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PENAL SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT AS THE BASIS FOR
NEW COVENANT AND NEW CREATION

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PENAL SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT AS THE BASIS FOR
NEW COVENANT AND NEW CREATION

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In Loving Memory

of my Father

James Wesley Reid
(May 5, 1940-August 23, 2008)

A godly father who helped me to understand

The Fatherhood of God

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>Bibsac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CTQ	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>
CTR	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
DBSJ	<i>Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
JETS	<i>Journal for the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary

NICNT	New International Commentary of the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary of 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	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC	The NIV Application Commentary
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
PNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>SBET</i>	<i>Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology</i>
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

PREFACE

I want to thank my professors at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for my development as a theologian. I am thankful for my advisor, Dr. Bruce Ware, for his guidance through this program. His excellent theological mind is complemented with a great pastoral disposition for his students. It has been an honor to serve as a Garrett Fellow for four years for Dr. Gregg Allison. I am thankful to him for the lunches and discussions that we had that have shaped my thinking. I also want to thank Dr. Stephen J. Wellum and Dr. Chad Brand for sharpening my theology and upholding excellence in theology, research, and writing. I also wish to recognize Dr. Shawn Wright and Dr. Michael Haykin, who have enriched and deepened my knowledge and love of historical theology, and I thank them for their high standards of scholarship.

Before I came to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, I was shaped by many professors at Dallas Theological Seminary. There are so many to name that space does not allow, but I am very appreciative for the ministry that they have provided for me and my wife there. I am especially thankful to Dr. Glenn Kreider, who was my advisor at Dallas and guided me in my discovery of contemporary theologians. I am thankful to Dr. Scott Horrell for his consultation on my thesis, and I thank him for his lasting friendship.

I have a great love for the Word, and I thank my previous pastors for fostering that love for the Scriptures. I thank Dr. Winfred Hope of Ebenezer Baptist Church West for his ministry, where I trusted Christ as my savior. I thank Rev. Joseph L. Johnson of West Oakland Missionary Baptist Church, who continued my development and gave me my first opportunity to teach. I am thankful for the ministry of First Baptist Church of Atlanta for further training in counseling and teaching ministry. I thank Dr. Rodney B.

Frazier of New Beginnings Community Fellowship, who gave me my first opportunity to preach the gospel and certified my by call by licensing and ordaining me. I thank Dr. Kevin Smith for continued training in ministry and opportunity to share the word at Watson Memorial Baptist Church. And, I thank the ministry of Highview Baptist Church for their support and encouragement throughout my studies.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my mother, M. Jewell Reid, for all of her encouragement through the years. She has always believed in me and encouraged me to have faith in God and in myself. I am blessed with a generous mother in many ways. Much of who I am today is because of her and my father's teaching and support.

Finally, I want to thank my wife, Satrina, for all of her support and her assistance. This degree would not have been possible without her tireless work. I thank her for taking the financial burden for our family. But much more than this, I thank her for her unwavering encouragement during moments of doubt and insecurity. She is a treasure that God has brought into my life.

Kenneth James Reid

Louisville, Kentucky

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Atonement Debate

At the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement, held in July 2005, Derek Tidball explained that all respondents agreed to three things: “the central significance of the death of Christ to the Christian faith, the variety and richness of the way the New Testament interprets that death, and the urgent necessity to communicate the message of the cross in a way that is both faithful to the Bible’s revelation and meaningful in the contemporary world.”¹ As the symposium debated the doctrine of penal substitution,² some participants questioned if this model of the atonement was biblically accurate or relevant to the modern world. Others argued that because of the variety of expressions in the New Testament, one metaphor is insufficient to express the meaning of

¹Derek Tidball, “Preface,” in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement*, ed. Derek Tidball, David Hilborn, and Justin Thacker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 14.

²For the purposes of this paper, Schreiner’s definition of penal substitution will be used: “The penalty for sin is death (Rom 6:23). Sinners deserve eternal punishment in hell from God himself because of their sin and guilt. God’s holy anger is directed (Rom 1:18) against all those who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). And yet because of God’s great love, he sent Christ to bear the punishment of our sins. Christ died in our place, took to himself our sin (2 Cor 5:21) and guilt (Gal 3:10), and bore our penalty so that we might receive forgiveness of sins” (Thomas R. Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” in *The Nature of the Atonement*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006], 72-73).

the cross. This symposium is representative of the current debates concerning the viability of the penal substitution model.³

Penal substitutionary atonement is the preeminent atonement doctrine of the Reformation tradition. The creeds and confessions that arose in the churches of the Reformation demonstrate this commitment to penal substitution, specifically among the Lutheran,⁴ Reformed,⁵ Anglican,⁶ and some Baptist traditions.⁷ The successors to the

³The specific critiques will be noted below.

⁴The Formula for Concord, Affirmation 4, states, “The Gospel, on the other hand, we judge to be properly the doctrine which teaches what man ought to believe who has not satisfied the law of God, and therefore is condemned by the same, to wit: that it behooves him to believe that Jesus Christ has expiated all his sins, and made satisfaction for them, and has obtained remission of sins, righteousness which avails before God, and eternal life without the intervention of any merit of the sinner” (Philip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom*, ed. Philip Schaff [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983], 3:127). See also *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*, ed. John H. Leith (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1973), 68-69.

⁵The Heidelberg Catechism codifies penal substitution in questions 10-19. The Belgic Confession, Article 21, states, “We believe that Jesus Christ is ordained with an oath to be everlasting High Priest, after the order of Melchisedec [*sic.*]: who hath presented himself in our behalf before his Father, to appease his wrath by his full satisfaction, by offering himself on the tree of the cross, and pouring out his precious blood to purge away our sins. . . . And hath suffered all this for the remission of our sins. . . . Neither is it necessary to seek or invent any other means of being reconciled to God, than this only sacrifice, once offered, by which believers are made perfect” (*The Creeds of Christendom*, 406-07). The Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647, Chapter 8, Section 5, reads, “The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up into God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him” (*ibid.*, 621). For the Heidelberg Catechism questions, see *The Creeds of Christendom*, 312-13.

⁶Though current Anglican/Episcopal doctrine has probably departed from its historic foundations, the church has a rich tradition that advocated penal substitutionary atonement, as expressed in the Thirty-Nine Articles, Article 31: “The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in which it was commonly said that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits” (*Creeds of the Churches*, 277).

⁷The Baptist tradition has been somewhat eclectic concerning the atonement. Particular Baptists strongly advocated penal substitution, as reflected in the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689, Article 8, paragraph 4: “This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which that he might

Reformers continued to develop, refine and defend it.⁸ Even after the Enlightenment, churches in the Reformation tradition maintained a commitment to the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures and they defended penal substitutionary atonement.⁹ It is regarded by many within the evangelical tradition as the central aspect of atonement doctrine.¹⁰

discharge he was made under the Law, and did perfectly fulfill it, and under-went the punishment due to us, which we should have born and suffered, being made Sin and a Curse for us: enduring most grievous sorrows in his Soul; and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, yet saw no corruption” and paragraph 5, “The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the Eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the Justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an Everlasting inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him” (William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, rev. Bill J. Leonard [Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2011], 249-50). The New Hampshire Confession, Article 4, states, “[We believe] That the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the Mediatorial Offices of the Son of God, who [by the appointment of the Father, freely] took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the [divine] law by his personal obedience, and made atonement for our sins by his death” (Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 379). Clearly, this creed does not strongly affirm propitiation. See also Article 4 of The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 in *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000: Critical Issues in America's Largest Protestant Denomination*, ed. Douglas K. Blount and Joseph D. Wooddell (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 207. Albert Mohler observes that the New Hampshire Confession and the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 present a modified Calvinist approach. See R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “Article IV: The Doctrine of Salvation,” in *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000: Critical Issues in America's Largest Protestant Denomination*, ed. Douglas K. Blount and Joseph D. Wooddell (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 38-39.

⁸Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 2, *Eleventh through Seventeenth Topics*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1994), 403-86; John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2007).

⁹See Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 2:464-543; A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology: For Students and Laymen* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 401-21; Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ* (Philadelphia: P. & R., 1950); William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3rd ed., ed. Alan Gomes (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003), 675-760; Herman Bavinck, in *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, trans. John Vriend, ed. John Bolt (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006); Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1932; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 361-91.

¹⁰Reformed evangelical theologians have repeatedly proclaimed that penal substitution is the predominate atonement doctrine. Packer argues that penal substitution is the “essence of the atonement” (J. I. Packer, “Introduction: Penal Substitution Revisited,” in *In My Place Condemned He Stood: Celebrating the Glory of the Atonement* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007], 25). Others, while not denying other aspects of the atonement, assert that penal substitution is the very center or heart of the atonement. See Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993),

The variety of images and descriptions of Christ's death in the New Testament stimulates much debate. Because of this diversity, Catholic, Orthodox, and various Protestant traditions have not reached a consensus concerning atonement doctrine. Consequently, an ecumenical council has never addressed and settled the meaning of Christ's death.¹¹ Debate over the nature of the atonement and objections to penal substitutionary atonement have thus persisted.

New Creation Critique

One particular critique of the penal substitutionary model is that it cannot initiate the new creation. There are varieties of arguments, but most indicate that this model of the atonement only satisfies God's wrath and justice; thus, it does not have any bearing on transformative renewal or cosmic restoration. Vernon White proposes a dichotomy between retribution and re-creation, such that an atonement theology that seeks "retributive balance" is mutually exclusive with re-creation.¹² Tom Smail criticizes the penal substitutionary model regarding the new creation, arguing that "by its very

174-75; Donald G. Bloesch, *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord*, Christian Foundations (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 158; Derek Tidball, *The Message of the Cross: Wisdom Unsearchable, Love Indestructible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 29; and John R. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 329.

¹¹Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 389.

¹²White argues, "Yet in fact precisely the contrary is true. If the retributivist logic is replaced by a recreative logic, these biblical concerns surrounding the Christ event will fare better, not worse. A recreative logic actually does more justice, not less, to the wrath of God, because, as already indicated, it takes a more 'strenuous' reaction to deal with the redemption of a whole situation, compared to the limited notion of mere retributive balance, or even mere destruction. Furthermore, as such, it finds wrath and justice wholly compatible with the aims of love, and does not have to trade them off against each other, as does the logic of retributive penal substitution" (Vernon White, *Atonement and Incarnation: An Essay in Universalism and Particularity* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], 102).

nature the penal model is backward rather than forward looking in its orientation. The bearing of the punishment deals with the sins of the past, but taken by itself does not say anything about how the person is brought into new and transforming relationships that will produce a new quality of life in the future.”¹³ Since it deals with sins of the past, Smail argues that “within its own terms of reference, the penal model leaves us with pardoned criminals rather than people participating in the new creation.”¹⁴ Thus Smail indicates that the penal substitutionary model is inadequate to express the atonement in a way that leads to the new birth and the new humanity. Joel Green claims that a penal substitutionary theory neglects transformation and cosmic renewal. In his critique of Schreiner’s view he opines,

I am unsure how the model of penal substitutionary atonement generates transformed life. Focused as it is on the individual, on forensic judgment and on the moment of justification, how can this model keep from undermining any emphasis on salvation as transformation and from obscuring the social and cosmological dimensions of salvation? If the purpose of God will be actualized in the restoration of all things, then how is this purpose served by a theory of penal substitution?¹⁵

Thus, these critiques contend that penal substitution cannot produce personal or cosmic renewal.¹⁶

¹³Tom Smail, *Once and for All: A Confession of the Cross* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998), 95-96. Steve Chalke argues that penal substitution does not cause cosmic renewal because of its lack of attention to the resurrection. See Steve Chalke, "The Redemption of the Cross," in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement*, ed. Derek Tidball, David Hilborn, and Justin Thacker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 44.

¹⁴Smail, *Once and for All*, 96.

¹⁵Joel B. Green, "Kaleidoscopic Response," in *The Nature of the Atonement*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2006), 114.

¹⁶For similar critiques, see Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 213-14; Colin Greene, "Is the Message of the Cross Good News for the Twentieth Century?" in *Atonement Today*, ed. John Goldingay (London: SPCK, 1995), 237-39; Tom Smail, "Can One Man Die for the People?" in *Atonement Today*, ed. John Goldingay (London: SPCK, 1995), 89-91; David Atkinson, "What

Thesis

This study will demonstrate that penal substitutionary atonement is necessary for the enacting of the new covenant and the formation of the new creation. The new covenant promises are fulfilled in the new heavens and the new earth. Accordingly, this study will argue that penal substitution initiates the fulfillment of the new covenant promises, and the fulfillment of the new covenant promises are consummated in the new created order.

Penal substitutionary atonement is necessary for the inauguration of the new covenant. Jesus taught that his death would inaugurate the new covenant at the Last Supper (Luke 22:14-20). Yet this dissertation will argue that the atonement brings forth not only the new covenant, but that the promises of forgiveness, universal knowledge, and covenant renewal, which is tangibly expressed by God's covenant presence, requires penal substitution. It will also show that the provision of the Holy Spirit for God's people is integral to God's judicial purposes because the transformation of the heart is grounded in penal substitutionary atonement. Thus each promise of the new covenant requires in some measure the satisfaction of God's justice and his wrath. Furthermore, God's provision of his Son as a sacrifice is an expression of his love.

This study will also demonstrate that each promise of the new covenant is fulfilled in the new creation. A new creation without a transformed people, which includes a regenerate heart and bodily resurrection, would result in the old order of sin and death. A new created order that is characterized by harmony between God and his people requires his forgiveness and reconciliation with him. This study will focus on the new covenant promises of personal renewal that are fulfilled in the new heavens and the

Difference Does the Cross Make to Life?" in *Atonement Today*, ed. John Goldingay (London: SPCK, 1995), 258-59, 270-21.

new earth.¹⁷

Delimitations

This study will focus on Jesus' work that he accomplished on the cross.¹⁸ Since this paper deals with the significance of the crucifixion, it will not deal with his earthly ministry except to acknowledge that he was sinless.¹⁹ Because he was sinless, Jesus' active obedience is an important aspect of penal substitution. In addition, Jesus' resurrection, while a vital aspect of penal substitution, will not be explored in detail.²⁰

¹⁷The term *personal renewal* refers to the promises of heart transformation and the renewal of God's covenant with his people, expressed in his forgiveness, his abiding presence, and their knowledge of him. Believers possess this renewed relationship with God from salvation (in an inaugurated form) to the new heavens and the new earth. The term "new creation" is used broadly and refers to the inaugurated aspects of God's regenerating work in believers, which is consummated in the new heavens and the new earth. Schreiner summarizes the inaugurated aspects of the new creation for Christians: "Paul also argues that the new creation has dawned in Jesus Christ. Those who are in Christ Jesus are now a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Now that the new creation has arrived, the Mosaic Covenant, which demanded circumcision, is no longer binding (Gal 6:15). The new creation is tied to the promise of 'the new self' (Eph 4:24), and this new person represents what believers are in Christ instead of what they are in Adam (Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21-22). Believers are a new creation in Christ Jesus and created by God to do good works (Eph 2:10). The 'new creation' language fits with the theme that believers have been regenerated, which is the work of the eschatological Spirit (Titus 3:5)" (Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 31). The new covenant also promises the renewal of the physical creation. For helpful arguments that penal substitution is required for cosmic restoration, see Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 211; Michael Ovey, "The Cross, Creation and the Human Predicament," in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today*, ed. David Peterson (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), 100-35; Lee Daniel Tankersley, "The Courtroom and the Created Order: How Penal Substitution Brings about New Creation" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010). Lee Tankersley's dissertation is probably the most extensive argument that penal substitution is required for cosmic renewal. Mary L. VadenBerg argues that atonement generally is necessary for cosmic renewal. See Mary L. VadenBerg, "Christ's Atonement: The Hope of Creation" (Ph.D. diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2008).

¹⁸For works covering the offices of Christ, see Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 483-547; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 2: 358-412; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 91-224.

¹⁹Regarding Christ's active obedience, see Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 113-21; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 570-71; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 379-81.

²⁰For studies regarding the relationship between the resurrection and penal substitution, see

Penal substitution is foundational to an understanding of atonement doctrine. God's covenantal relationship with his people cannot be conceived apart from his love and righteousness. At its core, God's relationship with his people requires penal substitutionary atonement if one is to maintain a biblical view of sin, God's righteousness, and his love. The *Christus Victor* model has become popular among some theologians who oppose the penal substitution view. While the *Christus Victor* atonement theory has much biblical support, it does not address the root cause of man's separation from God. While maintaining the importance of the *Christus Victor* theory, Jeremy Treat explains the priority of penal substitution:

First, in terms of theology, penal substitution has priority because of its explanatory power. Since systematic theology engages explicitly with doctrine and theory, the fact that penal substitution explains the "how" of *Christus Victor* gives it priority in the doctrine of the atonement. Penal substitution does not do everything, but it provides insight into many of the other aspects of the atonement, especially *Christus Victor*. Second, penal substitution has priority in the sense that it is more directly related to the God-human relationship, which is the special focus of creation, fall, and redemption. In other words, penal substitution *directly* addresses the root problem between God and humanity (wrath/guilt), whereas *Christus Victor* addresses the *derivative* problem of human bondage to Satan. However, I must once again be clear that maintaining this type of priority for penal substitution does not imply that it does everything. Penal substitution is necessary but not sufficient for understanding the doctrine of the atonement in its entirety.²¹

Richard Gaffin, Jr., "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus: The Scandal of the Cross," in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); idem, *The Centrality of the Resurrection: A Study in Paul's Soteriology*, Baker Biblical Monograph (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 124; Garry Williams, "Penal Substitution: A Response to Recent Criticisms," in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement*, ed. Derek Tidball, David Hilborn, and Justin Thacker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 184. Lee Tankersly devotes a chapter to the relationship between penal substitution and the resurrection. He concludes, "If Christ's resurrection is needed to justify him because he had died as the condemned one, then it should be apparent that the resurrection was a necessary act *precisely because* of the nature of Christ's atoning death. Because Jesus was the righteous Son of God (the obedient second/last Adam) he could not remain under the wrathful condemnation of the Father, which he bore in his death. Thus, far from being disconnected from the resurrection, it is Christ's penal substitutionary death which demands the resurrection" (Tankersly, "The Courtroom and the Created Order, 199 [emphasis in the original]).

²¹Jeremy R. Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 223-24.

Treat correctly asserts that penal substitution takes priority over *Christus Victor* and that it does not exhaustively communicate the significance of Christ's death. But Treat may overstate his case because he downplays the importance of penal substitution. While it does not explain all of the biblical data concerning the atonement, the atonement doctrine is severely impaired without penal substitution. Penal substitution is central to atonement theology if one properly accounts for reconciliation between God and his people.

New Covenant Approach

This comparison between the fallen created order and the renewal of creation begins with an examination of God's curses after Adam's sin. In Genesis 3, God pronounces three curses: the curse on the woman regarding her childbearing and in her relationship to the man (Gen 3:16), the curse on man's futility in work, with the end result of death (Gen 3:17-19), and serpent's final defeat by the seed of the woman (Gen 3:14-15). Whereas the man and the woman dwelled in the garden in companionship with God in Genesis 2, after the fall they no longer share that companionship. In Revelation 21-22, after Christ's second coming, God transforms the created order, and one feature of the new order is the removal of death and the curse (Rev 21:4, 22:3). In the new created order, God's reconciliation with his people is signified by his name on their forehead, his disclosure of his face to them, and that he dwells with his people in the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:3, 22; 22:4). The demonic forces have been judged, and are expelled from the new heavens and the new earth (Rev 20:7-10).

The new created order exhibits the renewal of the cosmos and a transformed, forgiven people who are reconciled to God. God's reconciliation with his forgiven people and their renewal are central themes through redemptive history. God addresses these

themes in the new covenant promises.²² The new covenant is inaugurated in the atonement and at Pentecost, and the new covenant will be consummated in the new heavens and the new earth.²³

The new covenant focuses specifically on God's restored relationship with his people, and this relationship is fully realized in the new creation. The focus on the new covenant has two favorable features. First, exploring the benefits of the new covenant will show God's comprehensive plan for the renewal of his people and the renewal of creation. Second, examination of the new covenant provides one an opportunity to explore a specifically biblical-theological approach for a defense of penal substitutionary atonement.²⁴ Thus, not only will this dissertation assert the priority of penal

²²P. R. Williamson, "Covenant," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 426-29; George Eldon Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 682; and W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (London: Paternoster, 1987), 199-200.

²³Regarding the features of the forgiveness of sins, God's dwelling with his people, and the renewal of creation, Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum remark, "The promise of a new creation—a new heavens and a new earth—shows that the divine plan of salvation is no halfway job. God has something bigger in mind. Yes, it involves return from exile and deliverance from the nations that have been oppressing God's people. Even more than that, it entails the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation so that the covenant is renewed, the temple is rebuilt, and Yahweh returns to Zion. God is dwelling once more in the midst of his people as king. Not only, then, do God's people have a right relationship to him, but they treat one another in genuinely human ways with faithfulness and truth, with justice and righteousness—social justice. And astonishing as it may seem, these blessings flow to the nations who are included now in the one people of God. But the creation itself has been subject to futility and destruction on account of human sin, and God is not finished until this is rectified. He will make a completely brand new universe: a new heaven and a new earth" (Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 466).

²⁴The rationale for a biblical-theological approach is that it accounts for the diversity of God's dealings with his people while maintaining the unity of God's redemptive purposes. Hamilton observes that "the purpose of biblical theology is inductively to understand the canonical form of the Bible's theology as it is progressively revealed in its own literary forms and salvation-historical development, and this sharpens our systematic and dogmatic theology" (James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 46). See also Brian S. Rosner, "Biblical Theology," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 3-11. Edward Klink III and Darian R. Lockett present a helpful taxonomy of Biblical theological approaches. The approach in this study most closely follows the

substitutionary atonement, but it will also highlight God’s covenant relationship with his people. Communion between God and humanity cannot occur without penal substitution, and the new covenant vividly illustrates this point.

Michael Gorman argues for an atonement theory that enacts the new covenant in his recent book, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant; A (Not So) New Model of the Atonement*.²⁵ Gorman contends that none of the current atonement theories addresses the new covenant.²⁶ He finds this surprising because he envisions that the ultimate purpose of Christ’s death was to enact the new covenant.²⁷ He critiques the traditional atonement models as “isolationist” and “non-integrative” because each is a stand-alone model. He also argues that traditional models are focused on the individual rather than both the individual and the community, and the theories are “underachieving.”²⁸ He asserts that traditional theories are more concerned about the

redemptive-historical approach. See Edward W. Klick III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 59-92.

²⁵Michael J. Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant; A (Not So) New Model of the Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014).

²⁶Ibid., 9-17.

²⁷Gorman states a summary of his proposal for a his new covenant atonement theory: “The purpose of Jesus’ death was to effect, or give birth to, the new covenant, the covenant of peace; that is, to create a new covenant community of Spirit-filled disciples of Jesus who would fulfill the inseparable covenantal requirements of faithfulness to God and love for others through participation in the death of Jesus, expressed in such practices as faithful witness and suffering (cruciform faith), hospitality to the weak and Servant-love for all (cruciform love), and peacemaking (cruciform hope)” (ibid., 203). On p. 28, he describes the cruciform shape of the Spirit’s ministry through the believer as “sacrificial, self-giving, sometimes even to the point of death.”

²⁸Ibid., 19-21. Concerning the underachieving aspect of each model, Gorman elaborates, “the under-achieving character of these models means that, on the whole, the focus on the *penultimate* rather than the *ultimate* purpose(s) of Jesus’ death. In the new-covenant model I am proposing, the purpose (and actual effect) of Jesus’ death is all of the above and more, but that effect is best expressed, not in the rather narrow terms of the traditional models, but in more comprehensive and integrative terms like transformation, participation, and renewal or re-creation” (ibid., 20-21[emphasis in the original]). Gorman admits that his theory is not exhaustive.

“mechanics,” of the atonement, meaning how they work rather than their result(s).²⁹

Therefore, he argues that his new covenant atonement model is “a more comprehensive model, addressing ultimate as well as penultimate concerns about the purpose of Jesus’ death.”³⁰ Also, his model is “a much more integrated, participatory, communal, and missional model than any of the major models in the tradition.”³¹

Gorman correctly asserts that traditional atonement theories have not addressed the relevance to the new covenant directly. However, this study will differ from Gorman’s study by exploring the cause of the new covenant. God enacted the new covenant because Israel failed to keep the old covenant. The failure was expressed in their disobedience to God’s law and by their idolatry. The ultimate cause of the broken covenant is sin. This study will argue that each new covenant promise has some relationship to overcoming sin and its effects. Therefore, Gorman is correct in affirming

²⁹Gorman explains, “Traditional theories of the atonement, as well as some contemporary ones, concentrate too much on the *mechanics* of atonement – on *how* God brings about our justification or forgiveness or transformation through Jesus’ death. I have been arguing that the New Testament writers are far less interested in the *mechanics* of atonement than they are in the *results* of atonement. In fact, I would suggest that the mechanics are largely a mystery and will always be precisely that” (Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah*, 210 [emphasis in the original]).

³⁰Ibid., 204.

³¹Ibid. On pp. 224-32, Gorman explains how different models are integrated into his model. Regarding penal substitution, he argues that Christ’s death is “the ultimate expression of God’s covenantal love” (ibid., 225). He continues, “The death of Christ *should not been seen as the expression of divine anger or even wrath, but as the expression of divine love*. It is the gift of God’s Son and, at least in some sense, the gift of God’s own self: ‘God was in Christ . . .’ (2 Cor 5:18). If that is the major emphasis from the satisfaction/sacrificial/penal kind of atonement models, then there may also be room for the satisfaction and penal components as minor sub-plots in the atonement narrative, but *only if they can be clearly found in New Testament texts, and only if they retain their minor role in relation to divine, covenantal love*” (ibid., 226 [emphasis added]). While I agree that the cross is the ultimate expression of God’s love, I strongly differ regarding his statements concerning divine wrath. As I will demonstrate below, God’s satisfaction of his wrath and his justice is inherently a part of the atonement in both the Old and New Testaments. Any removal of this aspect cannot truly integrate the penal substitutionary model. Regarding Gorman’s elements of participation, communal, and missional, a traditional Reformed approach may view these as benefits of salvation and aspects of sanctification rather than a part of the atonement.

that penal substitution does not account for all of the believer's blessings in the New Testament. However, penal substitution can bear the weight of the new covenant promises because it addresses the fundamental sin problem that the new covenant resolves.

Contemporary Critique of Penal Substitution

Penal substitution is the central atonement theory of the Reformation tradition.³² The key elements of this model are that (1) Christ died as our substitute, bearing our sin in our place and (2) Christ bore God's wrath and the penalty of death that we deserved due to our sin. Many theologians repudiate and challenge this doctrine.

Some critics of penal substitutionary atonement employ a metaphorical argument to deny its truthfulness. On the one hand, some argue that there are many metaphors and expressions of the atonement in the Bible, and penal substitution is not among these metaphors.³³ On the other hand, some use the metaphorical argument to deny penal substitution by saying that the theory is one metaphor among many.³⁴ Thus in either sense these scholars deny penal substitution as a viable atonement doctrine.³⁵

³²For helpful histories of atonement doctrine and theories, see H. D. McDonald, *The Atonement of the Death of Christ: In Faith, Revelation, and History* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985); Allison, *Historical Theology*, 389-410; L. W. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001). Much of this section depends on the research of Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 205-321.

³³Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 13, 148; Joel B. Green, "Kaleidoscopic View," in *The Nature of the Atonement*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2006), 167, 176-77; Stephen Sykes, *The Story of the Atonement, Trinity and Truth* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1997), 17; Alan Mann, *Atonement for a "Sinless" Society: Engaging with an Emerging Culture* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005), 99.

³⁴Sykes comments, "Contemporary defenders of the penal satisfaction theory rightly now speak of the language as metaphorical. This important concession is bound to imply that, in certain

Another critique of penal substitutionary atonement attacks the legitimacy of substitution, specifically, that one may die for another person. One form of the argument envisions substitution as merely a legal transaction, and as such substitution is not valid because atonement provides much more than a legal transaction.³⁶ Another form argues that it is unjust for one person to bear the penalty for another person. Each person must bear his own penalty, so it is impossible for one to receive benefits from the punishment of another.³⁷

respects, the application of a theory of specific penal exchange to the death of Christ is not appropriate to the atonement, and that there remains a dimension of mystery. *In other words, the narrative of our salvation is not in a literal sense, one of penal substitution*; by itself the importance to a sound Christian theology of justification by grace to be received by faith does not give such a theology of atonement a normative status” (Sykes, *The Story of the Atonement*, 52 [emphasis added]).

³⁵Gunton argues for a *via media* between liberal theologians and conservatives by contending for the value of atonement metaphors and the manner in which they inform the human condition. Blocher presents an excellent defense against the metaphor argument. He summarizes, “The recognition of the unifying scheme that underlies the use of the various biblical metaphors does not entail that their diversity be flattened or ignored. It appears that the judicial version, probably the least metaphorical of all and often the middle term in the ‘translation’ of one metaphorical language into another, most clearly expresses the logic of Christ’s work of atonement. . . . But there is a distinct contribution made by each of the main metaphors, and nothing prevents the classical theology of atonement from doing it full justice: sacrificial language shows the location of atonement, between God and humankind, in the ‘religious’ sphere; redemptive language highlights the twofold effect: the freedom of former slaves, and their new belonging to Christ, who bought us with a price (such a price!); the polemic language, of warfare and victory, reminds us of the cosmic scope and operation in the spiritual world. This is not limiting! [*sic.*]” (Henri Blocher, “Biblical Metaphors and the Doctrine of the Atonement,” *JETS* 47 [2004]: 645). See also Colin E. Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).

³⁶Paul Fiddes argues, “It would also not be entirely out of place to say that Paul conceives of Christ as a ‘substitute’ as well as a representative for humankind, since no human being need die the kind of death that Christ died. But these two factors do not in themselves amount to a theory of ‘penal substitution,’ according to which atonement is achieved through a transfer of penalty” (Paul S. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989], 98). See also Greene, “Is the Message of the Cross Good News for the Twentieth Century,” 231; and Smail, *Once and for All*, 89.

³⁷Smail, *Once and for All*, 98. For a defense for the substitutionary aspect of the atonement, see Simon Gathercole, “The Cross and Substitutionary Atonement,” *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 21 (2003): 152-65.

While some scholars have dismissed the substitutionary aspect of the atonement, others have attacked its penal aspect. One form of the argument redefines the nature of God's wrath, which is a resurgence of Dodd's argument, namely, the wrath of God is only displayed to sinners as they experience the natural consequences of their sin.³⁸ God does not personally carry out his wrath upon sinners or on Christ himself.³⁹ Steve Chalke and Alan Mann argue an extreme form of this view by denying God's wrath, stating that God is only loving.⁴⁰ They reason that since God is love, he cannot be angry, and they deny the propitiatory and penal aspects of Christ's death.⁴¹ Another argument opposing the penal nature of God's judgment denies retributive justice. In other words, God does not punish through retribution, but rather, his judgment is only relational or restorative.⁴²

³⁸C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 23. Dodd also argues that the wrath of God is a pagan idea, and therefore God is not appeased through the atonement. Hence, he interprets ἵλασκεσθαι as "expiation" to remove the idea of propitiation. See *ibid.*, 55; C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946), 25-26. For Dodd's extended analysis on the term ἵλασκεσθαι, see C. H. Dodd, "ἸΛΑΣΚΕΣΘΑΙ, Its Cognates, Derivatives and Synonyms, in the Septuagint," *JTS* 32 (1931): 352-60. For responses, see Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 154-55; Leon Morris, "The Use of ἵλασκεσθαι etc. in Biblical Greek," *ExpTim* 62 (1950-51): 227-33; Roger Nicole, *Standing Forth: Collected Writings of Roger Nicole* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2002), 343-85. For a more comprehensive analysis of Dodd's arguments, see chap. 2 below.

³⁹Stephen H. Travis, *Christ and the Judgment of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009), 62-69; Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 91-93.

⁴⁰Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 63.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 182-83.

⁴²Travis argues that the judgment of God is not retributive but relational. Timothy Gorringer argues that the satisfaction theory, with its necessary corollary, retributive justice, has had an effect on the Western criminal justice system and the idea of retribution in society, therefore rejecting retributive justice.

Some feminist theologians present another challenge to the penal substitutionary model. Some have charged that any picture of a Father sacrificing his son encourages mistreatment of children, which amounts to “divine child abuse.”⁴³ Such a Father would not be a loving father, and Jesus would be an innocent, involuntary victim. Those who advocate this approach exhibit a tendency to affirm the love of God while denying his involvement in the atonement.⁴⁴

Some theologians attack the prospect of violence in the atonement.⁴⁵ J. Denny Weaver proposes that the devil is ultimately satisfied in the atonement. In his Narrative *Christus Victor* model, he contends that Satan’s demands are the ultimate cause of Jesus’ violent death.⁴⁶ Hans Boersma presents a “modified reformed view” that incorporates

See Travis, *Christ and the Judgment of God*, vii; Timothy Gorringer, *God's Just Vengeance: Crime, Violence, and the Rhetoric of Salvation*, Cambridge Studies in Ideology and Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Smail, *Once and For All*, 95.

⁴³Rita Nakashima Brock, “And a Little Child Will Lead Us: Christology and Child Abuse,” in *Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, ed. Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York: Pilgrim, 1989), 52-53; Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker, “For God So Loved the World?” in *Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, ed. Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York: Pilgrim, 1989), 2. Chalke and Mann also characterize the penal substitution theory as “divine child abuse” (Chalke and Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus*, 182).

⁴⁴Some feminist theologians who oppose penal substitution do not agree with the characterization of the atonement as “divine child abuse.” See Margo G. Houts, “Atonement and Abuse: An Alternate View,” *Daughters of Sarah* 19 (Summer 1992): 30; Reta Halteman Finger, “Liberation or Abuse?” *Daughters of Sarah* 19 (Summer 1992): 38.

⁴⁵For the comparison of views, see John Sanders, ed., *Atonement and Violence: A Theological Conversation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006). For another compilation of scholars advocating a non-violent atonement, see Brad Jersak and Michael Hardin, eds., *Stricken by God? Nonviolent Identification and the Victory of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

⁴⁶J. Denny Weaver, “Narrative Christus Victor: The Answer to Anselmian Atonement Violence,” in *Atonement and Violence: A Theological Conversation*, ed. John Sanders (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 1-29. For Weaver’s book-length treatment of the subject, see J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011). Finger likewise proposes a *Christus Victor* approach with a different methodology. While Weaver grounds his argument in Revelation and the

elements of the *Christus Victor* and moral influence theories while highlighting the love of God over and against his justice. The “modified” part of his argument is that he denies imputation and he removes unconditional election and limited atonement.⁴⁷ He rejects these doctrines because he envisions that predestination and limited atonement are eternal decrees that limit God’s hospitality, which is an expression of his love.⁴⁸ T. Scott Daniels uses Girard’s scapegoat theory to argue that Christ overcame violence by submitting to it. By his death, Christ “unmasks and defeats ‘the Powers’ that hold us captive and separate us from God.”⁴⁹ Each scholar presents a different approach regarding violence in the atonement. However, their common element is to blame the violence either on the world or on Satan and the demonic powers, but these theologians never attribute the ultimate cause of Jesus’ violent death to the Father or the Son.⁵⁰

Gospels, Finger grounds his argument in Irenaeus’ recapitulation theory. See Thomas Finger, “*Christus Victor* as Nonviolent Atonement,” in *Atonement and Violence: A Theological Conversation*, ed. John Sanders (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 87-111.

⁴⁷Hans Boersma, “Violence, the Cross, and Divine Intentionality: A Modified Reformed View,” in *Atonement and Violence: A Theological Conversation*, ed. John Sanders (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 47-69. For Boersma’s book-length treatment of the subject, see Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004).

⁴⁸Hans Boersma, “Response by Hans Boersma,” *CTJ* 40 (2005): 331-32. For a helpful critique of Boersma’s book, see James K. A. Smith, “Predestination and Violence: A Review Essay,” *CTJ* 40 (2005): 326-330.

⁴⁹T. Scott Daniels, “Passing the Peace: Worship that Shapes Nonsubstitutionary Convictions,” in *Atonement and Violence: A Theological Conversation*, ed. John Sanders (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 136. Daniels also states, “The call of Jesus for disciples to take up the cross daily and follow him should continually be a mandate that shapes our theology and our communal practices. The ability of the disciple to take up the cross must mean that there is more to the atonement than some kind of transaction of divine retribution and justice. The logic of taking up the cross must mean that the crucifixion of Christ be understood in terms like those of Girard, interpreting the death of Jesus as a radical unmasking of the principalities and powers that shape the violent structures of the world in such a way that those powers are now defeated” (ibid., 144).

⁵⁰For a discussion on the “myth of redemptive violence,” see Walter Wink, *Engaging the*

Opponents of penal substitution have presented many arguments against the doctrine, including those listed above.⁵¹ However, in the last twenty years some critiques have come from within the evangelical community.⁵² Among these critiques are Green and Baker's *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, Chalke and Mann's *The Lost Message of Jesus*, and *Atonement Today*,⁵³ which is a compilation of works from a symposium at St. John's College. In response to the symposium, scholars submitted papers at Oak Hill College that resulted in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet*,⁵⁴ which presents a defense of penal substitution. The London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement resulted in

Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 148-49.

⁵¹For others opposing penal substitution, see Darrin W. Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace: The Message of the Cross and the Mission of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); R. Larry Shelton, *Cross and Covenant: Interpreting the Atonement for the 21st Century Mission* (Tyrone, GA: Paternoster, 2006); Andrew Sung Park, *Triune Atonement: Christ's Healing for Sinners, Victims, and the Whole Creation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009); Stephen Finlan, *Options on Atonement in Christian Thought* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007). The liberal tradition, in their rejection of the authority of Scripture and use of the historical critical methods, reject penal substitution. Friedrich Schleiermacher argues that the work of Christ is to awaken the God-consciousness within man, and he rejects the orthodox doctrine of the person of Christ. Representing traditional liberal theology, Albert Ritschl conceives of the atonement only in terms of Christ's supreme example of obedience. Barth, on the other hand, proposes an incarnational atonement theory. See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 425-75; Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay (New York: Scribner's, 1900), 476-80; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromily and T. F. Torrance, vol. 4, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, trans. G. W. Bromily (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2004), 79-154.

⁵²A. T. B. McGowan refers to these as "revisionist evangelicals." See 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), 200-03; Frank S. Thielman, "The Atonement," in *Central themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 102-03; and Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 25.

⁵³Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*; Chalke and Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus*; John Goldingay, ed., *Atonement Today* (London: SPCK, 1995).

⁵⁴David Peterson, ed., *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001).

The Atonement Debate,⁵⁵ which contains papers from those opposing and defending penal substitution. Many theologians have responded to the critics and presented defenses of the doctrine.⁵⁶

Methodology

This dissertation will argue through biblical exposition and theological construction. This construction will occur in a decidedly biblical-theological fashion, progressing through the canon from Old to New Testament. Each chapter will argue for

⁵⁵Derek Tidball, David Hilborn, and Justin Thacker, *The Atonement Debate: Papers From the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008); For another collection of essays regarding atonement doctrine, see James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, eds., *The Nature of the Atonement* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2006).

⁵⁶Stephen R. Holmes, *The Wondrous Cross: Atonement and Penal Substitution in the Bible and History* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2007); Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III, eds., *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2004); Graham A. Cole, *God the Peacemaker: How Atonement Brings Shalom*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009); Donald MacLeod, *Christ Crucified: Understanding the Atonement* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014); Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 105-94; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 3-336; Garry Williams, "Penal Substitution: A Response to Recent Criticisms," 172-91; McGowan, "The Atonement as Penal Substitution," 183-210; Thielman, "The Atonement," 102-27; David Searle, "Satisfaction for Sin Romans 3:25-26," *European Journal of Theology* 8 (1999): 123-32; Simon Gathercole, "The Cross and Substitutionary Atonement," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 21 (2003): 152-65; Simon J. Gathercole, "Justified by Faith, Justified by His Blood: The Evidence of Romans 3:21-4:25," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 147-84; Henri Blocher, "The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ: The Current Theological Situation," *European Journal of Theology* 8 (1999): 23-36; Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," 67-98; Jarvis Williams, "Violent Atonement in Romans: The Foundation of Paul's Soteriology," *JETS* 53 (2010): 579-99. Current systematic theologies that defend penal substitution include Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 810-40; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 568-603; Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 483-520; Gerald Bray, *God is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 585-92. For defenses of penal substitution that are not specifically addressing the current debate, see John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955); Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965); Stott, *The Cross of Christ*; I. Howard Marshall, *Aspects of the Atonement: Cross and Resurrection in the Reconciling of God and Humanity* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2007); J. I. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution," *TynBul* 25 (1974): 3-45.

the requirement of penal substitution for each facet of the new covenant through analysis of key Old and New Testament passages.

A biblical-theological framework is vital to this argument for two reasons. First, the movement from creation to new creation occurs across redemptive history. It is a theme that unites Scripture.⁵⁷ Accordingly, the examination of God's purposes should naturally arise through the progressive revelation of Scripture. Second, the biblical covenants provide a biblical-theological framework for the atonement and new creation. The new covenant, specifically fulfilled in the New Testament, has its roots and rationale in the Old Testament. To understand the success and eternal nature of the new covenant, one must understand the failure of the old covenant and its temporary nature. Thus, this study will actively explore the Old Testament teachings first, then the New Testament teaching in order to demonstrate fulfillment and completion through penal substitution.

Summary of Contents

Chapter 2 is a foundational chapter that presents a biblical defense of penal substitution. It first surveys the theological foundations for penal substitution. Then, it argues that the Passover, the Day of Atonement, and the Suffering Servant's sacrifices are penal substitutionary sacrifices. Lastly, this study argues that the Gospels and Paul's writings support Jesus' death as vicarious atonement.

Chapter 3 defines the new covenant through biblical investigation. At the heart of this investigation is the inadequacy of the old covenant and the enumeration of new covenant promises. The chapter surveys two new covenant passages, Jeremiah 31:31-34

⁵⁷It is not the only theme, but an important theme that unites Scripture.

and Ezekiel 36:25-31. This chapter also demonstrates that Christ's death inaugurates the new covenant.

Chapter 4 argues that God requires penal substitutionary atonement to forgive sin. God's forgiveness, expressed as a new covenant promise in Jeremiah 31:34, grounds the remaining promises of the new covenant. It argues that the guilt offering, the sin offering, and the Suffering Servant's sacrifice are vicarious atonement sacrifices that result in forgiveness. The key New Testament passages that demonstrate forgiveness as a result of penal substitution include Matthew's Lord's Supper sayings, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 2:13-15, and Hebrews 9.

Chapter 5 argues that the transforming work of the Holy Spirit requires penal substitution. The gift of the Spirit and some aspects of the Spirit's ministry cannot be separated from a judicial framework. The chapter argues that the promise of the law written on the heart is fulfilled by the Spirit's indwelling of individual believers. The chapter recounts the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament era and prophecies of his coming. Romans 8:3-4 and Galatians 3:10-14 are key New Testament passages that present the connection between penal substitution and the Spirit's advent. The Spirit is also the cause for the new creation because he is active in the believer's resurrection and he is the sign of the believer's future inheritance.

Chapter 6 proposes that God's presence with his people requires penal substitutionary atonement. It argues that the expression of the covenant formula is God's covenant presence with his people. This chapter traces the importance of God's presence from Adam, to his presence among Israel, to his presence with his people in the new covenant era, and his everlasting presence in the new heavens and the new earth. It also demonstrates that God's departure from Israel resulted from their sin and that penal substitutionary atonement allows access to God the Father.

Chapter 7 argues that salvific knowledge requires penal substitution. This

knowledge is universal among all of the covenant members. It surveys Old and New Testament passages to argue that knowledge of God is a relational concept and requires obedience. It also explores how God teaches his people by the Spirit and that his people know the Lord because his presence is with them; hence, they are regarded as a kingdom and priests.

Chapter 8 shows that reconciliation requires penal substitution. Reconciliation describes the result of God's restored relationship with his people. The chapter surveys aspects of reconciliation in the Old and New Testaments, and it argues that John's characterization of the new heavens and the new earth describes a reconciled relationship between God and his people.

Chapter 9 concludes this study. It first summarizes the argument, then articulates some implications and finally, suggests some areas for further study.

CHAPTER 2

PENAL SUBSTITUTION DEFENSE

Introduction

This dissertation demonstrates that penal substitutionary atonement is required for the fulfillment of the new covenant promises and new creation. The goal of this chapter is to present a brief defense of penal substitutionary atonement. This defense surveys significant passages from the Old and New Testaments to show that penal substitution is a biblical doctrine, and that God atones for sin vicariously throughout redemptive history.

Theological Foundation

A biblical view of human sinfulness and God's holiness, justice, and love, are foundational for the penal substitution theory.¹ Sin is defined as "any failure to conform

¹The atonement presents a solution to a particular problem. Paul Eddy and James Beilby observe that each interpretation of the cross "sees the central thrust of the work of Christ as designed to address a different fundamental problem that stands in the way of salvation" (Paul R. Eddy and James Beilby, "The Atonement: An Introduction," in *The Nature of the Atonement*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006], 12). A definition of the problem largely determines the preferred atonement theory. Yet, atonement theology is also grounded in one's Christology, doctrine of human sin, and the doctrine of God's attributes, particularly those of holiness and love. Millard Erickson elaborates, "Our doctrines of God and of Christ will color our understanding of the atonement. For if God is a very holy, righteous, and demanding, then humans will not be able to satisfy him easily, and it is quite likely that something will have to be done on humans' behalf to satisfy God. If, on the other hand, God is an indulgent, permissive Father who says, 'We have to allow humans to have a little fun sometimes,' then it may be sufficient simply to give them a little encouragement and instruction. If Christ is merely a human being, then the work that he did serves only as an example; he was not able to offer anything on our behalf beyond his perfect example of doing everything he was required to do, including dying on the cross. If, however, he is God, his work for us went immeasurably beyond what we are able to do for ourselves; he served not only as an example but as a sacrifice for us. The doctrine of humanity, broadly defined to include the doctrine of sin, also affects the picture. If humans are basically spiritually intact, they probably can, with a bit of effort, fulfill what God wants of them. Thus, instruction, inspiration, and motivation

to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.”² The Scriptures demonstrate that all people sin and that they continually fall short of God’s glory (Rom 3:23; cf. Rom 3:10-18). As a result, they bear the guilt of that sin³ and are incapable of fulfilling God’s righteous standards.⁴ The depth of sin is pervasive among humanity. Thomas Schreiner comments,

All human beings enter into the world as sinners and condemned because they are sons and daughters of Adam (Rom. 5:12-19). Sin blinds human beings to their own wickedness and tricks people into thinking that they are righteous. Sin is not merely a matter of peccadillos or mistakes. Human beings are fiercely rebellious and stubborn, which is captured in the metaphor of being stiff-necked. . . . All enter into the world spiritually dead toward God and heading toward physical death and judgment. By nature, humans are children of wrath and are rotten trees. By birth, they are under the dominion of the old age of the flesh instead of the new age of the Spirit. They are a brood of vipers instead of children of God.⁵

Conversely, God is holy, which means that he is morally perfect and set apart from his creatures.⁶ God’s purity is reflected in his actions with humanity, particularly in

constitute what humans need and hence the essence of the atonement. If, however, humanity is totally depraved and consequently unable to do what is right no matter how much they wish to or how hard they try, then a more radical work had to be done on their behalf” (Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 800).

²Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 490. Louis Berkhof refers to sin in its material sense as opposition to the love of God. Thus, it is “separation from God, opposition to God, hatred of God, and this manifests itself in constant transgression of the law of God in thought, word, and deed. . . . Scripture contemplates sin in relation to God and His law, either as written on the tablets of the heart, or as given by Moses” (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 2:232). See biblical support in 1 John 3:4 and Jas 2:9.

³Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 2:371.

⁴Total depravity means “not that humans are as wicked as they can possibly be, but rather that they are utterly unable to do anything to save themselves or to extricate themselves from their condition of sinfulness. Since this is true, it follows that the atonement, to accomplish for humanity what needed to be done, had to be made by someone else on humanity’s behalf” (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 821).

⁵Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 544-45.

⁶Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 2:73; Graham A. Cole, *God the Peacemaker: How Atonement Brings Shalom*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 40.

his law. God's moral law is grounded in his own nature.⁷ Schreiner observes that, "the moral norms of the law are not externally imposed on God. *The norms of the law express God's character, the beauty and holiness of his person.*"⁸ Because God is holy and the law is an expression of his character, he requires perfect obedience to his law from all people (Jas 2:10).⁹ Since sin is a violation of God's law, mankind's sin expresses their rebellion to and rejection of God's holiness. Thus, sin not only violates God's law but it is also a rejection and an insult to God personally.¹⁰

God's judgment is his administration of his law and his personal distaste for sin. To uphold his law, or act according to his justice, God has decreed that he will punish those who are guilty of sin (Deut 7:10, Ps 58:11, Rom 12:19).¹¹ Since all people are

⁷John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 448.

⁸Thomas R. Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," in *The Nature of the Atonement*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 77. Erickson refers to this feature of God's holiness as righteousness: "The righteousness of God means . . . that the law of God, being a true expression of his nature, is as perfect as he is. . . . The righteousness of God also means that his actions are in accord with the law he himself has established" (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 313). See also Ps 19:7-9; Gen 18:25, Jer 9:24.

⁹The sacrificial system in the Old Testament reflects this need for perfection. See Schreiner, "The Penal Substitution View," 74.

¹⁰Erickson notes, "Disobeying the law is serious, not because the law has some inherent value or dignity that must be preserved, but because disobeying it is actually an attack on the very nature of God himself. Thus, legalism – the attitude that the law is to be obeyed for its own sake – is unacceptable. Rather, the law is to be understood as a means of relating to a personal God" (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 820). Human disobedience of God's law is also a rejection of his Lordship. See Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," 77.

¹¹Bavinck states, "God maintains that order of justice, moreover, in every domain of life. He who is justice in person and the author of all law is also the arbiter and vindicator of justice. His legislative justice includes his judicial justice. Law is not law unless it is enforced, if necessary, by coercion and punishment. . . . It is sin that forces the order of justice, in keeping with its nature, to compel respect by means of violence and coercion. Not justice as such, but the coercive character is now forced to assume, is due to sin. This coercive character, however, far from being arbitrary or accidental, is so necessary now that apart from it we cannot even conceive of justice, a fact attested by our own conscience. The moral order, rather than being in conflict with the order of justice, upholds, demands, and supports it. Justice is an important component of morality" (Herman Bavinck, in *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *God and Creation*, trans. John Vriend, ed. John Bolt [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 228). See also Erickson,

guilty of violating God's law (Rom 3:23), all people are subject to his punishment. While God punishes sinners as he upholds his law, he punishes sinners because of his personal hatred of sin. God's personal hatred of sin is expressed by his wrath.¹² His punishment of sinners is an expression of his justice and his wrath. God judges sin through retributive justice, which expresses both his personal hatred of sin and his justice.¹³ The fundamental

Christian Theology, 315. For a study of the history of justice and the law and its relationship to the atonement, see Adonis Vidu, *Atonement, Law, and Justice: The Cross in Historical and Cultural Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014).

