, *Definite Atonement* (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2006), 101-19.

<sup>8</sup>This is the way John speaks in Rev 5:9-10 (Tom Barnes, *Atonement Matters: A Call to Declare the Biblical View of the Atonement* [Webster, NY: Evangelical, 2008], 89-92). Moreover, John 11:52-53 provides a helpful explication of 1 John 2:1-2 (Long, *Definite Atonement*, 117).

<sup>9</sup>Douty, *Did Christ Die for the Elect?*, 118-19; Lightner, *The Death Christ Died*, 71-72; Shultz, "A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement," 141-45.

<sup>10</sup>Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: H. Fisher, R. Fisher, and P. Jackson, 1834), 304.

<sup>11</sup>Shultz writes, "Christ is the fulfillment of Psalm 8:4-6," which is quoted in Heb 2:6-8, and is consequently "united with all people in his incarnation and death" (A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement," 144). The imprecision of this statement is as troubling as is its commonality (cf. A. H. Strong, *Outlines of Systematic Theology* [Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907], 772). The problem arises in the conflation of incarnation and atonement, as well as the non-descript mediation of general (covenantal?) blessings to those who are in 'union with Christ' by means of his incarnation, but not his covenant-ratifying death. In response, it must be asked if it is biblically tenable or theologically responsible to assume that Christ shares his covenantal blessings (i.e., forgiveness of sins) with men dead in Adam? As it has been argued in this dissertation, Christ mediates a life-giving covenant, where his covenantal union is contingent on his priestly service. He is the head of the covenant and the one who procures the blessing by his blood and who seals it to his people by means of his priestly service of teaching, such that all those in covenantal union with him repent, believe, and receive the blessings that he purchased in his death and applies in his indestructible life. Accordingly, the notion of union in Christ via his incarnation is highly suspect. It does not carry the weight that generalists think it does.

humanity with all people as well. However, such a reading shows the interpreters' covenantal insensitivity.

Adam's union with humanity as a covenantal head involves union in sin, death, and the flesh; however, Christ's union with humanity is by the Spirit and is only for those offspring of Abraham, whom he will bring into the family of faith. He is the firstborn of from the dead (Col 1:15, 18). The similarity between Adam and Jesus is that they are both heads of a new humanity (cf. Rom 5:12ff.). Adam was the head of the human race, which he led into death; Jesus is the head of a redeemed humanity, which he is leading into life. In this way, the typology of Jesus' priesthood is crucial. Jesus is not a priest like Adam, who failed in his priestly duties. Rather, he is a priest like Abraham, who succeeded in his priestly duties, and thus effectively brought blessing and salvation to his people.<sup>12</sup> Even better, he is a priest like Melchizedek (Heb 5:1-10; 7:1ff.), whose indestructible life leads him to perfectly intercede for all those in covenant with him. In this way, the universal language, which was argued in chapter 6, relates to the expansion from Israel to the nations and must be defined by the stipulations of the new covenant. Altogether, these three texts (Eph 2:11-22; 1 John 2:1-2; Heb 2:9) are a sampling of the verses that need to be considered and read in the light of Christ's multi-faceted priesthood and new covenant mediation.

**Longitudinal themes.** In addition to problems that generalists have with individual passages, their theological method needs to consider more fully the longitudinal themes and intrasystematic categories that Scripture gives. For instance, the biblical metaphor bridegroom and bride in Ephesians 5:22-33 becomes a "grotesque" love affair if

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<sup>12</sup>See the discussion of Abraham's priestly mediation in chap. 3.

Christ's death retains its general scope.<sup>13</sup> If Christ lives and dies in the same sense for the non-elect as the elect, he becomes the bridegroom of the latter but abandons the former. Further, his death says nothing special to his beloved. Instead it cuts a covenant with the whole world, but then only remains faithful with his bride.<sup>14</sup>

Again, if Christ goes to the cross in the same sense for sheep and goats, but only saves the former class, then he shows himself to be a reckless shepherd. The shepherd's task is to lovingly lead, feed, and protect the sheep, and he is to judiciously kill all approaching enemies.<sup>15</sup> To say that Christ dies in the room of his enemies is more than what Matthew 5:45 is affirming; it is a confusion of Christ's warrior priesthood.<sup>16</sup> Third, if Christ dies for the posterity that he is going to usher into his Father's kingdom, and if he also dies for the enemies of God in the same sense (i.e., purchasing their legal pardon), it gives the impression that the Father and Son are debating who to let in at the front door. One major strength for the priestly view of the atonement is the way it coheres with the Father's election (Eph 1:4-6) and the Son's refusal to do anything but what he sees the Father doing (John 5:19). In this way, it is manifestly Trinitarian.