¹²Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 206. God's wrath is not arbitrary, out of control anger, but it flows from his righteous character. Schreiner adds, "God's anger does not call into question his goodness but is a manifestation of it: God's goodness necessarily approves what accords with his character and repulses what stands contrary to it. So goodness necessarily loves what is right and hates what is evil. God's wrath, then is holy righteous and unstained by any evil motive" (Schreiner, "The Penal Substitution View," 80). Carson argues, "The wrath of God testifies to the living personal response of a holy God to all that is tawdry and mean, let alone rebellious and idolatrous" (D. A. Carson, "The Wrath of God," in *Engaging the Doctrine of God*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 39). Carson's article is an effective defense against the attacks against the wrath of God. Scholars have presented various arguments against the idea of God's wrath. Some have denied the wrath of God by arguing that wrath is in conflict with the love of God (Tom Smail, *Once and for All: A Confession of the Cross* [London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998], 87; Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003], 63) or that God's wrath is metaphorical (Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000], 53-54). Others have redefined wrath not as God's personal hatred against sin but as his passive allowance of the laws of the universe to punish sin (C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932], 23; Klaus Koch, "Is There a Doctrine of Retribution in the Old Testament?," in *Theodicy in the Old Testament*, ed. James L. Crenshaw [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983], 57-87).

¹³Retributive justice "relates to the infliction of penalties. . . . It should be noted that, while man does not merit the reward which he receives, he does merit the punishment which is meted out to him. Divine justice is originally and necessarily obliged to punish evil, but not to reward good. . . . Many deny the strict punitive justice of God and claim that God punishes the sinner to reform him, or to deter others from sin; but these positions are not tenable. The primary purpose of the punishment of sin is the maintenance of right and justice" (Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 2:75). For those who oppose retributive justice, see Stephen H. Travis, *Christ and the Judgment of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009); Timothy Gorringer, *God's Just Vengeance: Crime, Violence, and the Rhetoric of Salvation*, Cambridge Studies in Ideology and Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Smail, *Once and For All*, 95; Darrin W. Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace: The Message of the Cross and the Mission of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012). For defenses of retributive justice, see Garry Williams, "Penal Substitution: A Response to Recent Criticisms," in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement*, ed. Derek Tidball, David Hilborn, and Justin Thacker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 173-78; Charles Gregory Jackson, "The Retributive Justice of God" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological

problem for humanity is God's righteous judgment and his revulsion of human sin.

Therefore, God's justice must be satisfied if sinful people would escape condemnation.

John Stott summarizes,

The essential background to the cross, therefore, is a balanced understanding of the gravity of sin and the majesty of God. If we diminish either, we thereby diminish the cross. If we reinterpret sin as a lapse instead of a rebellion, and God as indulgent instead of indignant, then naturally the cross appears superfluous. But to dethrone God and enthrone ourselves not only dispenses with the cross; it also degrades both God and humans. A biblical view of God and ourselves, however - that is, of our sin and of God's wrath - honors both. It honors human beings by affirming them as responsible for their own actions. It honors God by affirming him as having moral character.¹⁴

God's executes his wrath and his justice through retributive justice, and it is a vital feature of penal substitutionary atonement. If God were only concerned with satisfying his justice, he would condemn all humanity. However, Christ's death is not only an expression of God's justice but also a display of his love. Michael Horton comments, "It is God's love that moves him to provide his own satisfaction of justice. Rather than being set in opposition, God's love and propitiatory sacrifice of his Son are mentioned in the same breath."¹⁵ God's provision of atonement is a fundamental expression of his love toward humans and is followed by concrete action: the sending of the Son as their substitute (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8-10).¹⁶ While reflecting on the unity of

Seminary, 2012).

¹⁴John R. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 111.

¹⁵Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 500.

¹⁶McDonald explains, "The love of God is not in the New Testament a truth declared, so to speak, antecedent to the work of Christ. It is rather the uniform teaching that it is in relation to Christ's coming and deed that his love is declared. It is the act of atonement itself as God's judgment of our sin on Christ that is the chief reason for the announcement *God is love*. The death of Christ, by which he bore sin's condemnation as an essential of the divine forgiveness, is at the same time a demonstration of the immensity and the holiness of God's love. The fact that God has himself met in the death of his Son the requirement of his holy judgment on sin is the final manifestation of his love. And it is a love that lies in a region other than mere words. It is a love that has its action in the atonement of Christ's death. God could

God's attributes, Wayne Grudem concludes,

Therefore both the love and the justice of God were the ultimate cause of the atonement. It is not helpful for us to ask which is more important, however, because without the love of God, he would never have taken any steps to redeem us, yet without the justice of God, the specific requirement that Christ should earn our salvation by dying for our sins would not have been met. Both the love and the justice of God were equally important.¹⁷

While God's requirement of a sacrifice satisfies his justice and his wrath, God's provision of the sacrifice displays his loving disposition toward humanity.

Penal Substitution in the Old Testament

The Passover Sacrifice

God provided his instructions for the Passover sacrifice so that Israel would be saved from the tenth plague.¹⁸ He ordered each household to acquire a lamb or goat that was large enough for that household to eat (Exod 12:3-4). God required a male without spot or blemish (Exod 12:5) and it was to be killed at twilight on the fourteenth day of the month (Exod 12:6). The Israelites were instructed to roast and eat all of the sacrifice in the evening, and to eat in haste with their clothes fastened and wearing their shoes (Exod 12:8-11). They were told to wipe the blood on the doorposts and the lintel (Exod 12:7) and to remain inside their homes. When the destroyer came to kill the first born of all Egyptian households and animals, God would pass over those houses with the blood, thus preserving the life of the firstborn in that house (Exod 12:12-13).

Though the purpose of the Passover sacrifice was the deliverance of the

not do justice to his love and his holiness in relation to sin in a way less awful than this: that the Son of God has taken for us the whole responsibility of it" (H. D. McDonald, *The Atonement of the Death of Christ: In Faith, Revelation, and History* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985], 30-31).

¹⁷Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 569.

¹⁸While there are other examples of sacrifice in the Genesis, the Passover is the first recorded sacrifice in which the Lord gives clear instruction.

Israelites, three features show that it was a penal substitutionary sacrifice. The first feature of the Passover was the quality of the sacrifice. The instructions were very specific; the Passover sacrifice must be perfect, a young male without spot or blemish.

Douglas Stuart notes,

The reason for demanding perfection rested not in the quality of the meal but in the symbolic purpose: the animal served as a reminder of the eventual deliverance that a perfect God perfectly provided for his people as part of the process of making them holy like himself. Proper relating to God requires perfection.¹⁹

The Lord's demand of a perfect animal illustrates that only a perfect sacrifice satisfies him.

The second feature of the sacrifice was its substitutionary nature. The instructions indicated that the Lord would pass over the houses with animal's blood on the doorposts and lintel. Someone, or a sacrifice, died in every home in Egyptian territory. Among the Egyptians the firstborn of the family died, while among the Israelites the lamb died instead of the firstborn in that house.²⁰ If the Israelite households failed to show the blood of the sacrifice, the firstborn of that house would have died. The Passover celebration was a perpetual reminder of this substitutionary sacrifice:

This one-to-one correspondence between the life of the son and the life of the lamb is re-emphasized in the ceremony of the consecration of the firstborn, which is presented alongside the Passover in the book of Exodus and is intended explicitly to evoke its memory. . . . Thus the consecration of the firstborn served as an enduring reminder of the events of the first Passover, and specifically the substitutionary element inherent within it.²¹

Thus the Passover sacrifice was substitutionary because it was a substitute for the

¹⁹Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC 2 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 275.

²⁰J. A. Motyer, *The Message of Exodus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 134.

²¹Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 37.

firstborn in each Israelite home.²²

The third feature of the sacrifice was that it averted the wrath of God. In the previous nine plagues, the Lord's punishment differentiated between the Israelites and the Egyptians. The Israelites were not harmed by the plagues because the Lord applied them only to the Egyptians.²³ For the final plague, both groups would be subject to God's wrath. God revealed that the plague of death was an indictment against the Egyptian gods (Exod 12:12). While this plague was a judgment against the Egyptian oppression of God's people, it was also a judgment against Egyptian idolatry and a demonstration of the impotence of their gods. Yet, in Ezekiel 20:4-10 the prophet stated that Israel was guilty of worshiping Egyptian gods; hence, they deserved judgment for their idolatry.²⁴ The blood was the central element to averting God's judgment,²⁵ because the wrath of

²²Peterson observes, "The first Passover involved God's deliverance of his people from the judgment of the final plague, in which the first-born son of every Egyptian household died (Exod 11:4-8). Thus, from this early stage of the biblical story, deliverance from divine judgment is associated with the offering of animal blood as a substitute for human life. In this respect there is a resemblance to the sin offering prescribed later in the Pentateuch" (David Peterson, "Atonement in the Old Testament," in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today*, ed. David Peterson [Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001], 4).

²³Moses implies that the waters of Egypt alone were turned to blood, not the waters that the Israelites used (Exod 7:19-21, 24), and the plagues of the frogs, gnats, boils, and locusts are implied to focus only on the Egyptians (Exod 8:3-4, 17-18, 9:9, 10:4-5). Regarding the other plagues, see Exod 8:22; 9:4, 22, 10:23. Motyer observes, "Ever since the fourth plague, the people of Israel had been set apart from the Egyptians (8:22), but in each case was the onset of the plague itself that made their distinct status evident. In the case of the plague on the livestock, Pharaoh had to send messengers to establish that Israelite cattle had been exempted (9:7). Now, however, before the onset of tenth plague, Israel was commanded to put the public mark of blood on the houses where they were living (12:7, 13). Previously they had been segregated by the Lord without any cooperative or obedient act of their own, but now, by command of the Lord, Israel must take a stand, self-declared as the people under the blood of the lamb" (Motyer, *The Message of Exodus*, 126-27). See also T. D. Alexander, "The Passover Sacrifice," in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 17.

²⁴Philip Graham Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 326; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 38. Joshua makes a similar indictment of the Israelites' idolatry in Egypt (Josh 24:14).

²⁵Christopher J. H. Wright, "Atonement in the Old Testament," in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement*, ed. Derek Tidball, David Hilborn and

God was “satisfied” by that blood.²⁶ The sacrificial blood of the Passover sacrifice spared Israel from divine judgment. T. D. Alexander adds,

The concept of atonement, while not mentioned specifically, underlies the offering of the Passover sacrifice. Whereas on previous occasions the Lord had distinguished between Israelites and the Egyptians without requiring any special ritual, on the occasion of the Passover the Israelites had a necessity to mark their houses with sacrificial blood. Obviously the blood of the sacrifice played a significant part in preventing the death of the male firstborn. Implicit in this is the idea that the Israelites were inherently no different from the male firstborn of the Egyptians. Without the atoning blood of the sacrifice they too would have been struck dead by the “destroyer.”²⁷

While the Egyptians experienced the wrath of God through the death of their firstborn, the Passover sacrifices saved the Israelites from the wrath of God.

Day of Atonement

The Lord instituted the Day of Atonement within the Levitical sacrificial system. The Levitical sacrificial offerings usually required an animal or grain sacrifice. The animal sacrifices displayed common elements that indicated that the sacrifices were substitutionary.²⁸ The various types of offerings included the burnt, grain, peace, sin, and

Justin Thacker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 73.

²⁶Motyer, *The Message of Exodus*, 133.

²⁷Alexander, “The Passover Sacrifice,” 17. Darrin W. Snyder Belousek argues against this approach, stating the Passover sacrifice is not a sacrifice for sins. Furthermore, he argues that the citation of Ezek 20:4-10 does not mention the Passover sacrifice and that the Lord forgives Israel for his name’s sake. See Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace*, 160-65. However, Belousek misconstrues the argument. First, Jeffries, Ovey and Sach never propose that the Passover sacrifice is a sacrifice for sins. Secondly, the function of the reference to the Ezekiel passage is to demonstrate that the Israelites were under the judgment of God because of their idolatry in Egypt. Therefore, there was a penal aspect to the sacrifice, and the sacrifice did avert the wrath of God toward the Israelites because they were saved from the deserved sentence of death.

²⁸Wenham contends, “All the animal sacrifices have a common procedural core, i.e. gestures that occur in every sacrifice, laying on of the hand, killing the animal, catching the blood and using it, burning at least part of the flesh on the altar. It therefore seems likely that every sacrifice has a common core of symbolic meaning. . . . The animal is a substitute for the worshipper. Its death makes atonement for the worshipper. Its immolation on the altar quietens God’s anger at human sin” (Gordon J. Wenham, “The Theology of Old Testament Sacrifice,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J.

guilt offerings.²⁹ At the completion of many offerings, the sacrifice produced a “soothing aroma” to the Lord (Lev 1:9, 17, 2:2, 9, 3:5, 16). This phrase indicates that the Lord was satisfied with the offering. Gordon Wenham observes that the “soothing aroma” signifies God’s acceptance of the burnt offering:

Though man was unchanged in his sinfulness, God's attitude to man altered. . . . The idea that man is always in danger of angering God runs through the whole Pentateuch. Fierce judgments and sudden death stud its pages. Sacrifice is the appointed means whereby peaceful coexistence between a holy God and sinful man becomes a possibility.³⁰

God also forbade them from eating the blood (Lev 17:12). The blood is forbidden because it makes atonement:

The emphasis on blood is not merely the existence of blood within the body or the natural vitality of blood that was effective for atonement. The focus is on blood that is shed. . . . Blood was established by God to have this atoning purpose. . . . This unique teaching regarding the blood is particular to Israel, for there is little evidence of blood playing a significant role in any other sacrificial system, whether in Babylon, Syria, or Phoenicia. In Israel, however, the manipulation of blood was a unifying factor to the entire sacrificial system.³¹

The blood was symbolic for the life, and the life was sacred because it was sacrificed as a substitute for the sinner.³² God reserved the blood for himself, thus making the atoning sacrifice acceptable.

The Israelites observed the Day of Atonement annually, and God gave these instructions to prevent Aaron from dying in the course of his priestly duties. The purpose

Selman [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995], 82).

²⁹For a discussion of the sin and guilt offerings, see chap. 4 below.

³⁰Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 56.

³¹Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, NAC 3A (Nashville: Broadman& Holman, 2000), 53.

³²Vos explains, “Taking it together, then, we may say, that the blood has its rich symbolism in sacrifice, first, because it stands for death, secondly because it stands for the death of an individual, substitutionary person, and thirdly because it stands for a death involving suffering” (Geehardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948], 165).

of this day was expressed in the initial reference to the deaths of Nadab and Abihu (Lev 16:1-2). The Lord judged them because they offered unauthorized fire; thereby they did not approach him in a proper way. Their deaths reinforced God's holiness and his requirement to be worshiped according to his instructions.³³ Similarly, God gave these instructions "to sternly warn the high priest to conduct himself properly when he enters the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement so that he does not lose his life as they did."³⁴ God graciously gave Aaron these instructions so that he would approach God rightly and avoid judgment.

The Lord commanded Aaron to present two sacrifices. The first sacrifice was the guilt offering, which was made on behalf of the priest. After killing the ram, Aaron sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat (Lev 16:14) to atone for his own sins (Lev 16:6, 11). Mark Rooker explains that "the sin offering for Aaron is mentioned twice in one verse, which emphasizes the necessity of atonement being made for the high priest official at the commencement of this ceremony and contributing to the solemnity of this occasion."³⁵ Aaron also presented incense before the Lord and spread it around the mercy seat (Lev 16:12-13); he would die if he neglected this crucial step. Aaron sacrificed the first goat, which represented the assembly and then sprinkled its blood in the sanctuary to cleanse it (Lev 16:15-19).³⁶ The sanctuary required cleansing because of the people's sin.

³³John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, WBC 4 (Waco, TX: Word, 1992), 137.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 234.

³⁵Rooker, *Leviticus*, 217.

³⁶The term "cleanse" (כִּפֶּר, *kipper*) has been debated. Jacob Milgrom argues that כִּפֶּר means purge, and carries no other meaning. He claims that the sanctuary must be wiped clean because of ritual uncleanness, and over time the sanctuary become polluted. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 255-58, 1081. Roger Nicole argues that the term has propitiatory connotations (Roger Nicole, "C. H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation," *WTJ* 17 (1955): 150). See also Jay Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005), 44-79.

John E. Hartley describes the importance of both sacrifices:

If the sprinkling of the blood in the Holy of Holies cleanses all parts of the Tent, it seems logical that a blood rite is also necessary to cleanse the main altar, representative of the furniture in the court, especially since this altar is used so heavily in the operation of the sanctuary. That the rite of sprinkling the altar of the whole offering only took place on the Day of Atonement indicates that its efficacy is intricately tied to the preceding cleansing of the Holy of Holies. . . . Since blood has been put on both the Atonement Slate and on the altar of whole offering, the entirety of the sanctuary, both the inside and the outside, is cleansed.³⁷

After the sacrifice, Aaron presented the scapegoat. The priest laid his hand on the live goat, symbolizing that the community transferred its sins to the goat.³⁸ The priest

³⁷Hartley, *Leviticus*, 241.

³⁸Much debate has occurred regarding the standard requirement to lay hands on the sacrifices. The three options are that the gesture symbolizes ownership, identification, and transference. While there is a general consensus that the laying of hands means transfer for the scapegoat, the options regarding other animal sacrifices have been debated. Jacob Milgrom argues that one hand on the placed on the sacrificial animal indicates ownership for burnt offerings and similar sacrifices, while two hands on the scapegoat in Lev 16:20 indicate transference (Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 151-52; 1041-42). However, ownership is obvious because the person who brings the sacrifice naturally owns it, so a special designation of laying a hand on the offering is not necessary. Though Hartley does not agree with this approach, he summarizes the view that the gesture indicates identification (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 20-21). A better explanation is given by Wenham, who says that the gesture represents both identification and transference. “The laying on of hands may indicate that the animal is taking the place of the worshipper. . . . Or alternatively the laying on of hands transfers the worshipper’s sins symbolically to the animal. Both of these meanings seem to be attested in Scripture. . . . It does not seem necessary to decide between these explanations. Both fit well with sacrifices making atonement, i.e., the animal serving as a ransom for the life of man. One may regard the animal either as dying in the worshipper’s place as his substitute, or as receiving the death penalty because of the sin transferred to it by the laying on of hands” (Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 62). See also Emile Nicole, “Atonement in the Pentateuch,” in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 44.

Another objection to this practice is the effect of the sacrifice itself. Fiddes objects that the act of transferring sins to the sacrifice would make the sacrifice itself impure, and an impure sacrifice cannot propitiate. His first argument is that since the poor person could use cereal instead of an animal as an offering, it is absurd to think of the pouring out of cereal in the same manner as pouring out blood. Thus, the animal does not propitiate. His second argument is that if sin is transferred to the animal, it no longer remains holy but becomes impure (Paul S. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989], 73). In regard to the first objection, cereal offerings may have sin transferred to them as the cereal offerings are an exception for the poor. The cereal offering does not invalidate the standard of sacrifice that the blood makes atonement. See Nicole, “Atonement in the Pentateuch,” 45. The second objection demonstrates a misunderstanding of the relationship between the sin and the holy. Angel Rodrigues argues, “What this tension proclaims is the superiority of holiness over against impurity. When sin/impurity is, through repentance and confession, given to Yahweh, He controls it. In the sanctuary the power of sin is overcome. We can, therefore, conclude that neither the flesh of the animal, nor the priest, nor the blood, lose their holiness by bearing the sin of the offerer. They are the

confessed all iniquities, transgressions, and sins of the people (Lev 16:21), so that the goat bore the sins of the people (Lev 16:22).³⁹ Then the goat was driven away from the camp into exile,⁴⁰ which represented the sins of the people departing from the camp. Wenham points out that “the scapegoat ceremony was seen by all and could be understood by all. It was a powerful visual aid that demonstrated the reality of sin and the need to eliminate it.”⁴¹ The goat was usually sent to its death by being in isolation in the

means by which sin is brought before the Lord. We need not choose between a transference of sin which supposedly contaminates the animal, or no transference in order to maintain the holiness of the flesh. Holiness and impurity are brought together in order to proclaim the glorious superiority of holiness. This is done through the ritual of the laying on of hands” (Angel Manuel Rodriguez, “Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus and in Cultic-Related Texts” [Ph.D. diss., Andrews University: Seventh-Day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1979], 218-19). He continues, “But above all there is one which we consider to be most important. The offerer did not only transfer to the animal his sin but also his penalty, his punishment. He had to kill the animal because he had also transferred his penalty to it. Once he sinned he was immediately in a sin/punishment state. The penalty for his sin was not separated from the sin itself. The offerer had already broken the covenant, he was already in a state of alienation from God, going inexorably toward the ultimate result of his sin, that is, death. He could transfer his penalty because it was already his penalty. It was, therefore, logical and theologically sound to demand from the offerer the slaughtering of his own sacrifice. The slaughter was required, but not in order to obtain the blood. It was required because the penalty of sin was also transferred to the animal through the laying on of hands. The offerer acknowledges that his penalty was borne by the animal he slaughtered. . . . The conclusion is, therefore, inescapable that in the ritual of the laying on of hands in the expiatory sacrifices the idea of transfer of sin is basic, and that it is always accompanied by the idea of sacrificial substitution. To the sacrificial victim was transferred the sin/penalty of the offerer and it died as his substitute. In that way the sinner’s life was preserved” (Rodriguez, “Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus and in Cultic-Related Texts,” 223-24). This argument is based on the research of Schreiner, “The Penal Substitution View,” 83.

³⁹Hartley states, “These three terms [iniquities, rebellion, sins] together encompass all dimensions of humans’ breaking of God’s law. Furthermore, all these terms are in the plural, indicative of the frequency and totality of humans’ sinning. By confessing these sins with both hands placed on the goat’s head, the high priest transfers the sins of the community to the goat” (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 241).

⁴⁰The term for Azazel (לְעִזָּאזֵל) has been debated. The term may refer to the function of the goat itself, it may refer to the concept of sin being removed, it may refer to the location that it departs to, or it may refer to the name of a demon in the wilderness. The likely choice is the concept of sin being removed or to a location outside of Israel. See Hartley, *Leviticus*, 237-38; Rooker, *Leviticus*, 216. Rooker explains, “Regardless of the precise meaning of the term, the overall understanding of the passage is clear: the releasing of the goat indicated that the sins of the Israelites had been removed never to visit them again” (Rooker, *Leviticus*, 217).

⁴¹Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 236-37.

wilderness. Thus the goat, as a substitute for the people, bore their sins and died because of the people's sins.

The Day of Atonement sacrifices were penal substitutionary. The sacrifices and the scapegoat were substitutes for the priests and the people. Without these substitutionary sacrifices, the priests and the people would die. Rooker argues that "the blood of the sacrificial victim makes atonement for the worshiper, for the victim's blood (life) is being offered in the worshiper's place. Thus the concept of substitution is foundational to the understanding of the Israelite sacrificial system."⁴² The Day of Atonement sacrifice also averted the wrath of God toward the priest and the people. Nadab and Abihu's deaths (Lev 16:1-2) emphasized the propitiatory nature of the sacrifice:

Though some have suggested that the Day of Atonement does not avert the anger of God over human sin, this view seems difficult to maintain in light of how this climactic chapter begins. The description of the ceremony begins by recalling the tragic events of Leviticus 10, and states that if the priest, the people's representative, does not wish to receive the same treatment as Nadab and Abihu, then all of the following specifics must be obeyed. We see then that sin defiles, and God's judgment follows as retribution. . . . The presence of sin defiles the holiness of God and brings retributive judgment. As such, the introductory verses set the tone for the ritual. God is angry at sin (vv. 1-2), yet his anger is averted through the bloody sacrifice that cleanses and atones for sin (vv. 3-34).⁴³

The sacrifice and the scapegoat served as one act of atonement.⁴⁴ Kaiser notes, "The one goat makes possible the expiation of the sins laid on it, and thus it is the means of expiating and propitiating Israel's sins, while the other goat exhibits the effects of that

⁴²Rooker, *Leviticus*, 53.

⁴³Barry C. Joslin, "Christ Bore the Sins of Many: Substitution and the Atonement in Hebrews," *SBJT* 11 (2007): 76; see also Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 47.

⁴⁴This argument and research is dependent on Joslin, "Christ Bore the Sins of Many," 78.

expiation.”⁴⁵

Suffering Servant

The Suffering Servant’s sacrifice was a vicarious atonement.⁴⁶ In chapters 40-

⁴⁵Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Book of Leviticus*, in vol. 1 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 1111. Vos observes, “In the ritual of the Day of Atonement, which we may consider the culminating occasion of the whole ritual system, Aaron is told to lay his hands on the head of the second goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the people. This second goat was not a sacrifice to be slain after the ordinary manner; it was sent away into the wilderness for the purpose of symbolically removing the sin. Yet it formed with the other goat in reality one sacrificial object; the distribution of suffering death and of dismissal into a remote place simply serving the purpose of clearer expression, in visible form, of the removal of sin after expiation had been made, something which the ordinary sacrificial animal could not well express, since it died in the process of expiation” (Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 163).

⁴⁶Some theologians insist that penal substitutionary atonement is not represented in Isa 52:13-53:12. R. N. Whybray argues that the Servant suffers with his people rather than taking their place. He also argues that the ‘many’ refers to the exilic community and that they are suffering the punishment for their sins in the exile: “Although the immediate context, which is beset with textual difficulties, does not make clear the identity of these ‘many’, the general situation reflected in the book of Deutero-Isaiah indicates that they are the Jewish exiles in Babylonia. If this is so, the Servant cannot be said to be suffering, or to have suffered, in place of the exiles in such a way that they escape the consequences of their sins, since, as in the case of the speakers in Lam 5:7, it cannot be said that these have escaped punishment: they are actually suffering the consequences of defeat and banishment. The Servant, if, as is here maintained, he is one of them, shares their suffering. Chapter 53 indeed makes it clear that he has suffered more intensely than they, and the ‘we’ who speak there confess that, at any rate compared with themselves, he is innocent; nevertheless this is shared and not vicarious suffering” (R. N. Whybray, *Thanksgiving for a Liberated Prophet: An Interpretation of Isaiah Chapter 53* [Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1978], 30). See also Harry M. Orlinsky, *The So-Called “Servant of the Lord” and “Suffering Servant” in Second Isaiah* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 55; Morna D. Hooker, “Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus?” in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. William H. Bellinger, Jr. and William R. Farmer (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 96.

John Oswalt presents a helpful response to these arguments. Both Orlinsky and Whybray admit that the Servant suffers unjustly because of sin. Oswalt retorts, “But this undeserved suffering can only be a revelation of the delivering arm of the Lord, of his ability to restore his people to fellowship with himself, if it is substitutionary, a concept familiar to the Jews through the language of the entire sacrificial system.” (John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 377). He later observes, “The sacrifices do not mitigate the temporal effects of sin, so what do they do? They deal with spiritual effects of sin; they address the truths that the soul that sins shall die . . . and that there is no forgiveness for sin apart from the shedding of blood. . . . It is only through substitution that fellowship between humans and God is possible. . . . Yes, Israel had suffered temporal results for its sins, but that did not mean that it was automatically restored to fellowship with God. For that to happen, for Israel to be enabled to be the servants of God, atonement was necessary” (Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 385). David Peterson observes, “As Israel’s substitute, the Servant is punished in a manner that exceeds the just punishment of the Babylonian exile. The salvation or ‘healing’ that is achieved in this way is profound and comprehensive. A decisive reconciliation with God is implied, together with a restoration of God’s

66, Isaiah comforted those who would be in exile, and he encouraged them with the knowledge that God would restore them. God was not merely interested in the restoration of his people into the land; he was also concerned about their sin. In the previous Servant songs, the Lord emphasized the deliverance that the Servant would accomplish:

So there are two issues in the return from exile: physical return from Babylon and spiritual deliverance from bondage and slavery to sin. And corresponding to these two issues 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 ([Isa] 44:24-48:22); the latter will bring about the second task: the forgiveness of sins ([Isa] 49:1-53:12).⁴⁷

Isaiah previously described the Servant's perfect obedience and that he successfully achieved God's purposes.⁴⁸ Isaiah 52:13-53:12 describes the Servant's sacrificial mission. Of the five stanzas, only stanzas 3 and 5 concentrate on the atonement, and these two stanzas will be examined in greater depth.

The first two stanzas proclaim the Servant's exaltation, humiliation, and rejection. The first stanza declares that the Servant is high and lifted up (Isa 52:13), which describes his exalted status. The verse uses the same wording that described Yahweh in Isaiah 6:1.⁴⁹ Many were astonished due to his anointing because his

people that involves more than a return from exile. . . . Those who deny the theme of penal substitution in the chapter appear to be guilty of special pleading" (David Peterson, "Atonement in the Old Testament," 21).

⁴⁷Peter J. Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)," *SBJT* 11 (2007): 22.

⁴⁸Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 378. In the three previous passages regarding the Servant, he is presented as one with a mission to perform and would successfully complete that mission (Isa 42:1-4), he is shown to have great difficulties in his work (Isa 49:1-7), and that when he speaks he mentions the suffering that he had to face (Isa 50:4-9). See Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 335.

⁴⁹Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 378.

appearance was not stately (Isa 52:14).⁵⁰ The kings of the nations remained silent while understanding the Servant’s exaltation and priestly work, which is demonstrated by his sprinkling many nations (Isa 52:15).⁵¹ The second stanza asks, who has been revealed as the Lord’s Servant (Isa 53:1). Then Isaiah states that the Servant did not have a beauty that would attract (Isa 53:2); therefore, the Servant was rejected by men (Isa 53:3). The Lord’s Servant was “met with shock, astonishment, distaste, dismissal, and avoidance. Such a one as this can hardly be the one who can set us free from that most pervasive of all human bondages: sin, and all its consequences. To a world blinded by selfishness and power, he does not even merit a second thought.”⁵²

⁵⁰Many commentators translate מְשֻׁחָה as “marred,” having the connotation of physical disfigurement. See Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 379-380; Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 337; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 425. Peter Gentry argues that the term, rather than coming from the root שחח (“to ruin”) is derived from the feminine noun משה (“to anoint”). He further argues that the term fits the passage better as a prologue, because it points to the high priestly function of the Servant and is preferable to the awkward rendering of “disfigured,” which does not fit the passage. See Gentry, “The Atonement in Isaiah’s Fourth Servant Song,” 27-30.

⁵¹Oswalt translates the term הִזָּה as “startle” because the term fits the parallel structure of v. 14 and the Servant’s disfigurement. He nuances the disfigurement carefully, emphasizing the complete suffering of the Servant that many find distasteful: physical, emotional, and mental. He points out that this rendering fits well with the second stanza that emphasizes the rejection of the Servant. See Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 379-81. Young and Gentry argue that הִזָּה should be interpreted as “sprinkle” (Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 337; Gentry, “The Atonement in Isaiah’s Fourth Servant Song,” 27). Gentry observes that rendering the term “sprinkle” fits the context better when considering the priestly work of the Servant that is shown in Isa 53:14 and foreshadows the Servant’s sacrifice in the remainder of the poem. Gentry’s conclusion is persuasive: “The idea of many being horrified at the Servant and of an anointing and sprinkling that goes beyond that of Israel so that it applies to all the nations best explains the exaltation of the Servant and why so many in the end are told something they have never before seen or understood. And it is natural in the prologue of a poem to find in germ form the ideas unfolded later. The idea that the Servant is disfigured more than others or beyond human recognition is both difficult to believe and not consonant with the rest of the song. The rest of the song affirms that the Servant is despised, but not that his appearance is disfigured more than others or beyond human recognition. But the idea of a priest offering a sacrifice that benefits the many is a major thought developed later. This interpretation, then, shows best how 52:13-15 suits the rest of the work *as a Prologue*. It fits the style of Isaiah well because frequently the introductory part of a major poem or section adumbrates cryptically the teaching to be unfolded within the section” (Gentry, “The Atonement in Isaiah’s Fourth Servant Song,” 31 [emphasis in the original]).

⁵²Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 384.

The main idea of the third stanza is that the Servant suffered by bearing our sin and punishment as our substitute, so that we would experience healing and peace. Isaiah explains that the Servant bore our griefs and carried our sorrows (Isa 53:4ab); however, “we” thought of him as stricken by God (Isa 53:4cd). The juxtaposition of “we” and “he” highlights the substitutionary nature of the passage; the Servant carries our griefs and sorrows.⁵³ Oswalt observes,

The force of this awareness is shown throughout the verse and the following by the recurrence of the contrast between “him” and “us.” *He* suffered, but it is *we* who sinned. This contrast is heightened in this verse by the use of the emphatic independent pronouns *he* and *we* in the first colon of each bicolen.⁵⁴

Thus the Servant took upon himself what belonged to us.⁵⁵ Oswalt also observes that the very language of carrying and bearing demonstrates substitution:

The language of carrying and bearing sets the stage for the substitutionary understanding of the Servant’s suffering. This is the language of the cult, especially from Leviticus. There the sacrificial animal carries . . . the sins of the offerers away, so that the offerer does not carry them anymore. The animal does not merely die because the offerer sinned, but in the offerer’s place, doing what the offerer must do otherwise. . . . In the same way *sabal* implies the bearing of a burden for someone else. . . . The Servant is not suffering with his people (however unjustly), but for them.⁵⁶

The Servant carried our griefs and sicknesses as our substitute. The griefs and sicknesses are the effects of our sins.⁵⁷ Isaiah asserts that God caused the Servant to be

⁵³Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 345. Jeffrey, Ovey, and Sach add, “The Servant is explicitly said to suffer ‘for’ others. The substitutionary character of his suffering is highlighted by the repeated comment in Isaiah 53:4-6 between *he*, *his*, and *him* on the one hand, and *we*, *us*, *we all* and *us all* on the other. The original Hebrew text underlines this even more forcefully by an emphatic use of the personal pronoun” (Jeffrey, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 54).

⁵⁴Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 386.

⁵⁵Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 345.

⁵⁶Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 386.

⁵⁷Young observes, “It should be noted that the consequences of sin and not sin itself are mentioned. Nevertheless, when it is said that he bore our sicknesses, what is meant is not that he became a fellow sufferer with us, but that he bore the sin that is the cause of the evil consequences, and thus became

stricken and smitten. The term “stricken” indicates painful suffering of the Servant, and the term “smitten” shows his personal experience of humiliation.⁵⁸ Verse 4 shows that the Servant bore our griefs and sorrows as a substitute, and because he carried them, we viewed him as humbled and brought low by God.

While verse 4 states that the Servant bore our griefs and sorrows, verse 5 shows the magnitude of the Servant’s work. The first two lines of verse 5 declare that our iniquities and transgressions were the cause of his piercing and crushing. The language of iniquities and transgressions is the language of sin.⁵⁹ The piercing and crushing indicates more than just suffering, it shows that the Servant died because of these sins. Oswalt argues that “while ‘pierced through’ is not always specifically said to result in death, it is typically used in contexts with death.” He approvingly cites Delitzsch that the term pierced “is the strongest term for violent and excruciating death in the language. Similarly, ‘crushed’ is stronger than that which . . . ‘bruised’ implies. It suggests at least breaking into pieces and in some cases even pulverizing.”⁶⁰ Thus the Servant died as our substitute for our sins:

The sins we had committed were borne by the Servant. Inasmuch as sin, however, is

our substitute” (Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 346).

⁵⁸Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 430. Motyer also indicates that the term stricken (נָגַעַ) “is used sixty times in Leviticus 13-14, not of the disease of leprosy but of the infliction or ‘blow’ of it.”

⁵⁹The *transgressions* (עָשָׂה) are the “willfulness and rebelliousness of sin, the deliberate flouting of the Lord and his law,” and the term *iniquities* (פְּשָׁעַ) “reflects the bentness or pervettedness of human nature, the result of the fall and the ever-flowing fount of sin” (ibid.). The term עָשָׂה “signifies a willful, knowledgeable violation of a norm or standard. . . . Beyond that, it represents a willful breach of trust. It occurs most frequently to designate the disruption of an alliance through violation of a covenant” (Eugene Carpenter and Michael A. Grism, “עָשָׂה,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 707). The term פְּשָׁעַ “has predominantly religious and ethical function . . . and its plural form sometimes serves as a summary word for all sins against God” (Alex Luc, “פְּשָׁעַ,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 351).

⁶⁰Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 387.

something immaterial, how can one be said to bear it? The answer is that sin involves not merely an inward corruption of the heart but also guilt before God. In saying that the Servant bore our sins, therefore, Isaiah is in reality declaring that he bore the guilt of our sins. Yet even guilt is intangible; but guilt involves liability both the censure and to punishment, and with this we meet the heart of the matter. When the Servant bore the guilt of our sins, we are saying that he bore the punishment that was due to us because of those sins, and that is to say that he was our substitute. His punishment was vicarious. Because we had transgressed, he was pierced to death; and being pierced and crushed was the punishment he bore in our stead. . . . If, however, the language is to have meaning, the Servant must be one who was himself utterly free of transgression and iniquity, else his vicarious suffering could be of no avail.⁶¹

The last two lines of verse 5 show the benefits that we received because of the Servant's punishment. We experienced peace and healing. The Servant bore our transgressions to give us positive results:

What the Servant does in bearing the undeserved results of his people's sin brings about positive results for the people. He is not merely participating in their suffering, he is bearing it away for them so that they may not labor under its effects anymore. He took the punishment that made it possible for us to have well-being, and he has taken the infected welts so that ours could be healed.⁶²

The peace that we have is the peace with God, reconciliation, and the healing we have is holistic. The peace that we have comes through his chastisement. The term מוֹסֵר (*masar*) contains the idea of correction,⁶³ like a parent who disciplines a child who has rebelled and disrupted the relationship because "justice is offended."⁶⁴ Oswalt continues:

There is no *shalom, well-being*, because things are out of order, unbalanced. Until punishment has been meted out, all the good intentions in the world cannot restore that broken order. But when the parent's authority has been recognized, when justice has been done, then both sides of the equation are balanced again, which is what *shalom* is all about. This is what the Servant has done for us. This is not a matter of a raging tyrant who demands violence on someone to satisfy his fury. It is

⁶¹Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 347-48.

⁶²Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 388.

⁶³Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 348.

⁶⁴Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 388.

a God who wants a whole relationship with his people, but is prevented from having it until incomplete justice is satisfied. In the Servant he has found a way to gratify his love and satisfy his justice.⁶⁵

The term *shalom* indicates the fullness of peace, the type of peace that God has for men, rather than a general state or feeling of peace.⁶⁶ Motyer observes that “Isaiah uses ‘healing’ in a total sense: the healing of the person, restoring fullness and completeness, a mark of the Messianic day.”⁶⁷ The image in the last two lines of the verse is of a rebel who deserves the welts (wounds) that he gets, and the only way that he escapes the welts is if someone takes them in his place.⁶⁸

The elliptical language only intensifies the point; it is literally: ‘in his welts it is healed to us.’ What can this mean but what it says? The Servant is not suffering with his people – he is suffering for them, procuring for them through his suffering what they cannot procure for themselves. This requires that the Servant does not deserve any welts of his own. Because he does not he can take those of his people and give them healing in return.⁶⁹

The avenue that brought us the peace was the Servant’s chastisement, and the path that brought us the healing are the wounds that the Servant suffered.

The last verse of this stanza emphasizes two points. The first is that we have gone astray, like sheep. Sheep are prone to wander, are not always aware of their

⁶⁵Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 388.

⁶⁶Young says, “The word involves more than a sense of well-being. . . . Because of our sins, so the thought may be paraphrased, God was not at peace with us. If he was to be at peace with us, there must be chastisement. We deserved that chastisement, but it fell not upon us, but upon the Servant. In our place he was punished; and inasmuch as he was punished, God was at peace with us. One is not reading into the text if he asserts that the chastisement that fell upon the Servant was for the purpose of propitiation. Because of the Servant’s chastisement, our deep need of peace was fulfilled. If peace refers only to well-being or to material prosperity it is difficult to perceive why the death of the Servant was necessary to procure that peace. Rather, this peace is the peace of God that passeth understanding” (Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 348-49.)

⁶⁷Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 431.

⁶⁸Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 388.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 388-89.

circumstances, and will run in any direction when frightened.⁷⁰ Humans have this same tendency because we are not always “aware of the consequences of our choices.”⁷¹ This image of straying sheep is an appropriate summary of our corrupted nature.⁷² The Servant’s work was needed because people have departed from God. A second issue in the third stanza is that the Lord placed *our* iniquity on him. Verse 6cd emphasizes God’s initiative of placing our sins on him:

Thus he was indeed “smitten by God.” The Servant is not an expedient which we hopefully proposed, nor one moved only by personal compassion and voluntariness; he is the provision and plan of God, who himself superintends the priestly task (Lv 16:21) of transferring the guilt of the guilty to the head of the Servant, giving notice that this is indeed his considered and acceptable satisfaction for sin.⁷³

The Servant demonstrated the substitutionary nature of his sacrifice as he suffered the consequences of our sin.⁷⁴

Isaiah explains the Servant’s oppression in the fourth stanza of the poem. The Servant suffered in silence while experiencing his painful sacrifice (Isa 53:7). The comparison with a lamb shows the compliant way that the Servant was led to his death, with an emphasis on his willing submission.⁷⁵ Verse 8 addresses the unjust treatment of the Servant; he was killed because he suffered for his people’s sins. Young states, “God does carry out His judgments in the midst of His people, and the supreme manifestation of his judgment was that which fell upon the Servant. It is best to understand he was

⁷⁰Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 389.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷²Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 431.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 433; Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 392.

taken as referring to a being taken away by death from the unjust trial.”⁷⁶ His grave was placed with the sinners even though he was innocent (Isa 53:9). Oswalt observes, “In view of all these points the verse does indeed seem to speak of the final irony in the Servant’s life—he is not even buried with the poor, who had been his most faithful companions, but is surrounded in death by some of those whose sins he had carried, but who had oppressed and despised him.”⁷⁷ Motyer helpfully summarizes this stanza:

This is the emphasis of the present stanza: the clear-headed, self-restraining voluntariness with which the Servant approached and accepted what happened. The human eye . . . saw him at the mercy of hostile, and even divine, forces: the theologically instructed eye . . . saw the hand of the Lord fulfilling the Servant’s death as a sin-bearing exercise. Now, however, we stand on a very sacred spot indeed, within the Servant’s own consciousness, and we see him, not caught in a web of events, but masterfully deciding, accepting and submitting.⁷⁸

Verse 10 indicates that it pleased the Lord to crush him. The word for crush conveys the idea of being crushed to death, and the term is used in the same manner as in verse 5.⁷⁹ However, the Lord determined and was satisfied that the Servant would be killed. God was not happy, and the NASB and KJV translation “it pleased the Lord to crush him,” does not accurately reflect the Lord’s disposition. The better translation is that the Lord was satisfied with the sacrifice. Gentry explains,

This exegesis not only handles well all the problems in the line, it makes better sense than that of the KJV and NASB which translate ‘it pleased the Lord to crush him.’ This makes it seem that God took delight in making the Servant suffer and much popular preaching and teaching has followed this point of view. This is not the meaning of the text at all. Here ‘delighted’ is being used in the context of a sacrifice. God is delighted or pleased with the sacrifice in the sense that he accepts it as sufficient to wipe away his indignation, his offense and his outrage at our sin. This text contrasts with Isa 1:11 where the same verb is used, ‘I have no pleasure in

⁷⁶Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 351.

⁷⁷Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 398.

⁷⁸Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 432.

⁷⁹Ibid., 438-39. See also Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 387.

the blood of bulls and lambs and goats' (NIV). God will not accept the sacrifices of a corrupt Zion, but here he is pleased with the death of his Servant, the king of the transformed Zion. He accepts his sacrifice. Why? Verse 10b explains it for us.⁸⁰

The second part of the verse indicates that the Servant's soul would be a guilt offering. The emphasis in this verse is that the Servant voluntarily gave himself as an offering.⁸¹ This phrase also indicates that the guilt offering was in view (cf. Lev 5:14-26; 7:1-10). Three aspects make the guilt offering unique. First the emphasis of the offering was restitution; "Isaiah is explaining here how restitution is made to God for the covenant disloyalty of Israel and her many sins against God. . . . Second, this offering provides satisfaction for every kind of sins, whether inadvertent or intentional."⁸² Third, it is the "only regular offering that required a ram or male sheep."⁸³ The significance of the ram is that it is often used as a symbol for community leadership; thus the guilt offering "is perfectly suited to describe a sacrifice where the king suffers the penalty on behalf of his people."⁸⁴ The Servant would prolong his days and the Lord's purpose would be accomplished as a result of his sacrifice. The Servant's prolonged days refers to his resurrection. Though he died, the Servant would see his offspring.⁸⁵ His offspring are

⁸⁰Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song," 35.

⁸¹The verb *אָפֵר* may either be second person masculine singular or third person feminine singular. The better translation is the third feminine singular because it avoids the awkward phrasing that Yahweh is making an offering to himself. (Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song," 36). Motyer states, "This is not as straightforward as the Servant offering himself. The Servant makes the offering, and at the same time he is the offering. He is both the priest and the sacrifice. This line indicates that the death of the Servant is intentional on his part as well as on the part of Yahweh" (ibid.) Contra Motyer, who interprets the verb as a second person masculine singular in reference to God, meaning that God is the one who makes the offering (Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 440), and Oswalt makes the same translation decision but argues that the pronoun refers to the individual appropriating the Servant's sacrifice for himself (Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 401-02).

⁸²Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song," 36.

⁸³Ibid..

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Young explains, "Thus it may be seen that the results described occur only because the

those who receive the benefits of the Servant's sacrifice. "The guilt offering has been made; what remains now is the gathering of the family (all those for whom the reparation was made) and the Servant lives on, vested with authority to see that this is done."⁸⁶

Verse 11 reflects on the Servant's work and its effect upon his people. The verse begins by showing that at the completion of his sacrificial death, the Servant was satisfied by the outcome of his labor.⁸⁷ The verse also states that by his knowledge he will justify the many.⁸⁸ Motyer explains, "In a context where the Servant's personal righteousness receives such emphasis, the phrase 'to provide righteousness for the many' can mean only that there are those ('the many') whom he clothes in his righteousness, sharing with them his own perfect acceptability before God."⁸⁹ The result of the death of the Servant, and that he bore their iniquities, is that many⁹⁰ would be made righteous before God. The idea of bearing sin refers to the burnt offering, whereas the offerer seeks

Servant himself brings an expiatory sacrifice. The first of these results is that he will see a seed, i.e., his own seed, those whom he by vicarious suffering and expiatory sacrifice has redeemed from the guilt and the power of their sins, a great multitude that no man can number. . . . It is of importance also to note that the Servant himself will see the seed. If he were to die and remain dead, this would be impossible. Hence, this verb makes clear that death will not hold the Servant, but rather, after his death he will again come to life and as a living one will see his seed" (Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 355).

⁸⁶Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 440-41.

⁸⁷Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 403.

⁸⁸The grammatical construction of "by his knowledge" has been debated, whether it is a subjective or objective genitive. As a subjective genitive, the emphasis is the faith relationship of the recipient of the Servant's benefits. If an objective genitive, the emphasis is the Servant's knowledge, that is his experience of his saving work. Motyer rightly argues that the objective genitive is in view: "But it is more suited to this section of the stanza to retain the focus on the Servant himself and to see here the knowledge which he alone possesses (and we need) regarding what God requires in relation to sin and what to do about it" (Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 441). See also Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 404; Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 356-57.

⁸⁹Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 442.

⁹⁰The "many" is not all inclusive but signifies the numerous people who are beneficiaries of the Servant's saving work. See *ibid.*

God's acceptance through sacrifice.⁹¹ Young concludes,

When the Servant bears the iniquities of the many and has been punished for the guilt of these iniquities, the act of bearing the iniquities in itself has not changed the character of those whose iniquities are borne. When the iniquities are borne, i.e. when the guilt those iniquities involve has been punished, the Servant may declare that the many stand in right relationship with God. Their iniquities will no longer be able to rise up and accuse them, for the guilt of those iniquities has been punished. Thus, they are justified. They are declared to be righteous, for they have received the righteousness of the Servant and they are received and accepted by God Himself. Of them God says that they no longer have iniquities, but they do have the righteousness of the Servant. This can only be a forensic justification.⁹²

⁹¹Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 442. J. Alan Groves examines the various lexical constructions for the terms “bear guilt” (נָשָׂא עוֹן) and concludes that the term denotes atonement. (J. Alan Groves, “Atonement in Isaiah 53,” in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004], 61-89). Some argue “the language in Isaiah 53 is not cultic language and hence cannot be the language of atonement” (Groves, “Atonement in Isaiah 53,” 62). Groves cites Whybray, *Thanksgiving for a Liberated Prophet*, 29-52; Orlinsky, *The So-Called “Servant of the Lord” and “Suffering Servant” in Second Isaiah*, 56.) Groves argues that though the language of the cult (specifically the Hebrew word כַּפֵּר) is absent, the concept is still present in Isaiah. Regarding the argument of the cult, Groves first argues that atonement may occur outside of cultic contexts. He says, “I am proposing, therefore, that atonement is best understood as made by an act that purifies something in such a manner that the outbreak of Yahweh’s holy wrath is either arrested or prevented, whichever is appropriate in a particular situation” (Groves, “Atonement in Isaiah 53,” 66). Second, since Yahweh’s presence is universal, holiness is universally demanded, and is not limited to the temple. Third, Yahweh has rejected Israel’s temple sacrifices because they continued in their sin and did not bring about any change. See Groves, “Atonement in Isaiah 53,” 66-68. Groves perceives that the real problem “is not the absence of cultic language. The real problem is whether or not Isa 53 uses the language of atonement (an action that arrests or prevents Yahweh’s wrath), and if so, how the suffering and death of a *human being* to make atonement can be explained” (Groves, “Atonement in Isaiah 53,” 69). Groves’ task is to show that the term “bear guilt” (נָשָׂא עוֹן) is atonement language. He argues that the “unique syntax is well suited to indicate a unique meaning, ‘to make atonement.’” He summarizes his investigation: “There are several other features in Isaiah 53 as well as in all of Isaiah that reinforce both the uniqueness of Isaiah 53 and of the ‘bearing guilt’ clauses. First, the use of the verb נָשָׂא in constructions that mean to ‘bear guilt’ in Isaiah is always unusual. Second, when Yahweh says the Servant will be exalted and lifted up, like Yahweh himself, he is making the Servant and the passage about the Servant unique. Hence, it is not unexpected that there will be many surprises in the content and even the syntax of Isaiah 53. Third, נָשָׂא and סָבַל as *leitworts* in Isaiah 53 move the song forward from surprise (‘bearing infirmities and sorrows’ in Is 53:4) to even greater surprise (‘bearing guilt and sin’ in Is 53:11-12). Moreover, the Servant who bore guilt (נָשָׂא) will be the one lifted up (נָשָׂא) as well. Fourth, each of the other occurrences of נָשָׂא in Isaiah, when it means to ‘bear guilt,’ is unusual. It should be no surprise that the usage in Isaiah 53 is unusual too. Fifth, the immediate context of each clause shows that they are unexpected in their immediate context – bearing the guilt of the many rather than condemning the wicked, and after having borne the sin of the many, interceding for them. Finally, Leviticus 10:17, 16:22 can be understood as showing that ‘bearing guilt’ is a part of the atoning process” (Groves, “Atonement in Isaiah 53,” 86-87).

⁹²Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 358.

Verse 12 completes the thought of the whole poem. It emphasizes the Servant's exaltation and that he would divide the spoil among many. His reward would be his redeemed people.⁹³ The poem ends with four reasons that the strong are his spoil.⁹⁴ First, the reason for his reward was that he "poured out his soul to death," which indicates that he voluntarily submitted to death.⁹⁵ Second, he identified himself with those he came to save.⁹⁶ He was counted among the transgressors, meaning that though the Servant was not guilty of transgression, he was identified with them. Third, he acted as a substitute by removing the sin of many.⁹⁷ He bore their sin, meaning that he took the guilt and consequences of their sin upon himself. Fourth, he acted as a mediator and made intercession.⁹⁸ The Servant both bore the sins of many and made intercession for the transgressors. Young explains,

Finally, the Servant will make intercession for the transgressors. The conjunction suggests a gradation; in addition to having borne the sins of many, the Servant will also make intercession for the transgressors. Here again there is reflection upon a priestly work of the Servant, who pleads before God the merit and virtue of his atoning work as the only ground of acceptance of the transgressors for whom he dies. The basis of the intercession is the substitutionary expiation of the Servant.⁹⁹

⁹³Motyer elaborates, "The Lord gives his Servant all those whom he has redeemed . . . in token that, in the sight of God, the work of redemption has been successfully completed. . . . He is not 'given' the strong as those captured by some other power and then placed under his charge; he takes them by his own superior power and disposes of them according to his own pleasure" (Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 443).

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Oswalt states, "What is the cause of the Servant's exaltation? The simple forcefulness of the statement seems designed to leave no doubt in the reader's mind: it is the voluntary self-sacrifice of the Servant whereby he became identified with the transgressors, dying their death so that they could live. If one had any doubt about how to read the poem, this last verse should dispel it" (Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 405).

⁹⁶Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 443.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

The nature of the intercession is not merely praying for them, but that he intervened on their behalf. Oswalt presents the big picture of this passage:

There was no one to step into the gap between the rebels and their just destruction, so the Servant did it with his own blood (Heb 9:12-14). Thus as noted above, the writer wants to remove any doubt from the reader's mind: the Servant will be exalted to the highest heaven (52:13) not because he was humiliated (although he was), not because he suffered unjustly (although he did), not because he did it voluntarily (although he did), but because it was all in order to carry the sin of the world away to permit God's children to come home to him. He is exalted because he fulfilled God's purpose for his ministry, and that purpose was redemption.¹⁰⁰

The Servant's death was a penal substitutionary atonement because he bore his people's sins and suffered their sentence of death as their substitute.

Penal Substitution in the New Testament

The Gospels

The synoptic gospel narratives portray Jesus' death as a vicarious atonement.¹⁰¹ The evidence for penal substitutionary atonement in the synoptic gospels includes Jesus' teaching of his sacrifice in Mark 10:45, his Last Supper statement, and his request that the Father remove the cup from him before his arrest.

Jesus taught that his death was substitutionary in Mark 10:44-45 (cf. Matt 20:28). After the disciples debated among themselves about which one of them would be greatest in the kingdom, Jesus instructed about the servant leadership which he himself exemplified.¹⁰² Then he remarked, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to

¹⁰⁰Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 407.

¹⁰¹For recent works covering the atonement in the Gospels, see Peter G. Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance: Atonement in Mark's Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); John Raymond Kimbell, "The Atonement in Lukan Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008); Mark Randall Jackson, "Atonement in Matthew's Gospel" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011).

¹⁰²James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 326.

serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Lane notes that the ransom metaphor “is that of deliverance by purchase, whether a prisoner of war, a slave, or a forfeited life is the object to be delivered.”¹⁰³ Jesus described the ransomed as “many,” and he contrasted between the many who would be ransomed and the one person who would give his life for them.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the preposition “for” implies substitution. Leon Morris contends,

He might have added that the preposition, *αντι*, ‘for’, is the preposition of substitution. Of itself it does not prove that the atonement is substitutionary, but it lends its measure of support to the other indications that this is in mind. Indeed the whole saying is substitutionary, for it tells us that in His death Jesus paid the price that sets men free. He took our place. He gave his life that our lives be no longer forfeit.¹⁰⁵

Jesus gave himself as a ransom, a payment. The text does not designate the recipient of the payment, but theological inference would indicate that God the Father received the payment. The identity of the recipient of the ransom becomes clearer as Jesus is identified with the Suffering Servant. The allusion to the Suffering Servant describes the character of Jesus’ sacrifice.¹⁰⁶ David Peterson argues that “the expression ‘to give his

¹⁰³William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 383. Procksch and Morris observe that the term *λύτρον* means “ransom,” and the LXX’s use of the word corresponds to the Hebrew term *כִּפֶּר*, which means “to cover” or “to atone.” See O. Procksch, “*λύω*,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittell (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 329; Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rded. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 11, 24-27.

¹⁰⁴R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 763.

¹⁰⁵Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 54. See also Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 384.

¹⁰⁶Some theologians argue that the sayings of Jesus do not allude to Isaiah 53. See M. D. Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1959). R. T. France rightly opposes this view. For a full response, see R. T. France, “The Servant of the Lord in the Teaching of Jesus,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968): 26-52. Belousek argues that the verse does refer to the Servant, yet he arrives at a different conclusion. He argues that the Servant’s mission is deliverance from exile. Furthermore, he contends that the Jesus’ saying communicates exchange, not substitution. See Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace*, 149-55. As argued above, the Servant’s mission involved more than deliverance from exile. He restored their relationship to God by dealing with their sin, which caused the exile. Regarding substitution, if the people were going to die

life' signifies the voluntary nature of the death and recalls Isaiah 53:10-12, which speaks of the Servant of the Lord offering his life as a compensation or payment for the sins of his people."¹⁰⁷ While reflecting on the concept of ransom, Lane summarizes,

Because the idea of equivalence, or substitution, was proper to the concept of ransom, it became an integral element in the vocabulary of redemption in the OT. It speaks of a liberation which connotes servitude or an imprisonment from which man cannot free himself. In the context of verse 45a, with its reference to the service of the Son of Man, it is appropriate to find an allusion to the Servant of the Lord in Isa. 53, who vicariously and voluntarily suffered and gave his life for the sins of others. The specific thought underlying the reference to ransom is expressed in Isa. 53:10 which speaks of "making his life an *offering for sin*." Jesus as the messianic Servant, offers himself as a guilt offering . . . in compensation for the sins of the people. The release effected by this offering overcomes man's alienation from God, his subjection to death, and his bondage to sin. Jesus' service is offered to God to release men from their indebtedness to God.¹⁰⁸

Jesus gave himself as a substitute for the people in the same manner as Isaiah's Suffering Servant. This exchange of Jesus' life for the many as a payment is substitutionary atonement.¹⁰⁹

Two of Jesus' sayings before the crucifixion indicate a vicarious atonement in the context of Jesus' mission.¹¹⁰ At the Last Supper, Jesus presented himself as the

because of their sin, then the verse indeed implies substitution. As Morris expressed, Jesus gave his life as a substitute so the many would not die.

¹⁰⁷David Peterson, "Atonement in the New Testament," in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today*, ed. David Peterson (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), 30.

¹⁰⁸Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 383-84.

¹⁰⁹Simon Gathercole, "The Cross and Substitutionary Atonement," *SBET* 21 (2003): 161n20. Though not stated, in this text, the allusion to the Servant, as the quote above notes, connotes a penal aspect to Jesus' death.

¹¹⁰Jesus indicates the divine necessity of his death several times, saying that he "must" be handed over to the priests, must die and rise again (Matt 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; Luke 9:22, 31, 44; 17:25; 18:31-34; and in the post resurrection appearances, Luke 24:25-27, 44-47). Marshall notes, "The verb $\delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ expresses the divine purpose which 'must' be fulfilled in the career of Jesus. . . . The parallel passages 18:31, 24:26; Mk. 9:12; 14:21 indicate that for Luke and the early church this 'must' lay in the necessity to fulfill what was laid down in the Scriptures" (I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], 369).

Passover Lamb (Matt 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20). When serving the bread and the wine to his disciples, the analogy to the Passover became evident: “The shedding of the blood of the Passover victim brought deliverance to the people of God, so would it be now. All that the Passover prefigured and symbolized, Jesus perfectly fulfilled.”¹¹¹

Jesus shows that he takes away the wrath of God, resulting in the salvation of his people.

Describing the approach in the gospel of Luke, Kimbell opines,

In view of Luke’s emphasis on the Passover context of the Last Supper . . . the parallels between the original Passover and Jesus’ reinterpretation of the meal are difficult to miss. Just as God’s people celebrated the Passover the night previous to their deliverance through the lamb’s blood, so Jesus celebrates the Last Supper with his disciples on the night previous to “pouring out” his own blood. It does not seem far-reaching to perceive the theological point from Luke’s narrative that, as with the Passover lamb, Jesus dies an atoning death for God’s people so that they will be spared judgment.¹¹²

In the evening before his arrest, Jesus asked the Father to take the cup from him (Matt 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42.). The symbolism of the cup has a rich history in the Old Testament, which symbolized God’s wrath against his people for their sin.¹¹³ The cup has this same association in the New Testament, except Jesus was

¹¹¹Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament*, 99. As an anticipation of the banquet, Marshall observes, “If Jesus looked forward to the banquet in the kingdom of God in this way, two things would seem to follow. The first is that Jesus believed that God’s act of redemption was near. The Last Supper was a Passover meal in which the accent shifted from remembering the past to anticipation of the future. It was, however, the past which set the pattern for the future. The events of the Exodus constituted the type which gave form to the future expectation of an act of redemption by the mighty hand of God. The second thing is that Jesus spoke in terms of fulfillment and newness, and thus indicated the end of the old Passover and its replacement by its fulfillment. Theologically the Passover came to an end with this final celebration by Jesus, and when the church would later speak of celebrating the festival (1 Cor. 5:7f) it would be a new Christian festival that was regarded as paschal only insofar and the Passover provided the typology for understanding the death of Jesus as an act of redemption” (I. Howard Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord’s Supper* [Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1980], 80).

¹¹²Kimbell, “The Atonement in Lukan Theology,” 37.

¹¹³Leonhard Goppelt, “πίνω,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittell (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 149-52. Kimball presents an excellent study of the occurrences of the term ποτήριον in the Old Testament. In the LXX, 12 times it refers to a literal cup, while the term is used metaphorically 32 times. Of the metaphorical uses, the word is used 17 times in relation to God’s wrath (Ps 11:16; Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15, 17, 28; Ezek 23:29b-33; Ps 75:8; Jer 49:12; 51:7; Lam 3:13; 4:21; Hab 2:16). In several other instances,

drinking the cup. Thus, the cup “is a metaphor for the impending suffering of Jesus . . . it refers especially to the infliction of punishment associated with the wrath of God.”¹¹⁴

Jesus took the cup of God’s wrath by dying on the cross. Therefore, Jesus’ statement in 10:45 emphasizes the substitutionary aspect of his death; the metaphor of the cup emphasizes the penal aspect, and his sacrifice as the Passover lamb shows his sacrifice as a penal substitute.¹¹⁵

while the cup itself is not mentioned, the concept of drinking God’s wrath is in view (Job 21:17-20; Isa 63:6; Jer 51:55-57; Obad 16-17; Ps 60:1-3; Jer 48:21, 24-26, 51:39; Nah 3:11) (Kimbell, “Atonement in Lukan Theology,” 73-74). In the word ποτήριον translates the Hebrew term כּוּס 30 out of 32 times. The only exceptions are “in Esth 1:7, the plural of ποτήριαῖς used to translate golden “vessels” (כּוּסִים) used to serve drinks. In Lam 2:13, the “ruin” (כּוּסֵי) of Israel is rendered as their “cup of destruction” (Kimbell, “Atonement in Lukan Theology,” 73n1).

¹¹⁴Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 831. See also C. E. B. Cranfield, “The Cup Metaphor in Mark xiv. 36 and Parallels,” *ExpTim* 59 (1948): 138; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1005; Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 517; Jackson, “Atonement in Matthew’s Gospel,” 170; Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” 91; Jeffery, Ovey, Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 69.

¹¹⁵The synoptic gospel narratives present two other events at the crucifixion that may show that Christ bore the wrath of the Father. First, darkness covered Jerusalem at about the sixth hour (Matt 27:45, Mark 15:33, Luke 23:44). They symbol of darkness has been used as a sign of judgment and “a visible expression of God’s displeasure” (France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1075). See also Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 1858. Thus darkness may symbolize that Jesus is experiencing the judgment of sin at crucifixion. (Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance*, 126; Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 573; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 720). Second, Jesus cries “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46; cf. Mark 15:34). For various interpretations of the cry, see Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance*, 127-32; Jackson, “Atonement in Matthew’s Gospel,” 187-89. The text demonstrates that Jesus feels abandoned, but the meaning of this abandonment had been debated. The traditional view is that the Father abandons the Son, so that there is a real separation in the Trinity. See Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 573; Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 476; Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 721-22; idem, *The Cross in the New Testament*, 47-48; Jackson, “Atonement in Matthew’s Gospel,” 190-92. The weakness of this view is that it may imply that the Father is against us while the Son is for us. Perhaps a more careful articulation of the cry is that the Father abandoned the Son to death, and not that the Father was separated from the son (Thomas H. McCall, *Forsaken: The Trinity and the Cross, and Why it Matters* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012], 42). Thomas McCall explains, “There is a genuine sense in which *the Son in fact was abandoned by his Father*. Jesus suffered and died. This much is obvious from the Passion Narratives themselves, and the subsequent New Testament witness to the gospel witnesses to the vast importance of the death of Christ. His Father did indeed leave him to die, and could have rescued him; Jesus could have been spared the terrible humiliation, agony and death. The Father could have done so, but he did not. Jesus *was* abandoned – the Father abandoned him to this death, at the hands of these sinful people, for us and our salvation” (McCall, *Forsaken*, 44[emphasis in the original]).

Though the Apostle John does not present a detailed exposition for penal substitutionary atonement, his account shows that Christ bore the wrath of God as a substitute. In the narrative, John the Baptist said that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). While many scholars cannot clearly explain the specific Old Testament reference to the lamb imagery,¹¹⁶ many generally agree that the imagery denotes sacrifice.¹¹⁷ The verb ἀἴρω means “take away,” or “bearing off,” which demonstrates that the sacrifice has an expiatory effect as a substitute.¹¹⁸ The ideas of taking away sin and bearing sin “are not mutually exclusive: the bearing of sin by another involves its removal from the one on whom it formerly rested. Here the sin which is removed by the Lamb is that of ‘the world.’”¹¹⁹ The phrase “for the life of the world” should be understood sacrificially in light of Jesus’ voluntary self-sacrifice. Jesus’ voluntary sacrifice as a substitute for the world by bearing their sin, resulting in sin’s removal, is unmistakably vicarious.¹²⁰ Hebrew background regarding the sacrifices

¹¹⁶The lamb metaphor may be the Passover Lamb, the lamb led to slaughter in Isa 53:7, the Servant of the Lord, the lamb of the daily sacrifices, the “gentle lamb” of Jer 11:19, the scapegoat, “the triumphant lamb in the apocalypses”, the lamb provided by God of Gen 22:8, or a guilt/sin offering. For a helpful summary, see Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 125-29.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 129-30; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 150-51. Peter Head observes, “It seems likely that John has deliberately used an ambiguous term, in order to maintain that Jesus’ death fulfils and displaces all the OT sacrifices, by dealing finally with sin” (Peter M. Head, “The Self-Offering and Death of Christ as a Sacrifice in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995], 122).

¹¹⁸Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 67; Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 130.

¹¹⁹F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 53. Bruce argues that “the world” is all people “without distinction of race, religion, or culture.”

¹²⁰Carson adds, “It is hard not to think of the Suffering Servant (Is. 52:13-53:12), the more so since Isaiah 54 has just been quoted (Jn. 6:45) and becomes quite central to the thought of John 12. Isaiah’s “Servant” reaches out to Jews and Gentiles alike (Is 49:6); the same emphasis is struck here, in that Jesus gives himself for the life of the world (cf. 3:15-17; 4:42)” (Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 295).

reinforces that John's proclamation points to substitutionary atonement.¹²¹

John's gospel vividly communicates the substitutionary aspect of Christ's death. John frequently employs the term ὑπέρ to communicate substitutionary atonement.¹²² Jesus' teaching about the good shepherd explains that his death is substitutionary because he lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11, 15). Jesus, the Good Shepherd, voluntarily died as a substitute for his sheep. Carson explains,

The words 'for (*hyper*) the sheep' suggest sacrifice. The preposition, itself ambiguous, in John always occurs in a sacrificial context, whether referring to the death of Jesus (6:51; 10:11, 15; 11:50ff; 17:19; 18:14), of Peter (13:37-38), or of a man prepared to die for his friend (15:13). In no case does this suggest a death with merely exemplary significance; in each case the death envisaged is on behalf of someone else. The shepherd does not die for his sheep to serve as an example, throwing himself off a cliff in a grotesque and futile display while bellowing, 'See how much I love you!' No, the assumption is that the sheep are in mortal danger; that in their defence [*sic.*] the shepherd loses his life; that by his death they are saved. That, and that alone, is what makes him *the good shepherd*.¹²³

See also Charles A. Gieschen, "The Death of Jesus in the Gospel of John: Atonement for Sin?" *CTQ* 72 (2008): 258.

¹²¹Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 53.

¹²²The proposition *for* (ὑπέρ) "is repeatedly found in a sacrificial context in the Fourth Gospel (cf. 10:11, 15, 11:51-52; 15:13; 17:19; 18:14; cf. also 13:37-38)" (Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 295). See also Gieschen, "The Death of Jesus in the Gospel of John," 258. Simon Gathercole surveys the language of "for" in the New Testament. In at least 14 occurrences, Christ died either "for us" or "for our sins" After his survey, he comments, "However, it is not the case that all statements about Christ's death 'for us' require the meaning 'in our place': the meaning of 'for' can be 'for the benefit of.' Nevertheless, the fact of the interchangeability of statements about Christ's death *for sins* and Christ's death *for us* indicates a substitution. If the statements were limited to talk of Christ's death 'for us,' then it is possible that the continual implication of Christ's death [is] *for our benefit*, rather than *in our place*. Statements about Christ's death *for our sins*, on the other hand, mean *taking the consequences of our sins*. The biblical assumption is that death is the consequence of sin, and therefore Christ takes that consequence even though the sin is not his own. In his death, Christ receives the penalty that was due to us. While it would in theory be possible to develop this in a non-penal way, in fact it is at this point in the logic where substitution and penalty become very difficult to prise apart" (Gathercole, "The Cross and Substitutionary Atonement," 160-61[emphasis in the original]).

¹²³Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 386 (emphasis in the original). Two more occurrences of ὑπέρ in John's gospel indicate substitution. Jesus says that the life he gives *for* the world is his flesh (John 6:51). After Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, Caiaphas remarks that it is better for one person to die for the people, than the whole nation perish (John 11:49f-50). Clearly Caiaphas, in his desire to save the nation, suggests Jesus' death instead of the whole nation. Morris observes, "In the place of the

Though the penal aspect of the atonement is not explicitly stated in John's gospel, it expresses that the consequence for rejecting Jesus is to suffer God's wrath as punishment for sin. In John the Baptist's closing statement, he warned that those who do not believe in the Son would have the wrath of God abiding on them (John 3:36). John sets a clear contrast; those who believe in the Son see life, while those who do not believe will not only miss life but they remain in the wrath of God. The wrath of God "is not some impersonal principle of retribution, but the personal response of a holy God who comes to his own world, sadly fallen into rebellion, and finds few who want anything to do with him."¹²⁴ This wrath remains on unbelievers, meaning that the wrath will persist and is God's permanent disposition toward them.¹²⁵ The result of this unbelief is death, as Carson explains,

If faith in the Son is the only way to inherit eternal life, and is commanded by God himself, then failure to trust him is as much disobedience as unbelief. The antithesis to seeing life is seeing death (8:51). Judgment has already been threatened (vv. 19-20); now it is alarmingly explicit.¹²⁶

Jesus warned the people that they would die in their sins (John 8:21, 24).

While the phrase "die in their sins" is not clear, the evidence of Jesus' warnings suggest that "to go into the presence of God with all our sins about us is the most terrible of all

death of Jesus, Caiaphas wants to see the death of Jesus. Substitution is inherent in what he says" (Leon Morris, "The Atonement in John's Gospel," *CTR* 3 [1988]: 64). See also Köstenberger, *John*, 352; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 422; Gieschen, "The Death of Jesus in the Gospel of John," 258.

¹²⁴Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 214; Köstenberger, *John*, 140. Morris adds, "The word 'wrath' points to the eschatological wrath, that divine hostility to evil that will be manifested at the end of time" (Morris, "The Atonement in John's Gospel," 54).

¹²⁵Morris argues, "The verb 'abides' (*μένει*) indicates something that is permanent. John is telling us that the sinner who persists in rejecting the Son of God can look for nothing but continuing hostility from God: the 'wrath' is not something transient that will soon pass away" (Morris, "The Atonement in John's Gospel," 54).

¹²⁶Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 214.

disasters.”¹²⁷ The contrast between Jesus’ mission and the destiny of those who reject him is ironic, for “Jesus was dying to deliver them from sin (1:29) and death (8:51), but they would die in sin anyway because they rejected his testimony.”¹²⁸ John’s gospel demonstrates the seriousness of sin and that the wrath of God resides with those who reject Christ. In addition to Jesus’ designation as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the gospel expresses the necessity of sin’s removal to escape God’s wrath. John implies that Jesus’ death atoned for and removed sin for those who believe in Christ.

Romans 3:25-26

Paul addresses the problem of the human race that is presented in Romans 1:18-3:20. Paul argues that the righteousness of God is revealed through the gospel (1:16-17), and God’s wrath is revealed against all ungodliness (1:18-32). The wrath of God is properly understood to be his righteous anger against sin.¹²⁹ Yet, the wrath of God

¹²⁷Morris, “The Atonement in John’s Gospel,” 52.

¹²⁸Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:743.

¹²⁹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 206; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 93; Carson, “The Wrath of God,” 39. C. H. Dodd argues that the wrath of God is displayed through the inevitable cause and effect laws of the universe, and thus God does not personally have wrath. Dodd opposes the idea of an angry, capricious God (Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 23-24). Yet the nature of God’s wrath is not capricious or arbitrary. C. E. B. Cranfield responds to Dodd’s argument: “He is begging the question by assuming that anger is always an irrational passion. Certainly it sometimes is; but there is also an anger which is thoroughly rational. That Paul would attribute to God a capricious, irrational rage is more than improbable. But a consideration of what Dodd calls ‘the highest human ideals of personality’ might well lead us to question whether God could be the good and loving God, if he did not react to our evil with wrath. For indignation against wickedness is surely an essential element of human goodness in a world in which moral evil is always present” (C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, ICC [New York: T & T Clark, 1975], 108-09). See also S. J. Gathercole, “Justified by Faith, Justified by his Blood: The Evidence of Romans 3:21 - 4:25,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 169-75.

contains an affective dimension. Murray notes, “Wrath is the holy revulsion of God’s being against that which is the contradiction of his holiness.”¹³⁰ Paul shows that this wrath is revealed *from heaven* against all humanity (Rom 1:18). This wrath is not God’s allowance of the laws of cause and effect to work against sinners, but it is personal response against sin:

Even if it could be justified that the concept of the “wrath of God” did not necessarily represent divine activity *ab extra*, or from outside human existence, the qualification that this wrath of God comes “from heaven” indicates decisively that the divine action in question comes *from the divine sphere*, that is, from God himself. This is manifested in the three instances of God “giving over” . . . where even though the result of failure to worship the true God and turning to idols is concrete *human* acts of wickedness in general and sexual sin in particular, these are still the wrath of God manifested in divine actions of *transcendent* judgment: the cause is actually external to human existence.¹³¹

Paul’s argument indicts both Jews and Gentiles. While speaking to the Jews, Paul emphasizes that they will not escape the wrath of God because God judges sin (Rom 2:1-5). Gathercole remarks, “Romans 1:18 highlights that God’s wrath is revealed against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of people. . . . Similarly, Romans 2 pursues the theme by advancing the case that God is infallible both in the sense that he is wholly accurate in his detection of sin (2:3), and in that he invariably does punish it (2:5).”¹³² Paul contends that all will be judged according to what they have done. God judges both Jews and Gentiles according to their works, without partiality (Rom 2:6-11).¹³³ He indicts

¹³⁰John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 1:35.

¹³¹Gathercole, “Justified by Faith, Justified by his Blood,” 170.

¹³²*Ibid.*, 169. See also Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 135.

¹³³Murray expounds on v. 11: “The criterion of judgment is not privilege or position but that affirmed repeatedly in the preceding verses, namely, the character of men’s works. It might appear that the priority accorded to the Jew gives him no immunity from the criterion of judgment which is applied to all individuals indiscriminately. The determining factor in the awards of retribution or of glory is not the privileged position of the Jew but evil-doing or well-doing respectively. And the priority of the Jew applies to retributive judgment as well as to the award of bliss” (Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1:63). Some

the Gentiles because they knew the true God but chose to suppress the truth; their judgment is that they are enslaved by their sins (Rom 1:18-32).¹³⁴ Paul indicts the Jews because, though they have God's ordinances, they do not follow the law but they rely on their circumcised status (Rom 2:17-29). Thus, in chapter two Paul presents "a sustained attack on the adequacy of the old covenant. The Jews did not obey the law sufficiently to inherit the salvation promised in the OT, proving they were still enslaved to sin. They were under God's wrath in the same way as the Gentiles."¹³⁵ Though Paul affirms that God will be faithful to his promises, the Jews will not escape judgment for their disobedience (Rom 3:1-8).¹³⁶

All people are under condemnation and are required to live according to God's

theologians view this verse in contradiction to Paul's later expression that people cannot be justified by observing the works of the law. (Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983], 106-07; E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983], 124-29). See Schreiner, *Romans*, 114-15 for some counterarguments. Moo adopts a hypothetical view, which argues that if human righteousness could be obtained by observing the law, then vv. 6-11 gives a biblical view of judgment. However, Paul's argument clarifies that justification cannot be obtained by following the law. (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 139-42). Schreiner argues that Rom 2:6-11 must be properly understood for Christians by observing that they follow the law by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, those who obey unrighteously will experience wrath and fury. Those who do good will inherit eternal life, but the Holy Spirit empowers believers to do good (Schreiner, *Romans*, 115, 137-45).

¹³⁴Schreiner, *Romans*, 81. Schreiner lists five reasons why this text specifically refers to Gentiles. First, Paul's expressed view is the "typical Jewish view of Gentile idolatry." Second, first century Jews refrained from this type of open idolatry. Third, while homosexuality was "not uncommon in the Greco-Roman world," Jews did not openly engage in this sin and would likely disapprove of homosexuality. Fourth, the Jews would condemn others for their sin rather than encourage them. Fifth, "the idolatry present among Jews in Ps 106:20 and Jer 2:11 is now applied to Gentiles." See also Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:105; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 125.

¹³⁵Schreiner, *Romans*, 158.

¹³⁶Moo notes, "Taken as a whole, then, the passage both affirms the continuing faithfulness of God to his covenant people and argues that this faithfulness in no way precludes God from judging the Jews. Provoking this discussion is the Jewish tendency to interpret God's covenant faithfulness solely in terms of his salvific promises. Paul meets that conception with a broader and deeper view of God's faithfulness – his faithfulness to remain true to his character and to all his words: the promises of cursing for disobedience as well as blessing for obedience" (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 180).

law (Rom 3:9-18).¹³⁷ Therefore, no one will be justified by following the law, for the law only makes people aware of sin (Rom 3:19-20). People cannot be declared righteous by works because nobody can follow the law perfectly. In addition, the purpose of the law was not made to make people righteous but to point out their sinfulness and show their need of God's righteousness.¹³⁸ Cranfield summarizes,

The point that Paul is making here is surely not that no flesh will be justified in God's sight on the ground of works regarded as in themselves a means of justification (i.e. works done in a legalistic spirit), but that no flesh will be justified in God's sight on the ground of works – that is, no man will earn justification by his obedience to God's requirements. The reason why this is so is that ἔργα νόμου in the sense of such a perfect obedience as would merit justification are not forthcoming. . . . So far from its being true that there are men who so adequately fulfill the law's requirements as to earn justification for themselves, the truth is rather that the condition of all men is such that the primary effect of the law in relation to them is to show us their sin as sin and themselves as sinners.¹³⁹

¹³⁷Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 198; Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1:107-08; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:197; Schreiner, *Romans*, 169.

¹³⁸Carson states, "This does not mean the law is intrinsically evil, of course (Rom 7:12); it does mean that Paul adopts a certain salvation-historical reading of the law's role, and according to that reading, the law (by which he here means the law-covenant), while it enabled human beings to become conscious of sin and doubtless performed other functions described elsewhere, could not, in the nature of the case, justify anyone (Rom 3:20)" (D. A. Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004], 121).

¹³⁹Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:198-99. Theologians advocating the New Perspective on Paul have proposed an alternate meaning for "works of the law." E. P. Sanders argues, "There are two aspects of the relationship between grace and works: *salvation is by grace but judgment is according to works; works are the condition of remaining 'in', but they do not earn salvation*" (E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977], 543 [emphasis in the original]). In his refined explanation, James D. G. Dunn states, "For the tendency in the traditional view has been to push in that direction – to see in Paul's conversion a general revulsion against the thought that any human striving or achievement can be the basis of God's acceptance. But Paul is talking about the Torah, the Jewish law. To be more precise, therefore, we should define 'works of the law' as what the law required of Israel as God's people. Works of the law, in other words, were what Israel's righteousness consisted of, Israel's part of the covenant which Yahweh had made with Israel in first choosing Israel as his special people. 'Works of the law' were Israel's response to that grace, the obedience God called for in his people, the way Israel should live as the people of God (Lev. 18:5). 'Works of the law' is the Pauline term for 'covenantal nomism' where both words are important – law as functioning within and in relation to the covenant, law as expression of and safeguard for the covenant, law as indicating Israel's part of the agreement graciously initiated by God" (James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 355 [emphasis in original]). See also N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 118. Contra the New Perspective on Paul, Mark

Paul's argument in Romans 1:18-3:20 must be understood for a proper interpretation of Romans 3:21-26, D. A. Carson notes the framework of Paul's argument:

What these observations establish, then, is the nature of the problem that Romans 3:21-26 sets out to resolve. The problem is not first and foremost the failure of Israel (national or otherwise), or inappropriate use of the law, or the urgency of linking Jews and Gentiles (all genuine themes in these chapters), but the wrath of God directed against every human being, Jew and Gentile alike - a wrath elicited by universal human wickedness. This is not saying that human beings are incapable of any good. Clearly, even those without the law may do things about which their consciences rightly defend them (Rom 2:15). But the flow of the argument that takes us from Romans 1:18-32 to Romans 3:9-20 leaves us no escape: individually and collectively, Jew and Gentile alike, we stand under the just wrath of God, because of our sin.¹⁴⁰

Thus, Romans 3:25-26 answers the key question: "Why is God's saving righteousness needed? Because human sin has resulted in the revelation of God's wrath in his judging righteousness."¹⁴¹

Paul argues that the righteousness of God is manifested apart from the law; it comes to those who believe in Christ (Rom 3:21-24) and is primarily God's saving righteousness,¹⁴² which is God's saving activity to rescue humanity. This righteousness is

Seifrid explains, "The 'works of the Law' of which Paul subsequently speaks implicitly arise from the Law itself. Since the Law mediates such works, they cannot be regarded either as markers of entrance into divine grace or as the condition for 'staying in (the covenant).' They rather represent the *benefit* of the Sinai covenant. They are the result of having 'the form of knowledge and of the truth' in the Law (Rom 2:20). It is all grace, from beginning to end, which Paul's dialogue partner enjoys. He is filled with confidence in prospect final judgment, not with fear. 'Works (of the Law)' are a cause for boasting, not for anxiety. If the Jew whom Paul describes in Romans 2:7-20 does not fit into the 'covenantal nomism' that Sanders has proposed, it is only because he sees a greater wideness in God's mercy than Sanders himself imagines: works are not the condition of remaining 'in' but the result of it" (Mark A. Seifrid, "Unrighteous by Faith: Apostolic Proclamation in Romans 1:18-3:20," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 143 [emphasis in the original]). For other arguments opposing the idea of "works of the law" as an identity requirement of those staying in the covenant, see Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 211-17; Schreiner, *Romans*, 171-73; C.E. B. Cranfield, "'The Works of the Law' in the Epistle to the Romans," *JSNT* 43 (1991): 89-101.

¹⁴⁰Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 120.

¹⁴¹Schreiner, *Romans*, 78.

¹⁴²Moo argues, "As 'the wrath of God' dominated the old era (1:18), so 'the righteousness of

God' dominates the new. 'Righteousness of God' means the same here as in Rom. 1:17: the justifying activity of God. From God's side, this includes his eschatological intervention to vindicate and deliver his people, in fulfillment of his promises. From the human side, it includes the status of acquittal acquired by the person so declared just. In 1:17, Paul asserts that this 'righteousness of God' is constantly revealed though the preaching of the gospel. Here he simply asserts its presence as a dominating force in God's interaction with humanity" (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 222). See also Schreiner, *Romans*, 181.

An alternate interpretation of the phrase "righteousness of God" has been proposed by proponents of the New Perspective on Paul. They propose that the term means "covenant faithfulness." N. T. Wright argues, "The divine righteousness (covenant faithfulness) is emphatically not the same as the 'righteousness' that humans have when they are declared to be covenant members. That idea, despite its often invoking the 'forensic' setting of the language fails to understand what that forensic setting means. In the Hebrew lawcourt the judge does not give, bestow, impute, or impart *his own* 'righteousness' to the defendant. That would imply that the *defendant* was deemed to have conducted the case impartially, in accordance with the law, to have punished sin and upheld the defenseless innocent ones. 'Justification,' of course, means nothing like that. 'Righteousness' is not a quality or substance that can be thus passed or transferred from the judge to the defendant. The righteousness of the judge is the judges' own character, status, and activity, demonstrated in doing various things. The 'righteousness' of the defendants is the status they possess when the court has found in their favor. Nothing more, nothing less. When we translate these forensic categories back into their theological context, that of the covenant, the point remains fundamental: the divine covenant faithfulness is not the same as human covenant membership. The fact that the same word . . . is used for both ideas indicates their close reciprocal relationship, not their identity" (N. T. Wright, "Romans and the Theology of Paul," in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 3, *Romans*, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995], 38-39 [last emphasis added]). See also Wright, *Justification*, 201; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 340-46; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, WBC 28 (Dallas: Word, 1988), 41, 176-81.

Contra the New Perspective's approach, D. A. Carson argues that based on Rom 1:18-3:20, the righteousness from God "is God's eschatological justifying or vindicating activity." He further argues that the terms "covenant" and "faithfulness" never occur in close proximity in the Hebrew Bible, that the word group for "righteousness" closely connect the ideas of righteousness and justice, and that "there is a dual concern that God be vindicated and that his people be vindicated" (Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 124-25). For a more extended study on the language of righteousness in the Hebrew canon, see Mark A. Seifrid, "Righteousness Language in the Hebrew Scriptures and Early Judaism," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 1, *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 415-42. Seifrid argues that the use of the term "righteousness," referring to justification, in Hellenistic Greek, the Septuagint, and in Paul's use refers not only to the verdict of righteousness but also God's justice that was enacted at the cross and resurrection (idem, "Paul's Use of Righteousness Language Against its Hellenistic Background," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 39-63). Critiquing Wright's law court model, Seifrid states, "At this point Wright is led astray by his model of the 'Jewish law Court,' which he seems to have created without much attention to the relevant biblical texts. When Paul echoes Psalm 98:1-3 in his announcement of the revelation of God's righteousness in Romans 1:17, he takes up the biblical tradition which expressed Israel's hope for the establishment of God's justice. By its very nature such justice is a gift to the world. Wright's abstract model of the "court" likewise overlooks Christ's cross and resurrection which, according to Paul, constitutes the justifying event – the "law-court" so to speak – announced in this gospel" (Seifrid, "Paul's Use of Righteousness Language," 66-67). See also Schreiner, *Romans*, 66-67; John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 62-71.

revealed apart from the law, which is the Mosaic covenant.¹⁴³ Schreiner remarks, “Paul argues that the saving righteousness of God cannot be obtained by keeping the law. The Mosaic covenant belonged to an era of redemptive history that has now passed away. . . . Its passing away is inextricably bound up with its inability to effect righteousness.”¹⁴⁴ God’s saving righteousness is effective to all those who place their faith in Christ,¹⁴⁵ not for those who seek it by obeying the Mosaic Law. Though all have sinned, they are justified by his grace. God gives his grace freely, which signifies “the way in which God has acted in Christ: unconstrained by anything beyond his own will. God’s justifying verdict is totally unmerited. People have done, and can do, nothing to earn it.”¹⁴⁶ The term “redemption” denotes the idea of a price that is paid for release.¹⁴⁷ Thus, “in the passage at hand, the price in view is Jesus’ death, which frees us from death that is

¹⁴³Schreiner, *Romans*, 180; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 223.

¹⁴⁴Schreiner, *Romans*, 180; Carson notes, “The issue is not whether or not people can do the law (the previous verses have insisted they cannot: all are sinners), but ‘law’ as a system: this side of the coming and death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, God has acted to vindicate his people ‘apart from the law,’ apart from the law as an entire system that played its crucial role in redemptive history” (Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 123).

¹⁴⁵The debate over the nature of the genitive construction (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) is between a subjective genitive (faith of Christ, “Christ’s faithfulness”) and the objective genitive (faith in Christ). The objective genitive translation is preferred for four reasons. First, Romans and Galatians have many passages that stress the faith of believers. Second, there is not a clear reference in which Paul spoke of the faithfulness of Christ. Third, there is much evidence in Paul’s letters regarding the believer’s faith in Christ. Fourth, the objective genitive translation makes the best sense for Rom 3:21-4:12. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 185-86.

¹⁴⁶Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 228.

¹⁴⁷Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 24, 45. Two “lines of evidence” support the concept that ἀπολύτρωσις is a price paid. First, that the justification is offered freely, without cost from humanity, implies that God paid the cost. Schreiner states, “The contrast between δωρεάν and the redemption provided by God suggests that the latter includes the idea of a price being paid.” Second, the context indicates sacrifice, since the term ἱλαστήριον has cultic connotations, regardless of the term’s specific translation (Schreiner, *Romans*, 190).

nothing other than sin's penalty."¹⁴⁸ This justification that God freely gives as a gift of his grace is grounded in the redemption that is provided by the death of Christ. Carson summarizes,

Paul has established that all are condemned, Jew and Gentile alike, apart from the cross of Christ; all stand under his judicial condemnation and face his wrath. But now, he says, a new righteousness has appeared in the history of redemption to deal with this. Paul first relates this righteousness to OT revelation (Rom 3:21). Then he establishes the availability of this righteousness to all human beings without racial distinction but solely on condition of faith. He now turns to the source of this righteousness from God. It is nothing other than the gracious provision of Jesus Christ as the propitiatory sacrifice for our sin.¹⁴⁹

Paul explains the meaning of Christ's death for the believer's justification in Romans 3:25-26. The first part of the verse grammatically refers to verse 24; God put forth (προέθετο)¹⁵⁰ Christ, through whom redemption was provided, as a *ἱλαστήριον*. The verse indicates that God set forth Christ as a propitiation¹⁵¹ by his blood. God the Father initiates the atonement, which satisfies his justice and wrath:

It is quite alien to biblical thought to overlook the agency of God the Father in the provisions of redemption and it is a perversion to represent the Father as won over to the exercise of grace and mercy by the intervention of Christ's propitiatory accomplishment. Paul here represents the Father as taking the initiative in this action and as making provision by which propitiation was wrought.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 128-29.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 127.

¹⁵⁰The term προέθετο may mean either "to purpose" or "to display." Some theologians argue that the verb references God's eternal plan to set Christ forth as a sacrifice. See Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:209; Colin G. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 186. However, the term is better translated to mean "display," especially in light of the translation of the term *ἱλαστήριον*, which is addressed below. Thus the translation "displayed" "fits better with the background and imagery of the concept Paul alludes to here. . . . Redemption is 'in Christ' in that God 'displayed him publicly,' or 'set him forth as a sacrifice' on the cross as a *hilastērion*" (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 231). See also Schreiner, *Romans*, 191-93.

¹⁵¹For the moment, this paper will translate *ἱλαστήριον* as propitiation. A refined definition of the term will be explored below.

¹⁵²Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1:117-18.

The text next used the modifying phrase “in his blood, to be received by faith.” Paul uses the phrase “in his blood” to modify the term *ἱλαστήριον*.¹⁵³ Schreiner notes that “the appeasement of God’s wrath is accomplished through the blood of his Son.”¹⁵⁴ The blood invariably refers to death, so that the death of Christ is the means of *ἱλαστήριον*.¹⁵⁵ The phrase “through faith” describes the manner in which believers gain access to the benefits of Christ’s death.¹⁵⁶

Paul indicates that God put forth Christ as *ἱλαστήριον*. C.H. Dodd proposes that the term *ἱλαστήριον* should be translated as “expiation,”¹⁵⁷ signifying solely the removal of sin for forgiveness. He argues that the term propitiation “suggests the placating of an angry God, and although this would be in accord with pagan usage, it is foreign to biblical usage. In the present passage it is God who puts forward the means whereby the guilt of sin is removed, by sending Christ. The sending of Christ, therefore, is the divine method of forgiveness.”¹⁵⁸ Dodd’s translation of *ἱλαστήριον* is grounded in his presupposition that appeasing an angry God is unbiblical.

One counterargument provides a lexical analysis of *ἱλαστήριον*. *ἱλαστήριον* and

¹⁵³Carson presents the three possibilities. The phrase may modify “displayed,” meaning that “through his blood he publically displayed”; the blood is the manner in which Christ was displayed. A second interpretation understands the blood as the object of faith, such that faith in the blood itself is the referent. A third and most likely option is that the blood describes the means of *ἱλαστήριον*, which describes Christ’s death as the means for propitiation (Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 136).

¹⁵⁴Schreiner, *Romans*, 194.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 194-95.

¹⁵⁶Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 188.

¹⁵⁷Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 54. See also idem, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), 82-95; idem, “ἸΛΑΣΤΗΣΘΑΙ, Its Cognates, Derivatives and Synonyms, in the Septuagint,” *JTS* 32 (1931): 352-60.

¹⁵⁸Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 55.

its historical usage must be analyzed to determine if the term excludes the idea of propitiation. Leon Morris examines the occurrences of the *ἰλάσχομαι* word group in the Septuagint and in non-biblical Greek, and he analyses the concept of the wrath of God in the Old Testament. He concludes,

Thus, our conviction that *ἰλάσχομαι* and its cognates includes as an integral part of their meaning the turning away of wrath rests partly on the examination of the occurrences of these words in the Septuagint, and partly on the fact that, quite apart from the words themselves, there is a formidable body of evidence that the wrath of God was a conception to be reckoned with in the Old Testament view. These two lines of thought reinforce one another and lead us to the conclusion that, on the biblical view, an element of wrath inheres in the divine nature, but that, by God's own appointment, this wrath may be averted.¹⁵⁹

Morris also conducts the study of *ἰλάσχομαι* in the New Testament and concludes likewise.¹⁶⁰ Roger Nicole contends that Dodd uses incomplete evidence and faulty assumptions.¹⁶¹ After his study Nicole concludes the following: (1) the Hebrew concept of propitiation has been used without compromising God's glory; (2) the term *כַּפַּר* has propitiation overtones, which is used within the Levitical sacrificial system and in non-religious usage; (3), the LXX translation of *כַּפַּר*, *ἐξιλάσκεσθαι*, also has propitiation connotations; (4) there is no good reason to suggest that *ἐξιλάσκεσθαι* has lost the original meaning in the New Testament; and (5), the use of the word group *ἰλάσκεσθαι* is consistent with general Greek usage, which does not include negative overtones of heathen religions.¹⁶² Thus, the term includes the idea of propitiation.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 178. For his complete argument, see pages 144-78.

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 207. See pp 179-213 for his complete argument.

¹⁶¹Nicole, "C. H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation," 127-51.

¹⁶²*Ibid.*, 152. On the fifth point, Nicole explains, "It must be carefully noted, however, that the biblical view of propitiation is not characterized by the crude features which attach to most heathen conceptions. Rather it should be viewed as the gracious provision made by God himself whereby the effect of his righteous anger against sin may be averted and the sinner may receive the blessings of his paternal love without infringement on his holiness and moral government."

Though the above arguments demonstrate that the term *ἱλαστήριον* has connotations of propitiation, the precise meaning of *ἱλαστήριον* must be determined in the context of Romans 3:25. The meaning of the term may include both concepts of “expiation” and “propitiation.” The idea that best fits this category is that *ἱλαστήριον* is the “mercy seat,” which may refer to the Day of Atonement sacrifices. On that day, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood of the sacrificial victim on the mercy seat.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, the priest made atonement through this ritual, and “in OT and Jewish tradition, this ‘mercy seat’ came to be applied generally to the place of atonement.”¹⁶⁵ Moo continues,

By referring to Christ as this “mercy seat,” then, Paul would be inviting us to view Christ as the New Covenant equivalent, or antitype, to this Old Covenant “place of atonement,” and derivatively, to the ritual of atonement itself. What in the OT was hidden from public view behind the veil has now been “publicly displayed” as the OT ritual is fulfilled and brought to an end in Christ’s “once-for-all” sacrifice. This interpretation, which has an ancient and respectable heritage, has been gaining strength in recent years. It is attractive because it gives to *hilasterion* a meaning that is derived from its “customary” biblical usage, and creates an analogy between a central OT ritual and Christ’s death that is both theologically sound and hermeneutically striking.¹⁶⁶

Jesus is the place of atonement because he is the typological fulfillment of the mercy seat

¹⁶³For a brief but helpful summary against Dodd’s view, see George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 471-72. If Dodd is correct and the term means expiation, then the problem still remains. Leon Morris explains, “Those who seek to reduce the concept of propitiation to a mere expiation do not, in general, face the questions which expiation raises, such as ‘Why should sin be expiated?’ ‘What would be the consequences to man if there were no expiation?’ ‘Would the hand of God be in those consequences?’ It seems evident on the scriptural view that if sin is not expiated, if men ‘die in their sins,’ then they have the divine displeasure to face, and this is but another way of saying that the wrath of God abides on them. It seems that expiation is necessary in order to avert the wrath of God, so that nothing seems to be gained by abandoning the concept of propitiation” (Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 211).

¹⁶⁴Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 232.

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 232-33.

under the old covenant. In the Old Testament, the wrath of God was satisfied at the mercy seat so that the priests would not be killed for improper worship and the people would be able to co-exist with God. In the same way, “Paul is attempting to communicate that Jesus fulfills the sacrificial cultus, and the fulfillment transcends the cult.”¹⁶⁷

The broader context of the passage demonstrates that the term *ἱλαστήριον* involves the concept of propitiation. In Romans 3:27-31, Paul establishes that believers are justified because the wrath of God has been satisfied. Paul argues in Romans 1:18-3:20 that God pours out his wrath in response to human sin. Romans 3:21-26 must account for the change of the divine disposition to believers between Romans 1:18-320 and Romans 3:27-31. Paul in Romans 3:21-26 answers how the wrath of God is satisfied; it is satisfied through the death of Christ.¹⁶⁸ Thus Romans 3:21-26 “is the culmination of a process of reasoning that began with the pronouncement of God’s wrath against sin. . . . God’s holiness requires that there be atonement if the condemned condition of sinners is to be overcome. The love of God provides that atonement.”¹⁶⁹ The wrath of God must be satisfied if humans are to avoid condemnation, for God’s justice requires a payment for sin. The term *ἱλαστήριον* is the way in which God freely provides salvation by his grace. This provision of salvation, according to the context of the passage, involves propitiation so that people are not rightly condemned for their sins.¹⁷⁰ G. K. Beale summarizes,

¹⁶⁷Schreiner, *Romans*, 194. See pp. 193-94 for a defense against objections to the “mercy seat” interpretation.

¹⁶⁸Jeffery, Ovey, and Sachs, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 81.

¹⁶⁹Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 826.

¹⁷⁰Kruse notes, “When to the linguistic evidence we add the evidence of the context of Rom 1-3, where the wrath of God is an overarching theme . . . the conclusion that *hilastērion* includes reference to the turning away of God’s wrath is inescapable. . . . In light of the overall argument of 1:18-3:26 that includes reference to the wrath of God, the idea of propitiation should be retained alongside that of expiation. Christ’s atoning sacrifice is effective both in removing God’s wrath towards sinners and in

The context of Rom. 3:25, as I labored to demonstrate earlier, primarily focuses not on the need for cleaning or consecration but rather on the fact that sinful humanity deserves God’s condemnatory wrath. Thus, Paul is drawing on that aspect of atonement at the mercy seat dealing with ransom by means of the blood of a penal substitute. . . . Christ is now the place where God’s penal wrath is poured out for sinful humans, who deserve condemnation. What was done in the old temple in the secrecy of the holy of holies is now “displayed publicly.” Part of the core of the temple, the mercy seat of the ark, is identified with Jesus, likely portrayed as the beginning of the eschatological temple, to which the old temple ark pointed. . . . Likewise, the animal sacrifice, the blood of which was sprinkled on the mercy seat, pointed to the greater sacrifice of Christ. God’s presence above the old ark has also broken in as a part of the new temple, so that he is the one who is revealing or “displaying publicly” the new covenant fulfillment to which the mercy seat and its sacrifice pointed. This fits with the overall purpose of the Levitical sacrifices to keep Israel as a set-apart people for God (Exod. 19:5-6) and to allow God to continue to dwell in his tabernacle among them (Exod. 29:38-46).¹⁷¹

The next phrase in Romans 3:26a demonstrates the purpose for which God set forth Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, “it was to show his righteousness at the present time.” Unlike verse 21, God’s righteousness in verse 26a refers to his judicial righteousness. God is just because he shows that he upholds his righteous standards.¹⁷² Though God demonstrates his righteousness, the exact meaning of righteousness is made clear in the next phrase. The next phrase indicates that there was a time of God’s forbearance (*ἀνοχη*) in passing over (*παρεσις*) previous sins. The previous sins “are not those committed by an individual before his or her conversion, but those committed by the human race before the cross.”¹⁷³ This passing over of sin means the final judgment

removing the stain of their sins” (Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 191).

¹⁷¹G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 489-90.

¹⁷²Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 241-42; Schreiner, *Romans*, 197. Carson adds, “This means, of course, that God’s ‘righteousness’ in Romans 3:25-26 does not mean exactly what it means in Romans 3:21. There, it refers to God’s ‘justifying’ of his sinful people; here, it refers to something intrinsic to God’s character, whether his consistency or his determination to act in accordance with his glory or his punitive justice: these and other suggestions have been made. And this is in line with the broader observation that for Paul, justification is bound up not only with vindication of sinners, but even more profoundly with the vindication of God” (Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 138).