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<sup>13</sup>“If Christ does not love his church in a special way, *different in kind* from the way he loves all other people, and if the husband is to love his wife *just as* Christ loved the church, then the husband is to love all other women in the same way that he loves his wife—surely a grotesque ethic!” (Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998], 674).

<sup>14</sup>Arguing similarly, R. S. Candlish avers, “The appeal” for husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25-27) “is unmeaning, frivolous, and irrelevant, if Christ is to be held as having given himself for any besides the Church which he is to ‘present,’ to betrothe and marry, ‘to himself, as a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing’” (*The Atonement: Its Efficacy and Extent* [Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1867], 114).

<sup>15</sup>In Ps 23 and Ezek 34, the shepherd saves his sheep and strikes down their enemies.

<sup>16</sup>On the nature of Christ's love for the non-elect, see D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000). On the other side of the coin, Kevin J. Vanhoozer explains that God's sacrificial love is always and only for his covenant people (*Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* [New York: Cambridge, 2010], 442-44).

**Theological interpretation.** All in all, remembering Christ’s priesthood and the typological structures of that office helps us read the Bible better. The cash value, as it concerns interpretation, is that since every passage that concerns the death of Christ touches on his priestly office, the larger “interpretive model” helps us get a grasp on individual passages of Scripture.<sup>17</sup> It brings isolated texts and universal texts into conversation with the biblical-theological office of Christ’s priesthood. Generalists may object by saying that this is a forced reading, but in truth it is simply an application of the *analogia fide*. Scripture is not a Pez Dispenser, which neatly distributes different color candies at the command of its user; it is a woven fabric where every strand in the matrix is organically-related. It takes time and literary attention to rightly discern the patterns, types, and themes that hold the Bible together.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, there needs to exist a hermeneutical spiral between the biblical typology of Christ’s priesthood and the individual texts that touch on Christ’s death, such that theologians engage in exegetical theology at the level of text, epoch, and canon.

Specifically, as it relates to the extent of the atonement, “genre awareness” is crucial. Chapter 6 argued that generalists by and large do not consider the “genre” of universal language that arises in the Latter Prophets. In practice, they regularly cite a word (“all” or “world”), run to a lexicon to prove the universal extent of the term, and run back to text, letting the single word define the rest of the sentence, and then the doctrine. This interpretive method effectively stops the hermeneutical spiral because the “alls” and the “worlds” become the fixed referent points in the passage, instead of the redemptive types and

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<sup>17</sup>J. I. Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution,” in *In My Place Condemned He Stood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 36.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Richard Lints, *Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

metaphors associated with Christ's atoning work. What is needed is an interpretive method that reads meaning at the level of illocutions and engages the larger structures of typology.

At the same time, epochal awareness is needed. Situated on a covenantal fault-line, the NT records a major shift in God's covenantal relations with the world.<sup>19</sup> For two thousand years, God's dealing with mankind was generally restricted to the sons of Abraham. They alone possessed the law, the covenants, and the promises (Ps 147:19-20; Rom 9:4-5). Written into the law itself was the command to separate from unclean Gentiles (Deut 23:3). Moreover, during Second Temple Judaism, faithful Jews sought to recapture God's favor through strict adherence to the Law. In this context, is it any wonder that the Jesus (and later his apostles) needed to use universal terms to spur on nationalistic Jews to embrace their Gentile brothers?<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, one of the apologetic factors of the book of Acts, especially chapter 15, includes Luke's intention to show how the gospel is moving out from Jerusalem.<sup>21</sup> God's program of salvation is for Jew *and* Gentile. This was foretold in the OT, especially in Isaiah, and is now being worked out in redemptive history. Indeed, since the prophets are the greatest source of universal language, biblical interpreters and theologians, debating the extent of Christ's death, must consider the relationship between Jew and Gentile and how the NT authors speak about the expansion of the gospel. Accordingly, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and

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<sup>19</sup>William Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* (1834; repr., Pittsburgh: United Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1864), 214ff.; A. A. Hodge, *The Atonement* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1867), 423–27.

<sup>20</sup>Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ*, 215; R. B. Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die? A Study of the Divine Design of the Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1959; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 30–34.

<sup>21</sup>On the internationalization of God's redemptive plans in Acts, see David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002).



Ezekiel need to be given pride of place over Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich in determining how the apostles use universal language. To put it as a question: How could the apostles have spoken about God's intention to reach beyond the Jews without using universal terms? And again, would the OT prophets and the NT apostles, who were steeped in Scripture, have considered that God was abandoning the particular features of the priest's sacrifices? In other words, was God using the OT sacrifices as molds from which Christ's atonement came into the world? Or, was God seeking to destroy the particularity of the OT sacrifices in light of the better sacrifice of Christ?

What is troubling about affirming a general atonement without limiting it to a particular covenant people is the way that it sets the OT and NT against one another. It destroys the relationship of type and antitype. This, of course, does not resolve the matter, but it does assert that the universal language of the prophets and apostles must be read in relationship with the priesthood of Christ and the stipulations of the covenant he mediates. This language cannot be extracted from the framework of the Bible. What this dissertation has shown is that when we do those two things—reading the universal terms in regard to the (1) priesthood and (2) covenant—the result is a gloriously effective salvation for the elect among all the peoples of the earth. Indeed, this receives the praise of heaven (Rev 5:9-10).

### **The Priesthood and the Atonement**

Second, a biblical theology of Christ's priesthood informs the nature and extent of the atonement. By observing the priestly nature of Christ's satisfaction and victory over his enemies, it unites penal substitution and *Christus Victor*.<sup>22</sup> In this way, the priesthood, with

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<sup>22</sup>For an excellent discussion on the relationship between penal substitution and *Christus Victor*, see Graham A. Cole, *God the Peacemaker: How Atonement Brings Shalom*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 124-30, 236-38.

its legal requirements and sacrifices, ensures that penal substitution is the “heart” or “linchpin” of the atonement,<sup>23</sup> while at the same time giving a central but auxiliary role to defeating God’s enemies—hence, *Kohen Victor*. Schreiner strikes the right balance when he responds to Greg Boyd, saying, “Christ’s victory over Satan is anchored in his sacrifice for sinners where he bore the wrath of God and took the punishment we deserved.”<sup>24</sup>

Of course, the goal of this dissertation has not been to protect a theological system, but to explicate what the Bible teaches about Christ’s multi-dimensional priesthood. With that said, Christ’s priesthood rightly aligns sacrifice, victory, and moral influence (example and teaching) in ways that other atonement models do not.<sup>25</sup> As Sherman observes, Jesus’ “priestly work should be understood as his own proper work as the incarnate Son.”<sup>26</sup> Yet, even in Sherman’s insightful study, he redefines the priestly sacrifice of Christ, elevating intercession above atonement and *Christus Victor* over propitiation.<sup>27</sup>

By contrast, I have argued that Christ, as a priest-king, gains his kingdom by means of his priestly sacrifice. In keeping with the priestly typology of the OT, he draws

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<sup>23</sup>Respectively, Thomas R. Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” in *The Nature of the Atonement*, ed. James Beilby and Paul Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 67; and Roger Nicole, “Postscript on Penal Substitution,” in *The Glory of the Atonement*, 451.

<sup>24</sup>Schreiner, “Penal Substitution Response,” 53. This articulation is further explicated by Henri Blocher, “*Agnus Victor: The Atonement as Victory and Vicarious Punishment*,” in *What Does It Mean to be Saved? Broadening Evangelical Horizons of Salvation*, ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 67-91; and Sinclair Ferguson, “Christus Victor et Propitiator: The Death of Christ, Substitute and Conqueror,” in *For the Fame of God’s Name: Essays in Honor of John Piper*, ed. Sam Storms and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 171-89.

<sup>25</sup>In this way, my view closely resembles Kevin J. Vanhoozer’s covenantal model of the atonement (*The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* [Louisville: Westminster-John Knox, 2005], 380-94), but it places greater stress on the victory that Christ’s death achieves—a weakness that Vanhoozer’s model possesses (see Cole, *God the Peacemaker*, 130).