¹⁷³Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 137.

against sin had not occurred during the Old Testament era.¹⁷⁴ God, in his forbearance, that is his patience, waited until this time in salvation history to fully judge sin:

Hence, we can return to Romans 3:25, which states that it was in God's *forbearance* that he passed over sins. In other words, this is about a period when as a kind of interim measure, God holds back. This does not mean there was no punishment of sins in the Old Testament period. It means that God did not exact the full and immediate punishment for sin at that time. Thus, it is after the Old Testament period that God acts decisively to punish sin fully in the death of Christ. There is probably an echo here of the Old Testament idea that God is slow in his anger (cf. Exod 34:6),¹⁷⁵ *but now* (Rom 3:21) in the cross, God has at last executed judgment against sin.¹⁷⁵

God's righteousness appears to be compromised because he passed over previous sins. Cranfield observes, "But for God simply to pass over sins would be altogether incompatible with His righteousness. He would not be the good and merciful God, had He been content to pass over sins indefinitely; for this would have been to condone evil – a denial of His own nature and a cruel betrayal of sinners."¹⁷⁶ The context infers that God's righteousness refers to his character to uphold justice.¹⁷⁷ His judicial righteousness has been vindicated because God did not leave previous sins unpunished:

And this, in turn, means that God's 'righteousness' or 'justice' must refer to some aspect of his character that, apart from the sacrifice of Christ, might have been viewed with suspicion had sinners in the past been permitted to slip by without facing the full severity of condemnation for sin. God's 'righteousness' has been upheld by his provision of Christ as the propitiation in his blood.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 240.

¹⁷⁵Rohintan K. Mody, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement in Paul: An Exegetical Study of Romans 3:25-26," in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement*, ed. Derek Tidball, David Hilborn and Justin Thacker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 122.

¹⁷⁶See Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:211-12.

¹⁷⁷Schreiner, *Romans*, 195-99; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 192. Moo prefers to label this righteousness as the constancy of his character (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 240). Contra Wright and Dunn, who define God's righteousness in this context and his covenant faithfulness (Wright, *Justification*, 204; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 173-75).

¹⁷⁸Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 138.

God's judicial righteousness has been vindicated in this era of salvation history because Christ was set forth as the mercy seat, the place of propitiation and the expiation of sins. Therefore, the previous sins that were passed over in patience have been atoned for at the cross.¹⁷⁹

While Paul establishes in verse 25 that God's judicial righteousness has not been compromised, he revisits the demonstration of God's righteousness in verse 26. The grammatical connection is best explained by stating that the phrase in verse 26b is a second explanation of the display of righteousness, which occurred when God set forth Christ as a sacrifice.¹⁸⁰ By showing forth his righteousness at this point in salvation history, God demonstrated that he is the "just" and the "justifier" of all who believe in Christ (Rom 3:26).¹⁸¹ He is just because he demonstrates that his righteous character is displayed through his judgment against sin at the cross. He is the justifier because, by the death of Christ; God justifies believers. The relationship that *καί* represents is a concessive, indicating that God is just while yet justifying sinners.¹⁸² Ladd aptly

¹⁷⁹An alternate interpretation has been accepted by many scholars of the second half of this verse. This view argues that *ἔνδειξις* means "demonstration" rather than "proof" and *πάρεσις* means to "forgive" rather than "passing over." Carson's paraphrase illustrates the translation in light of this argument: "In order to demonstrate God's saving, covenant faithfulness through his forgiving of sins committed before, in the time of his forbearance" (Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 136). For two advocates of this view, see Werner Georg Kümmel, "Πάρεσις and ἔνδειξις: A Contribution to the Understanding of the Pauline Doctrine of Justification," *Journal for Theology and the Church* 3 (1967): 1-13; John Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 115-17. For detailed arguments against this view, see Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 240; Schreiner, *Romans*, 195-98; Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 136-38; Mody, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement in Paul," 118-24.

¹⁸⁰Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 241; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 192.

¹⁸¹Moo argues, "The two purpose clauses in vv. 25 and 26 – both beginning "for a demonstration" – are parallel modifiers of "set forth," the former focusing on how the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ enabled God to maintain his righteous character in postponing the punishment of sins in the past, the latter showing how this same sacrifice preserved God's righteous character as he justifies those who, in this age of salvation, place their faith in Jesus" (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 241-42).

¹⁸²*Ibid.*, 242; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:213.

summarizes,

Therefore the *kai* must be understood not as a copulative but as an adversative and is to be translated “it was to prove at the present time that he himself is just and yet the justifier of him who has faith in Jesus.” If there had been no death of Christ, God would have been unable to justify the sinner. Apart from the death of Christ, the only manifestation of righteousness is the sinner’s condemnation in death. By virtue of Christ’s death, the divine justice and mercy have both found their perfect realization. In justice God has dealt with sin as sin must be treated, and at the same time in mercy he has acquitted the sinner of all guilt and delivered her or him from its doom. We may therefore conclude, even though the Scriptures nowhere use this terminology, that Christ in his death in a real sense of the word experienced the wrath of God in the place of the guilty sinner.¹⁸³

God the Father has shown mercy to sinners through the death of Christ, and has therefore provided a way for them to be in a right relationship with him. Schreiner provides a summation of Paul’s argument and its connection to Romans 1:18-3:20 which will be quoted at length:

I have argued in 1:18-3:20 that the fundamental reason God reveals his wrath is because people fail to honor and esteem his name. What Paul argues in these verses, then, is that God vindicates his righteousness in the cross. He satisfied his wrath in sending his Son as a substitute for sin in order to demonstrate that passing over of former sins was not because he winked at sin. He could tolerate the sin of human beings only because he looked forward to the death of his Son as an atonement for sin. In the present era of salvation history . . . God’s righteousness has been vindicated in the death of Jesus. These comments by Paul make clear that the question he asked was not, How can God justly punish human beings? His question was rather, How can God justly forgive anyone?

Verses 25-26 also solve the problem that has been building since 1:17. How do the saving and judging righteousness of God relate to each other? How can God mercifully save people without compromising his justice? Paul’s answer is that in the death of Jesus the saving and judging righteousness of God meet. God’s justice . . . is satisfied in that the death of his Son pays fully for human sin. He can also extend mercy . . . by virtue of Jesus’ death to those who put their faith in Jesus. To be more specific, the *καί* joining the last two clauses is probably concessive. . . . God is just even in justifying the one who has faith in Jesus. . . . Romans 1:18-32 indicates that the Gentiles experienced God’s wrath because they scorned his name, and that the Jews dishonored his name among the nations (2:24). By demonstrating his saving and judging righteousness, God has vindicated his name before the world.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 473.

¹⁸⁴Schreiner, *Romans*, 198-99.

Paul's argument in Romans 3:25-26 clearly presents penal substitutionary atonement. Paul presents the problem that all of humanity is under the wrath of God because of sin. They also are incapable of following the law, and they cannot be justified by observing the law. God shows his saving and judging righteousness through the death of Christ. He shows his saving righteousness by mercifully sending Christ as a substitute who bears his wrath against sin. Christ is the mercy seat, and by his death the wrath of God is appeased and sins are removed. God shows his judicial righteousness because he does not allow sins to continue without punishment. He also justifies believers because of Christ's death.

Romans 8:3

Since God has justified and reconciled believers through the death of Christ, Paul declares that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1). Those who are in union with Christ¹⁸⁵ no longer have to fear God's righteous judgment. Paul grounds his argument in the believer's justification, and he argues for the effect of Christ's work in sanctification. Paul's reference to the absence of condemnation "is not only freedom from the guilt but also freedom from the enslaving power of sin."¹⁸⁶ Paul also states that "the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2). This phrase indicates that the Spirit's power in the life

¹⁸⁵Murray says, "'In Christ Jesus' – this harks back to 6:3-11 where the theme of union with Christ in the virtue of his death and the power of his resurrection is developed as the pivot on which turns the argument of the apostle respecting death to sin and newness of life in Christ. To be reminded of union with Christ in this connection is no less pertinent than to be assured of freedom from condemnation, because the potency of sin and of the flesh, evident in the conflict of 7:12-25, makes it all the more necessary to appreciate the victory which belongs to the believer in the bonds of Christ Jesus. It is a succinct way of alluding to all the grace implied in the argument of the earlier passage" (Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1:275).

¹⁸⁶Ibid.

of the believer delivers from the power of sin that leads to death.¹⁸⁷ Paul explains the basis of the believer's justification in Romans 8:3.

God has done what the law could not do. Paul establishes in Romans chapters 3-7 that the law could not make someone righteous because, through the weakness of the flesh, the law gives sin an occasion to reign. Paul refers to flesh as the “this-worldly” orientation that all people share. It is this power that the law cannot break; indeed, as Paul has made clear, the law serves to strengthen the power of sin (cf. 5:20; 7:7).¹⁸⁸ The law was weak because it had no power to change the “unregenerate nature of human beings.”¹⁸⁹ Therefore, Kruse notes that “it was necessary for the problem of the flesh, that is, sinful human nature, to be dealt with before the requirements of the law could be fulfilled.”¹⁹⁰

God did what the law could not do by condemning sin in the flesh. The context of the passage suggests that *κατέκρινεν* conveys the idea of “breaking the power of sin.” The term is used in a forensic sense because the verse explains the means of “judicial condemnation of sin.”¹⁹¹ The phrase that sin is condemned “in the flesh” is explained by the participial phrase: “by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin.” The “sending” of the Son refers not only to his preexistence,¹⁹² but it also refers to the

¹⁸⁷Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1:276.

¹⁸⁸Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 478.

¹⁸⁹Schreiner, *Romans*, 401.

¹⁹⁰Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 325.

¹⁹¹Schreiner, *Romans*, 402. See Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 481; Friedrich Büchsel, “κατακρίνω, κατάκριμα, κατάκρισις,” in *TNDT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 951.

¹⁹²Schreiner, *Romans*, 402; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 479; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 325.

Son's redemptive sacrificial death.¹⁹³ The term "sinful flesh" conveys that Christ was in actual flesh, the same type of flesh that all humans possess. Yet, the phrase "likeness of sinful flesh" does not imply that the Son was not human. The term translated as "likeness" (*ὁμοίωμα*) "denotes the full identity of the Son with sinful humanity."¹⁹⁴ Paul uses the concept of "likeness" to communicate that Christ was distinct from sinful flesh and was not subject to the effects of sin, and he possessed real human flesh.¹⁹⁵ Thus Paul's statement that Christ was "in the likeness of sinful flesh" signifies that Christ was made fully human for the purpose of bearing sin and he remained sinless.

Paul states, "Concerning sin, [God] condemned sin in the flesh." The phrase

¹⁹³Moo observes, "In most references to the 'sending' of the Son the focus is on the incarnation. But the sacrificial allusions later in this verse show that, without eliminating allusion to the incarnation, Paul's application of the language is broader, with a particular focus on the redemptive death of the Son. . . . Paul's description of the way in which God sent the Son contributes to this sacrificial focus" (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 479). Schreiner notes, "'Son' is a reference to Israel. Jesus as the 'Son' is the true Israel and he takes upon himself the punishment that Israel deserved. Thus one can enjoy the blessings of Israel only if one belongs to the true Son of God, the true Israel, Jesus the Messiah" (Schreiner, *Romans*, 402).

¹⁹⁴Schreiner, *Romans*, 402. For a detailed description of the views regarding this word, see Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:379-82. Cranfield contends that "the Son of God assumed the selfsame fallen human nature that is ours, but that in His case that fallen human nature was never the whole of Him – He never ceased to be the eternal Son of God" (ibid., 382).

¹⁹⁵Moo asks, "But why does Paul say that Christ came in 'the *homoioōma* of sinful flesh'?" Certainly, in light of 'in the flesh' later in this very verse, Paul cannot mean that Christ had only the 'appearance' of flesh. Moreover, the word *homoioōma* here probably has the nuance of 'form' rather than 'likeness' or 'copy.' In other words, the word does not suggest superficial or outward similarity, but inward and real participation or 'expression.' It may be, then, that Paul wants simply to say that Christ really took on 'sinful flesh.' But this may be going too far in the other direction. Paul uses *homoioōma* here for a reason; and it is probably, as in 6:5 and 5:14, to introduce a note of distinction. The use of the term implies some kind of reservation about identifying Christ with 'sinful flesh.' Paul is walking a fine line here. On the one hand, he wants to insist that Christ fully entered into the human condition, became 'in-fleshed' (*in-carnis*), and, as such, exposed himself to the power of sin (6:8-10). On the other hand, he must avoid suggesting that Christ so participated in this realm that he became imprisoned 'in the flesh' (cf. the negative use of this phrase in 7:5 and 8:8, 9) and became, thus, so subject to sin that he could be personally guilty of it. *Homoioōma* rights the balances that the addition of 'sinful' to 'flesh' might have tipped a bit too far in one direction" (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 479-80). See also Johannes Schneider, "ὁμοίωμα," in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 195-96.

“concerning sin” (περὶ ἁμαρτίας) denotes sacrifice, and it is best translated as “sin offering.”¹⁹⁶ Thus, it is grammatically connected to the participle “sending” (πέμψας); the Son is sent as a sin offering.¹⁹⁷ The translation should read: “God judicially condemned sin ‘in the flesh’ by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin offering.”¹⁹⁸ The phrase, “in the flesh” refers to the flesh of Jesus; the condemnation occurred in the flesh of Christ at the cross.¹⁹⁹ Moo argues,

The interpretation that best meets the criteria above sees the condemnation of sin to consist in God’s executing his judgment on sin in the atoning death of his Son. As our substitute, Christ “was made sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21) and suffered the wrath of God, the judgment of God upon that sin. . . . In his doing so, of course, we may say that sin’s power was broken, in the sense that Paul pictures sin as the power that holds people in its clutches and brings condemnation to them. In executing the full sentence of condemnation against sin, God effectively removed sin’s ability to “dictate terms” for those who are “in Christ” (v. 2). The condemnation that our sins deserve has been poured out on Christ, our sin-bearer; that is why “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (v. 1).²⁰⁰

Therefore, Christians are no longer in condemnation because Jesus, who is fully human and yet without sin, bore sin as a sin offering. God condemned sin in the flesh of Christ as the believer’s substitute. God’s condemnation of sin at the cross shows that Jesus’ death is a penal substitutionary atonement.

2 Corinthians 5:21

One defense of Paul’s apostleship is that he is a minister of reconciliation, and

¹⁹⁶Schreiner, *Romans*, 403; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 480; Ernst Harald Riesenfeld, “περί,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 55. Schreiner observes that the construction (περὶ ἁμαρτίας) refers to “sin offering” 44 out of 54 times in the LXX.

¹⁹⁷Schreiner, *Romans*, 403.

¹⁹⁸*Ibid.*,

¹⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 404; Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 327.

²⁰⁰Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 481.

the message of reconciliation is grounded in Jesus' penal substitutionary sacrifice. God's people are reconciled because they are new creations in Christ and their trespasses are not counted against them. Garland says, "This verse explains how God did not count the trespasses against us (5:19) and made possible our reconciliation."²⁰¹ Harris summarizes,

For Paul the essence of the apostolic ministry was the proclamation of God's act of reconciling sinful humanity to himself through the death of the sinless Christ (vv. 18-21), a gracious act which inaugurated "the era of salvation" (6:2). When the benefits of that reconciliation are personally appropriated, the believer enters a new order of reality "in Christ" (v. 17) where there are altered attitudes toward Christ and other people (v. 16), the forgiveness of sins (v. 19), and a permanently right relationship with God (v. 21).²⁰²

The cross of Jesus Christ provides reconciliation and forgiveness of sins. Paul's sentence explains the penal substitutionary character of the atonement that brings people into right relationship with God: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21).

Paul contends that God caused Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin. The Greek verb "knew" (*γινώσκειν*) is based in the Hebrew verb *יָדַע*, which means "to have personal acquaintance or experience with."²⁰³ Paul is not stating that Christ did not have an awareness of sin generally, but that Jesus never participated in sin.²⁰⁴ Paul's statement may refer to Jesus Christ's pre-existence and/or his sinless conduct during his earthly ministry.²⁰⁵ Harris states that "neither outwardly in act nor inwardly in attitude did Christ

²⁰¹David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, NAC 29 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 300.

²⁰²Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 424.

²⁰³*Ibid.*, 450; Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 314.

²⁰⁴Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 450.

²⁰⁵*Ibid.*

sin, and at no time was his conscience stained by sin.”²⁰⁶ The second feature of this verse is that *God* made Christ to be sin for us. The divine initiative of the Father is highlighted in that “God caused Christ to be identified in some way with what was foreign to his experience, namely human sin.”²⁰⁷ The one person who had not experienced sin was made sin.

One ambiguity about this verse is the clear definition of “made sin.”²⁰⁸ A long-standing view is that Christ was made a sin offering. A second perspective is that the phrase denotes that Christ was made a sinner in some sense. A third view means that Christ became a sin bearer. A fourth option is that the verse means that God treated Christ as sin.²⁰⁹ The best approach is probably the last view; God treated Christ as sin. Harris summarizes,

We conclude that in v. 21a Paul is not saying that at the crucifixion the sinless Christ became in some sense a sinner, yet he is affirming more than that Christ became a sin offering or even a sin bearer. In a sense beyond human comprehension, God treated Christ as ‘sin,’ aligning him so totally with sin and its dire consequences that from God’s viewpoint he became indistinguishable from sin itself.²¹⁰

Another feature is that Christ became sin *for us*. This preposition (ὕπερ) indicates the

²⁰⁶Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 450.

²⁰⁷Ibid., 451.

²⁰⁸For a helpful summary of the approaches, see Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 453-54.

²⁰⁹For a summary of this view, see *ibid.*, 452-54. Contra Garland, who argues for the view that Christ was made as a sinner (Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 301).

²¹⁰Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 454. Barnett explains the weaknesses of the alternative interpretations. First, the phrase cannot mean that Christ was a sinner because this meaning would contradict the earlier statement that Christ did not know sin. Second, the phrase cannot mean sin offering because the term “sin” in the first part of the verse does not mean “sin offering.” Thus, it is highly unlikely that a term would be translated differently in the same sentence. See Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 314n 65.

force of “on behalf of.”²¹¹ Christ was made sin on our behalf even though he did not experience sin. Christ became what we were; he was our substitute.

The *ἵνα* clause provides the purpose for which Christ was made sin for us. God’s goal was that we would become righteous. The verb *γίνομαι* has one of three meanings: participation, action, or change.²¹² The term should not be rendered “participation” because there is much difficulty in rendering *γίνομαι* as “share.”²¹³ The idea of action does not suffice because the term for righteousness does not carry the idea of ethical righteousness, but of forensic righteousness.²¹⁴ Barnett expounds,

Because of their close proximity a close parallel exists between the statements “become the righteousness of God” and “not reckoning their trespasses to them (v. 19). As indicated earlier, “righteousness: is the opposite of “condemnation, the divine rejection. . . . The words “become the righteousness of God in him” point to

²¹¹See Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 301-02. Garland rightfully indicates that this phrase supports substitution and he appeals to B. Hudson McLean to make his case. While McLean does recognize that the verse supports substitution, he argues for the view that Christ became sin at the incarnation (B. Hudson McLean, *The Cursed Christ; Mediterranean Expulsion Rituals and Pauline Soteriology*, JSNT Supplement Series 126 [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 110-13).

²¹²By participation, the idea is that we might share in his righteousness. By action, the idea is that we might do the things that God considers right. The idea of change denotes that we become the righteousness of God (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 454-55).

²¹³*Ibid.*, 454.

²¹⁴Ladd opines, “This verse clearly asserts that in some sense Jesus took upon himself the sin of the world; and at the same time it asserts that he knew no sin. His ‘sinfulness’ must then be a forensic sinfulness by virtue of which he stood in the place of sinners, bearing their sin, their guilt, and the doom of their sin. In the same way those who are in him have become the righteousness of God. Righteousness in this context is not an ethical subjective sinfulness; it means that the individual in Christ now stands in the position of a righteous person and sustains a relationship to God that only the righteous can enjoy. That person is in fact in terms of his or her relationship to God a righteous person” (Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 487-88). See also Richard Gaffin, “Atonement in the Pauline Corpus: The Scandal of the Cross,” in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 159. In opposition to this definition of righteousness and to imputation, N. T. Wright argues that the “we” are the covenant ministers who exhibit God’s faithfulness to his covenant. See N. T. Wright, “On Becoming the Righteousness of God,” in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 2, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, SBLSymS No 22, ed. David M. Hay (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 205-06; Wright, *Justification*, 158-67. For a helpful response and a defense of the traditional interpretation, see J. V. Fesko, “N. T. Wright on Imputation,” *RTR* 66 (2007): 1-11.

forgiveness, the reversal of condemnation. Here, then, is the objective, forensic “justification” of God to those who are covenantally dedicated to God “in Christ” whom God “made sin.”²¹⁵

The context suggests that the proper meaning of *γίνομαι* is the idea of change and it fits better with *δικαιοσύνη*:

So *γίνομαι* may be given its most common meaning (“become,” “be”) and points to the change of status that accrues to believers who are “in Christ” and that is the ground of the “new creation” (v. 17). “To become the righteousness of God” is to gain a right standing before God that God himself bestows. . . . It is to be “constituted righteous” in the divine court, so that *γενέσθαι δικαιοσύνη = κατασταθῆναι δίκαιοι* (Rom 5:19). Although the term *λογίζομαι* is not used in v. 21 (but cf. v. 19), it is not inappropriate to perceive in this verse a double imputation: sin was reckoned to Christ’s account (v. 21a), so that righteousness is reckoned to our account (v. 21b). Certainly the literary symmetry of the juxtaposed opposites, *ἁμαρτία* and *δικαιοσύνη*, supports such an inference. As a result of God’s imputing to Christ something that was extrinsic to him, namely sin, believers have something imputed to them that was extrinsic to them, namely righteousness.²¹⁶

The best meaning of the text is that believers change from a status of sin to a status of righteousness before God. Those who are in union with Christ by faith become the righteousness of God.²¹⁷ Just as sin is not Christ’s, so the righteousness does not belong to believers. Jesus takes their sin for them, so that they take of the righteousness of God.²¹⁸

²¹⁵Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 315.

²¹⁶Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 455. In n. 207, Harris nuances his argument by stating that v. 21 does not argue for the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, but that it solely argues for the imputation of the righteousness of God, meaning a right standing before God by virtue of our union with Christ.

²¹⁷Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 314. Michael Bird prefers to use the term “incorporated righteousness” to show that the imputation is grounded in union with Christ. See Michael F. Bird, “Incorporated Righteousness: A Response to Recent Evangelical Discussion Concerning the Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness in Justification,” *JETS* 47 (2004): 253-75.

²¹⁸Schreiner notes, “The meaning of God’s righteousness is explicated by 2 Cor. 5:19, which refers to forgiveness of sins. The verse also explains how God could grant the gift of righteousness to those who are sinners. The extraordinary gift of righteousness is secured though Christ’s death on the cross. God ‘made him to be sin’ so that those who are wicked could become righteous. An interchange between Christ and sinners is posited here” (Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 358).

This verse raises the question: when did Christ become sin? The verb ἐποίησεν (made) “points to an action that was specific and limited in time.”²¹⁹ One possibility for the meaning of the phrase is that Christ became sin at the incarnation. However, this view has little support because Paul commonly regards Christ as sinless during his earthly ministry.²²⁰ The view that Christ became sin at the crucifixion is preferred because “Christ’s participation in human nature did not constitute a sin or make him a sinner, nor is it to be equated with his ‘becoming sin.’”²²¹ In addition, the immediate context of the passage argues that reconciliation results from the death of Christ; Christ’s death is referred to three times in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.²²² The death of Christ is clearly in view as the means toward reconciliation, so that the crucifixion is the point at which Jesus “became sin.”

Christians cannot have a relationship with God without being counted with his righteousness and they would not become new creations in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). Because of Jesus’ death believers become the righteousness of God and he reconciles the world to himself. While arguing for Christ’s reconciling and re-creative work, Paul demonstrates in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that penal substitutionary atonement causes the believer’s righteous status.²²³ Paul emphasizes Christ’s sinlessness by stating that he knew no sin and yet

²¹⁹Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 451.

²²⁰The one possibility is that one might appeal to Rom 8:3. However, Paul only says that Christ appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, not that he was sinful flesh. See Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 451-52.

²²¹Ibid., 452.

²²²Ibid.

²²³Barnett explains, “This verse explains how the ‘one’ / ‘he’ effectively ‘died for all,’ how he revealed his ‘love’ for them (vv. 14-15), how eschatologically and personally a ‘new creation’ occurs ‘in Christ’ (v. 17), and how God reconciled the apostle/his people/the world to himself (vv. 18-19). Above all, the vicarious death of Christ in v. 21 provides the emotional and spiritual basis for the heart-rending appeal of the previous verse. That God made the Sinless One sin for us leaves sinful ones like the Corinthians, and

became sin. Barrett states, “It is to be inferred that the efficacy of his death arises from the sinlessness of his life.”²²⁴ Christ became sin, meaning that “the sinless Christ was made to suffer for sin, that he was subject to the full brunt of the divine curse that hung over sin, the weight of which fell crushingly upon his innocent person.”²²⁵ Believers’ sin was imputed to Christ on the cross because he was their substitute. He did this so that God’s righteousness might be imputed to his people.

Galatians 3:10-14

Paul’s opponents in Galatia are referred to as “Judaizers,” who are “ritually strict Jews from Palestine.”²²⁶ Their teaching is that full church membership requires obedience to the Mosaic Law and circumcision, in addition to faith in Christ. Timothy George observes that “at the heart of their message was the plea for Galatian Christians to be circumcised as a means of becoming true children of Abraham. They based their arguments on the Hebrew Scriptures and also claimed to have a close relationship with the church at Jerusalem.”²²⁷ Thus, they argued that the gospel was incomplete without circumcision. F. F. Bruce concludes,

The “full” gospel included circumcision as an indispensable requirement: the gospel which they had received from Paul was a truncated gospel. To which Paul replied that such a “full” gospel, denying as it did the all-sufficiency of Christ, was no gospel at all, and in so far as it involved a reversion to legal bondage it undercut the

all readers since, with no real alternative but to heed the apostolic call, ‘Be reconciled to God’ (Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 315).

²²⁴Ibid., 314.

²²⁵Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 134.

²²⁶Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 49. For an extended discussion of the identity of the opponents, see pp 39-52.

²²⁷Timothy George, *Galatians*, NAC 30 (Nashville: B & H, 1994), 60.

message of justification by faith, disallowed the claim that Jesus by his death and resurrection had inaugurated the messianic age which superseded the age of the law and thus in effect disallowed his title to be the Messiah. Far from being a gospel in any sense, such teaching was plain apostasy from Christ.²²⁸

Paul opposes this doctrine and emphatically insists that one is justified by faith in Christ alone (Gal 2:16).

Paul's statements in 3:10-14 are preceded by his argument that believers receive the Spirit by faith and not by works (Gal 3:1-9). Those who receive the Holy Spirit are in God's family.²²⁹ Paul appeals to the Old Testament to show that the Galatians are members of Abraham's family (Gal 3:6-14).²³⁰ The true sons of Abraham are those who are justified by faith. Schreiner notes that "just as Abraham was declared to be in the right before God by faith, so too Gentiles who put their faith in what God has done for them by the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ are in a right relationship with God."²³¹ In 3:10-13 Paul shows that the blessing of Abraham only comes through Christ, and in Galatians 3:14 Jesus' death results in the blessing of Abraham and the promise of the Spirit.²³²

Paul explains that the law cannot justify anyone, so all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse. The works of the law, rightly understood, means obedience to all of the requirements of the Mosaic Law.²³³ Paul explains that a curse rests "on those

²²⁸F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGCT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 31-32.

²²⁹Schreiner, *Galatians*, 199.

²³⁰Ibid.

²³¹Ibid.

²³²Ibid., 200.

²³³Schreiner, *Galatians*, 161. Schreiner describes three approaches to this phrase (ibid., 159), the third of which is the traditional view articulated above. The first approach is that the works of the law refer to legalism. The second approach is from advocates of the New Perspective on Paul. Dunn summarizes, "And in terms of the preceding analysis, 'works of the law' are Paul's way of describing in

who rely on the law, or their performance of the law, for their acceptance with God”²³⁴ (Gal 3:10). He quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 to show that any person is cursed if they fail to perfectly obey the Mosaic Law. In Deuteronomy, this quote follows the eleven curses pronounced by the Levites on Mount Ebal.²³⁵ This twelfth curse is more comprehensive and Paul generalizes the curse by expanding its meaning; he argues that everyone must follow the written Torah rather than only the specific laws regulating acts of religious or social behavior.²³⁶ Thus, his expansion of the referent to the whole Torah shows that “the emphasis in both the Deuteronomic context and in Paul is that the curse applies if one fails to keep God’s law. Those who do not do everything . . . enjoined in the law are cursed.”²³⁷ Paul uses an unstated premise in this verse, which is that no one follows the

particular the identity and boundary markers which Paul’s Jewish (-Christian) opponents, thought, and rightly thought, were put under threat by Paul’s understanding of the gospel” (James G. D. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990], 220). See also Dunn, *The Theology of the Apostle Paul*, 361-62. Dunn continues to endorse this definition of “works of the law” in his updated publication. See James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebek, 2005), 26-41. For a detailed critique of this approach, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 51-58. Schreiner summarizes, “After this excursus on the phrase *works of the law*, we return to Galatians 3:10 to draw a conclusion regarding Dunn’s interpretation of this verse. He says that Israel is cursed in Galatians 3:10 for a wrong attitude towards Gentiles, and a nationalistic spirit. But nothing in this verse speaks to an exclusive attitude or nationalism. Nor is it evident that Paul focuses only on the Jewish part of the law. Indeed, the specific wording indicates the whole law since he says all who are cursed ‘who do not abide by *all things written in the book of the law*.’ And the connection between Galatians 3:10a and 3:10b, as we have seen, shows that the curse is pronounced for *failure to do the law*. I do not deny that Paul was concerned about the inclusion of the Gentiles into the Abrahamic promise. It does not follow from this concern, however, that Jews stand condemned in Galatians 3 *because* they excluded Gentiles” (ibid., 57-58, emphasis in the original). See also Jeffrey, Ovey, and Sachs, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 92-93.

²³⁴Bruce points out that the phrase ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν occurs three times in Galatians 2:16 and refers to those who rely on the law for their acceptance before God. (Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 157).

²³⁵Ibid., 158.

²³⁶Ibid.; Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 141.

²³⁷Schreiner, *Galatians*, 204.

law. The logic of the verse is that (1) “Those who don’t do everything required by the law are cursed (v.10b)”; (2) “no one does everything required by the law (implied proposition)”; and (3) “therefore, those who are of the works of the law are cursed (v. 10a).”²³⁸ One cannot rely on obedience to the law as a way of salvation because perfect obedience to the law is impossible.²³⁹

Paul compares two groups in verses 11 and 12: those who live by faith and those who follow the law to be righteous.²⁴⁰ Paul reiterates this thought by stating that no

²³⁸ Schreiner, *Galatians*, 204; George, *Galatians*, 230. Contra Bruce, who advocates the view that the curse falls on those who seek to rely on the law for their justification, even if they can keep the law perfectly. See Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 159. For a defense of the implied proposition that perfect obedience to the law is not possible, see Thomas Schreiner, “Is Perfect Obedience to the Law Possible? A Re-examination of Galatians 3:10,” *JETS* 27 (1984): 151-60.

²³⁹ Schreiner, *Galatians*, 205; Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 142. N. T. Wright proposes that the curse in Gal 3:10-14 deals with exile. He argues that the curse applies to the nation and involves the continuation of the exilic curse because nation as a whole failed to meet the requirements of the Torah, and the Israelites were under exile under Roman rule. See N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 141. See pp. 137-56 for his extended argument. Tom Schreiner responds, “A rigid distinction between corporate groups and individuals is quite popular in New Testament studies today, but the distinction is a flawed one. What Paul says about the group in question also applies to individuals. Individuals and a group are not mutually exclusive. In Galatians 3 Paul has in mind the Gentiles or Galatians as a corporate group. But does this mean, as Wright maintains, that the sin and curse in view in Galatians 3:10 are only corporate? Was the reception of the Spirit in Galatians 3:2 and 3:5 corporate or individual? Certainly the Galatians corporately possessed the Spirit, but it is also true that they individually expressed faith and then received the Spirit. Would anyone say that the exercise of faith in Galatians is only corporate? Neither does it seem sensible to me to claim that the sin of Galatians 3:10 refers only to corporate sin. Indeed, Paul uses third singular forms in Galatians 3:12. Of course, he also uses plural designations in Galatians 3:7, 8, 9, 10, 13, and 14. This would seem to support the interpretation that the corporate and individual are not mutually exclusive.” Furthermore, “if my argument in the above paragraph is on target, then the curse does fall on individuals who do not keep the law perfectly. ‘Cursed is *every one* . . . who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law’ (Gal. 3:10). This curse would apply to corporate entities as well, but the corporate groups would be comprised of individuals who failed to keep the law. The upshot of this discussion is that the Reformational way of reading this verse is not an imposition of Western categories onto Paul. Those who restrict the meaning of the text only to corporate realities fail to interpret the verse as accurately as Luther and Calvin” (Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment*, 49-50). See also Schreiner, *Galatians*, 206-07; George, *Galatians*, 233; Jeffrey, Ovey, and Sachs, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 94-95.

²⁴⁰ George comments, “The two quotations are linked by a common verb, ‘will live,’ but the two subjects form another of Paul’s antithesis: the one who is righteous by faith verses the one who does the things of the law” (George, *Galatians*, 233).

one is justified by the law (Gal 3:11). The verb “justify” should be understood as a gnomic present, meaning that this phrase is a universal principle “that no one is ever justified before God by means of the law.”²⁴¹ He then quotes Habbakkuk 2:4, showing that the righteous shall live by faith. “In the overall context of Paul’s argument, Hab 2:4 is a critical text because it links together three key terms already introduced in 2:20-21: righteousness – faith – life.”²⁴² This life refers to eschatological life, and the quote indicates that true life is only obtained by faith.²⁴³ Thus, Paul argues that “because Scripture says that it is he who is righteous (that is, justified) by faith that will live, it follows that no one is justified by works of the law (irrespective of one’s success or failure in keeping it).”²⁴⁴ The next phrase is somewhat difficult: “but the law is not of faith” (Gal 3:12). The key to this phrase is Paul’s theology of the old and new covenants:

We must begin by observing the context, where Paul discusses justification – what is required to be right with God. We must recall that he addresses those who believed that circumcision was mandatory for salvation, that one must keep the law to be justified. Paul rejects any notion that the law is the source of life. One does not become right with God by doing but by believing. Paul has already taught in 3:10 that righteousness by works of law is impossible since the law requires perfect obedience. We must also keep in mind that he writes from the perspective of the fulfillment of God’s promises in Christ. The covenant with Moses, then, is no longer in force. What makes one right with God with the arrival of the new covenant is faith in Christ – not keeping the commands found in the Sinai covenant.²⁴⁵

Paul’s statement, “The law is not of faith,” communicates a difference between the old covenant and the new covenant; in the new era of salvation history one becomes right

²⁴¹Schreiner, *Galatians*, 207.

²⁴²George, *Galatians*, 234. George continues, “Although the declarative aspect of justification is paramount in Gal 3, it can never be divorced from that new life in the Spirit with which Paul began his appeal to the Galatians in the opening verses of this chapter (cf. also 5:5).”

²⁴³Schreiner, *Galatians*, 207.

²⁴⁴Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 145.

²⁴⁵Schreiner, *Galatians*, 211.

before God only by faith in Christ. He then quotes Leviticus 18:5: “the one who does them shall live by them.” Paul uses this quote to indicate that those who seek to return to the Mosaic Law must keep the law perfectly; there is no other atonement except through Christ.²⁴⁶ The “but” in this verse demonstrates that “the method of justification called for by the law is wholly at variance with that established through faith.”²⁴⁷ Schreiner observes,

Law obedience, then, is contrary to faith since it is predicated on obeying instead of believing to obtain salvation, on performing what is required instead of trusting God’s work in Christ. The attempt, then, to be righteous by keeping the law is fundamentally opposed to believing, to trusting what God has done in Christ for justification.²⁴⁸

Paul argues that either one lives by faith and experiences the salvation that comes by faith, or one lives under the law and experiences the curses that follow.

Paul explains Christ’s role in justification in the next two verses. Paul’s central point is that Christ became the curse of the law by becoming a curse for believers (Gal 3:13). Christ redeemed Christians from the curse of the law. The term for redemption means to “buy off” or “set free.”²⁴⁹ George notes that “the ‘ransom’ for our sins was

²⁴⁶Schreiner, *Galatians*, 211. Schreiner adds, “Paul reads Lev 18:5 redemptive-historically. I have already noted in Gal 3:10 that perfect obedience is demanded from those who place themselves under the law, for atonement provided by OT sacrifices no longer avails with the coming of Christ. Paul returns to that theme here. Perfect obedience was not required under the Sinai covenant, for the law provided forgiveness via sacrifices for those who transgressed. In Paul’s view, however (see Gal 3:15-4:7), the Sinai covenant was no longer in force. Therefore, those who observe circumcision and the law to obtain justification (5:2-4) are turning the clock backward in salvation history.” Schreiner continues, “The coming of Christ spells the end of the Sinai covenant (3:15-4:7). Those who live under the law must keep it perfectly to be saved, for in returning to the law they are forsaking the atonement provided by Christ (2:21; 5:3). Returning to the law is futile, however, for the sacrifices of atonement under the Sinai covenant pointed ahead to the sacrifice of Christ. Hence, animal sacrifices no longer provide forgiveness now that the definitive sacrifice of Christ has been offered (3:13)” (ibid., 212-14). For the extended discussion on the importance of Leviticus 18:5 in Paul’s argument, see ibid., 212-14.

²⁴⁷George, *Galatians*, 235.

²⁴⁸Schreiner, *Galatians*, 211-12.

²⁴⁹George, *Galatians*, 238.

nothing less than the very life blood of the Son of God himself.”²⁵⁰ Thus, “the cross of Christ is the means by which God saves his people from the law’s curse.”²⁵¹ The curse of the law condemns all those who fail to follow the law and are held under its dominion. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 21:23 to show that Christ bore the curse at the cross.

First, Paul argues that Christ was cursed. Paul “related the curse of the law to the specific prophecy concerning a criminal who had been ‘hung on a tree.’”²⁵² The curse is pronounced for all who are disobedient and rebellious; the curse is evident throughout the entire Old Testament and is present on all people.²⁵³ Christ, by hanging on the tree, bore the curse.²⁵⁴ Second, God cursed Christ. Though Paul’s quote omits the words “by God,” it still remains that “the curse of the law that he bore was the curse of God’s law.”²⁵⁵ Third, God cursed Christ for believers’ good and in their place. Garland explains, “Paul was working here with the idea of an ‘exchange curse’ by which the sin, guilt, and hell of lost men and women are placed upon Christ while his righteousness, blessing, and

²⁵⁰George, *Galatians*, 238.

²⁵¹Schreiner, *Galatians*, 216.

²⁵²George, *Galatians*, 241.

²⁵³George observes, “However, the curse in this context assumes an almost personified form . . . indicating the totality of God’s righteous judgment and wrath that finally will be displayed in the blazing fire and eternal punishment of those ‘who do not know God’ and reject ‘the gospel of our Lord Jesus’ (2 Thess 1:7-9). Throughout the Old Testament the curse is associated with human rebellion and disobedience, from the curse on Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 to the very last threatening word of the Old Testament, ‘Else I will come and strike the land with a curse’ (Mal 4:6). . . . As Paul will explain shortly, the curse of the law for Jews had resulted in their bondage to the Mosaic legislation; for Gentiles the curse had resulted in their slavery to the principalities and powers who hold sway ‘in this present evil age.’ In both cases the curse of the law is damning, irrevocable, and inescapable” (ibid.).

²⁵⁴For a helpful description the idea of “hanging on a tree” in the Old Testament, see ibid., 238-39.

²⁵⁵Ibid., 241. See 2 Cor 5:21.

merit are imputed to those in whose place he stands.”²⁵⁶ The means by which Christ redeemed his people from that curse is that he became a curse for them. Christ resolves the problem of verse 10; Christ redeems us from the curse and takes the curse in humanity’s place because all people²⁵⁷ are under the curse because they do not perfectly follow the law.²⁵⁸

In verse 14 Paul concludes this argument with the purpose of Christ’s redemptive death. The result of Christ’s death is that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles. The blessing of Abraham is the salvation that is offered to all who have faith.²⁵⁹ Paul argues that the promise of the Spirit is grounded in the blessing of Abraham, and the Spirit is received by faith.²⁶⁰ George states,

Indeed, we can say that here in v. 14 Paul brought together three key soteriological concepts that will dominate the later discussion in Galatians: justification, redemption, and regeneration. Each represents a distinct dimension of the salvation effected by Christ. Through pardon and acquittal Christ has removed our condemnation (justification). He has also set us free from the power of sin and death (redemption) and bestowed upon us a new life in the Spirit (regeneration). The good news of how this has happened and what it means Paul called “gospel” and

²⁵⁶George, *Galatians*, 242.

²⁵⁷Bruce adds, “The ‘us’ in this verse does not apply to Jews only but to all believers in Christ. The next verse clarified that Gentiles were redeemed and in his “emphatic LXX insertions $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ and $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ in his quotation of Dt. 27:26 (v 10): ‘every one’, whether Jew or Gentile, is subject to the curse who does not persevere in ‘everything’ whether specifically ‘written in the book of the law’ or more generally ‘written on their hearts’” (Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 167).

²⁵⁸George, *Galatians*, 242. Bruce contends, “Christ had endured the curse on his people’s behalf (by being ‘hanged on a tree’) in order to redeem them from the curse pronounced on those who failed to keep the law” (Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 166).

²⁵⁹Schreiner notes, “The promise of Gen 12:3 – that all nations would be blessed in Abraham – has now become a reality in Christ Jesus. . . . not by circumcision or submission to the Mosaic Law. In Gal 3:8-9 the blessing of Abraham belongs to those who trust in Christ. Conversely, God’s curse falls on those who rely on the law for justification (3:10-12). Christ Jesus by his substitutionary death removes the curse for all who believe. It follows from this that Gentiles are included in the blessing of Abraham by trusting in Christ instead of through keeping the Torah” (Schreiner, *Galatians*, 218).

²⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 219.

“blessing.” Now for the first time he introduced a new word, “promise,” which both reaches back to the gospel of grace revealed in the blessing of Abraham and looks forward to the new life of liberty and love to which those who are in Christ have been called.²⁶¹

Paul presents a penal substitutionary apologetic in his defense of justification by faith alone. He also shows that “the penalty of the law is the wrath of God. God’s law pronounces a curse on everyone who fails to keep it – a curse, remember, that we are all under.”²⁶² However, Christ redeemed us from this curse, and the curse is an expression of God’s righteous judgment. He did this by taking our place and bearing our curse. The crucifixion testifies that he was a curse because he was hanged on a tree. Christ became the curse on our behalf because of his perfect obedience, thus removing the curse from his people.²⁶³ Morris observes,

His meaning then is that men have not kept the law of God. Therefore they stand under a curse. But Christ became a curse for them. He bore the curse that they should have borne. He died their death. . . . Paul’s vivid language conveys the thought that our sin is completely dealt with, our curse is removed from us forever. And Christ did this by standing in our place. He was one with sinners in His death.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹George, *Galatians*, 243. Schreiner summarizes, “Paul is now at the conclusion of his scriptural argument. He maintains that since the Gentiles have the Holy Spirit, they enjoy the blessing of Abraham. And if they enjoy the blessing of Abraham, they are members of Abraham’s family. And if they are part of Abraham’s family by receiving the Spirit, they do not need to submit to circumcision or the law to become part of the people of God” (Schreiner, *Galatians*, 219).

²⁶²Philip Graham Ryken, *Galatians*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2005), 114.

²⁶³Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 166.

²⁶⁴Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament*, 222-23. Garland adds, “Yet Christ emerged victorious over sin, death, and the eternal curse. This he did ‘for us.’ For this reason the doctrine of atonement can never be merely a matter of cool theologizing or dispassionate discourse. *For us* the Son of God became a curse. *For us* he shed his precious blood. *For us* he whom from all eternity knew only intimacy of the Father’s bosom came ‘to stand in that relation with God which normally is the result of sin, estranged from God and the object of wrath.’ All this – *for us!*” (George, *Galatians*, 242).

Synthesis

The Old and New Testaments both present vicarious atonement, but these pictures are not in isolation from each other; many allusions in the Old Testament find their completion in the New Testament. Jesus, at the Last Supper, presents himself as the true Passover Lamb, who brings about the deliverance of his people through sacrifice. Jesus, as the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, presents himself as the culmination of many Old Testament sacrifices. Paul presents Christ as the ultimate mercy seat of the Old Testament Day of Atonement because Christ bears the sin and becomes the sacrifice for the sins of his people as their substitute. Jesus is also the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, who dies for many, and he is the one who was cursed for the salvation of his people. These are just a few biblical allusions between the Old and New Testaments, but they clearly show that through redemptive history the Old Testament sacrifices pointed to Christ, who suffered as the substitute for sinners and bore their sin in the Father's eternal plan by dying on the cross. The New Testament displays Christ as the new covenant fulfillment of the old covenant sacrifices. There is much more support in the following chapters, especially from the letter to the Hebrews, but this is sufficient to show that God's penal substitutionary atonement is prevalent in both testaments.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵Though this study has concentrated on evidence from the Gospels and Paul, other New Testament Scriptures support vicarious atonement. Peter, in 1 Pet 2:21-24, encourages people to live rightly by following Christ's example, who died as a substitute for sinners and bore sin in his body at the cross. Though the focus of the text is Christ as an example, the content of that example is Christ's vicarious atonement. Isa 53 is quoted to support Peter's argument. Jobes states, "Peter personalizes the quotation for the Christian community by taking 'our sins' from 53:4 in place of 'the sins of many' in 53:12. Thus, Peter speaks to his readers as those for whom Isaiah's Suffering Servant bore sin" (Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005], 197). Schreiner notes, "The idea that Jesus was cursed for the salvation of his people is probably implicit. Since Christ died for the sins of the people, it is fair to deduce that his death was substitutionary" (Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC 37 [Nashville: B & H, 2003], 145). In 1 Pet 3:18, Peter shows that Christ suffered a substitutionary death because Christ himself is righteous and he suffered for the unrighteous. Jobes explains, "Peter has come to understand Christ's suffering to death as a unique sin offering that provides access to God, making it possible to be born again into the living hope that Christ's resurrection to eternal life has accomplished (1:3). While the world may have viewed Jesus as a common criminal executed by Roman authority with probable cause,

Conclusion

This chapter establishes that Scripture supports penal substitutionary atonement. The penal substitution theory is grounded in the doctrine of human sinfulness, God's holiness, and his justice. Furthermore, God punishes sin retributively because of his righteousness. God's righteousness is a reflection of his holiness, and his justice is the administration of that righteousness. God's wrath is his expression of his personal hatred of sin. God also expresses his love by sending his Son as a substitute. Jesus Christ bore the penalty of sin as a substitute by dying on the cross, in order to secure salvation for believers.

The Old Testament sacrifices were both substitutionary and penal. The Passover sacrifice was substitutionary because the lamb was a substitute for the firstborn of each household. The Passover was penal because the Israelites were not exempt from God's judgment because they worshipped the Egyptian idols. The Israelites did not bear the penalty of death, but the lamb died so that they would not bear God's judgment. The

Peter describes him as *δίκαιος* (*dikaïos*, righteous) and undeserving of the death he suffered. But Jesus did not die just an undeserved death. Jesus died a vicarious death on behalf of the unrighteous. The unrighteous who recognize the atoning nature of Christ's sacrificial death and become Christians must therefore live righteously, which means that it is better to suffer unjustly if necessary (3:17). In this way the Christian believer identifies with Christ, who stands alive forevermore on God's side of the moral divide between righteousness and evil" (Jobes, *1 Peter*, 238). Thus, the message for believers as Christ's example in the atonement is that "even though Jesus suffered death in terms of his body, the Spirit raised . . . him from the dead. Similarly, those who belong to Christ, even though they will face suffering, will ultimately share in Christ's resurrection" (Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 184). John the apostle uses the term *ἱλασμός* to show the nature of Christ's death for the world (1 John 2:2) and as the expression of the Father's love (1 John 4:10). Peterson observes, "In 4:10 we learn again that Christ takes sin away by being the 'atoning sacrifice for our sins.' It is the ultimate manifestation of the love of God that he provides his only Son as the means of atonement, so that we might 'live through him' (4:9). John says little about the judgment of God against sin (cf. 2:17-18, 28, 4:17), but Christ's incarnation and atoning death are clearly necessary to enable us to pass from death to life (3:14; 5:6-12). The penal and substitutionary dimension to Christ's death is essentially conveyed in 1 John by the use of atonement language (2:2; 4:10). But there is also exemplary and a recreational dimension to Christ's death. Loving one another as God has loved us is a sign of the new life in Christ already at work in those who believe (3:11-17; 4:7-12)" (David Peterson, "Atonement in the New Testament," in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today*, ed. David Peterson [Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001], 64). Atonement references in the letter to the Hebrews will be examined throughout the paper.

Day of Atonement sacrifices were also vicarious. The ram that was sacrificed to cleanse the priest was a substitute for the priest and suffered death in his place. The goat that was sacrificed and the scapegoat both died; the sacrificial goat was killed as a substitute for assembly and bore their punishment, while the scapegoat bore their sin and was driven away from the camp, presumably to its death. The sacrifice removed God's wrath from the people and the priest, while the scapegoat was a graphic picture of the removal of sin. The sacrifice was propitiatory because it averted the wrath of God, lest they suffer the same fate as Nadab and Abihu. Likewise the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 suffered death as a substitute for the people of Israel. He was a substitute because he bore the people's griefs and sorrows, and he suffered death for their iniquities. The Servant bore the sin of his people so that they would be declared righteous. He bore their sin, their sorrows, and the wrath of God as their substitute.

This chapter also surveys key passages throughout the New Testament that demonstrate penal substitutionary atonement. The gospels do not present a systematized doctrine of the atonement, but the testimony and events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion points to penal substitution. Jesus was the Servant who gave his life as a ransom for many. His sacrifice was substitutionary and it was an allusion to the Suffering Servant's sacrifice. Jesus, at the Last Supper, pointed to his death as the ultimate picture of the Passover sacrifice, which was a penal substitutionary sacrifice. Jesus, like the Passover sacrifice, was the one who bore the wrath of God and saved his people. Jesus also requested that the Father take away the cup on the night of his arrest; the cup has Old Testament associations that symbolize the wrath of God. In the gospel of John, Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The imagery of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world carries sacrificial overtones and shows that Jesus' death results in the removal of sin. The parable of the good shepherd shows that Jesus lays down his life as a substitute for the sheep. John's gospel suggests that the penal

aspect is in the atonement in two ways. John the Baptist stated that the wrath of God lies on anyone who does not believe in Jesus. Later in the gospel Jesus said that those who do not believe will “die in their sin.” These warnings imply that failure to believe results in condemnation, and eternal life comes to those who believe in Jesus.