<sup>26</sup>Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet*, 169.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 157-62, 210-18. Part of Sherman’s misreading of Christ’s atoning work relates to the fact that he psychologizes sin and makes it a community problem, not an individual offense against God.

near to the altar so that he might inaugurate a new covenant for the people he is bringing into his kingdom. In this way, his priesthood is intensely personal. He does not die to simply defeat the powers; nor does he simply die for sin in the abstract. To borrow somewhat antiquated language—but language that needs to be reissued today—Jesus dies “in the room and stead” of his covenant people. Hugh Martin states it well, “If the atonement of Christ falls under the category of His Priesthood, it is impossible it can be impersonal, indefinite, unlimited; for the priesthood is not.” Conversely, “Unless the Atonement transpires outside the limits and actings and conditions of the priesthood,” his atoning death must of necessity be definite, for it is based upon personal relations.<sup>28</sup>

From all quarters of the Bible, I have affirmed a priestly atonement *for* God’s people and *against* God’s enemies (angelic and human). This provides a better, more natural synthesis of substitution and victory. First, it incorporates the narrative of cosmic warfare that moves from Genesis 3:15 to the end of Revelation. Second, it emphasizes the substitutionary focus of the atonement, without setting it against Christ’s victory over his enemies.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, by nailing the law with all its legal demands to the cross (Col 2:13-15), Jesus effectively destroyed the judgment against his covenant people, and simultaneously, won the right to judge all those whose sins were not expiated on Calvary.

In history, the effects of Jesus’ death have been manifested over many millennia. Today, two thousand years removed from his death, the world awaits the full impact of

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<sup>28</sup>Hugh Martin, *The Atonement: In Its Relation to the Covenant, the Priesthood, the Intercession of Our Lord* (London: Ames Nisbet & Company, 1870), 55-56.

<sup>29</sup>In recent works on Christ’s atonement, Graham Cole’s book, *God the Peacemaker*, stands out as a work that beautifully weds the redemptive-historical narrative of Christ’s cosmic victory with Christ’s sacrificial death. Rightly, he argues that Christ’s death is the central work of the cross, one whereby Christ atones for the sins of his people and defeats the powers and principalities.

Christ's death. Nevertheless, we know from the testimony of Scripture how the priest who inaugurated a new covenant with his blood is effectively ruling at the right hand of God. He is teaching his people and awaiting the time when all his enemies will be put under his feet. In the end, because Christ's blood flows in two different directions, it cannot be the case that Christ died for all people without exception. Rather, he died for his own and against his enemies, even though in time, his enemies receive an amazing share of common grace until the Father puts the sword in Jesus' hand to come and cleanse heaven and earth.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Priesthood and the Person of Christ**

Third, a biblical theology of Christ's priesthood unifies Christ's atoning work. Theologically, it has often been affirmed that the person of Christ informs the work of Christ. For instance, William Cunningham posited that Christ's person and work are "intimately connected."<sup>31</sup> However, he goes further. Christ's work is not generically influenced by his personal properties; it is his priesthood in particular that is "the most peculiar and essential feature of the work which He wrought, as Mediator, for the salvation of sinners."<sup>32</sup> As chapters 3-7 have demonstrated, God's priest has a particular set of duties that Christ must have fulfilled if he was to be the NT fulfillment of the OT type.

Therefore, Christ's priestly service informs each step of atoning work, and each aspect of his priesthood also informs the totality of his humiliation and exaltation. Because his actions are unified in his office, Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension, session, and second coming are all organically-related and mutually-interpreting. Without conflating

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<sup>30</sup>On the Bible's view of "universalism," see Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 78–103.

<sup>31</sup>William Cunningham, *Historical Theology* (1862; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1960), 2: 238; cf. John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 149–63.

<sup>32</sup>Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 2:243.

them, each aspect informs all the others. For instance, Jesus must take on flesh and blood so that he can die and rise again; his death qualifies as a final atoning sacrifice because his life is perfect in holiness; his atoning sacrifice proves to be efficacious because he is raised from the grave; and his ascension explicates when and how he presents his covenantal blood. Together, it is inconceivable that the “provision” of redemption can be (theo)logically separated from the “application” of redemption.

Once the typological structures are understood, the division between provision and application, which is regularly postulated by generalists,<sup>33</sup> proves to be vain speculation and exegetically-unsustainable. For all the reasons stated in chapters 3-7, this cannot be. The priest guards, represents, and teaches his own covenant people. According to the biblical pattern, he must perform *all* of these duties for *all* those whom he receives from the Father. Because he does this with fullness of deity, his service cannot be sabotaged by sin or withered by weakness. He is the great high priest, who redeems unto eternity all those for whom he dies. Provision without application is untenable according the priesthood of Christ.

### **The Priesthood and the Universal Offer**

Fourth, the priesthood also informs the universal offer, in that the ministry of the gospel is described as a priestly work (Rom 15:16; Pet 2:9-10). There is a conceptual and linguistic connection between Christ’s priesthood and ours—not to mention the fact that Christ lives to intercede for his covenant people. Consequently, in union with Christ,

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<sup>33</sup>Millard Erickson affirms A.H. Strong’s “mediating position” that limits the application but generalizes the provision of Christ’s death (Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998], 852; Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Outlines of Systematic Theology* [Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907], 771-76). Demarest follows Erickson (Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997], 193), and in recent years, many others have appealed to these sublapsarian forebears (e.g., Lightner, Douty, Keathley, Ware, Shultz, Moore, and Breshears).

believers go forward as ‘little Christs’ (i.e., anointed ones) carrying out the priestly duties of their covenant head. It is through his Spirit-filled body, that the head carries out his priestly service until all the nations hear the message of the gospel (Matt 24:14).

The significance of this truth is that the universal offer is not technically universal. Since there have been and continue to be many places where the people of God are not present, it is important to recognize that there are pockets (some times large regions) where the message of Christ’s atoning sacrifice has not been heard.<sup>34</sup> To say it another way, these are places where evangelistic priests are absent. Indeed, if Christ is a universal priest, then his priesthood can only reach as far as his priests deliver the message. Of course, Christ has received authority over the cosmos and the right to subdue and save the nations (Matt 28:18; John 17:2), but unless he chooses to create sons of Abraham from stones and silence, geographically-bound men and women must be present. Therefore, as Christ awaits all things to be set under his feet, his priestly reign is coterminous with his church and its witnesses. As with everything in this epoch of history, it is already and not yet. Christ’s priesthood grows as his priestly witnesses move throughout the earth, establishing outposts of the kingdom from which the gospel is proclaimed.<sup>35</sup>

While not a logical denial of general atonement, this less-than-universal knowledge favors limited atonement. For, as it was evidenced in chapter 5, if Christ dies for countless millions who never hear of his priestly sacrifice, it brings disrepute on him as a

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<sup>34</sup>This, of course, includes the period of time before Christ’s incarnation.

<sup>35</sup>Russell D. Moore and Robert E. Sagers, “The Kingdom of God and the Church: A Baptist Reassessment,” *SBJT* 12 (2008): 75-81.

priest. John Davenant, an influential hypothetical universalist at the Synod of Dort,<sup>36</sup> reconciles this problem by appealing to the freeness of God's will.<sup>37</sup> To him, God has given the divine prerogative to withhold (or, not apply) the benefits of the covenant purchased by Christ's universal propitiation. Davenant solves the logical problem of universality and particularity with this restriction. However, it does not solve the priestly problem. The extent of the atonement must of necessity be coterminous with his priestly proclamation.

The multi-ethnic nature of Christ's new covenant impels the proclamation of the gospel to the nations (Matt 28:19). Christ's imperative to go make disciples creates an army of priests sent into the world trumpeting the gospel to all men everywhere. In fact, Ephesians 2:17 speaks of Christ proclaiming the gospel to those far and near. Obviously, Christ is doing this through means—through his Spirit and his bride (Rev 22:17)—in this way, the church is summoned by God to go into the world telling all people about the priest-king Jesus Christ. In perfect harmony, the priestly work of this universal king retains both the particular nature of the atonement and the universal offer of the gospel. Therefore, the priesthood of Christ preserves the content of the gospel,<sup>38</sup> and simultaneously, pushes the gospel to the farthest corners of creation.<sup>39</sup> In this way, the priesthood of Christ heightens the call to missions, promises success to struggling missionaries, and strengthens all those who take up

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<sup>36</sup>Lee Gatiss, *For Us and for Our Salvation*, 90-99; Stephen Strehle, "The Extent of the Atonement and the Synod of Dort," *WTJ* 51 (1989): 1-23.

<sup>37</sup>John Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ as to Its Extent and Special Benefits*, trans. Josiah Allport (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1831-32), 513-58.