Paul’s letters show that Christ’s atonement was penal substitutionary in nature, specifically in four passages. Paul argues in Romans 1:18-3:20 that the sin of mankind is their fundamental problem, and Romans 3:25-26 shows that Christ is the mercy seat, the place of atonement, and he satisfies the wrath of God against sin as a substitute. Jesus’ death also demonstrates God’s just character because he does not allow sins to continue unpunished, and he justifies believers. In Romans 8:3, Christians are no longer condemned because Christ bore their condemnation in his flesh on the cross. God condemned sin in the flesh of Christ who was the believer’s substitute. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul asserts that God treated Jesus as sin and he was a substitute for believers. Jesus bore the punishment for believers so that the righteousness of God would be imputed to them. Paul argues in Galatians 3:10-14 that Jesus became the curse for believers, so that he might bear the curse in their place, in order that his people would receive the blessing of Abraham and the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 3

NEW COVENANT AND ATONEMENT

Introduction

This chapter examines the relevant passages in the Old and New Testaments regarding the new covenant to enumerate its promises and demonstrate its permanent nature. It also explores the passages that clearly link the atonement and the fulfillment of the new covenant. This relationship is vital because it is the basis for the later chapters' assertion that each new covenant promise requires *penal substitutionary* atonement.

The New Covenant

The new covenant promises demonstrate God's plan of renewal for his people. First, this study presents a definition of a covenant. Second, this section describes the nature of the new covenant and the importance of the covenant concept in biblical theology. Third, this section defines the new covenant promises from Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:25-31.

Definition

The term "covenant" occurs throughout Scripture and is essential to understanding God's relationship with his people. The term for covenant comes from the Hebrew term בְּרִית.¹ After a detailed study, Daniel C. Lane concludes with this definition

¹Though בְּרִית has no synonyms, it is associated with the ideas of oath, steadfast love, and instruction (Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007], 36). For a discussion of the semantic ranges of בְּרִית and proposed etymologies, see Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 36-37; M. Weinfeld, "בְּרִית," in *TDOT*, trans. John T. Willis, ed. G. Hohannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923), 253-62.

of בְּרִית:

A *berith* is an enduring agreement which establishes a defined relationship between two parties involving a solemn, binding obligation to specified stipulations on the part of at least one of the parties toward the other, which is taken by oath under threat of divine curse, and ratified by a visible ritual.²

The Greek term translated as “covenant” is *διαθήκη*, which is generally translated as a “last will and testament.”³ Though “testament” is the term’s general translation, the use is similar to the Old Testament meaning of *berith*:

διαθήκη is from first to last the ‘disposition’ of God, the mighty declaration of the sovereign will of God in history, by which he orders the relation between Himself and men according to His own saving purpose, and which carries with it the authoritative divine ordering, the one order of things which is in accordance with it.⁴

Both terms indicate that a covenant is a commitment or an oath, which involves promises and orders the relationship between covenant partners, particularly in the divine covenants between God and his people.⁵ Williamson’s definition of a covenant as “a

²Daniel C. Lane, “The Meaning and Use of *Berith* in the Old Testament” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2000), 314. I am indebted to the research of Gentry and Wellum for this definition. See Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 132.

³Johannes Behm, “*διαθήκη*,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 124.

⁴Before this quote, Behm states, “In both form and content the NT use of *διαθήκη* follows that of the OT. The only difference is to be found in the step from prophecy to fulfillment. One can hardly say that the NT takes the same course as the LXX and introduces religious thoughts into the legal word, so that it is ‘a testament and yet not a testament.’ Nor can one refer to a transformation of the covenant concept to include that of a testament. Neither ‘covenant’ nor ‘testament’ reproduces the true religious sense of the religious term *διαθήκη* in the Greek Bible” (ibid., 134).

⁵Many scholars prefer a late dating of the covenant concept in Israel, arguing that the idea of covenant did not arise until the late prophetic period. Mendenhall’s article contributes to this debate, which proposes the late date and compares the biblical covenant formulas to the Hittite treaties. He specifically compares the Hittite forms to the form of the covenant in Deuteronomy. Thus, Mendenhall presents the two types of treaties, the suzerain-vassal treaty and the grant type treaty. See George E. Mendenhall, “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition,” *BA* 52 (1954): 50-76. In the last 150 years, much debate has occurred regarding the importance of the Hittite treaty as analogous to the Deuteronomic form of the covenant. For a helpful description of the debate, see Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 19-29. However, strict categorizing of biblical covenants according to Hittite treaty forms may distort the biblical data and may lead to misunderstandings of biblical covenants. See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 134-35.

solemn commitment, guaranteeing promises or obligations undertaken by one or both parties, sealed with an oath”⁶ synthesizes the meanings of both terms well, and is the working definition for this paper.

Relationship

A key aspect of the covenant is the relationship aspect between the covenant parties. Hafemann notes, “As a matter of definition, ‘covenant’ is not a synonym for ‘relationship,’ although the existence and maintenance of a relationship is central to the covenant itself.”⁷ The covenant is the formal way that God has ordered his relationship with his people. Though the covenant is bound by an oath, it is not merely a legal document, but it is built upon or establishes a relationship. The legal aspect of the covenant is grounded in the relationship, whether as a newly established relationship or a pre-existing relationship.⁸ Dennis McCarthy helpfully expresses this truth and is cited at

⁶Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 43. O. Palmer Robertson presents another aspect of this covenant, that it is sealed in blood. This may express the deep commitment to the covenant and its life and death consequences. See O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), 15.

⁷Scott J. Hafemann, “The Covenant Relationship,” in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 26. Hafemann states in his extended argument that covenant is the “integrating concept of Scripture.” Yet he presents three qualifications. First, though covenant language is not always present, covenant reality may be present in the relationship between God and his people. Second, there must be distinctions between the covenant itself and the relationship behind the covenant. Third, the covenant relationship between God and his people must be distinguished between his relationship across history and the specific covenants within biblical history (*ibid.*, 23-30). Contra Hafemann, this paper does not agree that there is merely one covenant relationship expressed in Scripture.

⁸Gordon Paul Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage Developed from the Perspective of Malachi*, VTSup vol. 52 (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 176. For further discussion see *ibid.*, 171-76. Some argue that the covenant merely ratifies or seals an existing relationship. See Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 43; W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (London: Paternoster, 1987), 18-19. This approach fails to keep a distinction between covenant and covenant renewals. For an argument against this approach, see Jeffrey J. Niehaus, “An Argument Against Theologically Constructed Covenants,” *JETS* 50 (2007): 265-67. Niehaus argues, “A covenant assumes some past history of relationship (however minimal) between two parties, but a covenant, once agreed upon, changes the relationship between the two

length:

This brings us to the final point which must be discussed in relation to a treaty covenant. . . . Two problems tend to be raised here. One is that the genre tends to be legalistic. The other is that the either/or of the blessings and curses can seem to make a failure on the part of the people an absolute disruption of the relationship to God.

The first problem misunderstands the analogy, which like all analogies for divine things is indeed inadequate. In this reading the laws or stipulations are taken to be means which are to produce infallibly a secure relation with the divine. Everything is on a strict *quid pro quo* basis. An obedient Servant wins the reward guaranteed him by his contract or, perhaps, even a better position with the master. But this is the exact reverse of the actual case. Covenant is not a contract, as we have had occasion to repeat more than once. It is personal union pledged by symbol and /or oath. The relationship comes first.

We have found this to be the case in just about all covenant making. It is true of the covenants recorded in formal reports in Gen [Genesis] and Dtr [Deuteronomy]. It is true of the treaties. The problem is to define and confirm the ties. Much more was this the case with religious covenant. The God who appears is by His being and presence already sovereign. The God whose saving will is manifested in history has already made Himself a people. This is what history is about. What is wanted is a means of response, a commitment to the sovereign, and a response which can be lived. Hence the stipulations which serve to define the already extant relationship so that it can be lived out in one's ordinary life. One does not earn a contracted reward, one lives a covenanted relationship. As a faithful vassal one gives tribute, a mark of submission, and willing service.

As for the second problem, the either/or absolute offered by the curses and blessings, one must admit that it can be frightening. Witness the reaction in 2 Kgs 22, 11. But when the matter is examined more closely, it does not look so fearsome precisely because it is not a contract, an impersonal instrument which goes into effect automatically as though simple infidelity must mean everlasting alienation. It is persistent infidelity, a state which mocks the commitment which is the heart of the covenant, that effectively ends it because it effectively denies it any real existence.

And still even this extreme case need not be a definitive. It involves persons, and a person, even an offended person, can be approached and he can forgive. This is explicit in the workings of the secular treaty tradition. . . . How much more might be expected from the savior sovereign who was the God of Israel. He remained the lord and father . . . and He could be approached with ever renewed hope, for He was the object of a personal commitment pledged to love, not the administrator of a legal machine. Hence Dtistic [Deuteronomistic] writers could and did hold out hope. They turned to various things, the promise to the patriarchs or to David, but they could always be sure from their own premises that Yahwe [*sic.*] would remember his pledge. All the people need do was return, repent, and re-commit themselves.⁹

covenanting parties and takes it to a different level" (Jeffrey J. Niehaus, "Covenant: An Idea in the Mind of God," *JETS* 52 [2009]: 235-38). See also See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 179-80.

⁹Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in*

The covenant is very important throughout Scripture. Though the formal terms for covenant are not as prominent in the New Testament as in the Old Testament, the covenant concept underlies much of Scripture. Rather than being the “center” of biblical theology,¹⁰ the biblical covenants form the “backbone of the biblical narrative.”¹¹ Scott J. Hafeman succinctly argues:

The concept of the covenant relationship provides the structure that serves to integrate the interrelated themes developed throughout the history of redemption delineated in the Scriptures. Like the hub and rim of a wheel respectively, the old (establishment) and new (restoration and consummation) covenants define and hold together the different ‘spokes’ of divine revelation manifested in the words and deeds of redemptive history. In so doing, the covenant becomes the interpretive lens for seeing clearly the conceptual and historical unity of the Bible in the midst of its diversity.¹²

Thus, it is difficult to understand biblical history and unpack the progressive nature of Scripture without due attention to biblical covenants.¹³

the Old Testament (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978), 296-98. This aspect of McCarthy’s study is helpful, though he wrongly proposes a late date of the Deuteronomistic covenant forms, stating that these covenant forms occurred during Josiah’s reforms. See Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 26.

¹⁰See Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. Baker, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961/1967). For a good argument of the problems with this view, see Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 77-104.

¹¹This is the thesis of *Kingdom through Covenant*. See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 138.

¹²Hafemann, “The Covenant Relationship,” 23.

¹³Williamson argues, “Given its prominence and pervasiveness in the biblical text, no preaching programme [*sic.*] or theological curriculum can ignore the biblical theology of covenant for very long. Indeed, even when not mentioned explicitly in the biblical text, covenant is seldom far from the surface. Some texts anticipate covenant realities, whereas others are built firmly on such a foundation. Hence one cannot faithfully expound or explain the Bible without paying particular attention to this important theological trajectory.” Williamson continues, “As well as its fundamental role in understanding the Bible as a whole, the covenant idea is essential for unlocking numerous biblical texts. Indeed, arguably, the meaning of many texts will be skewed unless covenant is brought into the hermeneutical enterprise (e.g. love/hate language is generally covenant related). Therefore, by reading texts against their implicit or explicit covenantal backcloth, their theological significance and practical import generally become so much clearer” (Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 33). See also Roger T. Beckwith, “The Unity and Diversity of God’s Covenants,” *TynBul* 38 (1987): 99.

The new covenant is God's promise to his people of permanent renewal. Though only one passage of Scripture refers to this covenant as the "new covenant," other Scriptures refer to the covenant in different ways.¹⁴ While only Jeremiah 31:31-34 uses the formal term "new covenant" other Scriptures refer to the same covenant as an "everlasting covenant,"¹⁵ a "covenant of peace,"¹⁶ "my covenant,"¹⁷ and the covenant is characterized by the promise of a new heart and a new spirit.¹⁸

The new covenant has a unique place in redemptive history and in relationship to the other biblical covenants. It is not merely a renewal of previous covenants, but it is a better covenant in scope and in depth. Paul Williamson helpfully summarizes the overarching realities of the new covenant. First, it is both national and international. It is national in the sense that it was prophesied in the midst of the Babylonian exile and that the beneficiaries would be the reunified Israel. It is international because the promises look toward an ideal Israel, a community of faith. "Thus, while the restoration of the Jews in the Promised Land marked the beginning of the fulfillment of the new covenant promises, this was merely the beginning. The best was yet to come, when the 'rest' foreshadowed in Joshua would find ultimate consummation in the new heavens and the new earth."¹⁹ Second, the covenant involves both continuity and discontinuity. Some

¹⁴For a helpful list of the new covenant passages, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 434; Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 158; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Old Promise and the New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34," *JETS* 15 (1972): 14.

¹⁵Isa 24:5, 55:3; 61:8-9; Jer 32:40, 50:2-5; Ezek 16:60, 37:26.

¹⁶Isa 54:9-10; Ezek 34:25, 37:26.

¹⁷Isa 42:6, 49:8, 59:21, Hos 2:18-20.

¹⁸Jer 32:39; Ezek 11:19, 18:31, 36:26.

¹⁹Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 180.

elements of the new covenant are in continuity with the Mosaic covenant, such as the covenant formula, an emphasis on the Torah, and the emphasis on the Abrahamic seed and the royal seed.²⁰ Yet the new covenant is radically different from the old covenant in its promises of the transformation of the heart, the complete removal from sin, and it is an unbreakable covenant.²¹ Third, the new covenant will be both climactic and eternal.

Williamson concludes,

In some sense previous divine covenants find their culmination in this new covenant, for this future covenant encapsulates the key promises made throughout the Old Testament era (e.g. a physical inheritance; a divine-human relationship; an everlasting dynasty; blessing on a national and international scale), while at the same time transcending them. Thus the new covenant is the climactic fulfillment of the covenants that God established with the patriarchs, the nation of Israel, and the dynasty of David. The promises of these earlier covenants find their ultimate

²⁰Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 180. Dispensationalists and covenant theologians have debated the discontinuity and continuity of the new covenant in redemptive history. Dispensational theologians view the structure and fulfillment of the new covenant in various ways. Classical dispensationalists argue that there are two new covenants, one that applies to the church with spiritual promises, and one that applies to Israel and the physical promises of the land. See Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Chafer Systematic Theology*, vol. 4, *Ecclesiology, Eschatology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1975), 314-15, 325; idem, *Chafer Systematic Theology*, vol. 7, *Doctrinal Summarization* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1975), 98-99; Craig Blaising, "The Extent and Varieties of Dispensationalism," in *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 28-29. The next generation of dispensationalists, referred to as "revised" dispensationalists, rejected the theology of two new covenants as biblically untenable. Thus, they propose that the new covenant provisions are spiritually fulfilled in the church, but the fulfillment of the land and reunification promises will occur for national Israel at Jesus' second coming, thereby maintaining a distinction between Israel and the church. See Blaising, "The Extent and Varieties of Dispensationalism," 37-39; Elliott E. Johnson, "Covenants in Traditional Dispensationalism," in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism: A Comparison of Traditional and Progressive Views*, ed. Herbert W. Bateman IV (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 144-55. Progressive dispensationalists argue on the basis of inaugurated eschatology, that the new covenant has been inaugurated in the church, but the covenant awaits its consummation at Jesus' second coming, when the national promises to Israel will be fulfilled, thus preserving the distinction between Israel and the church. See Craig A. Blaising, "The Fulfillment of the Biblical Covenants through Jesus Christ," in *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 208-11; Bruce A. Ware, "The New Covenant and the People(s) of God," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 92-97. However, covenant theologians consider the new covenant as the last administration of the one covenant of grace, which stresses the continuity of Israel and the church. See Jeffrey D. Niell, "The Newness of the New Covenant," in *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003), 127-55; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 2:299-301.

²¹Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 180.

fulfillment in this new covenant, and in it such promises become “eternal” in the truest sense.²²

New Covenant in the Old Testament

The new covenant is climactic and eternal, international and national with respect to the promises to Israel, and there is some continuity with the Mosaic covenant and also some discontinuity. This section surveys the new covenant promises from the most comprehensive new covenant Scriptures, Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:25-31.²³

Jeremiah 31:31-34. Jeremiah 31:31-34 is the only Scripture that uses the term “new covenant.” The new covenant passage occurs in the section commonly referred to as the “Book of Consolation” (Jer 30-33). In previous sections of the book, Jeremiah declared God’s judgment against Judah for their idolatry, promising exile from the land. The Book of Consolation encourages the exiles that God has not forgotten his promises and that he will restore them; the theme of this section is “the future restoration of Israel and Judah to the Promised Land.”²⁴ However, God not only restores his people to the Promised Land, but he also restores their hearts to himself and creates the New Jerusalem.²⁵ This promise of restoration for each person occurs in the context of national restoration through the new covenant:

²²Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 180-81.

²³For other Scriptures that address restoration and the new covenant, see nn. 14-18 above and Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 434; Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 158; Walter C. Kaiser, “The Old Promise and the New Covenant,” 14.

²⁴Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 149; Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 173.

²⁵For a more detailed description of the “Book of Consolation,” see Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 148-52; David G. Peterson, *Transformed by God: New Covenant Life and Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 25-39; Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52. WBC 27* (Dallas: Word, 1995), 83-87.

Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jer 31:31-34).

The new covenant passage may be divided into two sections. The first section, verses 31 and 32, provides the background and the rationale for the new covenant. The prophecy sets this covenant in the future, sometime after Jeremiah’s lifetime. The future covenant will be made with Israel and Judah, the “whole people of Israel.”²⁶ The oracle declares that the covenant will be radically different from their previous covenant, as indicated by adverbs “not like” (31:32) and “no longer” (31:34).²⁷ This previous covenant is referred to as the old covenant, which is the Mosaic covenant that was made with the exodus generation, symbolized by the word “fathers.”²⁸ J. A. Thompson elaborates,

The background to this announcement is the covenant inaugurated between Yahweh and Israel at Sinai (Exod 19:1-24:11). Integral to that covenant was the concept of Yahweh as the sovereign Lord of the Covenant who laid upon those who accepted it the stipulations of the covenant. The continued existence of the covenant depended on the continuing recognition of Yahweh as Lord, and continuing obedience to the terms of the Covenant (Jer 11:1-8). Failure to obey these laws would result in judgment and the operation of the curses of the covenant. Obedience brought the covenant blessings.²⁹

God used both parental imagery (“led them by the hand”) and marital imagery (“though I was their husband”) to describe his relationship.³⁰ As a parent, he led them and

²⁶J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 580.

²⁷Keown, Scalise, and Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 130; Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 30.

²⁸Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, AB 21B (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 467.

²⁹Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 580.

³⁰Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 467.

delivered them from Egyptian slavery. As a husband, God was faithful to his people and provided for them. Keown, Scalise, and Smothers comment, “Covenant breaking in the form of apostasy is likened to adultery, making the separation irreparable in human terms. . . . The Sinai/Horeb covenant had been brought to an end. Both the analogy to a broken marriage and the promise of a ‘new’ covenant make this point clear.”³¹ God demonstrated his faithfulness in the old covenant era through his acts of deliverance. He shows more grace in the new covenant.³² The Lord instituted the Mosaic covenant between himself and Israel, which is grounded in his covenant with Abraham. For the sake of Abraham and the patriarchs, God made a covenant with their descendants that required fidelity to him and obedience to his commands. God, for his part, would bless them in the land that he was giving to them. However, the Israelites broke the covenant with God by their disobedience to the law and by their idolatry. Thompson comments,

The history of Israel since the days of Moses was one of persistent failure to live according to the terms of the covenant. They had not merely refused to obey the law or to acknowledge Yahweh’s complete and sole sovereignty, but were incapable of such obedience. Here was a crisis for Israel’s faith which Jeremiah understood clearly. “Can the Nubian change his skin or the leopard its spots?” Jeremiah asked (13:23). Clearly not. And could Israel do good when she had been taught evil (13:23)? It was a spiritual dilemma. A new covenant was needed because they broke the first one despite the fact that Yahweh had undertaken mighty acts of deliverance on their behalf, seizing them by the hand and leading them from Egypt, and despite the fact that he was their Lord.³³

After the covenant was renewed following the golden calf incident, the nation of Israel continued to break the covenant. The Lord would enact the new covenant because, unlike

³¹Keown, Scalise, and Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 132.

³²Peterson says, “The focus in verse 32 is on the love and faithfulness of the Lord, expressed historically in saving the Israelites (‘I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt’), and persisting in his relationship with them (‘I was their husband’) even though they continued to rebel against him. . . . The surprising implication is that the New Covenant will surpass the former covenant in demonstrating the love and faithfulness of God” (Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 30-31).

³³Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 580-81.

the Mosaic covenant, the new covenant would not be broken.

Jeremiah lists four of God's new covenant promises to his people. First, God would write his laws on their hearts. This means that God will transform the hearts of his people so that his law will be within their hearts. "But there could be no obedience and no recognition of Yahweh's sovereignty as long as the covenant was externalized. It needed to touch the life deeply and inwardly in mind and will."³⁴ Under the Mosaic Covenant, the people were unfaithful and broke the covenant.³⁵ In the new covenant, God will transform the heart with the result that his people will be covenant keepers.³⁶ Thus, the law of God will not change, but "what is new about the new covenant is the ability of both partners to keep the covenant."³⁷

Second, God promises his faithfulness to his people. He indicates that he will be their God, and they will be his people. This promise is a result of God's placing the law in their hearts. Thus, Peterson explains, "Giving his law to his people in this new way would make it possible for the relationship to be resumed and maintained."³⁸ The Lord's reaffirms the same promise that was given in the old covenant, but it acquires a permanent character in the new covenant.

Third, God's people will have a greater knowledge of him. This knowledge is not limited to just the highest or priestly classes, because all covenant members will

³⁴Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 581.

³⁵There were some who were faithful to the covenant and kept the law. Yet many in the nation failed to keep it. The failure to keep the covenant was a national failure.

³⁶Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 503.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 506.

³⁸Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 32. See also Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 507-08.

know God. “The verb *know* carries its most profound connotation, the intimate personal knowledge which arises between two persons who are committed wholly to one another in a relationship that touches mind, emotion, and will.”³⁹ This knowledge is not only an intimate knowledge, but it governs the actions so that people will live in obedience:

According to Hos 8:1-2, the opposite of knowing the Lord is breaking the covenant and transgressing the law. . . . In Jeremiah, knowing God includes an awareness of God’s character and the nature of divine actions . . . the memory of what God has done for Israel . . . and the acceptance of God’s rule by obeying the commands. . . . in the promised new covenant each person’s desires and decisions will embrace, without reservation, God’s self-revelation.⁴⁰

Thus, all members of the covenant will have this knowledge of God. There will not be a need for regenerate members to teach or encourage non-regenerate members of the covenant, for under the new covenant all who are members will intimately know God:

What verse 34 is saying, however, in contrast to verses 29-30, is that in the old covenant, people become members of the covenant community simply by being born into that community. As they grew up, some became believers in Yahweh and others did not. This resulted in a situation within the covenant community where some *members* could urge other *members* to know the Lord. In the new covenant community, however, one does not become a member by physical birth but rather by the new birth, which requires faith on the part of every person. Thus only believers are members of the new community: all *members* are *believers*, and *only* believers are members. Therefore in the new covenant community there will no longer be a situation where some members urge other members to know the Lord. There will be no such thing as an unregenerate member of the new covenant community. All are believers, all know the Lord, because all have experienced the forgiveness of sins.⁴¹

Fourth, God promises to forgive their sins. Their sins are forgiven in such a way that the sins will not be held against them⁴² in the future. Longman III argues,

³⁹Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 581.

⁴⁰Keown, Scalise, and Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 135.

⁴¹Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 510.

⁴²Longman notes, “The fact that he will not remember their sins does not mean that God will erase his memory of them. To remember is to act upon something. To not remember is not to act upon it. He will not treat them as if they were sinners” (Tremper Longman III, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, NIBC

The final promise in this verse will put an end to the threat in Jer 14:10: when the Lord remembers sin and punishment follows. . . . But the Lord's promise not to remember their sins anymore means an end to divine wrath (31:23, 28). The people of the new covenant will not bear the guilt of their ancestor's sin or their own. They will be free to make a fresh start, under no lingering threats . . . because of God's gracious gift of pardon.⁴³

Peterson helpfully summarizes the promises of the new covenant:

So the unbreakable character of the New Covenant rests on several interconnected promises. God will provide a definitive forgiveness of sins, requiring no further judgment and bringing a new knowledge of God as gracious and faithful. This knowledge will bring about a profound change of heart in his people. . . . Radical forgiveness is the basis for the promised spiritual and moral transformation of the people.⁴⁴

Ezekiel 36:24-31. Ezekiel's restoration prophecies begin in chapter 34, and he presents a vital new covenant prophecy in Ezekiel 36:24-31. The Lord expresses his desire to vindicate his holy name, and his act of restoration is the means by which he will vindicate his name among the nations (36:16-23). God will restore his people to their land (36:24), which repeats the theme of a new exodus in Ezekiel.⁴⁵ However, God's desire is not merely for the physical restoration of the people into the land but also to "revitalize the relationship between himself and his people."⁴⁶

[Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008], 212).

⁴³Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 212. Peterson indicates that the means of the forgiveness, the atonement, is not spelled out here. However Peterson notes, "An unprecedented act of divine grace is signaled in 31:34. Return from exile and the reestablishment of the people in the Promised Land could be regarded as a first expression of this, but Jeremiah's vision for the restoration indicates much more. Pardon for sins past, present and future would seem to be necessary to keep God's people in the promised relationship and maintain the covenant" (Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 34).

⁴⁴Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 34. Lundbom adds, "Although this new covenant will have admitted continuity with the Sinai covenant, it will still be a genuinely new covenant, one that marks a new beginning in the divine-human relationship because 1) it is given without conditions; 2) it will be written in the hearts of people in a way the Sinai covenant was not (v 33); and 3) it will be grounded in a wholly new act of divine grace, i.e., the forgiveness of sins (v 34)" (Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 466).

⁴⁵Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 353.

⁴⁶Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, 354.

The following promises explain God's renewal of his fellowship with his people. First, God promises that he himself will cleanse the people from their idolatry and impurities with water. Block observes that this act was God's act to remove "the defilement caused by the people's idolatry and other violations of Yahweh's covenant." He adds, "In the present context, the issue is not simply an external ceremonial cleansing accompanying the internal renewal described in v. 26-27, but a wholesale cleansing from sin performed by Yahweh, a necessary precondition to normalizing the spiritual relationship between Yahweh and his people."⁴⁷

Second, God promises internal transformation, which he states in two ways. One description of transformation is to replace the heart of stone with a heart of flesh. The problem of the people was internal, with the heart of stone denoting "coldness, insensitivity, incorrigibility, and even lifelessness."⁴⁸ In this situation, a heart transplant is needed to remove the cold heart to replace it with a "warm, sensitive, and responsive heart of flesh."⁴⁹ The cold heart is disobedient to God. The Lord used different language to express his work of transformation by stating that he will place his Spirit within his people. The juxtaposition of heart and Spirit demonstrates a near synonymous relationship:

Concomitant with the heart transplant, Yahweh will infuse his people with a new spirit, his Spirit. On first sight, the present juxtaposing of *rûah* and *lêb* in such

⁴⁷Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, 354-55. Cooper states, "Cleansing and forgiveness were symbolized by sprinkling with clean water to wash away their impurities (cf. Ps 51:7). While the reference was to ceremonial cleansing that was necessary to reestablish worship (Num. 19:13, 20), it is important to remember that ceremonial cleansing was an external rite, but it was a ritual that also called for internal repentance." (Lamar Eugene Cooper, Sr., *Ezekiel*, NAC 17 [Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994], 316). Regarding the animating work of the Spirit, see Daniel I. Block, "The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of RWH in the Book of Ezekiel," *JETS* 32 (1989): 34-39.

⁴⁸Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, 355.

⁴⁹Ibid.

precise, if chiasmic, parallelism suggests that “spirit” and “mind/heart” should be treated as virtual synonyms. However the synonymy is seldom exact in Hebrew parallelism, and here the terms are associated with different prepositions. The new heart is given *to* . . . the Israelites, but the spirit is placed *within* . . . them. This distinction is confirmed by the manner in which vv. 26b-27 elaborate on the two statements. The provision of the new heart involves a removal of the petrified organ and its replacement with a heart of flesh, the source of which is unspecified. But the new spirit placed inside Israel is identified as Yahweh’s *rûah* (v. 27), which animates and vivifies the recipients.⁵⁰

Their hearts will be so transformed that they will loathe their previous conduct (Ezek 36:31), which confirms their changed heart.⁵¹ God will cause his people to obey his law because he will place his Spirit within his people. “The declaration abandons all hope that Israel, in her present condition can achieve the ideals of covenant relationship originally intended by Yahweh. The status quo can be altered only by direct divine intervention.”⁵²

Third, he promises that he will be their God and they will be his people; within the reestablished covenant relationship⁵³ they will dwell within the Promised Land. Thus, the Lord renews his covenant relationship because he empowers his people to become faithful covenant partners by his Spirit.⁵⁴

Fourth, God promises that he will transform the land so that they will never experience famine again and the land will experience great agricultural productivity.⁵⁵

⁵⁰Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, 355-56.

⁵¹Christopher J..H. Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 300.

⁵²Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, 356.

⁵³Cooper, Sr., *Ezekiel*, 317.

⁵⁴Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 172.

⁵⁵Block argues, “The significance of this new productivity is spelled out in v. 30b. Never again will the nation experience the reproach . . . of infertility among the nations. Instead, they will realize that the curse has been lifted and that their God has visited them with his favor once more, thereby stopping the mouths of those who mock them. Furthermore, instead of the land devouring its inhabitants . . . it will now provide them with food in abundance” (Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, 358).

Their land will have abundant vegetation, and the nations will see God's blessing. Thus, their return to the land is grounded in the restored relationship between God and his people.⁵⁶

New Covenant in the New Testament

The Old Testament writers frequently use interchangeable terms, such as the covenant of peace and the everlasting covenant, to refer to the new covenant. . However, the New Testament writers rarely refer to the new covenant by name.⁵⁷ Yet the New Testament passages regarding the new covenant provide greater depth about the nature of the new covenant. Paul and the writer of Hebrews use the new covenant references to advance their specific arguments, resulting in a more complete picture of the new covenant.⁵⁸

2 Corinthians 3:3-18. Paul defends his ministry against his opponents by stating he is a minister of the new covenant.⁵⁹ He argues that he does not need to send a recommendation letter because the Corinthian believers are his letter (2 Cor 3:1-2). Paul states that their transformation occurred because the Spirit wrote on their hearts, not with the written ink on tablets of stone (2 Cor 3:3). The tablets of stone allude to the Mosaic

⁵⁶The restoration of the land itself is beyond the scope of this paper.

⁵⁷Though the term "new covenant" is rare in the New Testament, the idea and the renewal concepts permeate the New Testament. See Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 127-84. For an account of the new covenant as expressed in Ephesians, see Joshua Matthew Greever, "The New Covenant in Ephesians" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014).

⁵⁸An exposition on Luke 22:20 will follow in the next section, Atonement and New Covenant, on p. 118.

⁵⁹Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 105. For a helpful summary of Paul's opponents and the defense of his apostolic ministry in 2 Cor 2:14-7:4, see Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 32 -44.

covenant,⁶⁰ while the writing on tablets of the heart allude to the new covenant; the new covenant promises that the law would be written on the heart (Jer 31:33) and that God would give his people a new heart and his Spirit (Ezek 36:26-27a).⁶¹ The transforming work of the Spirit is evidence that Paul is a new covenant minister. The Spirit's work "signals that the long-awaited new covenant, prophesied by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, has come. Since these effects – visible outwardly because real inwardly – have come as a result of Paul's ministry, it is evident . . . that he is a minister of this new covenant."⁶² Hence, Paul states that he and his ministers are confident in God because he has made them sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, which is not a covenant of the letter but the covenant of the Spirit (2 Cor 3:5-6a).⁶³ Though Jeremiah does not mention the Spirit, Ezekiel's prophecy links the transformation of the heart to God's Spirit and shows a close connection between the inward presence of the Spirit and obedience to God's law; the Spirit is the means of the internalization of God's law.⁶⁴ Paul says that the Spirit brings life, while the letter brings death (2 Cor 3:6b). In this context, the letter "refers to

⁶⁰David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, NAC 29 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 160; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 264.

⁶¹Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 169-70. Harris adds, "Whereas ink was erasable (cf. Col. 2:13), the Spirit of God is ever-living, having an inexhaustible supply of creative energy. Human writers use ink that is perishable. The divine penman, Christ, writes his letters by means of the Spirit, whose person and work are imperishable. Paul is alluding to Exod. 31:18 (LXX) where it is said that when the Lord had finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai he gave them two tablets . . . of the Testimony, which are further defined as "the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God" (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 264).

⁶²Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 161. See also Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 158.

⁶³Paul's opponents thought of themselves as "ministers of the new covenant," yet they concentrated on the letter of the Mosaic Law rather than the work of the Spirit. See Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 192-93, and n. 16.

⁶⁴Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 177.

the concrete demands of the Old Testament law which God's people were duty bound to obey but which in fact resulted in a bondage to sin and death. The 'letter' denotes what is merely written, and when Paul contrasts it with Spirit, he is contrasting an external code with an indwelling power that can transform believers into the image of God (3:18)."⁶⁵ Hence Paul, when he argues that the letter kills, explains on the outcome of the old covenant, while the new covenant gives life by the Spirit.⁶⁶ Garland continues,

We therefore should not attach an unduly negative connotation to the "letter" since it played a divinely given but specific role in salvation history. The letter was to be obeyed, but humans failed to obey it. The problem is with humans and with the letter's inability to create obedience. Even the most valiant attempts to obey the letter are doomed. Since the letter only specifies God's demand and the punishment for failing to obey, it ends up only condemning the disobedient to death and never giving life or righteousness (Gal 3:21). The Spirit is the power that enables the moral life and sets people free. The Spirit therefore completes God's action in giving the law because it gives obedience, life, and the potential for the old to become new (5:17; Eph 4:22, 24; Col 3:9-10).⁶⁷

Paul describes the old covenant as glorious, but it was a ministry of death. This glorious covenant was carved in stone, which is an allusion to the Ten Commandments that were written in stone. Paul then contrasts the glory of the old covenant and the glory of the new covenant. First, he states that the old covenant came with a glory such that nobody could gaze at Moses' face, and this glory of the old covenant will cease. Williamson observes that "Paul's argument, therefore, is not that the letter associated with the old covenant is bad or inherently flawed. Rather, it is that it is vastly inferior to

⁶⁵Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 165. For a helpful summary of the different views of the term "letter," see *ibid.*, 163-66; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 272.

⁶⁶Harris comments, "When the Law's demand for perfect obedience (3:10) is unfulfilled, it pronounces the sentence of death, both spiritual death and physical death. The Law in its character or function as *ἐντολή* is simply an instrument of death, since it addresses sinful human nature (*σάρξ*), which cannot please God (Rom. 8:3, 8). For Paul, the elements in the trio of Law, sin, and death are inseparable" (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 273).

⁶⁷Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 166.

the life giving Spirit associated with the new covenant.”⁶⁸ Paul then contends that if the ministry of death had glory, how much more the ministry of the Spirit (2 Cor 3:7-8). Paul points to the Mosaic Law as an instrument that resulted in death because it cannot give life.⁶⁹ Yet, the “ministry of death” had glory. Moses’ face shone with the *Shekinah* glory when he received the law; the glory was so great that people could not gaze at Moses’ face.⁷⁰ Since the ministry of death and condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness must necessarily exceed this glory (2 Cor 3:9). The ministry of death is synonymous with the ministry of condemnation because both are the outcome of the old covenant. God’s judicial verdict of condemnation rests on all who break the law, and all are under condemnation because all people are lawbreakers.⁷¹ Since condemnation is God’s judicial act against lawbreakers, then the language of righteousness in Paul’s comparison demands a forensic element.⁷² In comparison to the ministry of righteousness, the ministry of death has no glory because the ministry of righteousness surpasses it (2 Cor 3:10). Peterson comments, “Just as the sun outshines the moon, so the glory of the New Covenant outshines the glory of the Old Covenant. Something of God’s splendor could be experienced through the law but a greater experience comes through

⁶⁸Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 193.

⁶⁹Garland argues that the law brought death in four ways: (1) there was a sentence of death for those who disobeyed, (2) the law brings a greater accountability of sin, so that people no longer sin in ignorance, (3) the law provides a way for people to observe the law legalistically, and (4) the law cannot give life. See Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 171-72.

⁷⁰Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 182-83.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 185.

⁷²Barnett contends, “But what is this ‘righteousness?’ As with the previous question (vv. 7-8), where Paul’s rhetorical contrast is between opposites, so here ‘condemnation’ and ‘righteousness’ should be viewed as opposites. ‘Righteousness’ therefore, whatever its nuances as used elsewhere, must in this context carry a forensic meaning like forgiveness, acquittal, or vindication” (Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 185).

the gospel.”⁷³ Paul then argues that since the temporary ministry of condemnation had glory, then the permanent ministry of righteousness should have more glory (2 Cor 3:11). Paul’s point is that the new covenant is permanent, while the old covenant is temporary.⁷⁴

Paul revisits the theme of the veil and the role of the Holy Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3:12-17. He refers to Moses’ veiled face to cover his glory when he received the old covenant promises (2 Cor 3:13). Paul then uses the veil imagery as an indicator of the people’s disposition. The unbelieving Jews who rely on the old covenant have a veil over their minds and hearts (2 Cor 3:14-15). Peterson’s insight shows that “what was literally veiled from the Israelites in Moses’ day remained figuratively veiled to their descendents.”⁷⁵ Christ lifts the veil when a person turns to the Lord, so that the Spirit of the Lord brings freedom (2 Cor 3:16-17). All those who are free and unveiled are able to behold the glory of the Lord and receive spiritual transformation that comes from the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:18). Garland contends, “The Spirit’s work is what distinguishes his ministry from that of Moses (3:6, 8) and makes it so much more glorious. God has made him sufficient by giving him a Spirit-endowed, Spirit-empowered ministry to those who are Spirit equipped.”⁷⁶ Harris concludes,

⁷³Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 105. Garland agrees, “The effects of the glory associated with the giving of the law do not endure when one compares it with the glory associated with the ministry of righteousness. Paul believes that the law is therefore no longer the touchstone for the revelation of God’s glory to the world after Christ’s arrival. The breathtaking glory of the new covenant so outshines the old that it makes its glory seem nonexistent. The coming of the new also makes the Sinai covenant old” (Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 177-78).

⁷⁴Garland argues, “The old covenant was impermanent because it did not represent God’s ultimate purpose to save both Jew and Greek through faith. . . . From the outset, then, it was destined to pass away. When Christ came, the old had run its course. The gospel, with its forgiveness based on free grace and direct access to God, is God’s last word and is permanent. The gospel, like God’s righteousness, abides forever” (Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 178).

⁷⁵Peterson, *Transformed by God*, 114.

⁷⁶Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 202.

[2 Corinthians] 3:12-18 incorporates and contrasts between two ministries, two covenants, and two religions. It ends (in v. 18) with contrasts that are partly explicit and partly implicit, between two sets of persons, Moses and the Jews on the one hand, and Paul and Christians on the other. Under the new covenant, not one man alone, but all Christians behold and then reflect the glory of the Lord. Moreover, unlike the Jews, who still read the Law with veiled hearts, Christians, with unveiled faces, see in the mirror of the gospel the glory of Yahweh, which is Christ. Again, the glory is displayed not outwardly on the face but inwardly in the character. Finally, so far from waxing and waning, the glory experienced under the new covenant progressively increases until the Christian finally acquires a “glorious body” like that of the risen Christ. All this constitutes further evidence of the grandeur and superiority of the apostolic ministry, which is the theme of 2:14-4:6.⁷⁷

Paul’s defense of his apostolic ministry conveys two truths regarding the new covenant. First, the new covenant has surpassed the old covenant in glory. While the old covenant had glory, the new covenant has far surpassed it, and the glory of the old covenant is fading. Hence, the new covenant is permanent. Second, the new covenant is evident in the lives of Christians because of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 8:1-13. The writer of Hebrews argues that the old covenant is obsolete and that Christ is the mediator of a new covenant in Hebrews 8:1-10:18. William Lane states that “the mediation of the new covenant demonstrates the eschatological superiority of Christ’s ministry and the divine intention to replace the old arrangement with another that is eschatologically new.”⁷⁸ Under the old covenant, the sacrifices and the tabernacle were shadows of the heavenly things (Heb 8:5). The writer quotes Exodus 25:40 to emphasize that “the Mosaic tabernacle, and by implication the whole OT cultus,

⁷⁷Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 318-19. Barnett adds, “Whether intentionally or not, in this summary comment about the new covenant, Paul has given his readers what will prove to be one of his most potent theological declarations. It spans the covenants, implying the blindness under the old covenant while affirming the brightness of sight of those within the new. Moreover, it spans from the creation of humanity as *imago dei* and the fall with its rebellion and death, to conversion-illumination and from there through metamorphosis to glorification. It teaches that ‘we all’ in whom the image of God is defaced are able through the gospel to ‘see’ that image in its perfection, in the face of Jesus Christ. And we are enabled not only to see that image but to be progressively transformed into it by the sovereign Spirit” (Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 209).

⁷⁸William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC 47A (Waco, TX: Word, 1991), 204.

was only a copy of the heavenly reality.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, the new covenant is a better covenant because it has better promises (Heb 8:6). The writer declares that if the old covenant was perfect, then there would not be a need for a new covenant (Heb 8:7). Christ’s ministry is more excellent than Moses’ ministry because it enacts better promises in the new covenant (Heb 8:6). The better promises are those that are quoted subsequently from Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Hebrews 8:8-12. Namely, these better promises include the law written in the heart, that they will truly know the Lord, and that he will remember their sins no more.⁸⁰ Thus, the old covenant becomes obsolete because God enacts the new covenant for his people (Heb 8:13). The writer follows with a quote of Jeremiah 31:31-34 which exposes the deficiency of the old covenant.⁸¹ Lane summarizes the differences between the old and new covenants:

The treatment of the two covenants in vv 7-8a exhibits the eschatological outlook of the writer. At the level of historical events, the covenant mediated by Moses had developed faults on the human side and has been replaced by a better arrangement. The supersession of the old covenant was not due simply to the unfaithfulness of the people to the stipulations of the covenant. It occurred because a new unfolding of God’s redemptive purpose had taken place, which called for a new covenant action on the part of God. 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. . . . Thus God finds fault . . . with the Mosaic covenant, and not simply with the people.⁸²

⁷⁹Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 408.

⁸⁰F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 186-92. Peter O’Brien observes, “Legally the person who made a covenant or testament . . . could change or annul it. . . . According to Hebrews, God established the first covenant, and he has replaced it with a new one. He is the speaker of the oracle in Jeremiah 31, and thus the one who called this covenant new (v. 8). To call it a new covenant does not simply mean to describe it in a fresh way or to draw out an exegetical conclusion from the text of Jeremiah 31. Rather, the language points to a new act of God to which Scripture bears witness. And, because God has acted in this way he ‘has made the first one obsolete.’ God himself declared that the Sinai covenant was unserviceable and outmoded” (Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 302-03).

⁸¹Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 208.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 209.

The main points of this passage are that: (1) the new covenant has better promises than the old, and (2) now that the new covenant has been enacted by the mediator, the old covenant passes away. The new covenant is better and eternal.

Synthesis

The results of this survey of the Old Testament passage are as follows. First, God has promised forgiveness to his people. Second, he has promised a cleansing and a transformation of the heart that will cause his people to obey his law. Third, he has promised that there will be a greater knowledge of him, which is evidenced by the salvation that he gives. Fourth, God has reinstated the covenant formula, so that he will reestablish his relationship and his presence with them. Fifth, God has promised to restore Israel to the transformed Promised Land.⁸³ These promises in redemptive history incorporate the Gentile believers, and these promises are fulfilled in the new creation.

The New Testament Scriptures affirm the above new covenant promises with some particular emphases. The writer of Hebrews quotes Jeremiah 31 and affirms it as a better covenant with better promises. The writer also points to the permanent nature of

⁸³The order listed reflects the foundational promises and the resulting blessings. Peterson notes that forgiveness is foundational to the covenant. After forgiveness, the transformation of the heart by the Spirit empowers God's people to be faithful covenant members. The result of forgiveness and heart transformation is God's abiding presence as a sign of his renewed covenant, and each covenant member's salvific knowledge of him. Michael Gorman suggests nine characteristics of the new covenant community: "(1) liberated (having experienced the new Exodus), (2) restored and unified (Israel and Judah together; gathered from the peoples; returned to the land of Israel; one heart), (3) forgiven, cleansed from unholiness and idolatry/infidelity to YHWH, (4) sanctified, (5) existing in a mutual covenant relationship with YHWH ('I will be their/your God, and they/you shall be my people') characterized by community-wide faithfulness, intimacy, and knowledge, (6) internally empowered and enlivened (law / new spirit / God's Spirit within; heart of flesh, not stone) to keep the Law / covenant, (7), bearing witness to YHWH's holiness, (8) experiencing shalom: at peace with God and secured from enemies, and (9) permanent, i.e., partners in an everlasting covenant" (Michael J. Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant; A (Not So) New Model of the Atonement* [Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014], 26-27). Gorman's list includes characteristics of the covenant as well as the implications of the new covenant promises in the community. This study focuses on the promises as outlined in Jer 31:31-34 because renewal promises in other texts, except for the renewal of the land, overlap with Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy.

the new covenant, arguing that the old covenant is passing away. Paul shows that he is a new covenant minister because his ministry bears one of the marks of the new covenant promises. The mark is the transformed lives of the Corinthian believers by the Holy Spirit's power. Thus, the New Testament Scriptures affirm and presuppose the promises of the new covenant, while emphasizing the superiority and eternity of the new covenant over and against the Mosaic covenant.

Atonement and New Covenant

This section examines the relationship between Christ's death and the new covenant and it shows that Luke and the writer of Hebrews establish that Christ's death inaugurates the new covenant.

Luke 22:20

Jesus connected his impending death and the new covenant during his Last Supper with his disciples (Luke 22:20). He gathered the disciples in the upper room, and he taught that this meal would not be eaten again until he is with them in the kingdom. He took bread and said that it was his body, given for them, which represents his death. Then, he picked up the cup and said, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."⁸⁴ The cup refers to the death of Christ, and he indicated that it is

⁸⁴Among parallel passages, Luke's gospel is the only passage that refers to the "new" covenant. Matt 26:28 states "for this is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Matthew's gospel omits the "new" and instead of "for you" it adds "for many" and also adds "for the forgiveness of sins." Mark 14:24 states "this is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." Regarding the wording of the original saying, Bock adds, "Trying to decide which wording is most original is almost impossible, given the diversity of sources and variations, as well as the likelihood that all the traditions are in Greek – not the Aramaic that Jesus likely used here. It is also ultimately irrelevant because each form of the tradition, with differing emphases, explains what Jesus meant as he shared the bread and the cup. The varying forms clarify and complement each other. All accounts argue that Jesus' death was a sacrifice that inaugurated a new era of salvation, like the one represented in Passover. All accounts appeal to a covenant inauguration. Jesus' death brings a new age" (Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996], 1728). For a helpful discussion on the textual critical issues in this text, see I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A*

the new covenant, which is inaugurated by his blood.

The background of this verse is Exodus 24:8. After the Lord presented the Mosaic covenant to the Israelites, Moses offered a sacrifice. This sacrifice sealed the covenant God made with his people at Sinai. Moses sprinkled the congregation with the blood of the sacrifice. Hence, the “blood of the covenant” refers to the sacrificial blood that enacted the old covenant. Marshall explains,

The sacrifice which inaugurated the covenant in the wilderness was intended to atone for the sins of the people so that they might then belong to God in a covenant membership. . . . The sacrifice was in effect the means authorized by God for cleansing the people from their sins. By analogy, therefore, Jesus here interprets his own death as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the people that they may become partakers in the covenant. Hence the concepts of the covenant and of the Suffering Servant who bears the sins of the many fit in with one another and form a unified whole. . . . There is a fundamental unity between them which means that they belong together theologically and neither of them need be regarded as a secondary development of an originally simpler interpretation of the death of Jesus⁸⁵

Jesus taught that his blood functions in the same way. Just as the sacrifice sealed the old covenant in Exodus 24, Christ’s death would seal the new covenant.⁸⁶ Thus, the contents of the cup “symbolizes the new covenant, in the sense that the new covenant is brought into being by what it signifies, namely the sacrificial death of Jesus. . . . It signifies not a temporal repetition but a new, eschatological beginning.”⁸⁷ Bock summarizes,

The covenantal reference makes it clear that a new area is in view, an era that Jesus brings. We have here a clear note that God’s plan has reached a new phase. At the

Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 799-801; John Raymond Kimbell, “The Atonement in Lukan Theology” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 22-33.

⁸⁵I. Howard Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord’s Supper* (Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1980), 92.

⁸⁶Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC 24 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 543.

⁸⁷Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 806.

center is a death and an inauguration of benefits. The mediating source is Jesus, who gives his body and blood so that those who ally themselves to him may receive salvation's benefits. He is sacrificially offered for them, and thus a fresh covenant comes.⁸⁸

Hebrews 9

In Hebrews 9:1-10, the writer describes the role of the sacrifices and the tabernacle under the old covenant.⁸⁹ The tabernacle in the old covenant was a tent, with the lampstand, table, and bread placed in the first section (Heb 9:2). Yet F. F. Bruce observes that the writer's main point is that "the sanctuary of the old covenant, in its very furnishings and sacrificial arrangements, proclaimed its own temporary character; and while this is shown with more special reference to the tabernacle, the principle holds good equally for the temple, whether Solomon's or Herod's."⁹⁰ The second section⁹¹ was

⁸⁸Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2, 1729. John Nolland adds, "New covenant benefits are passed to those who share in the covenant cup. Where in the earlier form the covenant allusion has been to Exod 24:8 ("the blood of the covenant"), now the immediate allusion is to the "new covenant" of Jer 31:31-34, a covenant based on a new activity of God beyond Sinai, in which he will bestow forgiveness and bring inner renewal. The underlying allusion to Exod 24:8 remains since the new covenant is said to be ἐν αἵματί μου, which presumably means "[sealed] with my blood" (John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, WBC 35C [Waco, TX: Word, 1993], 1054). John Kimbell argues that this sacrifice is a sacrifice for sins. See Kimbell, "The Atonement in Lukan Theology," 35-42. His conclusion is grounded in the Old Testament background of both the Passover and the covenant sacrifice. "In summary, when careful attention is given to Old Testament backgrounds that drive Luke's Last Supper account, Jesus is seen to interpret his death as an atonement for the sins of God's people that allows them to enter a new covenant relationship with God. In both the deliverance from Egypt and the establishment of the Sinai covenant, a blood sacrifice was required as an atonement for a sinful people. According to Luke, so it is with the deliverance Jesus provides in establishing the new covenant by his death" (Kimbell, "The Atonement in Lukan Theology," 42).