<sup>38</sup>This is a concern that many have raised against general atonement because of the way it changes the message of the gospel (cf. Michael Horton, *For Calvinism* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011], 87-89).

<sup>39</sup>As a prophylactic against hyper-Calvinism and evangelistic lethargy, a proper understanding of Christ's priesthood stimulates new covenant priests to share the gospel.

the cross and suffer with Jesus in his priestly service.<sup>40</sup> All in all, the priestly nature of Christ's work balances the particular and universal aspects of atonement and bolsters the church's calling to pronounce the gospel to all creation (Mark 16:15).

### **The Priesthood and Cosmos**

Fifth, and finally, since Christ ministers in the true temple, made without hands, his priestly office also informs how his death is related to the cleansing of the old creation and the birth of the new (Matt 19:28). In fact, Christ's priesthood gives us textual warrant for understanding how Christ's death has saving efficacy for a particular people *and* universal impact as his death accomplishes universal "reconciliation" (Col 1:20).<sup>41</sup>

Throughout church history, Reformed theologians have argued for the "universal significance of particular atonement."<sup>42</sup> So, the recent onslaught of theologians advocating multiple intentions in a hybrid unlimited/limited view of the atonement does not offer anything essentially new. Instead, it confuses what Christ has done. It rightly affirms the manifold effects of Christ's death, but it places universal propitiation on the wrong side of the ledger. Without allowing the priestly office of Christ to inform the multiple-intentions of Christ's death, generalists argue that Christ died for the sins of all people, but that he died in a special way for the elect. The problem is that such a theological distinction is based on parsing general and particular texts, instead of discerning how the particular and universal

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<sup>40</sup>On the relationship between suffering and priesthood, see Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 50-55.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. John Murray, "Reconciliation," in *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1982), 4:92-112.

<sup>42</sup>Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatic*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 470-75.



texts work together in the biblical canon and how they relate to the priestly office of Christ as it is worked out in the progress of redemptive, *covenantal* history.

Conversely, I have argued that Christ's priestly office identifies him with a particular group of people—namely, the countless multitude from every nation who are members of his new covenant. In this way, Christ's royal priesthood functions as the means by which he redeems the human race—not by saving every person, but by creating from dead humanity a new people who are purchased and pardoned by his priestly sacrifice. Still, Christ's priestly work is not just personal; it is also cosmic.

As the priest serving in God's place, Jesus' service has impact on all creation. The argument to be made at this juncture can only be suggestive, but the notion is this: Christ restores all creation through the means of redeeming a new humanity. Since God created the world to be ruled by the human race as a family of royal priests (see chapter 3), it holds that the eschatological goal is of a piece with the original design. Therefore, as the Last Adam, Christ has offered a priestly sacrifice in order to redeem a family of priests who he will set over his new creation. At the present, creation groans waiting for the revelation of these sons and daughters of God (Rom 8:19-22). Nevertheless, when Christ seals the Spirit on the last of his redeemed children, he will return to enjoy the fellowship of all those sons and daughters that his priestly service saved and sanctified.

As it was argued in chapter 7, it is on this last day that Christ as *Kohen Victor* will cleanse heaven and earth of every impure thing—angelic and human. In this way, Christ's death on the cross not only has particular, personal implications for the forgiveness of sins, but through the purification of his people, Christ is making inroads to cleanse, cultivate, and

keep the world that has been given to him. Earning eternal praise in the process, the Son of God does all of this as the all-glorious royal priest.

### **Further Research**

As these five systematic applications demonstrate, there are numerous doctrines that a biblical theology of the priesthood informs and improves. Throughout this dissertation, we have paid close attention to the intrasystematic categories of priesthood and covenant in order to better understand Christ's atonement and its extent. Now, at the conclusion of this study, I suggest five other areas of research regarding theological interpretation, typology, new covenant theology, the priesthood, and the atonement's extent.