⁸⁹This study considers the specific themes of forgiveness and penal substitutionary in Heb 9 in chap. 4.

⁹⁰Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 198. See also William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, WBC 47B (Waco, TX: Word, 1991), 218. Peter O'Brien observes, "The description of the *earthly sanctuary* begins with the construction of the *tabernacle*. When our author comments on the place of worship, he draws upon the tabernacle of the Israelites in the wilderness rather than upon the temple in any of its forms. A likely reason for this is the prior use of Exodus 25-40, where Moses was instructed to erect a sanctuary according to the pattern God showed him on Mount Sinai (see on Heb. 8:5). Here in Hebrews the issue of the sanctuary is being considered in relation to the old and new covenants, especially the contrast between the two. It is natural that the tabernacle be used rather than the temple because of the connection of the desert sanctuary with the inauguration of the Sinai covenant" (O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 307). See also G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*

the Most Holy Place that contained the Ark of the Covenant and the cherubim overseeing the mercy seat (Heb 9:3-5). The priest entered into the Holy Place while performing his ritual duties. During the Day of Atonement he first presented a guilt offering to atone for his own sins, and then he presented a sin offering for the unintentional sins of his people as he accessed the most holy place (Heb 9:6-7). The writer of Hebrews emphasizes three points in connection with the Day of Atonement sacrifices:

(i) except on this annual occasion, the way into the throne room of God was barred for all Israelites, even for the high priest himself, (ii) when the high priest did receive permission to enter, his entry was safeguarded by sacrificial blood, (iii) this sacrificial blood was not finally efficacious, for fresh blood had to be shed and a fresh entry made into the holy of holies year by year.⁹²

Thus, access to the Most Holy Place is impossible as long as the Holy Place continues to stand (Heb 9:8). This separation indicated God was inaccessible, and “before the advent of Christ there was no free and unhindered access into God’s presence.”⁹³ However, these sacrifices were not sufficient to cleanse the conscience of the worshiper but were good for surface ritual cleansing until the time of reformation (Heb 9:9-10). The sacrifices’ ineffectiveness demonstrates that “the entire cultic ministry was only a temporary arrangement in God’s redemptive plan for his people.”⁹⁴ Barry Joslin observes,

What the Day of Atonement could only do symbolically, Christ has done in the true Day of Atonement, the Day of Atonement *par excellence*. The purification via the death (blood) of Christ has brought real cleansing, a purification that is internal,

(Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 293.

⁹¹The first and second sections refer to the two rooms inside the tent, not separate tents. Lane argues, “The descriptive terminology in v. 2 indicates the writer envisages the sanctuary in use: entering the tabernacle from the courtyard, the appointed priest enters first the Holy Place and then passes through the separating second curtain into the Most Holy Place” (Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 219).

⁹²Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 208.

⁹³O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 312.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 315.

rendering the worshipper perfect in conscience, in contrast to and in fulfillment of the external rites of the old.⁹⁵

The writer has demonstrated the inadequacy of the sacrifices of the old covenant in verses 1-10, and in verses 11-14 he establishes the superiority of Christ's death over the old covenant sacrifices. First, Christ entered the greater tabernacle of heaven itself, rather than the tabernacle on earth (Heb 9:11). F. F. Bruce argues, "The sanctuary in which he ministers is a true tabernacle of which the Mosaic shrine was but a material copy; it is a sanctuary not made with hands not belonging to the earthly creation."⁹⁶ Second, the sacrifice is better because Christ entered into heaven not with the blood of goats and bulls but with his own blood and secured eternal redemption (Heb 9:12). In contrast to the blood of bulls and goats, the blood of Christ is sufficient for his entrance into the heavenly sanctuary. The verse is not arguing that Christ literally carried his own blood into heaven to sprinkle the sanctuary as Aaron carried the blood into the tabernacle,⁹⁷ but the verse demonstrates that Christ's blood was sufficient to bring forth redemption:

But while it was necessary under the old covenant for the sacrificial blood first to be shed in the court and then be brought into the holy of holies, no such division of our Lord's sacrifice into two phases is envisaged under the new covenant. When on the cross he offered up his life to God as a sacrifice for his people's sin, he accomplished in reality what Aaron and his successors performed in type by the twofold act of slaying the victim and presenting its blood in the holy of holies.⁹⁸

⁹⁵Barry C. Joslin, "Christ Bore the Sins of Many: Substitution and the Atonement in Hebrews," *SBJT* 11 (2007): 85.

⁹⁶Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 212. David Peterson states, "The 'heavenly' things are the eschatological realities which Old Testament institution only foreshadowed, and the relationship between the two 'sanctuaries' is basically a temporal one. Therefore, our writer's distinction between 'earthly' and 'heavenly' is eschatologically controlled, rather than philosophically inspired: Levitical priests served in a God-ordained, but man-made sanctuary, and in this ministry only superficially foreshadowed the definitive priestly ministry of Christ, in his death and exaltation to the very presence of God" (David Peterson, "The Prophecy of the New Covenant in the Argument of Hebrews," *RTR* 38, [1979]: 76).

⁹⁷For this discussion, see Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 213, and n. 82.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

The nature of Christ's redemption is eternal. Christ sacrificed himself once, while the old covenant sacrifices required annual repetition. Redemption, which carries the connotation of a price paid, is "equated with, or at least in apposition to, the forgiveness of sins."⁹⁹ With the Day of Atonement in view, the contexts suggests liberation from sin and judgment. Hence, "at the heart of eternal redemption, which is perfect in its nature and eternal in its effects, is the once-for-all and climactic offer of forgiveness of sins promised under the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:34 (Heb. 8:12; 10:17-18)."¹⁰⁰ While the blood of bulls and goats were able to purify the flesh, the sinless blood of Christ through the eternal Spirit would cleanse the conscience and secure eternal redemption (Heb 9:13-14). The sin offerings of the old covenant did not present true cleansing of the presenter's conscience, but the offerings "served merely in an external and symbolical manner to counteract the defilement of sin."¹⁰¹ The writer presents a *how much more* argument: if the old covenant sacrifices could bring about external and ritual cleansing, *how much more* would Christ's sacrifice truly cleanse the conscience and thereby allow his people to serve the living God.¹⁰² Christ offered his sacrifice through the eternal Spirit, which means that Christ was divinely enabled by the Holy Spirit's power to live his life and become the sacrifice for sins.¹⁰³ Joslin concludes,

⁹⁹O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 322.

¹⁰⁰Ibid. Lane comments, "Christ's sacrifice on the cross requires no repetition or renewal: his exaltation and entrance into the real sanctuary consecrates the eternal validity of his redemptive ministry" (Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 239).

¹⁰¹Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 214.

¹⁰²O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 323.

¹⁰³Ellingworth notes, "A further question is why the author should specify that Christ's self-offering was *διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου*. Probably this phrase is to be taken together with *ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν*: it is the power of the eternal Spirit which enabled Christ to be at the same time both high priest and offering. Other priests depended on animal sacrifices to cover their own sins; Christ was supernaturally empowered

Christ effects in reality what the cultus could only provide symbolically and in seminal form. The self-offering of Christ procures the internal cleansing of the conscience *from* dead works and *to* obedient service to God. Those who draw near to God through Christ's sacrifice *are* perfected, in direct contrast to 9:9. Once there is an *internal change*, the tabernacle and its rituals are no longer necessary. Such cleansing in 9:14 leads to a change of heart, and generates service to God. The result is worship expressed in a life that acknowledges the name of God (13:15), loves fellow Christian brethren (3:13; 10:24-25), and is pleasing to God by means of obedience (13:16). The effective purgation of the conscience and its orientation to obedient service is the epitome of the New Covenant promises in 8:10-12, and draws attention to the specific matter of covenant (*diathēkē*) taken up in 15-22.¹⁰⁴

The writer's main argument is that Christ is the mediator of the new covenant.

He argues that a death is required for a covenant to become effective (Heb 9:16-17). New

Testament scholars debate the whether the term *διαθήκη* should be translated as

"testament" or "covenant."¹⁰⁵ The term should be translated as "covenant" because "the

focus of these verses is more on death as it inaugurates a covenant via the priestly

mediator . . . than on death as a prerequisite for an inheritance. Yet, the fundamental point

of these verses is less debated and is established by 9:15, viz., a death has occurred for

redemption."¹⁰⁶ The old covenant required a death both to establish the covenant and to

to be himself an unblemished offering; or conversely, it was the power of the eternal Spirit which made Christ's unique sacrifice eternal in its effect" (Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 457). See also O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 324-35; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 240; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 217.

¹⁰⁴Joslin, "Christ Bore the Sins of Many," 86.

¹⁰⁵O'Brien summarizes whether the term "should be rendered 'testament', in accordance with its secular Hellenistic meaning, or as 'covenant', in line with its LXX meaning and other uses in Hebrews" (O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 328).

¹⁰⁶Joslin, "Christ Bore the Sins of Many," 87. For a more detailed argument that *διαθήκη* means "testament," see Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 462-64; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 221-22. Hughes' article is the most complete and definitive defense of the "covenant" view. See John J. Hughes, "Hebrews IX 15ff. and Galatians III 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure," *NovT* 21 (1979): 27-96. For other scholars who support the meaning of *διαθήκη* as "covenant" see Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 231, 242-43; Scott W. Hahn, "A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death: A Study of Hebrews 9:15-22," *CBQ* 66 (2004): 416-36. Though Hahn presents a response against the "testament" view, he argues that the term does not refer to covenants in general, but to the broken Mosaic covenant. The broken covenant requires a death and "a broken covenant demands the death of the covenant maker and is not enforced while the covenant maker is alive" (ibid., 435). O'Brien agrees with Hahn, with two qualifications, "first, the 'corpses' are not Israel but the slain animals by which the covenant oath was ritually enacted, and,

redeem from transgressions (Heb 9:15b, 18). The writer recalls the process that Moses followed to inaugurate the old covenant; under the old covenant, everything was purified by blood, according to God's instructions, because forgiveness only came by the shedding of blood (Heb 9:19-22). The writer of Hebrews 9 shows that sacrificial blood is important because "it provides access (v.7), purges the conscience (v. 14), inaugurates covenants (v. 18), consecrates the people (v. 19), cleanses cultic instruments (v. 21), and purges many things under the Old Testament law (v. 22a)."¹⁰⁷ O'Brien continues,

Our author recognizes that under the old covenant the *ritual* cleansing was real and effective as far as it went, even though it could not achieve perfection or cleanse the worshipper's conscience. However, the principle that defilement is cleansed by blood, which was well known in Second Temple Judaism, is significant for the argument being developed within the context, for it provides the basis of comparison between animal sacrifices under the old covenant and Christ's sacrifice that inaugurated the new. The word rendered *forgiveness* could be used for release from debts, slavery, and imprisonment. But the context makes it clear that remission of sins is involved.¹⁰⁸

In the same manner, a blood sacrifice is required to establish the new covenant and for the forgiveness of sins. If the copies of the heavenly things required a sacrifice for purification, then the heavenly things themselves required a better sacrifice for cleansing (Heb 9:23). The heavenly things were not heaven itself or things in heaven, but the phrase means that the conscience of the worshiper needed cleansing:

It has frequently been asked in what sense "the heavenly realities" needed to be cleansed; but our author has provided the answer in the context. What needed to be cleansed was the defiled conscience of men and women; this is a cleansing which belongs to the spiritual sphere. The argument of v. 23 might be paraphrased by saying that while ritual purification is adequate for the material order, which is but an earthly copy of the spiritual order, a better kind of sacrifice is necessary to effect

second, vv. 18-22 point to the Sinai covenant as a particular instance of the point Hebrews is making in vv. 16-17" (O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 332).

¹⁰⁷O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 334.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 334-45. See also Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 246.

purification in the spiritual order.¹⁰⁹

Christ did not appear in the earthly tabernacle made with earthly hands, but he appeared in the presence of God himself in heaven (Heb 9:24). Yet Christ's sacrifice was superior because he was sacrificed himself once and accomplished forever the remission of sins (Heb 9:25-26); his sacrifice was not repeated while sacrifices under the old covenant required repetition. Lane summarizes,

The offering Christ made was not repeated, unlike the action of the high priest who year by year entered the Most Holy Place with the sacrificial blood of animals (vv 25-26). The high point of the annual atoning ritual under the old order was the sprinkling of the blood on the cover of the ark of the covenant. To denote that cultic action, the writer had made singular use of the verb προσφέρειν, "to offer." . . . When he applies the annual Day of Atonement ritual to Christ, he again uses the verb προσφέρειν. In this context it refers not to a corresponding action in the heavenly sanctuary but to the death of Christ on the cross. That becomes clear when the writer develops his thought hypothetically by means of a contrary-to-fact condition: if Christ had offered himself many times (on the analogy of the action of the high priest, v 25), it would have been necessary for him to suffer death many times, beginning with the foundation of the world (v 26a). In fact, he appeared ἅπαξ, "once," at the climax of history to cancel the force of sin through his sacrifice (v 26b). The antithesis to the πολλάκις, "many times," which qualifies the action of the Levitical high priest is the ἅπαξ, "once," which qualifies the action of Christ. Thus the typological fulfillment of the Levitical high priest's annual sprinkling of blood in the Most Holy Place was Christ's death on Calvary. The contrast between the Levitical high priest and the heavenly high priest is displayed in the sequence of the projected action as well as in its frequency. The repeated entrance followed by the repeated act of sprinkling the sacrificial blood throughout the old order was displaced by the single, sufficient sacrifice upon the cross followed by the definitive entrance into the heavenly sanctuary. Christ's priestly action inaugurated the new covenant and introduced the new age of fulfillment.¹¹⁰

Christ's blood accomplished what the blood of bulls and goats could not, it permanently brought about the forgiveness of sins. For this reason, Christ is the mediator of the new covenant because his death brings about an eternal inheritance; it enacts the promises of

¹⁰⁹Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 228. For a helpful description of the interpretation options of τὰ ἐπουράνια and in the preference of this interpretation, see O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 336-38.

¹¹⁰Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 249.

the new covenant and results in the forgiveness of sins.¹¹¹

Conclusion

This chapter describes the nature of the new covenant and presents God's five new covenant promises. The covenant is the formal way that God has ordered his relationship with his people. The new covenant has a national aspect regarding Israel with the promise of restoration into the Promised Land. The new covenant is international because most promises are applicable to all believers. The new covenant has continuity with the other biblical covenants because there is a focus on God's relationship with his people and the covenants requires conformity to his law. This covenant is discontinuous and climatic because it supersedes the previous covenants and is the goal for all other covenants. Furthermore, the new covenant is eternal because this covenant never ends. The first new covenant promise is the forgiveness of sins. God has promised that he will no longer hold sin against his people, and this promise is perhaps the most foundational promise of the new covenant. His second promise is that he will change the hearts of his people so that they will obey the law because the law is written on their hearts. Ezekiel envisions this transformation of the heart as the Lord's cleansing from sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit. God's third promise is that he will renew his covenant with his people; he will be their God and they will be his people. The tangible expression of this covenant promise is that God will dwell with his people. His fourth promise is that all of his covenant people would know God so that they would not need a human covenant

¹¹¹Peterson says, "By his single sacrifice for sins Christ has removed the necessity for the Old Testament sacrificial system, providing that definitive cleansing of the conscience or forgiveness which is the basis of Jeremiah's prophecy. . . . By that cleansing of the conscience Christ consecrates his people to God in the relationship of heart-obedience envisaged by Jeremiah (9:14, 10:10, 22). By dealing decisively with the sin problem Christ has made it possible for those who are called to receive the promised eternal inheritance (9:15)" (Peterson, "The Prophecy of the New Covenant," 81).

mediator.¹¹² God's fifth promise is that he will restore Israel to the Promised Land from which they were removed in exile. This restoration results in transformation of the land so that God's people will dwell in the land in safety and peace with God and all of their neighbors.

The New Testament writers expound on the nature of the new covenant. First, they affirm that the new covenant surpasses the old covenant because it has more enduring power than the law. The Spirit of God transforms people in a way that the law could not. The law kills, meaning that it leads to death, but the Spirit gives life and transforms. Second, the new covenant is superior to the old covenant because it is an everlasting covenant. The old covenant became obsolete, but the new covenant is the reality, of which the old Mosaic covenant is only a shadow.

This chapter also argues that the atonement inaugurates the new covenant. Jesus proclaims at the Last Supper that his blood enacts the new covenant. Jesus' death is the fulfillment of the covenant sacrifice of Exodus 24 because his death inaugurates the new covenant. The writer of Hebrews shows that Jesus is a better sacrifice because his blood truly cleanses the conscience; old covenant sacrifices were incapable of such cleansing. In a similar manner, the old covenant sacrifices required repetition and could not gain access to God in the heavenly tabernacle. Jesus is a better sacrifice because he sacrificed himself once, and his blood was sufficient to enter the heavenly sanctuary.

¹¹²See n. 81 for the rationale for this order of new covenant promises.

CHAPTER 4
PENAL SUBSTITUTION AND FORGIVENESS

Introduction

This chapter argues that God provides and requires penal substitutionary atonement to forgive sins. This study surveys relevant passages in the Old and New Testaments to show that only the satisfaction of God's justice brings forth forgiveness. Jesus bore our sin(s) as our substitute so that we may have forgiveness and be restored to fellowship with God.

Wayne Grudem defines sin as “any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.”¹ It includes any act of rebellion against God's law and any failure to conform to God's standards in conduct or thought. Sin also describes the moral nature that is oriented against God, which pervades all human beings. So pervasive is sin that it damages the relationship between God and man, and it damages the created order.

D. A. Carson asserts,

Sin is rebellion against God's very being, against his explicit word, against his wise and ordered reign. It results in the disorder of the creation and in the spiritual and physical death of God's image bearers. With perfect justice God could have condemned all sinners, and no one could have justly blamed him. In reality, the Bible's story line depicts God, out of sheer grace, saving a vast number of men and women from every tongue and tribe, bringing them safely and finally to a new

¹Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 490. Cornelius Plantinga states, “All sin has first and finally a Godward force. Let us say that a sin is any act – any thought, desire, emotion, word, deed – or its particular absence, that displeases God and deserves blame. Let us add that the disposition to commit sins also displeases God and deserves blame, and let us therefore use the word *sin* to refer to such instances of both act and disposition. Sin is a culpable and personal affront to a personal God” (Cornelius Plantinga Jr., *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 13).

heaven and a new earth where sin no longer has any sway and even its effects have been utterly banished.²

Therefore, a correct understanding of the biblical storyline demands a true comprehension of the significance of sin and God's redemptive action against sin.³ Furthermore, in the new covenant, God removes sin's effects with the purpose of restoring his people, and restoration is consummated in the new heavens and the new earth.

One of the promises of the new covenant is that of forgiveness as foretold in Jeremiah 31: 34, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." The promise of forgiveness itself is not new, for God had forgiven his people throughout the Old Testament. But in the new covenant God promises full and final forgiveness,⁴ which is so encompassing that the Lord declares that he will "remember their sin no more." This means that he will no longer need to take action against sin, which implies that he has dealt with sin once and for all.

By requiring forgiveness, God indicates that he takes sin seriously. This chapter demonstrates that throughout the Bible, God does not simply forgive sin on a whim, but rather, the Lord requires atonement in order to do so. Why is forgiveness so important? Sin breaks fellowship between people and a holy God. God must deal with sin to forgive sinners and restore his relationship with them in accordance with his holiness and justice. Penal substitution is the only theory of the atonement that directly deals with

²D. A. Carson, "Sin's Contemporary Significance," in *Fallen: A Theology of Sin*, ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 23.

³Carson summarizes, "In short, if we do not comprehend the massive role that sin plays in the Bible and therefore in biblically faithful Christianity, we shall misread the Bible. Positively, a sober and realistic grasp of sin is one of the things necessary to read the Bible in a percipient fashion; it is one of the required criteria for a responsible hermeneutic" (ibid.).

⁴Likewise, in the new covenant passage in Ezek 16:60-63, God promises in verse 63 that "when I atone for you for all that you have done." The word for atone may be the same term for forgive.

the barrier of sin between God and humanity.

Forgiveness and Atonement in the Old Testament

Sin and Guilt Offering

God's instructions requiring sin and guilt offerings present the first clear connection between sacrifice and forgiveness in redemptive history.⁵ Moses received these instructions in Leviticus chapters 4-5. While the offerings in chapters 1-3 were voluntary, the sin and guilt offerings were mandatory. The purpose of these offerings was to atone for sinful acts, which is indicated by the terminology of "inadvertence," "sin," "guilt," and "forgive."⁶

The sin offering was given by any person who sinned unintentionally.⁷ God's

⁵Robert W. Yarbrough, "Forgiveness and Reconciliation," in *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 499. Yarbrough notes that though the terms that are translated for "forgiveness" are not used, the condition is implied throughout Genesis and Exodus. God forgave Adam and Eve when he provides garments for them (Gen 3:21). Though not explicitly stated, God forgave Noah and his family for their sins while saving them from destruction (Gen 6:17-18) and giving his covenant promises (Gen 9:8-11). That God counted Abraham as righteous must imply that Abraham's sins were forgiven (Gen 15:6). Pharaoh asked Moses for God's forgiveness and to eliminate the plague (Exod 10:17), and Moses warned the Israelites that rebellion against the Angel of the Lord would not be forgiven (Exod 23:21).

⁶Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, NAC 3A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 106.

⁷Some scholars debate over the designation of the "sin" offering. Gordon Wenham, following Milgrom, argues that the correct designation is the purification offering. He states, "Purification is the main element in the purification sacrifice. Sin not only angers God and deprives him of his due, it also makes his sanctuary unclean. A holy God cannot dwell amid uncleanness. The purification offering purifies the place of worship, so that God may be present among his people. This interpretation of the term seems to be compatible with its root meaning, and to explain the rituals of blood sprinkling peculiar to it" (Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 89). However, purification only describes one aspect of the offering. Other features of the offering, including "the laying on of hands the killing of the victim, the burning of select parts of it and the subsequent removal of its body outside the camp (in two cases 4:12, 21) still cry out for interpretation" (Derek Tidball, *The Message of Leviticus* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005], 80). Consequently, while the sanctuary is purified, the sinner needs forgiveness. Derek Tidball states, "The sin offering is designated to restore the sinner, remove the guilt and deal with all the consequences of sin, not just its pollution of the sanctuary. Only the traditional interpretation makes adequate sense of the rituals of the sin offering and offers the sinner the forgiveness needed" (Tidball, *The Message of Leviticus*, 81).

requirement for this offering showed that people incurred guilt when they sinned, albeit unintentionally, and that these sins required atonement.⁸ Generally, the wrongdoer (s) would bring the animal sacrifice, lay hands on its head, and the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled in the temple. The Lord instructed each type of offender to give the sin offering, starting with the anointed priests (Lev 4:1-12) and then the congregation (Lev 4:13-21). Two unique features of the sacrifice were that the blood was sprinkled in the inner court on the horns of the incense altar and the skin of the sacrifice was taken outside the camp to be burned. The Lord's instructions were similar for the sins of a leader (Lev 4:22-26), and the common people (Lev 4:27-35), except that the blood was sprinkled in the outer court of the temple and the carcass was not taken outside of the camp. Chapter five begins by addressing the sins of those who withheld evidence, those who touched an unclean animal, those who became unclean, and those who took a foolish oath (Lev 5:1-6). Lastly, the Lord gave instructions so that the poor (Lev 5:7-13) would be able to meet the requirements for the sacrifice. The importance of the rite shows that any sin, no matter how small, needs atonement.⁹ Another feature of the sacrifice was that "the power of defilement corresponded to the prominence of the sinner. The sins of the priest or the cultic community defiled the inner sanctuary, while those of the prince or an individual defiled the main altar."¹⁰ Thus, the blood was required to enter into the inner courts of the tabernacle for the priest and the community, and for other individuals it was required to cleanse the main altar in the outer court of the tabernacle.¹¹ Repeatedly, the

⁸Tidball, *The Message of Leviticus*, 71.

⁹John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, WBC 4 (Waco, TX: Word, 1992), 70.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Averbeck argues, "The manner of blood manipulation for the sin offering of the priest and whole congregation was different from that for the leader and the common people in important ways. For the priests and the whole congregation the priest sprinkled the blood with his finger seven times in front of

Lord proclaimed that the priest has made atonement and the sin has been forgiven (Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13), emphasizing that “atonement and forgiveness are the desired effects of the sin offering.”¹² The Hebrew term סָלַח first appears here, meaning forgiveness, and God is the only subject when the term is used.¹³

In Leviticus 5:14-6:7, Moses imparted the instructions for the guilt offering.¹⁴ The difference between the guilt offering and the sin offering is that the former required reparations. Mark Rooker observes, “The guilt offering, in contrast to the sin offering, was required for the type of offense that created a debt calling for compensation. This compensation applied both to indebtedness incurred by mistreatment of one’s fellow man and for the improper treatment of one of God’s ‘holy things.’”¹⁵ Unintentional violations of God’s sacred place required a guilt offering (Lev 5:14-16), as did unintentional sins against the commandments, which “are also regarded as a desecration of the name of God” (Lev 5:17-19).¹⁶ It was also required for sins against others that required

the veil of the sanctuary (i.e., the tent of meeting inside the tabernacle complex), put some of the blood on the horns of the incense altar inside the Holy Place, and simply poured out the remainder of the blood at the base of the burnt offering altar near the gate of the tabernacle complex (Lev 4:67, 17-18). In other words, the blood penetrated into the tabernacle complex as far as the contamination did (i.e., the priest could enter the Holy Place, and the congregation included the priests). The blood of the leader and the common Israelite was applied only to the horns of the burnt offering altar (4:30, 34, 5:9), which was the boundary of penetration for the nonpriestly Israelite into the tabernacle. The principle is that the blood went as far as the particular person or the collective group of persons could go and, therefore, decontaminated the tabernacle at that point” (Richard E. Averbeck, “סָלַח,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 98).

¹²Rooker, *Leviticus*, 113.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴While Lev 5:14-6:7 deals with the conditions that cause the offering, Lev 7:1-10 provides the procedures for the guilt offering.

¹⁵Rooker, *Leviticus*, 122.

¹⁶Ibid., 124.

reparations (Lev 6:1-7). In the first and final cases, the offender was obliged to make restitution plus 20 percent. Restitution reinforces the principle that a person should reconcile with their neighbor before bringing an offering to God. It demonstrates that true repentance has occurred; yet atonement is still necessary to restore relations with God.¹⁷ Thus, “that restitution is to be made before atonement becomes effective reinforces the notion mentioned in connection with the sin offering that genuine repentance precedes forgiveness.”¹⁸ The result of the guilt offering for unintentional sins is that the priest has made atonement and the sin has been forgiven (Lev 5:16, 18, 6:7).

Symbolically, the sacrificial animal suffered the fate that rightly belonged to the worshiper. The sacrificial animal died in place of the worshiper who is pardoned from his sin. The phrase “he shall be forgiven” is repeated 9 times in chapters 4 and 5. Each time the emphasis is on the offender who is forgiven, not the sin. N. Kiuchi notes,

This is clearly highlighted by the fact that the text says ‘*he* shall be forgiven’ and not ‘*his sin* shall be forgiven.’ This fact implies that by breaking one divine prohibition the whole existence of the sinner is at stake. Thus the inference is inevitable that since the sinner is forgiven because of the expiation of his sin, the expiatory ritual also concerns the salvation of the whole existence of the sinner. This is different from holding that the ritual deals with a sin which is envisaged as being in some sense separate from the sinner.¹⁹

Furthermore, the Hebrew construction of כָּפַר and סָלַח “designates God’s forgiveness

¹⁷Tidball states, “Putting matters right with one’s neighbours was as essential as putting matters right with God. Indeed, the debt that sin had incurred before God would not be removed until the debt to the neighbour had been paid in full. Yet offenders were not forgiven their guilt simply by making amends with the neighbours. On its own, making things right with one’s neighbours was not sufficient, because to sin against them was also to sin against God, and so the matter needed to be cleared with him. Furthermore, only by securing atonement from God through sacrifice could the ‘weighty residue of ache’ that sin brings in its train be dispelled. The Godward and the human dimensions of spirituality are inseparable” (Tidball, *The Message of Leviticus*, 89). See also Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 112.

¹⁸Rooker, *Leviticus*, 126.

¹⁹N. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature: Its Meaning and Function*, JSOTSup 56 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 37.

subsequent to, and as an essential element of, the atonement ritual performed by the intercessory priest on behalf of an individual or the community for sins committed unintentionally . . . or even without a priest's mediation."²⁰ The sin and guilt offerings are penal substitutionary offerings. In both cases, a death is necessary. The death of the sacrifice is a substitute for the sinner, symbolized by the laying on of hands.²¹ The sacrifice is penal because the punishment is death as a result of the sins of the offender.²² Furthermore, forgiveness is the stated result of the sacrifices.

The Day of Atonement sacrifices also clearly demonstrate penal substitutionary atonement.²³ The language of forgiveness is implicit and the results of forgiveness are evident in this passage. The sacrificial blood of the burnt and sin offerings cleansed the priest and the assembly. In Leviticus 4:1-5:13, the result of the sin offering is clearly the forgiveness of the people's sins. The sin offering on the Day of Atonement is performed for the people as the first goat is sacrificed. The result of the sin offering is the cleansing of the Holy Place (Lev 16:15-16). Yet, the cleansing of the Holy Place does not invalidate that the sin offering also results in the forgiveness of sins.²⁴ Though the Holy Place is cleansed due to the sacrifice of the first goat, the blood

²⁰J. P. J. Olivier, "סלח," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 260. Olivier subsequently rightly contends that the attitude of repentance of the worshiper is just as important, which is demonstrated in the prophetic books. Since נסלח is passive, it implies that God forgives (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 62-63).

²¹See the discussion in chap. 2, p. 34n36.

²²I am indebted Bruce Ware, who in conversation helped me to sharpen my understanding and articulation of penal substitutionary atonement in these specific terms.

²³See chap. 2, pp. 31-37.

²⁴Jacob Milgrom argues that the sin offering for the atonement cleanses the pollution of the sanctuary. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doublday, 1991), 1079-84.

nevertheless atones for the sins of the people. Tidball articulates this point well and is quoted at length:

While recognizing that there were two forms of the sin offering – one that atoned for people and one that atoned for the sanctuary – they were both atonement offerings that dealt with moral guilt, not just ritual impurity. And the blood of both of them removed guilt, and it did not simply act as a spiritual detergent, cleaning up what had been unfortunately made dirty. In the special rite of the Day of Atonement the sanctuary is indeed cleansed, but it is cleansed because Aaron temporarily bears the guilt of the Israelites and then subsequently transfers it to the live goat by laying both his hands on its head and sending it away into the wilderness.

This seems to do greater justice to the whole tenor of the sacrificial system, where guilt, not mere ritual impurity, is a major concern, and where atonement is acquired by blood substitution, not by mere washing. The sanctuary is indeed purified on this one day of the year. But it is purified not only from the ritual pollution but also from the moral pollution of Israel's *rebellion* (16, 21), *wickedness* (21) and *all their sins* and wrongdoings (21). The rich and varied vocabulary of sin cannot be avoided in this chapter. Woven through the central rituals of the day is a consciousness of sin in all its varied forms. To pull the thread of sin, and consequently moral guilt, from the garment knitted together by these ceremonies is to cause the whole garment to unravel, not just a part of it to be defaced. The goat that was killed both purifies the sanctuary and atones for people, no less than the goat that was released.²⁵

The scapegoat “removes” sin, so that the sins of the people are symbolically taken away from the camp. The sacrifice of the one goat and the driving out of the scapegoat is one atoning work; this work propitiates sin and vividly portrays its removal from Israel. Thus, “sin has been both forgiven and forgotten.”²⁶ The removal and cleansing of sin constitutes forgiveness.

Suffering Servant

Isaiah's Suffering Servant bore his people's deserved penalty of death as their substitute (Isa 52:13-53:12). Since the Servant was a penal substitutionary sacrifice, he obtained certain benefits for his people. The question that must be raised is whether

²⁵Tidball, *The Message of Leviticus*, 194-95 (emphasis in the original).

²⁶Ibid., 197. See also Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Book of Leviticus*, in vol. 1 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 1111.

forgiveness is one of those benefits, or if the language of forgiveness is used in this passage.²⁷ Though the standard terms for forgiveness may not be present in the passage, the concept of forgiveness is present.²⁸ Chisholm states that God’s forgiveness may include a reduced punishment for the offender, and “at other times God’s forgiveness means that he removes, at least in part, the persistent consequences of past sin, . . . no longer holds the offenders accountable (i.e. subject to punishment) for those past transgressions, and transforms their inner character as he restores them to renewed fellowship.”²⁹ The language of Isaiah 53 shows that God forgives his people.

Two of Chisholm’s features indicating forgiveness are evident in Isaiah 53. First, the passage shows that through the sacrifice of the Servant, the persistent effects of sin were removed. Isaiah indicates that the Servant bore our sorrows and griefs (Isa 53:4). He suffered (was pierced and crushed) for our transgression and iniquities (Isa 53:5). The Servant took our chastisements. The effects of sin are the griefs, sorrows, and chastisements, which we as sinners rightfully suffer. Young observes, “It should be noted that the consequences of sin and not sin itself are mentioned. Nevertheless, when it is said that he bore our sicknesses, what is meant is not that he became a fellow sufferer with us, but that he bore the sin that is the cause of the evil consequences, and thus became our substitute.”³⁰ Yet the Servant bore these effects and died so that we would no longer be

²⁷This section is dependent on Robert Chisholm Jr., “Forgiveness and Salvation in Isaiah 53,” in *The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic and Professional, 2012), 191-210.

²⁸Ibid., 193. In n. 3, Chisholm adds, “Standard terminology for forgiveness in the Hebrew Bible includes טהר, ‘cleans, purify’, כבס, ‘wash’, כפר, ‘cover over, atone for’ (cf. Isa. 47:11), מחה, ‘blot out, obliterate’ (cf. Isa 43:25, 44:22), נשא, ‘lift up, take away’, סלח, ‘forgive, pardon’ (cf. Isa 55:7) and עבר, ‘pass over, overlook’ in the qual stem and ‘take away’ in the hiphil stem.”

²⁹Ibid., 198-99.

³⁰Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66: The English Text with Introduction*,

subject to the penalty of sin, which is an important aspect of forgiveness.

A second feature of forgiveness is expressed in Isaiah 53:11c, which proclaims that the Servant will justify the many. The term קָדְשׁוֹ may be interpreted either in the legal judicial sense, or in the sense that the Servant will transform people to live righteously, referring to their sanctification.³¹ Chisholm rightly notes that “while the significance of this statement is debated, it would seem to mean, at the very least, that the Servant, as God’s representative, declares the offenders no longer legally accountable for their past transgressions.”³² The Servant’s sacrifice results in the justification of the believer; his sins are no longer counted against him.³³ Verse 11d states the basis of the Servant’s declaration of righteousness for the many – he bore their sins. Oswalt argues,

Lest there be any misunderstanding, the basis on which the Servant can “make many to be righteous” is given again in the final colon of the verse. This clause functions as a circumstantial clause modifying the preceding main clause. He makes many righteous, *bearing their iniquities*. Isaiah does not want to leave one fragment of doubt. The reason the Servant has the power to make people righteous before God is that he himself bears their iniquities. As in vv. 4-6, heavy emphasis is laid on the

Exposition, and Notes, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 346.

³¹For Chisholm’s argument regarding קָדְשׁוֹ, see Chisholm Jr., “Forgiveness and Salvation in Isaiah 53,” 201-203.

³²*Ibid.*, 201.

³³Young, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40 to 66*, 358. Oswalt argues that full deliverance is envisioned through the Servant, which includes making many righteous: “This man, *my Servant*, is the Anointed of God to restore sinful Israel to himself, just as Cyrus was the anointed to restore exiled Israel to her land. In contrast to Cyrus, this man’s Servanthood is redemptive. It finds it [*sic.*] true fulfillment in the realization of what the whole sacrificial system prefigured. When an offerer accepted and carried out the provision of God for his guilt as stated in the manual of sacrifice (Lev. 1-11), he could be clean in the sight of God. But that cleansing was only symbolic, because an animal life is no substitute for a human one. Now a human life, yet obviously more than just a human life (he will make ‘many’ righteous), has been freely given, and the symbol is a reality. Fellowship with God is possible. As the body can come home to the land, so the heart can come home to its God. No prophet could do this for Israel, much less the world, and neither Israel as a whole nor any segment of Israel could do it either. Whoever he is, the Servant stands in the place of God, pronouncing a pardon that the Sinless One alone can offer (51:4-6)” (John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 404-05 [emphasis in the original]).

fact that it is *their* iniquities that he bears. This is not symbolic. Somehow the Servant has actually suffered the condemnation of all the sins ever committed, and by virtue of the fact, he is able to declare all those who will accept his offering as righteous, delivered, before God.³⁴

The language of justification is the language of forgiveness, for the sinner has been pardoned and no longer bears the guilt of his sin because the Servant bore the sinner's sin as his substitute.

The Servant's penal substitutionary sacrifice results in the forgiveness of his people. Chisholm argues that the concept of forgiveness is present in Isaiah 53, which includes the removal of sin's consequences, the acquittal of the offender's past sins or not holding those sins against the offender, and the transformation of the offender's character. If his criterion is correct, then at least two of the three signs of forgiveness are met in this passage, with the possibility of a third sign:

To summarize, at least two of the key elements of forgiveness seen elsewhere in the Old Testament are apparent here. First, the Servant removes, by his own suffering, the persistent consequences of past sins. Second, he "makes the many righteous," meaning at the very least that the Servant, as God's representative, declares the offenders no longer legally accountable for their past transgressions. But, depending on how one understands the hiphil form קִיְּרַם in verse 11, it is possible that the transformation of sinners' character is envisioned here as part of God's plan to reconcile his covenant people to himself. In this case, the Servant's sanctifying work has a transformative dimension (cf. Ps. 51:10 [12]).³⁵

At minimum, the Servant's sacrifice results in the removal of the penalty of sin.³⁶

³⁴Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, 405 (emphasis in the original).

³⁵Chisholm Jr., "Forgiveness and Salvation in Isaiah 53," 202-203.

³⁶Another issue is that the Servant presents himself and is presented as a guilt offering (Isa 53:10b). Lev 5:14-6:7 has established that forgiveness is the outcome of the offering. This raises the question: In what sense is the Servant's sacrifice restitution? Hartley provides a helpful answer: "While interpretations of Isa 53 vary widely, the traditional Christian interpretation holds that the Servant suffers and dies vicariously for mankind's sin. His death is an atoning sacrifice. The choice of $\text{זָּחַ$ to describe his sacrificial death may be twofold. First, it communicates that the Servant's death compensates God fully for the damages he has incurred by mankind's sinning. Second, the Servant's sacrifice provides expiation for every kind of sin, inadvertent and intentional. That is, the Servant's sacrifice provides expiation for any person who appropriates its merits to himself, no matter how grave his sin" (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 80). Though Scripture states that the guilt offering is for inadvertent sins, it implies that genuine repentance of

Forgiveness and Atonement in the New Testament

Matthew 26:28 and Acts

At the Last Supper, Jesus foreshadowed his sacrificial death. He stated that his body and blood was given for, or as a substitute on behalf of, his people. Furthermore, in Luke 22:20 Jesus said that his sacrifice instituted the new covenant. However, in Matthew's gospel Jesus expressed the clearest link between his death and the forgiveness of sins. After passing the cup and instructing his disciples to drink, Jesus remarked, "for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:28). This saying indicates that Jesus' sacrifice inaugurates the new covenant, and one of the promises of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:34 is the forgiveness of sins.³⁷ Leon Morris observes,

This is central to the covenant he was about to inaugurate. Jesus had taught people a good deal about the way they should live their lives in the service of God, but he had also spoken of their need for divine help and forgiveness. Now he makes it clear that forgiveness would be brought about by his death.³⁸

Thus, "to say then that Jesus is shedding His blood to inaugurate such a covenant is to say that He is shedding His blood that men's sins might be forgiven."³⁹ This saying alludes to the reason that Jesus came, which Matthew 1:21 stated. He came so that he would "save his people from their sins."⁴⁰ Jesus died so that the sins of his people would be forgiven.

an intentional sin may reduce the penalty to an inadvertent sin. Milgrom provides the most extensive explanation, and he grounds the reduction from intentional sin to inadvertent sin in the requirement to confess in Lev 5. See Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 373-78.

³⁷R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 994.

³⁸Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 661.

³⁹Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 51-52.

⁴⁰France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 994.

Jesus' statement alone does not indicate a particular atonement theory. However, penal substitution is implied if the statement is viewed in the context of the events surrounding the crucifixion, which include Jesus partaking of the cup of wrath at his crucifixion, his cry of dereliction, and the darkness in the land at the hour of his crucifixion.⁴¹

The apostles, in the power of the Holy Spirit, proclaimed the death and resurrection of Christ. As they preached the gospel, they invited people to believe, and the result of belief is that their sins would be forgiven (Acts 2:38; 5:31; 8:22; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18). Some commentators believe that Luke's account of Jesus' death does not have any atoning significance.⁴² While Luke does not explicitly explain the nature of the atonement, he uses the language of blood as a reference to the atonement at least twice in his writings.⁴³ At the Last Supper, Jesus referred to his impending death as inaugurating the new covenant: "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood"

⁴¹See chap. 2, pp. 52-54 and n. 115.

⁴²David Peterson notes that Hans Conzelmann is perhaps the most influential advocate of this view. See David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 75. Conzelmann states, "The most important finding in this connection for our purpose is that there is no trace of any Passion mysticism, nor is any direct soteriological significance drawn from Jesus' suffering or death. There is no suggestion of a connection with the forgiveness of sins" (Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell [London: Faber and Faber, 1960], 201). For other interpretations of Jesus' death in Luke-Acts, see D. D. Sylva, ed., *Reimagining the Death of the Lukan Jesus* (Frankfurt: Anton Hain, 1990). For Peterson's response to these interpretations see David Peterson, "Atonement Theology in Luke-Acts: Some Methodological Reflections," in *The New Testament in its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B. W. Winter on His 65th Birthday*, ed. P. J. Williams et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 56-71. See also John Raymond Kimbell, "The Atonement in Lukan Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 71-116.

⁴³Peterson explains, "First, it should be remembered that the presentation of the gospel in Acts is generally more Christological than soteriological. Christ is proclaimed as Saviour and the benefits of his saving work are offered to all, but the process by which he achieves that salvation is not always explained. Nevertheless, we have enough indications from Luke to know how the process with respect to the cross was understood and expounded, by both Peter and Paul. . . . Secondly, we must ask what Scriptures could be included in the testimony of 'all the prophets', other than those with strictly Christological significance (such as we find in the sermons in Acts 2 and 13). To begin to answer this question, we must look carefully at the sermon in Acts 3" (Peterson, "Atonement Theology in Luke-Acts: Some Methodological Reflections," 66). Peterson's approach from his article and commentary is briefly explained below.

(Luke 22:20).⁴⁴ Peterson notes, “Alluding to Jeremiah 31:34, he implies that his death will make possible a definitive forgiveness of sins.”⁴⁵ Luke also uses the language of blood in Acts 20:28 when Paul gave his farewell speech before the Ephesian elders. Paul preached to the elders that they should care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. While the point of the passage is that the elders must protect the church against false teachers, the reference that God acquired the church with his blood is a direct reference to the atonement. Luke presents the image of the Father giving his own Son, in a similar way that Abraham gave up Isaac as a sacrifice.⁴⁶ Bock asserts,

Thus the acquiring of the church had as its basis a substitution of God’s own for those God would bring to eternal life. Such a sacred form of down payment for the church makes the responsibility of the elders sacred. It is clear that the death of Jesus, God’s own Son, is described here. Behind the action stands the loving commitment of God to take the initiative and suffer sacrifice in order to restore a broken relationship with humanity.⁴⁷

Luke also alludes to the atonement in addition to his explicit references to blood.⁴⁸ Jesus stated that the Scripture must be fulfilled and that he must be numbered with the transgressors (Luke 22:37). This statement is an allusion to Isaiah 53:12. William Larkin comments that this verse encourages the disciple’s obedience and functions as a prediction of what must be fulfilled.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the quote may be an

⁴⁴See chap. 3, pp. 119-21.

⁴⁵Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 75.

⁴⁶Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 630. Neither Bock nor this study argues that Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac is equivalent to God the Father’s loving sacrifice of the Son and the Son’s voluntary sacrifice to save sinners.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 630-31. See also F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 392-93.

⁴⁸ Much of this argument is based on Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 75-79.

⁴⁹William J. Larkin, Jr. “Luke’s Use of the Old Testament as a Key to His Soteriology,” *JETS* 20 (1977): 329. David Peterson argues that the trajectory of Jesus’ death and resurrection is for the purpose of the gospel presentation of repentance and forgiveness of sins. Peterson comments, “The outcome of the

allusion that refers to the whole story of the crucifixion.⁵⁰ Thus, Luke shows that Jesus is the innocent one who fulfills the mission of the Servant, which is vicarious atonement.

Larkin concludes,

In presenting the fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12, Luke shows us an innocent Jesus suffering as a guilty transgressor before God. This is the historical basis for the doctrine of vicarious atonement on the basis of which forgiveness of sins may be offered. This historical basis or groundwork in the passion narrative gives us supporting evidence for the conclusion that Luke's soteriology does indeed have vicarious atonement as its foundation. Because its presentation concentrates on the objective historical basis, not the explicit theological interpretation that may be built on it, this aspect of Luke's soteriological thought is often missed. Still, Luke's use of the OT, especially Isa 53:12 at Luke 22:37 and its fulfillment in the passion narrative, helps us to see that the proper way to understand Luke's soteriology is with Jesus' death as vicarious atonement at its base.⁵¹

cross and resurrection is then shown in Luke 24 to be that of 'repentance and forgiveness of sins are to be proclaimed in (Jesus') name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem' (24:7).' So the sequence of Luke's Gospel at its climax is clear. The theological significance of Jesus' death is first disclosed at the Last Supper (even if the wording in 22:19-20 has been influenced by that of the Pauline churches). It is linked both to the fulfillment of the Passover (vv. 15-18) and the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant about the forgiveness of sins (vv. 19-20). The Son of Man then goes forward to his death 'as it has been determined.' . . . This divine determination is linked to the fulfillment of Isa 53, which is then illustrated in the narrative to follow. The scriptural necessity of the Messiah's death and resurrection is then specifically articulated in the teaching of Luke 24:26, 44-46, and made the basis for the challenge to preach the promised forgiveness of sins" (Peterson, "Atonement Theology in Luke-Acts," 62).

⁵⁰Larkin, "Luke's Use of the Old Testament as a Key to His Soteriology," 331.

⁵¹Ibid., 335. For his entire argument, see pp. 325-35. John Kimbell also concludes, "Careful consideration of a number of significant elements in Luke's passion narrative provides support to the thesis that atonement theology is integral to Luke's presentation of Jesus' death. First, just prior to his suffering and death, Jesus prays on the Mount of Olives for God to remove this "cup" from him. Attention to the extensive Old Testament use of "cup" imagery demonstrates this to be the cup of God's wrath that Jesus is bearing on behalf of sinners. Second, Jesus' final appearance before Pilate focuses on the release of the guilty Barabbas at the expense of the innocent Jesus' condemnation. The historical event serves as a poignant indication of the theological reality that Jesus was to die a substitutionary death in place of condemned sinners. Third, Jesus promises salvation to the repentant criminal as he hangs upon the cross. The dialogue between the crucified Jesus and the criminal, which revolves around God's retributive punishment, indicates Jesus provides salvation by suffering the penalty deserved by sinners. Fourth, darkness descends upon the land at midday during Jesus' crucifixion due to a failure of the sun. These narrative details, read in light of Old Testament imagery, show the darkness communicates a time of eschatological judgment that falls upon Jesus at the cross. Fifth, immediately following the darkness, the veil of the temple is torn down the middle. In keeping with Luke's overall narrative, Jesus' death established the new covenant and thus the temple ceases to be God's ordained place of forgiveness. In summary, Luke's passion presents the suffering and death of Jesus in narrative form as an atonement that removes God's judgment and brings new covenant forgiveness" (Kimbell, "The Atonement in Lukan

In Acts, Peter, after healing the lame man, indicated that the prophets foretold that Jesus would suffer, and on the basis of this suffering that the people should repent and have their sins blotted out (Acts 3:17-19). Though Luke usually focuses on Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension in Acts, the reference to suffering shows that only Jesus' death is in view (Acts 3:17).⁵² The implication of sins being blotted out indicates that Jesus' death is redemptive.⁵³ Peterson notes that Peter's "emphasis is also on the unjust suffering by which Jesus became the Savior able to offer a definitive forgiveness of sins and all the promised blessings of eschatological salvation."⁵⁴ He continues, "The suffering of an innocent person like this could only bring forgiveness of sins to others if it were penal and substitutionary, in the pattern of Isaiah 53."⁵⁵ Peter testified to the Sanhedrin about Jesus' crucifixion and exaltation, stating that they must obey God instead of men (Acts 5:30-31). In the speech, Peter referred to Jesus' crucifixion by using the language that Jesus was "hanging on a tree." This reference to Jesus hanging on a tree may allude to Deuteronomy 21:22-23, which shows that the curse is borne by one who hangs on a tree.⁵⁶ Peterson comments,

The raising of Jesus in this sequence of thought proclaims his vindication and ability to save from God's judgment even those who condemned him to death. While there might not be an articulated theology of Christ becoming a curse for us here (cf. Gal. 3:13-14), a penal and substitutionary dimension to this death may be assumed from the cumulative effect of the argument.⁵⁷

Theology," 115-16).

⁵²Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 77.

⁵³Bock, *Acts*, 174.

⁵⁴Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 77.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, n. 88.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 77; Bock, *Acts*, 247.

⁵⁷Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 77.

Paul, in his sermon in Acts 13:16-41, offered forgiveness of sins in verse 38, but added in verse 39: “And by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.” Clearly the other sacrifices could not free people from the law, only Jesus’ death could.⁵⁸ Consequently, the law cannot provide full forgiveness, but full forgiveness only came through Christ.⁵⁹

Luke’s theology in his books, particularly in the book of Acts, implicitly assumes Jesus’ death is a penal substitutionary atonement. The connection between belief and forgiveness is made implicitly because forgiveness is the direct benefit of Jesus’ death. Peter calls for those who listen to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. Morris argues,

This means both that God provided forgiveness in what he did in Christ, and that he intends that those who believe should turn decisively from their sins. It is true that forgiveness is not explicitly connected with the death of Jesus in this passage, but it is not possible to make sense out of Luke’s various statements on the matter apart from such connection.⁶⁰

The apostles show that the forgiveness of sins is directly tied to the gospel message, which proclaims Jesus’ penal substitutionary death and resurrection. Without the death, resurrection and ascension, there is no gospel message and no empowerment of the Spirit. However, Jesus’ death results in the forgiveness of sins. Jesus’ redemptive work is the foundation of the gospel message. James Denney explains,

It is not a sufficient answer to this to say that the connection of ideas asserted here between the forgiveness of sins or baptism, on the one hand, and the death of Jesus on the other, is not explicit; it is self-evident to anyone who believes that there is such a thing as Christianity as a whole, and that it is coherent and consistent with itself, and who reads with a Christian mind. The assumption of such a connection at once articulates all the ideas of the book into a system, and shows it to be at one

⁵⁸Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 78.

⁵⁹Bock, *Acts*, 259.

⁶⁰Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament*, 136.

with the Gospels and Epistles; and such an assumption, for that very reason, vindicates itself.⁶¹

Concerning Luke's theology of atonement, Peterson adds,

In terms of narrative development, particularly the placement of key speeches, in terms of theological development, particularly the introduction and interweaving of important Old Testament themes, Luke presents a view of Jesus' death that involves vicarious atonement. Although the resurrection is prominent in Luke's presentation of the early preaching and the atoning significance of Jesus' death is not always stressed, the differences of emphasis in the various sermons show that Luke was seeking to present a comprehensive and cumulative picture of early Christian thinking about the saving significance of those great events.⁶²

Pauline Passages

Paul's writings rarely refer to forgiveness of sins specifically. However, his doctrine strongly implies the forgiven state of the sinner which is grounded in the penal substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Paul clearly connects atonement and forgiveness in Ephesians 1:7 and in Colossians 2:14.⁶³

Ephesians 1:7. Paul states in Ephesians 1:7 that "in him we have redemption though his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace."⁶⁴ The context of the verse is Paul's enumeration of the blessings that all Christians have in Christ. These blessings included election before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:3), adoption as sons (Eph 1:5), redemption and forgiveness (Eph 1:7), knowledge of the mystery of his will (Eph 1:9), an inheritance that was predestined according to his purpose (Eph 1: 11), and sealing with the Spirit who is a guarantee of our

⁶¹James Denney, *The Death of Christ* (London: Tyndale, 1951), 51.

⁶²Peterson, "Atonement Theology in Luke-Acts," 71.

⁶³In 2 Cor 5:19, Paul indicates that God did not "count their trespasses against them." Since 2 Cor 5:16-21 focuses on reconciliation, this passage will be explored in chap. 8.

⁶⁴See also a parallel passage in Col 1:14 that has nearly identical wording.

inheritance (Eph 1:13-14). Paul uses a clear trinitarian structure though the passage to develop and enumerate the salvific blessings.⁶⁵ After stating the believer's election, adoption, and blessing in Christ, Paul expresses that believers have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of trespasses, according to his grace.

Two phrases describe the nature of redemption and forgiveness in this passage. The first is that these two blessings are "in him." The phrase "in him" refers to the believer's union with Christ. Union with Christ is the believer's connection to him such that the believer receives Christ's blessings.⁶⁶ Thus, the phrase "indicates an internal

⁶⁵O'Brien argues, "The divine saving purposes from eternity to eternity which are celebrated in Ephesians 1:2-14 are clearly set forth as the work of the triune God. First, the origin and source of 'every spiritual blessing' which believers enjoy is 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' (v. 3), who is also 'our Father' (v. 2). His initiative is seen at every point: it is he who has 'blessed us' (v. 3), 'chosen us' (v. 4), 'destined us to be his sons and daughters' (v. 5), 'lavished his grace upon us' (vv. 6, 8), made known to us his plan and purposes for the world (vv. 9-10), and accomplished all things in accordance with his will (v. 11). There is also significant mention of God's love, grace, will, purpose, and plan. God the Father, who has set his love and grace upon us, is working out his eternal plan. Secondly, the sphere within which the divine blessing is given and received is God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the first fourteen verses of this letter the name or title 'Christ' (or its equivalent or a personal pronoun) occurs no fewer than fifteen times. The phrase 'in Christ', 'in whom', or 'in him' appears eleven times. It is in Christ, that is, because of our incorporation in him, that God has blessed us. It is in him that both Jewish believers, who have become God's people (vv. 11-12), and Gentile Christians, who have been sealed as belonging to God (vv. 13-14), now belong to the redeemed humanity. In Christ it is God's intention to bring everything back into unity under his rule (1:9, 10). Thirdly, the Spirit's presence is in view at both the beginning and ending of the paragraph. He stamps his character on every blessing (they are 'spiritual', v. 3), and he marks God's ownership and serves as the guarantee of the fulfillment of his purposes (v. 14)" (Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 91-92).

⁶⁶Wayne Grudem gives a helpful definition of union with Christ: "Union with Christ is a phrase used to summarize several different relationships between believers and Christ, through which Christians receive every benefit of salvation. These relationships include the fact that we are in Christ, Christ is in us, we are like Christ, and we are with Christ" (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], 840). Constantine Campbell presents a helpful study on union with Christ in Paul's letters. His inductive study leads to this definition: "Union with Christ is defined as *union, participation, identification, incorporation* – terms that together do justice to the widespread variety and nuance of Paul's language, theology, and ethical thought about our relatedness to Christ. *Union* conveys faith union with Christ, mutual indwelling, Trinitarian, and nuptial notions. *Participation* refers to the partaking in the events of Christ's narrative. *Identification* encapsulates believers' location in the realm of Christ and their allegiance to his lordship. *Incorporation* gathers up the corporate dimensions of membership in Christ's body. These terms provide sufficient breadth through which the various characteristics of union with Christ are to be understood – the notions of locality, identification, participation, incorporation, instrumentality, Trinity, union, eschatology, and spiritual reality are all ably

close relationship; hence, redemption is integrally connected with Christ.”⁶⁷ The next phrase is that redemption and forgiveness occur “according to the riches of his grace.” This phrase conveys that the greatness of God’s grace grounds all of God’s redemptive work. Thus, the great abundance of God’s grace is “the ultimate cause of our redemption.”⁶⁸

The main idea of the passage is that Christians have redemption. The verb indicates that the believer’s possession of redemption is a present reality, not merely a future benefit.⁶⁹ The Greek term for redemption (*ἀπολύτρωσις*) denotes the idea of a payment. In general, “the NT usage of *ἀπολύτρωσις* refers to one set free on the basis of a ransom paid to God by Christ’s death.”⁷⁰ This redemption came through his blood. The

represented” (Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012], 420).

⁶⁷Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 205.

⁶⁸O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 107.

⁶⁹Ibid., 105.

⁷⁰Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 206. The debate centers on the meaning of the term: whether it has the active form, meaning solely *release due to receipt of the ransom*, or if it is in the middle, which means *the payment of a ransom*. Hoehner proposes that the term carries the idea of both, particularly in this passage. It carries the idea of release and that of payment (ibid). The importance is whether the term refers to only a future redemption in Jewish messianic ideas, or if it also refers to the present state of the believer which is grounded in the cross. For the whole argument, see Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 40-51. Morris states, “But the great obstacle to believing that these passages refer simply to a final deliverance along purely Jewish lines lies in the fact between the Old and the New Testaments stands the cross. The older writers spoke of a coming redemption, but without any precise idea of how God’s messiah would bring it about. The New Testament writers had in view a redemption purchased at the price of the precious blood. The words we have quoted must be interpreted in light of the whole Christian experience of God’s mighty intervention for man’s salvation and not in isolation from it. As we read, for example, the glowing words of St. Paul it is impossible not to be struck by the fact that he sees everything in the light of the cross which for him has made all things new. It is difficult to think of a reason why redemption in two passages should form an exception to this. On the contrary, in the light of Paul’s statements elsewhere about the cross, and about redemption, we must surely hold that here, too, he sees redemption only in the light of the cross. . . . To speak of a future redemption is not to imply that there awaits us a redemption which has no relationship to that accomplished at Calvary, being simply a deliverance from some outward enemy in the typical Jewish style. On the contrary, the future

phrase “through his blood” indicates the agency or the means that brought forth redemption. The blood refers to Christ’s sacrificial death. The sacrificial death is not an insignificant part of redemption, it is the very cause of it. O’Brien observes that “this abbreviated expression is pregnant with meaning, and signifies that Christ’s violent death on the cross as a sacrifice is the *means* by which our deliverance has been won. . . . it was obtained at a very great cost.”⁷¹ Hoehner relates Christ’s death to the sacrificial offerings in redemptive history:

The *διὰ* defines more precisely how redemption was accomplished. It was not only in connection with Christ, which could refer to his life, but, more specifically, it was by Christ’s death. However, it is more than mere death because the blood speaks of sacrificial death. The OT writings very carefully indicated that the shedding of blood was involved in sacrifice. Sacrificial animals were not killed by strangulation. The shedding of blood is necessary (Lev 17:11; Eph 2:13; 1 Pet 1:19) for without it there is no forgiveness of sins (Heb 9:22), and Paul makes it clear that God has been propitiated in Christ’s redemption, which was in connection with his blood (Rom 3:24-25), and that one is justified by means of Christ’s blood (Rom 5:9). Therefore, the ransom price in connection with deliverance was the sacrificial death of Christ. Certainly, there are numerous references in the NT which refer to the blood of Christ as the ransom price for our sins (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Rev 1:5; 5:9; cf. 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23).⁷²

The phrase “forgiveness of sins” is “appositional to redemption and further defines it. It is the immediate result of release from sin’s bondage by the payment of Christ’s sacrificial death.”⁷³ The result of Christ’s sacrificial death is that Christians have the forgiveness of sins.⁷⁴ Therefore, because of God’s great love for his people and by his

redemption is the consummation, the outworking of the redemption which was accomplished once for all by the death of the Redeemer” (Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 48).

⁷¹O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 106 (emphasis in the original).

⁷²Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 207.

⁷³Ibid. See also O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 106.

⁷⁴Hoehner observes, “However, this verse shows that as a result of redemption in Christ through his blood, God has cancelled or forgiven sins and the necessary punishment that goes with them. Redemption is the cause and forgiveness is the effect. God is not lenient with sin because sin had to be paid in order for the sinner to be set free. The effect of this payment is the cancellation of or release from all the

grace, believers have been redeemed through the death of Christ, and this death results in the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 2:13-14. Paul also refers to the relationship between forgiveness and the atonement in Colossians 2:13-14. Paul first encourages the Colossian believers to live their lives by faith, just as they had received Christ by faith (Col 2:6-7). He urges them not to fall into the trap of the false teachers' vain philosophical teachings, but to live according to Christ (Col 2:8). In verses 9 through 15, Paul explains theologically why their teaching should be rejected.⁷⁵ These following verses “also elaborate the significance for believers of Christ’s supremacy and exclusivity. Christ is the one universal Lord, and Christians, by identifying with Christ in faith, experience the benefits of that Lordship.”⁷⁶ He grounds his instruction in the fact that the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ in bodily form (Col 2:9), and then he explores the blessings that Christians have in union with Christ. Thus, “all that human beings can know or experience of God is found in Christ, and so Christians, by virtue of being *Christians*, have access to this knowledge and all these experiences.”⁷⁷ These blessings include Christ’s circumcision, which is imputed to the believer because of his union with Christ in his death and resurrection (Col 2:10-12). Then, Paul states in Colossians 2:13-14: “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the

obligations caused by sin. Christ in his sacrificial death has taken the punishment for us. The supreme sacrifice of Christ clearly shows that God does not take sin lightly” (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 208).

⁷⁵Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 184.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.” God also accomplished his victory over the demonic forces because of Christ’s death (Col 2:15). O’Brien summarizes,

Christ is the one whom they received as Lord. Let them continue to live in him, for he is the one in whom the entire fullness of Godhead dwells, the one in whom they have been made full, the person in whom they have been incorporated in death, burial and resurrection. It is in him that they have been raised and given new life. What really matters then is Christ and Christ alone.⁷⁸

The end of verse 13 says that God has “forgiven us all our trespasses.” Prior to that phrase, Paul states the condition of believers before their conversion. They were “dead” in their “trespasses and the uncircumcision” of their “flesh.” That believers were “dead in their trespasses” shows their separation from God because of sin before conversion.⁷⁹ Paul uses the phrase “uncircumcision of your flesh” in both the physical and metaphorical sense. In the physical sense, their uncircumcised status points to their status as Gentiles.⁸⁰ Yet Paul generally uses the term *σαρκὸς* in a metaphorical sense to denote the unregenerate nature. Thus, the uncircumcision of the flesh points to their alienation from God.⁸¹ Even though they were alienated from God, he “made [you] alive together with him.” Christians who were once dead are now made alive, which is the language of regeneration. Christ has regenerated unbelievers, and regeneration was accomplished “with him.” The phrase shows that the blessing of regeneration comes in

⁷⁸Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, WBC 46 (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 134.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 122.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*; David W. Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 169.

⁸¹O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 122-23; Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 207.

union with Christ.⁸² O'Brien notes,

The Colossians have come to life with Christ, who was dead and rose again; their new life, then, is a sharing in the new life which he received when he rose from the dead. It is only in union with him that death is vanquished and new life, an integral part of God's new creation, is received. Further, the following words make plain that the giving of this life is an act of pure grace (*χαρισάμενος*) since it is related to the forgiveness of sins.⁸³

Regarding forgiveness, the key grammatical issue to note is the relationship between the participle "having forgiven" (*χαρισάμενος*) and the main verb "made alive with" (*συνεζωποίησεν*). The participle could "convey a temporal (when he forgave all our trespasses . . .) or causal (for he forgave us all our sins . . .) sense."⁸⁴ The best approach may recognize that both senses are communicated here, and Pao articulates this approach well: "Both senses could be present here; what is important is that the reception of the new life is impossible without God's initiative in restoring people to himself."⁸⁵ Those who have been regenerated, or made alive, have also had their sins forgiven. Finally, the change in pronoun from "you" to "us" indicates that both Jews and Gentiles experience the forgiveness of sins because of their new life in Christ.⁸⁶

⁸²Pao describes the significance of the *συν* prefix to the main verb: "Paul points to the universal significance of Christ's death on the cross. The verb with the *συν*-prefix, "made alive [with]" (*συνεζωποίησεν*) links this clause with "you were buried" (*συνταφέντες*) and "you were raised" (*συνηγέρθητε*) in v. 12. "Made alive [with]" reversed "dead" and points to a new existence. The implied subject of this verb is God, while "with him (*σὺν αὐτῷ*) refers clearly to Christ. This double *συν*-reference points to the believers' participation in Christ's resurrection, which in turn brings about new life in them. In this sense, one again finds the connection between the physical and the spiritual as Christ's physical resurrection brought about the believer's spiritual resurrection" (Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 170). For a helpful excursus on the phrase "with Christ," see O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 169-171.

⁸³O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 123.

⁸⁴Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 170.

⁸⁵Ibid. Similarly, Moo chooses not to specify a relationship between the participle and the verb while indicating that there is an inherent relationship between being made alive and God's forgiveness. See Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 207-08. Contra O'Brien, who argues for a causal relationship between the participle and the main verb. See O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 123.

⁸⁶O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 124.

Paul states in verse 14, “by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.” The participle “cancelled” (ἐξάλειψας) indicates the means or the conditions which ensured God’s forgiveness.⁸⁷ The meaning of the phrase “the debt that stood against us with its legal demands” has been debated. The word χειρόγραφον “denotes a ‘document,’ especially a ‘note of indebtedness’ written in one’s own hand as a proof of obligation.”⁸⁸ The symbolism of the document points to our own debt before God.⁸⁹ As human beings, we owe God complete obedience; because of our disobedience, the penalty is death.⁹⁰ The term δόγμασιν which is translated as “legal demands” in the dative carries a causal element, showing that the reason for the IOU is the legal demands against us.⁹¹ Moo states, “All we humans had, as it were, ‘signed’ an IOU promising God perfect obedience, and this document has come to stand against us ‘because’ of God’s ‘decrees’ that we have failed to keep. Paul emphasized the negative verdict of the IOU by stating it twice: it *stood against us* and *condemned us*.”⁹² These debts have been canceled by

⁸⁷Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 170; Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 208-09.

⁸⁸O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 124.

⁸⁹For a summary of the interpretation of χειρόγραφον, see *ibid.*, 124-25; Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 209. Moo concludes, “And, on the whole, there is insufficient evidence to give to the word any nuance beyond its general well-attested meaning of ‘IOU’” (Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 210).

⁹⁰O’Brien shows that both Jews and Gentiles are under obligation: “The Jews had contracted to obey the law, and in their case the penalty for breach of this contract meant death (Deut 27:14-26; 30:15-20). Paul assumes that the Gentiles were committed, through their consciences, to a similar obligation, to the moral law in as much as they understood it (cf. Rom 2:14, 15). Since the obligation had not been discharged by either group the ‘bond’ remained against us (καθ’ ἡμῶν)” (O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 125).

⁹¹*Ibid.*

⁹²Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 211.

nailing them to the cross. The metaphor communicates that “God has canceled the bond by nailing it to the cross – this is a vivid way of saying that because Christ was nailed to the cross our debt has been completely forgiven.”⁹³ The phrase shows that the means by which his people are made alive and forgiven is the cross. Jesus’ death is the means by which every believer receives forgiveness, and the language of a canceled debt conveys forgiveness. Moo observes,

The imagery probably has nothing to do with any ancient means of canceling debts but arises from the actual nature of Christ’s crucifixion. In causing him to be nailed to the cross, God (the subject of the verb) has provided for the full cancellation of the debt of obedience that we had incurred. Christ took upon himself the penalty that we were under because of our disobedience, and his death fully satisfied God’s necessary demand for due punishment of that disobedience.⁹⁴

This debt has legal demands, but those demands are no longer held against believers. The demands were nailed to the cross. O’Brien concludes,

Those who had once been spiritually dead in their trespasses and sinful nature God had made alive. The Colossians had come to life with Christ who was dead and rose again. Their new life, then, was a sharing in the life which he received when he rose from the dead. God had forgiven them as Gentiles, along with Paul and other Jewish Christians, all their trespasses. Indeed, he had not only canceled the debt but also destroyed the document on which it was recorded. This he did by blotting out the bond with its damning indictment against us and nailing it to the cross when Christ died.⁹⁵

In the middle of his argument about rejecting the false teaching in Colosse, Paul shows that a benefit is forgiveness of sins. This forgiveness was grounded in the removal of the charges against believers at the cross. Though all people were guilty, their

⁹³O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 126.

⁹⁴Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 211-12.

⁹⁵O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 133. Verse 15 further discusses the victory over the powers. O’Brien notes in this same paragraph: “Further, he stripped the principalities and powers, who had kept us in their grip through their possession of this document, divesting them of their dignity and might. God exposed to the universe their utter helplessness leading them in Christ in his triumphal procession. He paraded these powerless ‘powers and principalities’ so that all the world might see the magnitude of his victory.”

indictment was placed on the cross so that they might be forgiven. Christ's death as a substitute for believers, so they could be forgiven, shows that his death is a substitutionary sacrifice. The punishment is penal because a death was required and Jesus' death fulfilled the punishment. The penal substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus resulted in new life and forgiveness of sins for those who believe in him. The cross cancelled the debt that condemned, resulting in the believer's forgiveness.

Hebrews 9 and 10

In chapter 8, the writer of Hebrews explained that the new covenant is a better covenant than the old covenant with a better mediator and better promises. Chapter 9 expounds on Christ's mediatorial work. Christ is a better mediator because his sacrifice was a permanent sacrifice, and it does not need repetition as did the Levitical sacrifices. Christ is also a better mediator because his blood allowed him to enter into heaven itself, while the blood of goats allowed the high priest to enter into a copy of the heavenly places. Chapter 8 also stated that the new covenant offers better promises. The writer quoted Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Hebrews 8:8-12, which enumerates these "better" promises. Among these promises is the guarantee that the Lord will offer full and final forgiveness.

The writer relates Jesus' death with forgiveness twice in chapter 9, the first of which occurs in Hebrews 9:22. While arguing for the supremacy of Christ's sacrifice over the Levitical sacrifices, the writer explains the necessity for blood to purify the sanctuary (Heb 9:21).⁹⁶ Then the writer states that forgiveness of sins requires the shedding of blood (Heb 9:22). The verse expresses a general principle that is crucial to

⁹⁶Peter O'Brien clarifies, "The ratification of the covenant was not the only occasion when purification by the sprinkling of blood was sanctioned under the old order. The tabernacle itself and the vessels of divine service were likewise sprinkled. By adding these other details from Old Testament cleansing rituals Hebrews indicates the comprehensive way in which blood was used for purification under the first covenant" (Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 334).

the writer's argument because "it provides the ground for comparing the animal sacrifices under the old covenant and the sacrifice of Christ that inaugurated the new covenant."⁹⁷ The blood of goats and bulls provided cleansing for the earthly temple, which was only a copy of the heavenly temple; Christ's blood brings cleansing to the heavenly temple, which the writer expresses in Hebrews 9:23-28. Yet forgiveness does not come without the shedding of blood. Barry Joslin observes,

No one in Judaism could have argued with such a statement. It is the biblical author's theological purpose to affirm this fundamental truth, as well as to argue that it is Christ's blood, and not that of animals, that effects true forgiveness and internal cleansing from the defilement of sin. Far from a mere cancelling of the rubric of the cultus, the writer of Hebrews takes pains to show that the Old Covenant cultus has met its end and goal in the New Covenant "cultus."⁹⁸

The word ἀφεσις which is translated forgiveness "could be used for release from debts, slavery, and imprisonment. But the context makes it clear that remission of sins is involved."⁹⁹

The second reference regarding forgiveness occurs at the end of the chapter. After establishing that Jesus' death is superior because it occurred once and for all (Heb 9:25-26), he states that death for each person comes once and after that, judgment (Heb 9:27). That each person is appointed to die once "not only provides an argument for the

⁹⁷William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, WBC 47B (Waco, TX: Word, 1991), 246. See also O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 334. For a helpful argument that provides exegetical support that verse 22 indicates a general principle, see Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 471-73.

⁹⁸Barry C. Joslin, "Christ Bore the Sins of Many: Substitution and the Atonement in Hebrews," *SBJT* 11 (2007): 87.

⁹⁹O'Brien adds, "cleansed and forgiveness are almost synonymous; at 10:18 forgiveness is associated with the sacrifice that removes sin, 10:4)" O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 335. See also Rudolf Bultmann, "ἀφίημι, ἀφεσις, παρήμι, πάρεσις," in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittell, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 509-12. Though Bultmann rightly translates the term as forgiveness, I do not accept his interpretation on page 512, that "God's forgiveness is not deduced from an idea of God or His grace, but is experienced as his act in the event of salvation."

unrepeatable nature of Jesus' death. He also prepares for his point about the significance in relation to the judgment of humankind, which follows immediately (v. 28), and is a prominent theme in the remaining chapters."¹⁰⁰ Christ, like other men, died once for a specific purpose, to atone for sin at his first coming. The writer uses the language of bearing sin (Heb 9:28a), and the statement that Christ bore sin is an allusion to the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53; it shows that Christ is the fulfillment of the Servant's sacrificial ministry.¹⁰¹ After arguing that the Servant's sacrifice is a penal substitutionary sacrifice, Joslin concludes,

If the above interpretation of Isaiah 53 is correct, and I am correct that the writer of Hebrews draws from this text, seeing its fulfillment in Christ, then what does that say for the question under consideration concerning Hebrew's theology of the death of Christ? There is strong evidence that for Hebrews the death of Christ is not only a *substitutionary* sacrifice, but a *penal substitutionary* sacrifice. Sin is defilement that brings death, be it the deaths of animals that grant symbolic and external cleansing (Lev 16) or the death of the Servant of the Lord that effects true cleansing from sin and righteousness (Is 53). For the writer of Hebrews to refer to the death of Christ in terms of Isaiah 53:12 implies an understanding of the larger context of the fourth Servant Song, especially that of 53:4-12. In keeping with his hermeneutic, the writer of Hebrews sees here (along with other NT authors) that Christ is the Servant who bears the sin and sin's consequences on behalf of many.¹⁰²

Christ's work in bearing sin demonstrates that his sacrifice was for the purpose of

¹⁰⁰O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 341. Lane expounds, "The uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice as an unrepeatable action that occurred ἀπαξ, 'once,' at the climax of history suggests a further line of argument. The common human experience that death occurs ἀπαξ provides an analogy for understanding the saving significance of Christ's priestly action. He was offered ἀπαξ to bear the sin of many, with the consequence that he will return to his people with the gift of salvation. The repetition of the term ἀπαξ ties vv 27-28 to v 26b and underscores the perfection of the sacrifice of Christ. By his single offering he dealt decisively with sin and secured final salvation" (Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 249).

¹⁰¹O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 341; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 250; Joslin, "Christ Bore the Sins of Many," 88-90.

¹⁰²Joslin, "Christ Bore the Sins of Many," 90 (emphasis in the original). He approvingly quotes Gathercole who states, "Statements about Christ's death for our sins . . . mean taking the consequences of our sins. The biblical assumption is that death is the consequence of sin, and therefore Christ takes that consequence even though the sin is not his own . . . it is at this point in the logic where substitution and penalty become difficult to prise apart" (Simon Gathercole, "The Cross and Substitutionary Atonement," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 21 (2003): 160-61).

removing and/or forgiving sin, and the language of bearing sin is the language of forgiveness. Therefore, “his bearing of sin implies the removing of sin from others, and the consequent liberation of those who enter into the benefits of his self-oblation.”¹⁰³ In the second coming, Jesus will not bear sin but he will save his own (Heb 9:28b). The writer elaborates that since sin has been dealt with at his first coming, there is no longer any need to atone for sin. Thus, at his first coming, Christ bore sin once and for all, and his sacrifice was efficacious; the purpose and result of Christ’s death was the forgiveness of sins.

In Chapter 10, the writer further shows that this forgiveness is complete and final. The writer continues his argument by showing that the Levitical sacrifices could not take away sin, precisely because they were offered repeatedly and served as an annual reminder of their sins (Heb 10: 1-4). The annual reminder through the sacrifice highlights the absence of final and complete forgiveness. Bruce helpfully explains the significance of the annual reminder of Israel’s sinfulness and the annual sacrifice:

This reminder . . . involves some appropriate form of action. The remembrance of sins may involve repentance for them, or it may involve persistence in them. But the remembrance of sins in the sight of God involves appropriate action on his part, either pardon or retribution. A pardon which has to be bestowed repeatedly – as far at least as its ceremonial expression is concerned – cannot convey the same peace of conscience as a pardon bestowed once for all.¹⁰⁴

Though the Levitical sacrifices brought cleansing from sin in the mind of the old covenant believers, the cleansing and removal of sin was not permanent.¹⁰⁵ The old covenant sacrifices were not sufficient to enact full and final forgiveness, which is a

¹⁰³F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews, Revised Edition*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 232.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 237.

¹⁰⁵Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 261-62.

foundational promise of the new covenant. Christ accomplished the will of the Father through his death, and thus he nullified the old Levitical sacrificial system (Heb 10:5-10).¹⁰⁶ However, Christ's sacrifice for sin occurred once, and as evidence of this completed work he sat down at the right hand of the Father. Through his sacrifice, he is forever perfecting those who are sanctified (Heb 10:11-14). The writer quotes Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy to emphasize that God will change the hearts of his people and that he will no longer remember their sin (Heb 10:15-17). Regarding the promise of forgiveness, Lane observes,

The second promise is God's gracious response to the plight of Israel under the old covenant, when the observance of the Day of Atonement amounted to an annual reminder of sins for the covenant people (10:3). The assurance that God will certainly not remember the sins and transgressions of his people under the new covenant presupposes the provision of a definitive offering for sins.¹⁰⁷

The writer next states the main point that follows from his argument. The full forgiveness of sins has occurred through the death of Christ, and his death inaugurated the new covenant that brings forgiveness. After exploring the new covenant promise of a new heart, O'Brien states regarding the promise of forgiveness,

God's promise not to remember sins, which is reinforced by the words *and lawless acts*, is the basis of a new relationship of heart-obedience towards God by his people. Hebrews 9-10 have made it plain that Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice achieves the fulfillment of this foundational promise. Now our author highlights the forgiveness of sins offered under the new covenant, as he rounds off the quotation with a brief comment he highlights the decisive significance of Christ's sacrifice in relation to the remission of sins (v. 18).¹⁰⁸

Therefore, since full forgiveness has come, any other sacrifice is no longer necessary (Heb 10:18). Bruce argues that "repeated remembrance of sins and repeated sin offerings

¹⁰⁶Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 498.

¹⁰⁷Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 268-69.

¹⁰⁸O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 359 (emphasis in the original).

went inevitably together; therefore, the irrevocable erasing of sins from the divine record implies that no further sin offering is called for. The finality of the sacrifice of Christ is thus confirmed.¹⁰⁹ In the context of the letter to the Hebrews, Jesus' death supersedes the sacrifices for the old covenant because they are not sufficient to bring final forgiveness. Only Christ's death brings full and final forgiveness.

The Scripture clearly states that Jesus' death ushers in forgiveness as a promise of the new covenant. In chapter 2, this study established that the Christ's death is a penal substitutionary sacrifice, because his death was the fulfillment of the Levitical sacrifices. Christ died as a substitute for sinners, just as the animals were substitutes for the Israelites. The death occurred as a penalty for sins. The writer of Hebrews demonstrates that only the death of Christ, as a penal substitutionary sacrifice effects final forgiveness. Lane concludes,

Throughout the course of the argument developed in 8:1-10:18, the themes of covenant, priesthood, and sacrifice have been integrated. The writer viewed the old covenant in priestly and sacrificial terms, and this accounts for the distinctive manner in which he relates the exposition of Christ's unique sacrifice to the oracle of Jeremiah concerning the new covenant in 10:15-18. Although the promises of the new covenant are not couched in cultic terms and make no reference to a new priesthood and sacrifice, the promise that God will certainly not remember sins and misdeeds any longer presupposes a definitive putting away of sins. That Christ entered the world to do the will of God shows that he is the one person in whom the intention of the new covenant was realized completely. His adherence to the will of God, even in death, indicates that God had inscribed his laws on the human heart. Christ's atoning death provided the definitive putting away of sins, which is the basis of Jeremiah's oracle.¹¹⁰

An Objection and Response

Darrin W. Snyder Belousek presents a robust argument for a varied approach to the atonement in his opposition of penal substitution. He devotes one chapter to argue

¹⁰⁹Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 248.

¹¹⁰Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 271.

that forgiveness of sin does not require penal substitution.¹¹¹ Regarding Hebrews 9:22, he argues that two qualifying phrases, “under the law” and “almost everything,” show that the requirement of death for forgiveness is not absolute. He argues that the phrase “almost everything” shows that there are exceptions to the requirement of shedding blood for forgiveness. Furthermore, he argues that the phrase “under the law” implies that God can forgive “apart from the law.” He explains,

This is where the qualification “under the law” in Heb 9:22 matters. The sin offering prescribed by the Levitical code was Israel’s God-ordained means of dealing with sins; but it does not follow that God is restricted to such means of dealing with sins. Ordaining a ritual means of atonement-making does not entail that God cannot deal with sin *directly*, apart from mediation through priest and sacrifice. Is God “under the law” *bound* by the Levitical code? Can God forgive sin only under the prescribed atonement rituals? Reading Heb 9:22 per penal substitution, as requiring bloodshed as the necessary prior condition of sins being forgiven, entails that God is ‘under the law’ and so is not free to forgive ‘apart from the law.’ For if God cannot forgive sin except as regulated ‘by law’ then there must be a ‘higher law’ that regulates God’s mercy: God may not forgive sin without penal satisfaction.¹¹²

He argues against Hebrews 9:22 that the shedding of blood is required for forgiveness, making two major points.

The first point is that the exceptions for the poor who cannot offer a sacrifice show that God is gracious and atonement is his act of grace, not a “market trade” from

¹¹¹Darrin W. Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace: The Message of the Cross and the Mission of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 192-208.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, 199-200. He notes the defense of Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach for this argument but insists that this defense is not adequate: “Now, in defense of penal substitution, Jeffery et al. have argued that the law of justice that limits the mercy of God is not an external constraint on God’s will. Rather, the law requiring bloodshed as the prerequisite of forgiveness is intrinsic to God-self. . . . If this be so, then for God to require sacrifice or impose punishment as prior condition of forgiving sins is simply for God to act in accord with his own character, for God to be God. But conversely, if this be so, then were God to make any exception to this intrinsic standard of justice and forgive sin ‘apart from law,’ God would compromise his very integrity and fail to be God. If this law is intrinsic to God, and if God be God, then there can be no exceptions to the law. Again, we shall see, Scripture testifies to God doing what penal substitution advocates say the intrinsic law of God’s character strictly forbids him doing, forgiving sin without bloodshed. Whether penal substitution depicts this law of justice as an external constraint on God or as the intrinsic character of God, Scripture testifies otherwise” (*ibid.*, 200-01).

humans to God.¹¹³ Belousek demonstrates that the poor, who are unable to submit even turtle doves for an offering, are able to present an acceptable offering for forgiveness of sins by submitting a grain offering. Because of his gracious nature, God bears the cost of the atonement himself, rather than placing it on people. His argument deserves to be quoted at length:

Forgiveness of sin *is* costly. We thus agree with [Leon] Morris's observation that "An essential element in the sacrificial approach is the element of cost." But we do not agree that the "cost" of forgiveness is "covered" by humans, who "pay the price" of God's mercy by offering God a compensatory sacrifice. One might argue that the cost of forgiveness is borne by the sinner because he is required to sacrifice an animal (or birds or grain) to be forgiven. Yet, as observed above, the sacrificial animal offered by humans is God's creature, the life of which (in the blood) already belongs to God. The original sacrifice of the atonement ritual, therefore, is made from *God's* side: it is God's own gift of life, released by the death of the sacrificial animal, that is poured out on the altar. Rather than forgiveness being the effect of human sacrifice to God, thereof, forgiveness is, in a real sense, *the sacrifice that God offers* on behalf of and for the sake of humans. Again, it is not really humans who make atonement by offering sacrifice, but God (represented by the priest) who makes atonement on our behalf. Thus, offering a sacrifice of atonement for sin signifies, not that God forgives sins in "exchange" for our "compensation" to God, but rather that forgiveness is costly to God, that God willingly bears the burden of our sins as the cost of covenant faithfulness.¹¹⁴

Belousek's second argument is that God is not limited, either by the law, his character, or anything else, to forgive sin as he chooses. Since God is not under the law, or limited to forgive according to the law, then he is free to forgive however he chooses. Belousek cites different examples from the Old Testament and the Gospels as evidence that God forgives apart from the law. One "exception" in the Torah is that God does not enact the death sentence on Adam and Eve. God, instead of following through on his promise, forgives them. He argues that the reference to death indicates a natural, not spiritual death, and natural death best fits the context of God's promise.¹¹⁵ Belousek

¹¹³Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace*, 194-97.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 198.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 201-202.

argues that the Old Testament prophets show that God forgives sin only because of his steadfast love. He then refers to Isaiah 6:7 as an example of God's forgiveness of Isaiah. He states: "God's atonement for Isaiah's sin is mediated not by a bloody sacrifice but by a burning coal."¹¹⁶ He also cites Psalms 51, arguing that though David committed bloodshed, there is no mention of a blood sacrifice to cover his sins. The purification mentioned is by hyssop, thereby showing that God is free to forgive without the shedding of blood.¹¹⁷ Regarding Jesus, Belousek indicates that Jesus forgives sin without any mention of a blood sacrifice but offers it freely by his word. Belousek contends that Jesus' proclamations of forgiveness are consistent with God's forgiveness in the prophets.¹¹⁸ He concludes,

The Scriptures bear manifold witness – from the story of Genesis to the cult in Leviticus to the message of the Prophets and Psalms to the ministries of John and Jesus – that God does not need bloodshed or sacrifice in order to have mercy on sinners and forgive sins. How, then, to interpret Heb 9:22, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins?" Clearly, Heb 9:22 does not set forth a "universal law" regulating divine forgiveness in "all dispensations" (per Hodge). For all the evidence from Scripture demonstrates that God can and does act freely to forgive sin and cleanse iniquity "apart from law" without required sacrificial bloodshed as a prior condition.¹¹⁹

The main point of Belousek's chapter is to show that the phrase in Hebrews 9:22 is not a rule that forgiveness requires sacrificial blood. While he effectively looks at many exceptions in Scripture, a better approach may be to consider the literary context of

¹¹⁶Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace*, 203.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 204-05.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 206-07.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 207. He continues on p. 208 (emphasis in the original): "Noticing that the statements in Heb 9:22 are formed in the *indicative* mood, rather than the imperative, we can put the point simply: this text is *descriptive* of the Levitical cult, not prescriptive and not so restrictive of God's sovereign freedom to forgive sin and cleanse impurity. According to the witness of Scripture, the sovereign God remains free to exercise the divine prerogative of mercy, free to forgive sins unbound by any law, whether external to God's will or intrinsic to God's character."

the writer's statement.¹²⁰ Belousek interprets the phrase "under the law" solely as Israel's God given means of atonement through sacrifice. Hence, he contends that God can choose, as an exception, to forgive "apart from the law." When the writer of Hebrews uses "under the law," he is not merely referring to a law of sacrifice, but the phrase refers to the old covenant itself;¹²¹ God provided the old covenant to Israel with its stipulations of sacrifice, and it defines their relationship with him. God gave his law so that his people would be able to have fellowship with him in spite of their sin. In verse 9:22, the writer notes that "almost everything" is an exception to blood sacrifice. However, since "under the law" is understood as the old covenant, then the exceptions are a part of that covenant and Belousek cannot use them to show that God can forgive "apart from the law." God provides forgiveness in the context of his covenant, and there is no forgiveness outside of a covenant relationship with him. Even with exceptions, the writer quickly reaffirms that forgiveness requires sacrificial blood. This affirmation applies both to the old and new covenant requirements for forgiveness. Lane summarizes,

The writer is prepared to recognize that when the former covenant was in force some provision was made for purgation without blood (e.g., Lev 5:11-13 [an offering of flour by a person too poor to purchase two doves]; Num 31:22-23 [purification by fire and water]). But he is quick to add that for decisive purgation blood is essential. On this understanding, the introductory *καί* in v 22b is adversative in force ('but') and introduces a principle that governs both the old and new cultus.¹²²

The writer supported his case by reminding his readers that blood cleansing accompanied the inauguration of the old covenant and the cleansing of the tabernacle (Heb 9: 18-21). Belousek also fails to consider the writer's main point, which is that Christ's sacrifice is

¹²⁰For his method in this chapter, see the last paragraph. Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace*, 193.

¹²¹Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 471; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 245.

¹²²Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 245-46.

better than the Levitical sacrifices. It was better because only Christ's sacrifice effects complete forgiveness. The Levitical sacrifices could not cleanse the conscience and could not enable final forgiveness. The new covenant promises complete forgiveness. The writer uses Hebrews 9:22 to advance the argument that the old covenant sacrifices were inadequate to bring forgiveness.¹²³ Belousek's appeal to exceptions under the law overlooks the writer's argument in Hebrews 9:11-10:18 and the contribution that verse 22 makes in this argument.¹²⁴

Belousek's companion argument is that humans cannot present a sacrifice as an economic transaction because God pays the cost. While the term redemption has market place connotations, hardly any proponent of penal substitution conceives of any exchange "that the 'cost' of forgiveness is 'covered' by humans, who 'pay the price' of God's mercy by offering God a compensatory sacrifice."¹²⁵ Humans cannot pay the price for forgiveness. God is the one who gives the law of sacrifice and God ultimately provides the sacrifice. The point of penal substitution is that God the Father, by sending his Son has paid the cost for redemption, a cost that is set solely by him. Contrary to Belousek's depiction of penal substitution, an "intrinsic law" does not "forbid" God from

¹²³Barry C. Joslin, *Hebrews, Christ, and the Law: The Theology of the Mosaic Law in Hebrews 7:1-10:18* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2008), 236; Joslin, "Christ Bore the Sins of Many," 87.

¹²⁴If Belousek conceives of the law as God's moral commandments, then still God is not "bound" in any way by his law, yet God does not act "apart" from or against his law. The law is the tangible expression of God's holy character. See Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 313. Thomas Schreiner states, "The moral norms of the law are not externally imposed on God. *The norms of the law express God's character, the beauty and holiness of his person*" (Thomas R. Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," in *The Nature of the Atonement*, eds. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006], 77). The law is not "imposed" on God, nor is the law "intrinsic" to him in a way that forces him to require a sacrificial offering. God's actions are consistent with the law because he gave it and he administers it (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 313-15).

¹²⁵Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace*, 198.

forgiving without sacrificial blood; the weight of biblical evidence shows that God has revealed that *he* requires sacrificial blood for forgiveness.

Finally, the exceptions to the rule that forgiveness requires sacrifice must to be considered not only in a literary context of Hebrews, but also in a redemptive-historical context. One example is Isaiah's forgiveness. Though blood was not shed in that instance, the purpose of the passage indicates that God cleanses Isaiah for service. The larger context of Isaiah shows that God would address the sin of humanity through the sacrifice of the Suffering Servant. The Servant bore sin and effects forgiveness for God's people. Likewise, Jesus' forgiveness of sins during his ministry should be interpreted in light of the cross, which will bring forgiveness for all who believe. Jesus often said that the Son of Man must suffer, die, and rise again.¹²⁶ He foreshadowed his death by saying that it was the blood of the new covenant that is shed for the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20). Consequently, Belousek's "exceptions" fail to acknowledge God's redemptive-historical approach regarding punishment of sin. Paul, in Romans 3:25, argues that God did not fully judge sinners for their sin during the Old Testament era. The writer makes the same point in Hebrews 9 in covenantal language. Final forgiveness did not occur with the old covenant sacrifices because the sacrifices were insufficient. The writer of Hebrews implies that God passed over sins until Jesus came. Jesus' death brings full and final forgiveness, and his death is a better sacrifice than the Levitical sacrifice and the sacrifice that inaugurated the old covenant. Both passages show that God has chosen to delay his judgment until the crucifixion. The cross reveals his righteousness because it shows that he did not let sin continue unpunished. Belousek's

¹²⁶Matt 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:19; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22; 18:33. The gospel of John, using different language, points to the hour of the crucifixion. See the discussion below regarding Jesus' glorification in the gospel of John. See also John 2:19-21; 10:10-15; 12:27.

“exceptions” are in fact God’s gracious provision until he has dealt with sin at the cross.¹²⁷

Synthesis

The new covenant blessing of forgiveness required penal substitutionary atonement. The sin and guilt sacrifices resulted in forgiveness; the blood of the bulls and goats effected forgiveness for the offerers. The Day of Atonement sacrifices cleansed the sanctuary and the banished scapegoat symbolized the removal of sin from the community. The sacrifice of the Suffering Servant was a penal substitutionary sacrifice because the Servant died as a substitute for his people, and he bore sin and its effects on behalf of his people. Furthermore, the Servant’s sacrificial death resulted in at least two markers of forgiveness: he took away the debilitating results of sin, and he brought about the justification of many, which naturally implies that the benefit of his sacrifice for his people is, they are no longer guilty of their sin.

Jesus Christ’s penal substitutionary sacrifice effects forgiveness. Jesus proclaimed at the Last Supper as he instituted communion that his sacrifice was for the forgiveness of sins. Luke assumes that penal substitutionary atonement is the basis for gospel preaching. Furthermore, in the gospel presentation, he shows a relationship between belief in the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sins. Paul shows a direct relationship between sin and the atonement twice. First, he states in Ephesians 1:7 that redemption and forgiveness are grounded in Christ’s death. Since this redemption is through his blood, the blood denotes sacrifice and refers to the Old Testament sacrifices; the Day of Atonement, the guilt and sin offerings are penal substitutionary sacrifices that

¹²⁷Space does not allow for a comprehensive rebuttal, including Belousek’s interpretation of the Servant and his interpretation of Rom 3:25-26. Yet this interaction was designed to show some problems with his approach to penal substitutionary atonement and forgiveness.

provide forgiveness. Second, he contends in Colossians 2:13-14 that believers who were previously dead were regenerated and their sins were forgiven. The basis of forgiveness is that the debt that was owed was canceled because of Christ's death. Christ died as a penal substitute to bring forgiveness. The writer to the Hebrews shows that a death is required for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus is the typological fulfillment of the Day of Atonement sacrifices because only his death, which occurred once, brings true forgiveness. The Levitical sacrifices were insufficient to bring about full and final forgiveness. Only Christ's death inaugurated the new covenant and provided complete forgiveness as a fulfillment for the new covenant promise. Thomas Schreiner notes,

The author's entire discussion of the OT cult and Christ's sacrifice in Heb. 9:11-10:18 leads to this ringing conclusion. The blood spilled to inaugurate the old covenant was absolutely necessary for the covenantal arrangement, but only the sacrifice of Christ truly secures forgiveness of sins. The former always anticipated and pointed toward the latter. Since Christ has achieved complete forgiveness, further sacrifices were unnecessary.¹²⁸

The culmination of the evidence in both the Old and New Testament shows that God's forgiveness of sin is grounded in Jesus Christ's penal substitutionary death.

Conclusion

This chapter argues that forgiveness requires penal substitutionary atonement. Both the Old and New Testament passages show this connection. The gospel accounts, Paul's letters, and the letter to the Hebrews demonstrate that only Jesus' vicarious sacrifice brings forgiveness. Sin alienates people from a Holy God. Forgiveness is necessary to restore fellowship with God. First, God must forgive judicially, to show his

¹²⁸Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 396. Schreiner argues that in the context of the letter, anyone who returns to the Levitical sacrificial system cannot receive forgiveness. Because there no longer remains a sacrifice of sins (Heb 10:26), he adds, "Christ's death alone fully and finally forgives sins, those who turn from it cannot be forgiven. Conversely, those who rest on Christ's sacrifice alone for the forgiveness of sins find that no other offering is needed. He has secured forgiveness once for all" (ibid., 396-97).

righteousness and to deal with sin justly. The cross displays God's justice because he does not allow sin to continue unpunished and he places the punishment upon Christ in his voluntary, all-sufficient sacrifice. However, forgiveness also restores the relationship between God and his people. Christ's penal substitutionary death deals with the problem of sin and provides forgiveness for his people.¹²⁹

¹²⁹The new creation element regarding forgiveness will be explained in chap. 8 regarding penal substitutionary atonement and reconciliation.

CHAPTER 5
PENAL SUBSTITUTION AND
TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

This chapter demonstrates that the transforming work of the Spirit is a result of penal substitutionary atonement. This study first explores the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament. Next, it surveys some key New Testament passages to show that the penal substitutionary atonement brings about the Spirit's transformation of believers. This chapter also shows that the Spirit is the agent of the new creation because he gives life and he is the foretaste of their future blessings.

One of the foundational promises for the new covenant is that God would change the hearts of his people. The rationale for this promise is Israel's perpetual unfaithfulness under the Mosaic covenant, which began from the first generation of the delivered Israelites who worshiped the golden calf, until the generation to whom Jeremiah prophesied.¹ This promise occurs in two forms. The first form of the promise is that God would place his law in their hearts (Jer 31:33). The law is understood to be the summation of the commandments, ordinances, and decrees that God has revealed; it is the complete revelation of the will of God to Israel.² The heart is the place of emotions

¹J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 580; Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, WBC 27 (Dallas: Word, 1995) 131; Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, AB 21B (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 467.

²Keown, Scalise and Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 134.

and decisions, for the innermost motivations come from the heart.³ God promised that the Torah (Law) would be written within the heart of his people instead of stones, as under the old covenant.⁴ While the law was physically localized on tablets in the ark of the covenant, God promised a better provision in the new covenant by ensuring that the law would be within the heart of each covenant member.⁵ The effect of this writing would result in obedience. Therefore, “Yahweh himself proposes to bring about the necessary change in the people’s inner nature which will make them capable of obedience.”⁶ After arguing that God’s people are still required to obey his law, Paul Williamson observes,

But it is equally clear here that God himself is going to facilitate such obedience, and this clearly constitutes one of the major differences with respect to this future covenant. God is going to put his law – the expression of his will – in their minds; God is going to write his word on their hearts, rather than on tablets of stone. . . . Thus a major difference between the old covenant and the new is that the obligations of the covenant will be internalized in the new covenant community (cf. Jer 24:7; 32:39). Consequently, the primary objective of the earlier covenant (a permanent divine-human relationship) would now be attainable.⁷

³Keown, Scalise and Smothers comment, “The heart stands for the mind, the organ of memory (Jer 3:16), of understanding (Deut 29:3) of ideas (Jer 23:16), and, especially of conscious decisions of the will (Jer 3:10; 29:13). Only God is able to discern what is in an individual’s heart (Jer 17:9-10)” (ibid). Alex Luc explains, “The OT terms *lēb* and *lēbāb* are generally translated as ‘heart,’ ‘mind,’ and in some instances ‘chest’ and ‘conscience.’ In the OT, the words have a dominant metaphorical use in reference to the center of human psychical and spiritual life, to the inner life of the person” (Alex Luc, “לֵב,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 749).

⁴Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 581.

⁵Keown, Scalise and Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 133-34; James M. Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testament* (Nashville: B. & H. Academic, 2006), 43.

⁶Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 581.

⁷Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Purpose* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 154. Williamson quotes Brueggemann, who summarizes, “The contrast between old and new covenant is in its mode of reception. The old covenant from Sinai was resisted until it was broken and abrogated. The new covenant will not be resisted, because the torah – the same commandments as at Sinai – will be written on their hearts. That is, the commandments will not be an external rule which invites hostility, but now will be an embraced, internal identity-giving mark, so that obeying will be as normal and as readily accepted as breathing and eating. Israel will practice obedience because it belongs to Israel’s character to live in this way. All inclination to resist, refuse, or disobey will

The second form of the promise is that the indwelling Holy Spirit would give believers a new heart. In Ezekiel 11:19-20, God promised to give them one heart and a new spirit, and because of this united heart and new spirit, they will follow his laws. As noted previously, the heart denotes the mind, especially as the “conscious decisions of the will.”⁸ Regarding the promise of one heart, Iain Duguid notes, “The Lord will create in his new people ‘an undivided heart,’ not so much in the sense of mutual agreement among the people, but rather in the sense of undivided loyalty to the Lord, a single-minded commitment to him.”⁹ The promise of a new spirit appears in the second line, which essentially repeats the idea of a new heart, which is the “transformation of the human spirit.”¹⁰ God also promised to remove a heart of stone and to give them a heart of flesh, which means that God would replace the hearts that were unresponsive to him

have evaporated, because the members of the new community of covenant are transformed people who have rightly inclined hearts. There will be easy and ready community between God and reconstituted Israel” (Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 293). God gave a similar promise in Deuteronomy prophetically after the nation has experienced the curses for apostasy and disobedience. The Lord promised that he will circumcise the heart with the result that they would love him and live (Deut 30:6). Peter Craigie observes, “In [Deuteronomy] 10:16, the ‘circumcision of the heart’ is a part of the exhortation to obedience; it was something required of the people that they could do. In 30:6, it is seen rather to be an act of God and thus indicates the new covenant, when God would in his grace deal with man’s basic spiritual problem. When God ‘operated’ on the heart, then indeed the people would be able to love the Lord and live (v. 6).” V. 10 states that the people are still required to obey, thus “the new covenant, involving the direct operation of God in man’s heart, will still involve obedience, an obedience springing out of love of God in his continuing mercy and grace” (Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976], 364). For a salvation-historical explanation of this text see Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, NAC 4 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 387-89.

⁸Luc, “לֵב,” 749; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 353.