First, with the axiom in mind that better hermeneutics result in better theology, this dissertation has sought to engage the theological question of the atonement's extent with the tools and resources of biblical theology. With significant attention to typology, the biblical covenants, and all those passages of Scripture that relate to the intrasystematic category of the priest, I have argued for a definite atonement on the basis of the whole canon. At the level of method, the aim of this dissertation has been to let biblical theology help answer the dogmatic questions concerning the atonement's extent.<sup>43</sup> In terms of future research, it is hoped that further dogmatic inquiry will take up the task of careful exegesis at the textual, epochal, and canonical levels. There is a great need for this kind of theology, and it is hoped that the method employed in this dissertation may spur on others to cross-pollinate their

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<sup>43</sup>As it was stated in the introduction, this dissertation has intentionally avoided the quarrels of historical theology, in order to gain from the insights of biblical theology. This is not to reject the crucial role of church history or the theology gained in certain epochs of church history. In fact, the exegetical theologians of nineteenth-century Scotland have been prominently cited in this dissertation because of their careful attention to biblical theology.

systematic theology with biblical theology, typology, and the progression of the covenants in Scripture.

Another related area for research is the nature of typology. Articles and chapters continue to engage this subject, but few have considered the relationship between covenant and typology. However, as it was argued in chapter 2, typological persons must find their symbolic import from the covenantal structures of the Bible. In this dissertation, we only looked at the priestly type. However, typological understanding of saviors, kings, prophets, and righteous sufferers with the corresponding figures of Noah, David, Moses, and Joseph—to name only a few—would be improved if these types were considered in relationship to the biblical covenants that situated their lives and callings.

Third, this dissertation has depended heavily on the “progressive covenantalism” explicated by Gentry and Wellum.<sup>44</sup> It has sought to explain how tensions embedded in the OT covenants are resolved in Christ and how the priestly office helps retain the monergistic nature of salvation, while at the same time doing justice to the conditional demands of each covenant. In other words, while this dissertation has sought to ultimately defend a definite atonement, by making the case from the priesthood and covenant, it has also contributed to the covenantal conversation about whether covenants are unilateral or bi-lateral. By centering on Christ’s work in the new covenant, I have argued that every covenant must be understood on its own terms, but that all of them are graciously ratified by a priestly mediator. Still, there is more exegetical work to be done on the subject of covenants, especially as it relates to the NT and Paul in particular.

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<sup>44</sup>Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

Fourth, attention to the priesthood of Christ and his Christians (“anointed ones”) contributes much to the study of systematic theology. As Andrew Purves has said of Christ’s priesthood, “Because of its centrality, the whole approach to the understanding of Christian faith, as well as the church and ministry, needs to be thoroughly reframed in the light of the theological testimony to the priesthood of Jesus Christ exercised through his vicarious humanity.”<sup>45</sup> Rightly, Christ’s royal priesthood has potential for helping inform theological anthropology, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, eschatology, and missiology. This dissertation has broached all of these subjects, and it has only scratched the surface. Sadly, theologians who usually conceive of Christ’s priesthood in systematic categories (prophet, priest, and king) are most heavily influenced by Calvin in Geneva instead of Adam in the garden. To date, few have appropriated the insights of biblical studies as it relates to the multi-faceted ministry of the priest. However, as interdisciplinary studies continue to be fostered, it can only be hoped that more theologians will consider the intrasystematic categories of priesthood and covenant mediation to form and reform systematic doctrines.

Fifth, advocates and opponents of definite atonement must consider the priesthood of Christ in all its manifold perfections to rightly articulate the doctrine of the atonement’s extent. Methodologically, it has been the burden of this dissertation to show that the extent of atonement does not rise and fall with the elevation of one class of proof-texts and the subjugation (read: reinterpretation) of another. Rather, it is an exercise of theological interpretation that includes typology, the biblical covenants, and understanding how the

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<sup>45</sup>Andrew Purves, “The Ministry of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ: A Reformed View of the Atonement of Christ,” *Theology Matters* 3 (1997), 1; accessed 12 December 2012; available from <http://www.theologymatters.com/Julaug97.PDF>; Internet.

individual texts (e.g., John 10:11-18; Rom 5:18-19; Heb 2:9; 1 John 2:1-2) require more than a thin reading, one that is isolated from the contours of the biblical canon.

All throughout, this dissertation has demonstrated that the extent of the atonement begins with the priestly image of God in the garden and continues until Christ as the great high priest builds his church and beautifies his Father's temple by gathering his children through the priestly ministry of the Spirit-filled church. Therefore, all those who seek to disprove definite atonement with a casual appeal to John 3:16 or 1 Timothy 2:5 must instead consider the contours of Christ's priesthood and the stipulations of the new covenant. Only when the whole counsel of Scripture has been considered can we properly discern the true extent of Christ's atoning work.

### **Conclusion**

All in all, it is hoped that the kind of "research" that this dissertation has stimulated most is the kind that produces awe and reverence in the heart of the reader (Ps 111:2). While broaching the "troubling" subject of "limited atonement," it has been my express delight to study the efficacious work of Christ on behalf of his elect and to commend his priestly office as essential aspect of who he is and what he has done on earth and in heaven. The extent of the atonement is far more than an academic exercise or a theological eccentricity; it is a vital part of any biblical soteriology. Even more, it is my eternal hope.

Therefore, it is my prayer that all who read these pages and wrestle with their arguments might extol the mercies of God more completely and be encouraged to take the never-failing promise of the gospel to all the nations. Even as dust settles on this dissertation, the serpent is seeking to reduce men to the dust. But praise be to God, Christ, as our heavenly high priest, is sending men to save lost men and women. May we who trust in

Christ as our shepherd-servant-priest-king labor to take up his priestly mantle and bring the gospel to the sheep for whom Christ died, so that they might hear his voice and follow him. May he be pleased to use the arguments of this dissertation to focus our understanding of his priesthood and fuel our passion to serve our glorious priest, Jesus Christ.

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## ABSTRACT

### A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD AND COVENANT MEDIATION WITH RESPECT TO THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013  
Chair: Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

This dissertation argues that a biblical theology of the priestly mediation of the new covenant is necessary for understanding the extent of the atonement and that such a study will result in a clear affirmation of definite atonement. Chapter 1 shows how theologians have truncated Christ's priestly office and how biblical scholars have neglected to apply the priesthood to matters of the atonement's efficacy and extent. This chapter validates the need for a whole Bible typology of the priestly work of Christ.

Chapter 2 proposes an approach to typology that sets forth the methodological commitments of this dissertation. It argues that typology should be prospective in its orientation, Christotelic in its aim, and covenantal in its structure. It explains these three facets at length, helping the reader to understand how the dissertation uses typology.

Chapter 3 introduces the priestly prototype in the person and work of Adam. Next, it asserts that Noah and Abraham function as priestly types when they offer sacrifice, mediate covenants, and offer blessings. With each type, theological reflections are given in conversation with the New Testament fulfillment of Adam, Noah, and Abraham.

Chapter 4 examines the legislation of the priesthood. It asserts that three functions of the priesthood emerge in the Law of Moses: The priest is (1) a *Kohen Victor*, who defends the holiness of God's sanctuary, (2) a *Kohen Mediator*, who offers sacrifice for atonement, and a (3) *Kohen Teacher*, who teaches the covenant community the *torah* of God. This threefold orientation provides the authorized "mold" (*Vorbild*) by which the priestly type (*Nachbild*) can be formed and evaluated.

Chapter 5 argues that the prophets condemned the Levitical priests for their disobedience to God's law and their failure to fulfill their assigned duties (guarding, sacrificing, and teaching). The prophets' criticisms function in this dissertation as an inspired rubric for evaluating theological proposals for Christ's priesthood and the atonement. In particular, this chapter argues that general atonement does not match the stipulations of the priesthood, and is therefore liable to prophetic censure.

Chapter 6 outlines the priestly expectations of the Former and Latter Prophets. It suggests that the eschatological priest is a royal figure from the line of David who defends God's holiness (*Kohen Victor*), sacrifices himself for his people (*Kohen Mediator*), and instructs the covenant community with absolute efficacy (*Kohen Teacher*). On the basis of these prophetic anticipations, this chapter argues that the priest of the new covenant will provide a definite and particular atonement.

Chapter 7 shows from the New Testament how Christ Jesus fulfills all of the Old Testament promises in regards to the priesthood. Specifically, it demonstrates the threefold ministry of Christ—*Kohen Victor*, *Kohen Mediator*, and *Kohen Teacher*.

Following the chronological development of Christ's priestly ministry (i.e., on earth, on

the cross, in heaven), it will argue that the atonement's extent must be particular and definite, not general and indefinite.

Chapter 8 summarizes the biblical theological data espoused in chapters 3 to 7. It applies the priesthood to five areas of systematic theology (i.e., theological hermeneutics, the extent of the atonement, the person of Christ, the universal offer of the gospel, and reconciliation of the cosmos). It concludes with an appeal for holding definite atonement on the basis of Christ's priesthood. In addition, it suggests various avenues for doing future research on the priesthood of Christ.



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