⁹Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 151. Block observes, “Yahweh’s intention is to instill in his people a singleness of heart, which expresses itself in focused and exclusive devotion to him (Jer. 32:39)” (Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*, 353).

¹⁰Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*, 353; Lamar Eugene Cooper, Sr., *Ezekiel*, NAC 17 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 143.

with a heart that is warm and receptive to him.¹¹ While the Lord's promise of the Spirit is not explicit in Ezekiel 11:29-20, the promise became so in Ezekiel 36:25-27. God first promised that he would cleanse his people from their uncleanness, meaning that God himself would purify his people from sin. After God promised a new heart and a new spirit, he promised to place his Spirit within them. The effect of placing his own Spirit in his people would empower them to obey his law. Leslie Allen summarizes,

How could Israel hope to maintain Yahweh's covenant standards, after their signal failure in pre-exilic times? . . . Yahweh would creatively endow Israel with new wills that were to be sensitive rather than stony and hard in their reactions to Yahweh's will. Thanks to him, their lives would be governed by a new impulse that was to be the expression of Yahweh's own spirit. He would remake their human natures, so that they marched to the music of the covenant terms that expressed Yahweh's nature and will. Only thus could the covenant relationship become a living actuality rather than a doctrinal truth. Only thus could the old ideal of Yahweh's people in Yahweh's land . . . become a reality.¹²

The substance of this promise is that God's people would have a transformed heart. The transformed heart would cause them to obey his law and the internalization of this law would result in their obedience. The Jeremiah and the Ezekiel passages indicate that Yahweh would initiate the transformation of his people's hearts. Williamson argues that Ezekiel 36:27 is influenced by Jeremiah 31:33, with the exception of the "infusion with the Spirit of Yahweh taking the place of an internalization of the divine Torah (apparently the same inner change described differently)."¹³ Yet the New Testament makes a stronger connection – the indwelling of the Spirit is the means by which the Torah is implanted in the heart, causing obedience.¹⁴ The permanent indwelling of God's

¹¹Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1-19*, WBC 28 (Dallas: Word, 1994), 165; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*, 353.

¹²Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, WBC 29 (Dallas: Word, 1990) 179. See also Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*. 172.

¹³Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*. 172.

¹⁴See Rom 8:1-17 (especially vv. 1-4) and 2 Cor 3:1-18. See Thomas Edward McComiskey,

Spirit is the material cause for the transformation of the heart, which would result in submission to God's law. Thus, the enduring promise for the obedience of God's people is that his Spirit would empower them to obey. Bruce Ware observes,

The problem with the old covenant, then, is not the law; the problem, rather, is with the nature of those persons who are called to covenant faithfulness but who instead transgress the law. God's sure and certain remedy to this problem of covenant infidelity is to effect a fundamental transformation of human agents under the new covenant, and he does this as his Spirit indwells those covenant participants (Ezek 36:27), making his law a very part of their inner life (Jer 31:33).¹⁵

Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Scripture demonstrates that the Holy Spirit performed various ministries in the Old Testament and among Old Testament saints. The Spirit was present in the creation of the world (Gen 1:2) and was active in the created order (Job 26:13). The Spirit also equipped people for special ministry; one example is that he equipped Bezalel and Oholiab for craftsmanship (Exod 25-31), which was crucial in the construction of the tabernacle. The Spirit empowered Moses' leadership (Num 11:17) and equipped the seventy elders to assist in the administrative needs for Israel. The Spirit worked through judgeships of Othniel (Judg 3:10), Gideon (Judg 6:34), Jephthah (Judg 11:29), and Samson (Judg 13:25, 14:19, 15:14) to deliver the Israelites from their surrounding enemies. The Holy Spirit anointed kings Saul (1 Sam 10:10) and David (1 Sam 16:13),¹⁶

The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 115-16; Christopher J.H. Wright, *Knowing the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 130-31; David G. Peterson, *Transformed by God: New Covenant Life and Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 141-45.

¹⁵Bruce A. Ware, "The New Covenant and the People(s) of God," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 76-77.

¹⁶W. J. Dumbrell argues that the Spirit's activity among kings and leaders brings about God's rule in Israel. Thus, the Spirit advances the Kingdom of God. See W. J. Dumbrell, "Spirit and Kingdom of God in the Old Testament," *RTR* 33 (1974): 1-10.

and he empowered the prophets and gave them supernatural insight for Israel. The Spirit of God thus indwelt and empowered Old Testament believers for various tasks of service and leadership.¹⁷

While the empowerment of the Spirit is similar in some respects to his empowerment in the New Testament, there are two differences between in his work among Old Testament saints and his work in Christians. First, the Spirit's ministry was limited in scope. He does not indwell or empower the whole community but only certain individuals.¹⁸ He empowered the judges, King Saul, and David for the purpose of leadership. The Spirit also empowered leaders in Israel to prophecy. When Joshua protested that some leaders were prophesying, Moses stated that he wished that all God's people would prophecy and be filled with the Spirit (Num 11:29). Ware notes that "this account suggests that God had given his Spirit only to a select few in Israel, that Moses was fully aware of this fact, and that he even pondered longingly what it would be like if all God's people had the Spirit."¹⁹ Thus, Moses' statement shows that the Spirit does not

¹⁷For studies on Holy Spirit's work in the Old Testament, see Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976); Wilf Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995); Christopher J.H. Wright, *Knowing the Holy Spirit Through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006); Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 881-85; David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner, eds., *Presence, Power, and Promise: the Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011); Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 636-37; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit – In Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 3-21; Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 25-41.

¹⁸Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 6; Anthony Thiselton argues that though the Spirit only indwells some individuals, he fulfilled God's purpose for the community by empowering the leaders. See Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit*, 3.

¹⁹Ware, "The New Covenant and the People(s) of God," 78. Dennis Cole considers the consequences of a universal indwelling of the Spirit in Israel. "Moses commends the Lord's movement among the two elders and expresses the desire that all the people would be so endowed with his Spirit. In doing so they would evidence the aspirations of a closer relationship to God. An undercurrent in Moses' response may be his own desire for further relief from the heavy responsibility of leadership" (Dennis R. Cole, *Numbers*, NAC 3B [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000], 195).

indwell or empower all Israel. A second feature was that the Spirit did not reside permanently with believers in the Old Testament. The Spirit may depart from someone whom he previously empowered or indwelt.²⁰ God removed the Spirit from Saul because of his disobedience (1 Sam 16:14). David feared that the Spirit would depart from him because of his sin of adultery and murder (Ps 51:11). Elisha requested a double portion of the Spirit before Elijah was taken away. Scripture shows that the Holy Spirit restricted his work to leaders and others for service and he did not dwell permanently with them.²¹

The Old Testament Scriptures predict a time when the Spirit will be present in the nation within all of God's people. In addition to Ezekiel 36:27, Joel 2:28-29 shows that the Spirit would be given to all of his people. The prophet proclaimed that the Lord would pour out his Spirit on *all* flesh. Douglas Stuart observes that "in the new age all of God's people will have all they need of God's Spirit. The old era was characterized by the Spirit's selective, limited influence on some individuals: certain prophets, kings, etc. But through Joel the people are hearing of a new way of living, in which everybody can have the Spirit."²² The phrase "all flesh" in context refers to the whole nation of Israel in the restoration, though the more significant fulfillment would occur in Acts, specifically as the Spirit was given to the Samaritans and the Gentiles.²³ The Lord described that the

²⁰Ware, "The New Covenant and the People(s) of God," 78.

²¹Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 770; The doctrine of the Old Testament work of the Holy Spirit raises the question of his work in regeneration among Old Testament saints. The Scriptures do not give a clear answer and there are many approaches to this question. There is a spectrum of opinion between those who believe that the spirit regenerated and indwelt old covenant believers and those who believed that the Spirit did not indwell or regenerate old covenant believers. For a summary of the different approaches, see Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 9-24. Hamilton proposes that the Spirit was with the old covenant believers but did not indwell them. Regeneration occurred because of God's presence in the temple. The Spirit indwells new covenant believers, who are the new temple. Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 1-5, 169.

²²Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, WBC.31 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 260-61.

²³David Allan Hubbard, *Joel and Amos*, TOTC 25 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989),

effect of the Spirit on his people is that they would have dreams and visions. Yet, the extent of the Spirit's work is perhaps the most important feature of this verse. The Spirit would indwell male and female, as well as the young and the old. The Lord's prophecy indicates the removal of socioeconomic restrictions, indicating that the Spirit would indwell both male and female servants. Garrett concludes,

The major characteristic of the outpouring of the Spirit is its universality. All the people of God receive the Spirit. The text specifically erases the major social distinctions of the ancient world: tender, age, and economic status. In an era in which men (not women), the old (not the young), and the landowners (not slaves) ruled society, Joel explicitly rejected all such distinctions as criteria for receiving the Holy Spirit. For Paul the fulfillment of this text is that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, and neither slave nor free.²⁴

Holy Spirit and Penal Substitutionary Atonement in the New Testament

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John provides much teaching concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught Nicodemus that he must be born again, born of the Spirit (John 3:3-5), which is the Spirit's work of regeneration. Jesus also instructed the Samaritan woman that his water will become within the one who drinks it, a well that would spring into eternal life (John 4:14), which may be an allusion to the regeneration by the Spirit. Jesus taught regarding the Spirit extensively throughout his last conversations with his disciples (John 14:16-17, 26, 15:26, 16:7-15). However, for this study, two passages are important to consider regarding penal substitutionary atonement and the work of the Spirit: John 7:37-39 and John 16:7-11.

In John 7:37-39, Jesus proclaimed on the last day of the feast that anyone who

73; Erika Moore, "Joel's Promise of the Spirit," in *Presence, Power, and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament*, ed. David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 250-56

²⁴Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, NAC 19A (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 369.

believed in him, from him rivers of living water would come forth. The feast was most likely the Feast of Tabernacles,²⁵ and Jesus indicated that he is the ultimate fulfillment of this feast. Jesus is the one who quenches the thirst with living water, and the apostle clarifies that Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit.²⁶ First, the Spirit, whom believers would receive, was not yet given. The verb given is supplied for clarity by most translators, so the Greek text literally reads “the Spirit was not yet” or “it was not yet Spirit.”²⁷ The statement does not deny the work of the Spirit or the existence of the Spirit.²⁸ The

²⁵For a detailed description of the Feast of Tabernacles, see Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 371-73.

²⁶Two interpretive issues are present in John 7:37-38. The first interpretive issue determines from whom the streams of living water will flow: from believers or from Christ. The issues derive from the grammatical construction of the passage and how the sentences are punctuated. For a helpful summary, see D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PTNC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 322-23. For advocates of the view that the living waters flow from the believer, see Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 374-79; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 323-28. Other commentators argue that the living water in verse 38 flows from Jesus. For a description of this view, see Gary Burge, *John*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 228-29; Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 67. Second, commentators debate about the source of Jesus’ Scripture citation when he says “Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” Though there is not an Old Testament passage with these words, a satisfactory answer is that this quote arises out of the prophetic tradition. See Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 240-41. For a detailed listing of the many Scriptures that may contribute to this tradition, see Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 325-28. The most satisfying interpretation according to the grammar is that the living water arises from believers, with the understanding that believers are not the source of living water to other believers. Only Jesus is the source. D. A. Carson summarizes, “If this is correct, Jesus in John 7:37-39, prompted perhaps by the Feast of Tabernacles, thinks of that Feast in Nehemiah 9, and that chapter’s use of the accounts of the provision of water from the rock, and the connection Nehemiah draws between water/manna and law/Spirit. But he takes one further step, the same Christological step he has taken when talking of worship with the woman at the well, or when talking of manna with the crowds in John 6: he insists he alone can provide the real drink, the satisfying Spirit. ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink’ (v. 37). The Scripture has itself promised this bountiful provision of living water welling up in believers: all the Old Testament portrayals of this rich bounty are understood to be at bottom anticipations that point to the richest provision of all. John himself explicitly confirms the connection between water and Spirit (v. 39)” (Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 328).

²⁷Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 328; Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 378.

²⁸Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 329; Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 378-79; S. H. Hooke, “The Spirit Was Not Yet,” *NTS* 9 (1962-63): 379-80.

statement means that the Spirit had not permanently indwelt all believers at this point in redemptive history.²⁹ Jesus later promised that the Spirit would be with and in the disciples after he left (John 14:17). The second observation is that the Spirit was not given because Jesus had not been glorified. There is an intimate connection between the Spirit being given and the glorification of Christ. This statement raises the question of what John means by glorification. Jesus' glorification is nothing less than his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.³⁰ However, the crucifixion is a vital part of Jesus' glorification.³¹ Thus, the Spirit would not come until Christ completes his earthly work, which commences with the crucifixion (cf. John 16:7). Morris states that "Calvary is the necessary prelude to Pentecost. Once again John refers to the cross in terms of glory, not of shame. Once again he sees the cross and the glory as one. And he views the atoning work of Christ as the necessary prelude to the work of the Spirit."³² The cross is a vital

²⁹Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 120.

³⁰Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 329.

³¹Köstenberger describes glorification as "a Johannine euphemism for the cluster of events centering in the crucifixion" (Köstenberger, *John*, 241). Gerhard Kittel remarks, "The turning point, the entry into δόξα, is the cross, the dying of the corn of wheat . . . This emphasis is itself Johannine to the extent that John has a particularly strong sense of the causal connection between dying and bringing forth fruit, or between the death and resurrection of Jesus, between the suffering and the glorification of the Son of Man. The δόξα derives from His death. At the same time, what Jesus does in His passion is a process through which ὁ θεὸς ἐδοξάσθη ἐν αὐτῷ ([Jn] 13:31). It is acknowledgment of the divine δόξα in the sense already mentioned, and it carries with it certainty of participation in the same δόξα: ὁ θεὸς δοξάσει αὐτὸν ἐν αὐτῷ ([Jn] 13:32). In the sense to have regard to the passion is to see δόξα even in the earthy life of Jesus" (Gerhard Kittel and G. von Rad, "δόξα," in *TNDT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromily [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964], 249).

³²Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 379. Margaret Pamment presents a helpful study showing the relationship between glory and the cross. Yet, her conclusion that glory is love exhibited through self-giving sacrifice seems reductionistic. See Margaret Pamment, "The Meaning of *doxa* in the Fourth Gospel," *Zeitschrift Für De Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 74, nos. 1-2 (1983):12-16, Charles A. Gieschen, while arguing against Bultmann's contention that the Gospel of John is revelation apart from atonement, shows that glorification and exaltation is tied to the atoning work of Christ and the removal of sins. See Charles A. Gieschen, "The Death of Jesus in the Gospel of John," *CTQ* 72 (2008): 252-54.

step prior to the permanent outpouring of the Spirit.

Jesus taught about the Spirit's work in the world during one of his last conversations with his disciples (John 16:7-11). He encouraged the disciples that his leaving was advantageous for them because the Spirit would not come otherwise (John 16:7). This statement reinforces that in redemptive history, Jesus must be glorified before the Spirit would come upon the church. Jesus shared the content of the Spirit's ministry in the world: "And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:8-11).

This passage presents several interpretive challenges, and many scholars have debated the precise meaning of the text.³³ Perhaps the most exegetically consistent interpretation of the passage is D. A. Carson's approach, so his layout is generally followed here with some modifications.³⁴ First, the verb ἐλέγχω should be translated as

³³One interpretive challenge is the translation of ἐλέγχω, either as convict or convince. A second interpretive challenge is the parallel structure of ὅτι and the relationship of each phrase that corresponds to sin, righteousness, and judgment. Some interpret ὅτι clauses as causal, while others interpret the ὅτι clauses as explanatory, and others render the ὅτι clauses as some combination of explanatory and causal. Another complicating factor is the recipient of the Spirit's convicting work. Some interpreters argue that the Spirit's work is directed to the world, others that the work is directed toward the disciples. For a helpful taxonomy, see D. A. Carson, "The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11," *JBL* 98 (1979): 549-58.

³⁴D.A. Carson's approach is not without difficulty, but it seems the most exegetically satisfying. However the noted alternate interpretations, while not as exegetically consistent, are theologically accurate. For Carson's approach, see *Ibid.*, 545-66; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 534-39; *idem*, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus: An Exposition of John 14-17* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 138-48. John Aloisi generally follows Carson's interpretation with some helpful modifications. See John Aloisi, "The Paraclete's Ministry of Conviction: Another Look at John 16:8-11," *JETS* 47 (2004), 55-69. For alternate interpretations of this passage, see Köstenberger, *John*, 471-73; Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 618-620; Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 469-70.

“convict,” and it is the main verb that governs the following three clauses.³⁵ Thus, Carson notes that the connotation of the Spirit’s convicting ministry is “in the personal sense, *i.e.* not arguing the case for the world’s objective guilt before God at the final Great Assize, but shaming the world and convincing it of its own guilt, thus calling it to repentance.”³⁶ The Holy Spirit convicts the world of its true spiritual condition and God’s judgment, with a view to encouraging repentance.³⁷ The three clauses are each introduced by ὅτι. Carson argues that the ὅτι clauses should be interpreted as causal, and the causal interpretation best preserves the parallelism of the passage, and the preservation of the parallelism maintains the same grammatical relationship of each clause with ἐλέγχω.³⁸ Thus, each clause is the cause of the Spirit’s conviction, or the Spirit convicts because of each clause. These two exegetical decisions drive the interpretation of the passage.

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Spirit works like a prosecuting attorney by proving the world wrong about its ideas of sin, righteousness and judgment. First, the Spirit convicts the world concerning sin (John 16:9a). The sin referred to here is the general disposition of mankind regarding its guilt before God. This definition is grounded in John’s use of the word ἀμαρτίας, which he

³⁵The verb ἐλέγχω may mean “to convict of” or “to convince of.” The most convincing evidence is that the construction of ἐλέγγειν περί matches John 8:46, where Jesus asks “Which of you convicts me of sin?” See Carson, “The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11,” 558; idem, *The Gospel According to John*, 534-37; idem, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus*, 138; Aloisi, “The Paraclete’s Ministry of Conviction, 60; Gary M. Burge, *John*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2000), 437; Köstenberger, *John*, 471; Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 619.

³⁶Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 536-37.

³⁷Ibid.; Aloisi, “The Paraclete’s Ministry of Conviction, 60.

³⁸Carson, “The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11,” 561; Aloisi, “The Paraclete’s Ministry of Conviction,” 61. For a helpful survey of the interpretation of the ὅτι clauses, see Carson, “The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11,” 549-58.

defines as lawlessness.³⁹ The Spirit will convict the world of its lawlessness “because they do not believe in me” (16:9b). Since the ὅτι clause is causal, the correct interpretation of this verse is that the Spirit convicts the world of sin because the world does not believe in Christ.⁴⁰ John shows throughout his gospel that belief in Jesus is required for eternal life. The Spirit’s conviction of the world’s guilt and condemnation from God may drive it to repentance so that they may believe. Second, the Spirit will convict the world of righteousness. Since verse 16:9 means to convict the world of its sin, then the righteousness must belong to the world if the parallelism in the passage is to remain consistent. The best interpretation is that the term “righteousness is used in an ironic sense.” The Spirit will convict the world of its false righteousness.⁴¹ While the term δικαιοσύνη is used once, the theological trajectory of John’s Gospel employ’s much irony, including the world’s false ideas of worship, and their false perspective on spiritual things.⁴² The reason that the Spirit will convict the world of its false righteousness is

³⁹John Aloisi observes, “The word translated sin is ἁμαρτία. Elsewhere, John defines ἁμαρτία as lawlessness and unrighteousness (1 John 3:4; 5:17). He says that sin is transgressing God’s law or falling short of his righteous standard. In John 16, ἁμαρτίας occurs without the article, and therefore most likely refers to sin as a quality or a state rather than to individual sins. The Spirit convicts the world of its sinful condition, that is, the fact that it stands guilty before God” (Aloisi, “The Paraclete’s Ministry of Conviction,” 61). See also Carson, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus*, 140.

⁴⁰Aloisi, “The Paraclete’s Ministry of Conviction,” 61; Carson, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus*, 140; idem, “The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11,” 561, 566; idem, *The Gospel According to John*, 537. Some argue that “sin” should be interpreted as unbelief. Those who argue that sin is unbelief, the highest form of sin, may argue that the ὅτι clause may be explanatory (the Spirit convicts of sin, that they don’t believe in Jesus), or causal (The Spirit convicts of the sin of unbelief because they do not believe in Jesus).

⁴¹Carson, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus*, 141-43; idem, *The Gospel According to John*, 537.

⁴²Carson says, “Moreover, although the word *righteousness* is found only once in John’s Gospel, considerable reproach is thrown on the Jews for their self-righteousness – even where the word is not used. The flow of the drama makes the point most tellingly, without underscoring it in a heavy-handed way. The temple, which is the very center of Jewish worship, is not only cleansed, but displaced by Jesus’ body (2:13-22); that is, the true means of righteousness focuses not on temple worship but on Jesus’ death. The Pharisees carefully observe the Sabbath regulations, but show no delight that a man thirty-eight years a

because Jesus is going to the Father and is no longer present. The Holy Spirit is the witness against the world's false righteousness because Christ has departed to God the Father. Since Christ is not present to show the world its false righteousness, the Spirit will now convict the world.⁴³ The phrase, "and you will see me no longer" indicates that the Spirit also serves as an encouragement to the disciples that they are not alone and the Spirit is working through them. Carson summarizes,

Putting these two together, it appears that Jesus is telling the disciples that although they are losing their opportunity to learn how to confront the world from the Master and his convicting ministry (for they see him no longer), nevertheless they are not being abandoned – because the Counselor is coming and he will convict the world *by working in part through the believers*. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of its false righteousness because Jesus is returning to his Father and can no longer exercise this ministry; moreover, even though, with Jesus gone, the disciples can no longer observe him and thereby learn to duplicate this ministry, yet the Counselor by his operation enables the disciples to bear witness with convicting force. Jesus' teaching on this subject should therefore greatly encourage his followers.⁴⁴

Third, the Spirit convicts about judgment. Aloisi proposes that "Christ is describing the Paraclete's work of convicting the world with regard to its own impending judgment by God."⁴⁵ The reason that the Spirit convicts the world of its impending judgment is that

paralytic has been healed (5:16). There is much pious study of the Scriptures, but an utter failure to grasp their true subject (5:39f). The leaders, even though they possess the law of Moses, go so far as to attempt to kill Jesus (7:19); and some of them, while secretly believing in Jesus, refuse to confess him, because they are motivated by fear of excommunication (they want to fit into human patterns of righteousness rather than adopt God's perspective on the matter [12:42f]). Small wonder, then, that the Holy Spirit must convict the world of *its righteousness*" (Carson, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus*, 141-42).

⁴³Ibid.,143. See also Carson, "The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11," 561-62.

⁴⁴Carson, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus*, 143-44. John Aloisi follows Carson's approach which interprets *δικαιοσύνη* as ironic, so that the Spirit convicts the world of its false righteousness. However, Aloisi proposes that the phrase "because I go to the Father" means that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of its false righteousness, showing the Father's acceptance of Jesus' righteousness, which demonstrates that Jesus is the true standard of righteousness. He interprets the phrase "and you will see me no longer" as parenthetical, referring to either Jesus' death at the cross or to his ascension. See Aloisi, "The Paraclete's Ministry of Conviction," 63. Though Aloisi's proposal is theologically accurate, Carson's approach is preferred because it is more exegetically accurate in light of the purposes of Jesus' discussion with his disciples, to encourage them before he departs.

⁴⁵Aloisi, "The Paraclete's Ministry of Conviction," 64. Contra Carson, who proposes that the

Satan has been judged. Since the ruler, Satan, has been judged, those who are under his power will experience the same judgment.⁴⁶

John's teaching concerning the Spirit in these verses and with regard to penal substitutionary atonement raises two observations. First, the Spirit does not come until glorification and the first event in that process is the crucifixion. John 7:37-39 does not establish penal substitution, but it does establish that at minimum atonement is necessary before the Spirit comes. Second, the convicting work of the Spirit in John 16:8-11 makes penal substitution intelligible. The Spirit convicts the world's sin, with the purpose of bringing those in the world to faith in Christ. In John's theology, those who believe in Jesus would not die in their sin and they would escape judgment (John 3:18, 36; 8:24). Jesus' vicarious atonement brings eternal life and with the result that believers would not die in their sin. The Spirit convicts the world of its false righteousness by bearing witness so that they may know the true righteousness of Christ, who could not be convicted of sin (John 8:46) because his righteousness was sufficient to bear the believers' penalty as their substitute. The Spirit also convicts the world of its impending judgment, and the only escape from this judgment is to believe in Christ, who died as their substitute. Penal substitutionary atonement addresses the consequences of unrighteousness, satisfies the judgment of God, and deals with sin. While this passage does not directly establish that penal substitution brings the Spirit, it does bring about an unavoidable conclusion. The Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and Jesus' penal

Spirit convicts the world concerning its false judgment about spiritual matters, evidenced in its judgment of Christ. See Carson, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus*, 145-47; idem, "The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11," 562-63; idem, *The Gospel According to John*, 538. Aloisi presents a better rationale for his approach: "In the ὅτι-clause, judgment speaks of Satan's condemnation, not his spiritual discernment. Therefore, in the absence of any indication that John intends to use the words in two different ways in the same sentence, it seems best to see judgment in the first half of verse 11 as meaning the world's condemnation by God."

⁴⁶Aloisi, "The Paraclete's Ministry of Conviction," 64-65.

substitutionary sacrifice inherently and uniquely deals with these three concerns. One cannot escape that one of the reasons that the Spirit comes presupposes Jesus' vicarious sacrifice. Though John 16:8-11 does not prove penal substitutionary atonement, vicarious atonement provides coherence to the Spirit's convicting ministry.

Acts

During Jesus' final meetings with his disciples, he described their assigned mission of preaching the gospel. While instructing them, Jesus told them to wait for the Spirit to come (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4).⁴⁷ Jesus promised throughout his ministry, particularly in John, that the Spirit would indwell and empower them.

Jesus' promise was fulfilled at Pentecost when the Spirit indwelled the disciples. Jesus thus began a new phase in redemptive history, which is the age of the Spirit. The Spirit's coming fulfilled Joel's prophecy that all of God's people, without distinction, would receive the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21). The sign of the Spirit's presence is that they would prophecy and have dreams and visions.⁴⁸ Moses' desire that all of God's people would be gifted with the Spirit was fulfilled at Pentecost.⁴⁹ Beale notes, "The Spirit's gifting, formerly limited to leaders helping Moses and imparted to them at the tabernacle, is universalized to all of God's people from every race, young and

⁴⁷In John 20:22, Jesus breathed on his disciples and said "Receive the Spirit." Some debate when the Spirit was given by Jesus to the disciples. For a view that favors the interpretation that Jesus gave the Spirit to the disciples immediately after the resurrection, see Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence*, 159. The preferred view is that Jesus' breathing on the disciples is a proleptic act, that symbolized the Spirit's coming to the church at Pentecost. See Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 655.

⁴⁸F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 61.

⁴⁹G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 604. See also David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 140-41.

old, male and female.”⁵⁰ Believing Samaritans and Gentiles have been integrated into the people of God because they have received the Spirit.⁵¹ Now, the universal aspect of the Spirit’s coming has been fulfilled because the Spirit now indwells all nations.

Consequently, the pouring out of the Spirit is a new covenant reality. In Acts 2:38-39, the Spirit is given to all whom the Lord calls. Those who are saved have the two new covenant promises of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. Thus, the preaching of the gospel and the salvation that it provides to believers allow them to receive the benefits of the new covenant:

In Acts 2:38-39, the gift of the Spirit is promised to all whom the Lord our God will call to himself, who respond to the preaching of the gospel by repenting and being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. The purpose of such baptism is to receive the new covenant promise of the forgiveness of sins *and* the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit works through the preaching of the gospel to bring people to faith, and in turning to the Lord Jesus for salvation they receive the fullness of the Spirit, as promised. Acts 2:28-29 establishes the normal expectation of the apostles for those who believe the gospel. Their own experience of being Jesus’ disciples for several years and subsequently receiving the Spirit is now set forth as the pattern for others. It is as if the two elements of Jeremiah 31:34 are being offered together: a definitive forgiveness of sins and a profound transformation of Israel’s relationship with God, made possible by the gift of his Spirit (cf. Ezk. 36:26-27).⁵²

The Lord inaugurated the new covenant promise by pouring out the Spirit on his people on the day of Pentecost.⁵³ Peter reinforces this new covenant reality as he explains Gentile conversion and reception of the Spirit (Acts 15:8-11). While speaking at the

⁵⁰Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 604.

⁵¹After a helpful analysis of the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost, on the Samaritans, Cornelius and his family, and John’s disciples, Schreiner summarizes, “I conclude, then that the primary purpose for granting of the Spirit at Pentecost, to the Samaritans, to Cornelius and his friends and to the Ephesian twelve is to testify that those who receive the Spirit are members of the people of God. The pouring out of the Spirit signifies that the new age has commenced, and the giving of the Spirit fits with the missionary character of Luke-Acts. Membership in the people of God is not confined to the Jews; it includes Samaritans and Gentiles” (Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 459).

⁵²Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 63 (emphasis in the original).

⁵³Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 144.

Jerusalem Council, Peter explains that God gave the Spirit to the Gentiles. God did not make any distinction between Jews and Gentiles because he cleansed their hearts by faith. Peter uses the language of the new covenant promises when he refers to their cleansed hearts that occurred by faith, which resulted in their conversion.⁵⁴ The point of Peter's message is that if God has cleansed their hearts, the council cannot place additional requirements on the Gentiles. Therefore, the new covenant is fulfilled because all who believe are indwelt by the Spirit.⁵⁵

While Luke does not make an explicit connection between the penal substitutionary atonement and the giving of the Spirit, the concept is in the background of the book of Acts. Luke's soteriology includes penal substitution, which lies beneath the surface of his theology regarding the work of Christ.⁵⁶ Christ's work of redemption, which includes the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, is a prerequisite for the Spirit's outpouring among believers. Luke unites the two blessings of salvation, the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the possession for those who believe in Jesus (Acts 2:38-39). Peter continually invited his audience to believe for the forgiveness of sins and to repent (Acts 2:38, 5:31); this forgiveness of sins is the result of Jesus' death. Luke shows that both the gift of the Spirit and the forgiveness of sins are blessings for those who believe in Jesus (Acts 2:38, 10:43-44). Luke implies that the death of Christ, the penal substitutionary death that secures forgiveness, also results in the Spirit's advent as he indwells believers.

⁵⁴Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 62n32.

⁵⁵While comparing the new covenant expressed by Luke and Paul, Ware observes, "While Luke stresses the *quantitative* expansion of the Spirit's new-covenant work (on all who believe), Paul clearly underscores the *qualitative* expansion of the Spirit's new-covenant rule (effecting transformed lives by the Spirit)" (Ware, "The New Covenant and the People(s) of God," 88 [emphasis in the original]).

⁵⁶See chap. 4 pp. 142-47 regarding Luke's theology of atonement and forgiveness.

Romans 8:4

Paul argues for a relationship between the believer's sanctification by the Spirit and the atonement. From chapter 7, Paul shows that the law cannot empower people to obey or follow the law. Paul has established that those who are justified by faith are not under condemnation. He has also established that those in union with Christ have been liberated from the power of the law, which leads to death, by the Spirit (Rom 8:2). Paul has shown that God condemned sin for humanity through the death of Christ as our substitute (8:3). Thus, "the work of the Spirit (8:2) and the work of Christ on the cross (8:3) enable believers to obey the law (8:4). . . . The law itself provides no power for holiness or righteousness, while those who have the Holy Spirit fulfil it."⁵⁷

After commenting on Christ's death, Paul comments on its significance in Romans 8:4: "in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Verse 4 explains a purpose for Jesus' death. The purpose of Jesus' sacrifice is that the righteous requirement of the law would be fulfilled in believers.⁵⁸ The meaning of the phrase "righteous requirement of the law" refers to the totality of the law's demands.⁵⁹ Moo states that this

⁵⁷Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 151.

⁵⁸For the ἵνα clause that transitions from v. 3 to v. 4, see Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, ICC (New York: T & T Clark, 1975), 383; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 481n54; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 404.

⁵⁹Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:384; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 482; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, 1 to 8 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 283. The phrase δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου has been interpreted in different ways. Universally, commentators observe that the δικαίωμα is in the singular form. One interpretation is that the phrase refers to the commandment to love. This approach is based on similarities between Rom 8:4 and Gal 5:13-16, which also has a flesh/Spirit antithesis and in comparison with Rom 13:10, which states that love of neighbor fulfills the law. See Richard W. Thompson, "How is the Law Fulfilled in Us? An Interpretation of Rom 8:4," *Louvain Studies* 11 (1986): 32-33; Colin G. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 328-29; Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 482. Another interpretation of the phrase is that the singular requirement is the tenth commandment, since the violation of the 10th commandment is expressly stated in Romans chapter 7. See J.

requirement is “its simplest and broadest meaning: the summary . . . of what the law demands of God’s people.”⁶⁰

What does it mean to say that the righteous requirement of the law was “fulfilled in us”? The best interpretation of this phrase is that “fulfilled in us” is Christian obedience.⁶¹ While the passive form of πληρωθῆ indicates God’s action, it does not preclude that the fulfillment is in reference to Christian obedience. Schreiner opines,

The passive of πληρωθῆ and the prepositional phrase ἐν ἡμῖν surely signal that the obedience described is the work of God. Paul does not envision believers keeping the law in their own strength. But it would be a serious mistake to conclude from this that the actual obedience of believers is excluded. The obedience of believers has its basis in the work of Christ on the cross, and this provides the platform on which believers receive the ability to keep the law. . . . The keeping of the law is God’s work, yet this does not exclude human activity and obedience. The two are not mutually exclusive.⁶²

A. Ziesler, “The Just Requirement of the Law (Romans 8:4),” *ABR* 35 (1987): 78-79. Ziesler’s interpretation construes the phrase too narrowly, though the tenth commandment is used as a paradigm for the whole law. See Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 328n306. Regarding the interpretation that the requirement is love, Paul has not contextually indicated that the requirement is love. A better approach is to interpret the singular form of δικαίωμα as the summary of all that the law requires. Though Schreiner now endorses the view that the requirement is probably the law of love, and he offered this helpful corrective in his commentary: “The differences among the three views should not be exaggerated. Those who detect a reference to the law of love or the prohibition against coveting in the word δικαίωμα, although formally incorrect, are materially on target. For the prohibition against coveting embraces the moral norms of the law, and the love command summarizes the moral norms of the law” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 407).

⁶⁰Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 482.

⁶¹Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:383-84; Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 329; Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, 283; Schreiner, *Romans*, 404-06; Kevin W. McFadden, “The Fulfillment of the Law’s ΔΙΚΑΙΩΜΑ: Another Look at Romans 8:1-4,” *JETS* 52 (2009): 483-97. Contra Moo, who argues that the verb πληρωθῆ in the passive form represents Christ’s obedience rather than the Christian’s obedience because Christ perfectly obeyed that law, and perfect obedience is impossible for Christians. Thus that the righteous requirement of the law was fulfilled by Christ’s obedience “in us” describes the character of Christian living, which is obedience to the law. See Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 483-85; John Calvin, *Commentaries of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 283. Gordon Fee sees the fulfillment of the law by God through his Spirit with the evidence of Christian obedience, but Fee does not envision Christian obedience itself as fulfilling the law’s requirement. See Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 535-37.

⁶²Schreiner, *Romans*, 405.

Therefore, God works in Christians, and Christians are to live in obedience.⁶³ The contextual evidence also suggests that Christian obedience is in view.⁶⁴ In the immediate literary context, Paul argues in Romans 8:1-2 that there was no condemnation and that the Spirit set believers free from the law of sin and death. In Romans 8:2, the freedom from sin and death means that they are no longer under the controlling power of sin that leads to death. However, this freedom from the controlling power of sin is not merely forensic, but it is a reality in Christian living. Kevin McFadden observes,

As an explanation of 8:1-2, verses 3-4 must clarify the argument of 8:1-2 – the verdict of “no condemnation” and the Spirit’s liberation of the Christian from sin and death. This is exactly what Paul does: He roots the verdict of “no condemnation” in the condemnation of sin in the flesh of the Son, and he explains the Spirit’s liberating work in terms of its result, the fulfillment of the righteous requirement of the law. Thus, Paul is not introducing something new into his immediate argument, whether the imputed righteousness of Christ or the law’s decree of life; rather, he is explaining the previously mentioned liberation in terms of its result – Christian obedience.⁶⁵

Christian obedience also provides an answer to Paul’s concern in chapter 7, when he laments that he is unable to keep the law. The Spirit aids the Christian to obey the law.⁶⁶ Romans 8:5-15 shows that those in the flesh, i.e. unredeemed people, cannot obey the law and cannot please God.⁶⁷ However, those in the Spirit are empowered to obey the Law.

⁶³Paul uses term *πληρωθῆ* when describing believers and the fulfillment of the law occasionally, so that the term is not restricted to a divine subject. See McFadden, “The Fulfillment of the Law’s DIKAIŌMA,” 489-90; Thompson, “How is the Law Fulfilled in Us?” 32-33.

⁶⁴ McFadden, “The Fulfillment of the Law’s DIKAIŌMA,” 486-89.

⁶⁵Ibid., 487.

⁶⁶Schreiner notes, “It is difficult to believe, therefore, that the work of the Spirit and the keeping of the law in 8:2 and 8:4 are only forensic. A response is needed to the true dilemma of 7:14-25 in which the “I” is actually in bondage to sin. Paul needs to demonstrate to his Jewish critics that his gospel does not promote sin but rather produces a more profound obedience than was possible under the law” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 406).

⁶⁷Schreiner comments, “The problem with those in the flesh is that they cannot keep God’s law (8:7), and thus by implication those who have the Spirit are able to observe it, not in their own strength but by virtue of the Spirit’s dynamic. Paul is reflecting mainly not on forensic realities but on the effect of the

Therefore, the best interpretation of Romans 8:4 in light of the context is that Paul is speaking about Christian obedience as a fulfillment of the law.⁶⁸

One other objection is that Christians cannot obey the law perfectly; therefore the verse must refer to Christ's sacrifice since he did fulfill the law perfectly.⁶⁹ McFadden helpfully explains that while Paul has in mind perfect obedience to satisfy the law, this phrase must be interpreted from a perspective of inaugurated eschatology.⁷⁰ Christians are now able to obey the law by the help of the Spirit, but this ability to keep the law perfectly will be consummated at the resurrection. The resurrection will bring complete freedom from sin, which will result in perfect obedience to the law. However, in this age, the Christian is not expected to keep the law perfectly, but to keep it sincerely by faith.⁷¹ McFadden states,

The liberation of the Spirit is a past work that will only be consummated at the

Spirit's work in the lives of believers. By the Spirit believers 'put to death the deeds of the body' (8:13), are led by the Spirit (8:14) and thus no longer slaves to sin (8:15). Those who confine obedience to forensic categories in 8:4 seem to miss rather badly the scope of Paul's argument" (ibid., 408).

⁶⁸Paul's argument in Rom 6 provides additional contextual evidence that Christian obedience is in view for Rom 8:4. Paul encourages Christians to live in obedience because of their newness of life as those in union with Christ (Rom 6:4, 6), and they have been set free from slavery to sin and are now slaves to righteousness, which should result in obedience (Rom 6:18-22). See McFadden, "The Fulfillment of the Law's DIKAIŌMA," 488-89. In addition, Paul's teaching is in continuity with Jesus' teachings of true obedience to the law. See Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 122-128, cited by Schreiner, *Romans*, 405, note 15.

⁶⁹Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 483; Calvin, *Romans*, 283.

⁷⁰McFadden, "The Fulfillment of the Law's DIKAIŌMA," 493-94.

⁷¹While comparing Rom 13:8 and Rom 8:4, McFadden notes that this problem of perfect fulfillment occurs in Rom 13:8, yet perfect obedience is not expected here because Paul commands the Romans to stop walking in bitterness and strife in Rom 13:13. He concludes, "rather, to the degree that Christians genuinely love one another, they have fulfilled the law (13:8). In the same way, to the degree that Christians genuinely obey, they have fulfilled the righteous requirement of the law (8:4). But we must view all of this . . . in light of the resurrection, for it is only at the resurrection that Christians will be completely liberated and thus will completely fulfill the requirement of the law" (ibid., 493). See also Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:384.

resurrection. Paul says our liberation from death is already accomplished (8:2), but he also says that the body is dead because of sin (8:10) until the Spirit who dwells in us makes our mortal bodies alive at the resurrection (8:11). The creation eagerly awaits our resurrection (“the revelation of the sons of God” 8:19), because its liberation from slavery to corruption follows our resurrection (8:21). Until that liberation, its existence is characterized by groaning as it awaits this hope (8:22, 20). Furthermore, we who have the Spirit live lives characterized by groaning as well, as we await the resurrection in hope (“the redemption of our bodies”; 8:23-24a). This groaning suggests that Christians await liberation from our mortal bodies in the same way creation awaits liberation from corruption. Therefore, Paul views our liberation from sin and death by the Spirit as in one sense completed (8:2) and in another sense a hope to be awaited with perseverance (8:23-25).⁷²

Therefore, the objection that the Christian cannot keep the law perfectly is not a sufficient rationale to deny that Paul is referring to Christian obedience in Romans 8:4.

However, those who fulfill the law do so not by walking “according to the flesh” but by walking “according to the Spirit.” Paul describes believers’ habitual practice of obedience or disobedience as a “walk.”⁷³ Someone may walk, or conduct their lives “according to the flesh.” When Paul uses the term “flesh,” he means the orientation of unredeemed humanity against God and toward their own desires. Moo observes that to walk according to the flesh “is to have one’s life determined and directed by the values of ‘this world,’ of the world in rebellion against God. It is a lifestyle that is purely ‘human’ in its orientation.”⁷⁴ The phrase “according to the Spirit” means that a person’s life is governed by the rule of the Holy Spirit. It is “to live under the control, and according to the values, of the ‘new age,’ created and dominated by God’s Spirit as his eschatological gift.”⁷⁵

The connection between Jesus’ penal substitutionary sacrifice and the ability of

⁷²McFadden, “The Fulfillment of the Law’s DIKAIŌMA,” 494.

⁷³Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 329; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 485; Schreiner, *Romans*, 405.

⁷⁴Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 485.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

Christians to obey the law becomes clear. Christians are not able to live in obedience unless they are governed by the Holy Spirit. Christians fulfill the law by walking according to the Spirit.⁷⁶ The fulfillment of the law is one purpose of Jesus' penal substitutionary sacrifice that was explained in verse 3. Furthermore, the purpose of the cross enables the obedience that is envisioned in the new covenant; the new covenant promise is that God's people will obey because of a transformed heart because the law is in their hearts.⁷⁷ Cranfield comments, "God's purpose in 'condemning' sin was that his law's requirement might be fulfilled in us, that is, that His law might be established in the sense of at last being truly and sincerely obeyed – the fulfillment of the promises of Jer 31.33 and Ezek 36.26f."⁷⁸ Therefore, Paul reasons that the cause of the believer's ability to obey God's law is penal substitutionary atonement. Schreiner summarizes,

The law itself was powerless to produce the fulfillment of the law envisioned in verse 3, not because there was any deficiency in the law per se, but because human beings under the power of the flesh are unable to practice what the law says. Those who are in Christ, however, are in a very different position. They are right in God's sight by virtue of the work of Christ on the cross. The judicial work of God in Christ is the basis by which the law can be fulfilled in their lives. By the work and power of the Holy Spirit they are able to keep the law.⁷⁹

Galatians 3:14, 4:4-6 and 5:16-19

Paul's argument in his letter to the Galatians shows Jesus' vicarious atonement as the basis of the Spirit's transformation of believers. Against the Judaizers, Paul argues

⁷⁶Cranfield argues, "The law's requirement will be fulfilled by the determination of the direction, the set, of our lives by the Spirit, by our being enabled again and again to decide for the Spirit and against the flesh, to turn our backs more and more upon our own insatiable egotism and to turn our faces more and more toward the freedom which the Spirit of God has given us" (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:385).

⁷⁷Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 33.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 384.

⁷⁹Schreiner, *Romans*, 407-08.

that one is justified by faith in Christ alone, not by performing works of the Mosaic Law and becoming circumcised. He contends that the Galatian Christians received the Spirit and were declared righteous by faith and not by works of the law (Gal 3:1-9). Paul establishes in Galatians 3:10-14 that Christ bore the curse of the law in our place.⁸⁰ The point of Galatians 3:1-14 is that one is justified by faith, and those who are justified by faith are a part of God's family. Justification is grounded in Christ's death on the cross. Paul also argues that the Mosaic Law was temporary in salvation history until Christ came, who redeemed Christians from the curse of the law and adopted them as sons and daughters, indwelt by the Spirit (Gal 3:15-4:7). Paul allegorizes Sarah and Hagar to show that Sarah is the free woman who represents the new covenant blessings of salvation through faith with the destination in Mt. Zion, but Hagar is the slave woman who represents the obsolete Mosaic covenant from Mount Sinai (Gal 4:8-31). George presents a helpful summary,

Sarah-Isaac-the New Covenant-Mount Zion-Jerusalem Above stand together over against Hagar-Ishmael-the Old Covenant-Mount Sinai-Jerusalem that Now Is. Paul's inversion of the traditional interpretation of the analogy shows that the true descendants of Isaac are those who are justified by grace through faith on the basis of God's unfailing promise, while the offspring of Ishmael are those like the Judaizers, who seek to justify themselves "according to the flesh (vv. 23, 29, RSV).⁸¹

Therefore, Christians should live in freedom, and follow God's commands by the Holy Spirit's empowerment (Gal 5:1-6:10).⁸²

⁸⁰For a full explanation of this verse, see chap. 2, pp, 83-91.

⁸¹Timothy George, *Galatians*, NAC 30 (Nashville: B & H, 1994), 348.

⁸²George comments, "There is a mutual incompatibility between these two systems of salvation, and thus Paul brought his entire theological argument to a climactic conclusion with an imperative command, 'Get rid of the slave woman and her son!' (v. 30). With the concepts of slavery and freedom firmly fixed in the vocabulary of the Galatians, Paul was now ready to move on to the third major section of his letter in which he would set forth the goal of the gospel as God intended for it to be realized in the Spirit-controlled lives of the Galatian believers" (ibid.).

Paul argues that the results of the atonement are the blessing of Abraham and the gift of the Spirit (Gal 3:14). Earlier in the passage, Paul asks a foundational question to which he eventually returns: Did you receive the Spirit by faith or by performing works of the law (Gal 3:2, 5)? Verse 14 has two *ἵνα* clauses, which indicate the purpose of Christ's redemption from the curse of the law.⁸³ This first *ἵνα* shows that the purpose of Christ's death is that in union with Christ the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles. The blessings referred to in the first clause are from the Abrahamic promise, meaning that all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12: 3). Longenecker observes that Gentile believers in union with Christ are "the connection between Abraham and Gentile Christians; conversely, it is the reality that absolutely negates the Judiazer's attempt to relate Gentile Christians to Abraham by means of Torah observance."⁸⁴ The blessing of Abraham is that the Gentiles will be justified by faith and not by following the works of the law.⁸⁵

The second *ἵνα* clause explains the blessing of Abraham in different terms, the Spirit is given to all believers by faith.⁸⁶ Paul combines the doctrines of justification and

⁸³F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGCT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 167; Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 151; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 219.

⁸⁴Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 123. Bruce adds, "The law makes a distinction between the people of Israel, to whom it was given, and the Gentiles, to whom it was not given. But the promise to Abraham explicitly embraced the Gentiles . . . within its scope; they were to have a share in the blessing promised to him. Their share in his blessing was confirmed to them 'in Christ Jesus', not only because he was the one who redeemed his people from the curse of the law but also (as declared in v 16) because he was the offspring . . . of Abraham in whom, according to a further elaboration of the promise, all the Gentiles were to be blessed" (Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 167).

⁸⁵Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 151.

⁸⁶Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 168; Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 152; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 218-19; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 123-24; Sam K. Williams, "Justification and the Spirit in Galatians," *JSNT* 29 (1987): 91.

the Spirit in Galatians 3:1-6, particularly in verse 6. In the same way that Abraham believed God and was declared righteous, so the Galatians were given the Spirit by faith.⁸⁷ Paul perhaps alludes to Isaiah 44:3: “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.” Isaiah appears to include the Spirit’s advent as a part of the blessing of Abraham.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the evidence that believers have received the promised Spirit by faith shows that God has accepted them; this acceptance reinforces Paul’s argument that justification is by faith and not by observance of the Jewish law.⁸⁹ Thus, the blessings of justification and the giving of the Spirit are distinct, yet inseparable. Sam Williams notes, “The experience of the Spirit and the status of justification are, for the apostle, inconceivable apart from each other. Each implies the other. Those persons upon whom God bestows the Spirit are justified; the persons whom God reckons righteous have the Spirit poured out upon them.”⁹⁰ Therefore, one result of the atonement is that those who have faith, those who have been justified, also receive the Spirit. Fung concludes,

Justification through faith, viewed from the experiential point of view, is based upon the salvation-historical event of Christ’s death (vv. 13, 14b): it is Christ’s bearing of the law’s curse in this death that made reception of the Spirit through faith possible. . . . It can now be said that righteousness or justification has its objective ground in the vicarious death of Christ, and that the purpose of that death is fulfilled in the

⁸⁷Schreiner, *Galatians*, 219.

⁸⁸Ibid. Rodrigo J. Morales helpfully shows that the promise of the Spirit was an expectation in the second temple period. This expectation can be seen in the Jewish tradition (Isaiah 44:3, *Words of the Luminaries*, and *Testament of Judah*), and Morales argues that Paul’s argument, which focuses on the Spirit, is in continuity with Jewish expectation. See Rodrigo J. Morales, “The Words of the Luminaries, the Curse of the law, and the Outpouring of the Spirit in Gal 3, 10-14,” *Zeitschrift Für De Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Alteren Kirche* 100 (2009): 269-77.

⁸⁹Longenecker, *Galatians*, 123; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 219.

⁹⁰Williams, “Justification and the Spirit in Galatians,” 97.

bestowal of justification (and of the Spirit) through faith.⁹¹

After establishing that the law was a tutor until Christ came, Paul argues in Galatians 4:4-5 that Jesus was born under the law in order to redeem us from the law. In the right time within God's plan, he sent forth his Son. The Father's sending of the Son shows the Son's deity and eternal nature. The description of the Son as born of a woman emphasizes his human nature. The next descriptive clause, which is that he was born under the law, shows that Christ was subject to the law just like all humanity.⁹² Christ was sent was to redeem his people from the law. Christ's redeeming work from the law refers to his penal substitutionary death, and Paul alludes to his earlier statement in Galatians 3:13.⁹³ Fung notes, "Christ achieved the purpose of redeeming those under the law by bearing the full obligation of the law in life as well as the curse of the law in death (3:13)."⁹⁴ The result of redemption from the law is the status of sonship, which is signified by the presence of the Spirit (Gal 4:5b-6). Those who are justified are adopted. The Christian's adoption is tied to his justification, which is signified by the Spirit. The point is that believers are sons and heirs, and the Spirit "confirms, authenticates, and ratifies their sonship."⁹⁵ Within his argument that believers are adopted, not by works of

⁹¹Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 153.

⁹²Schreiner notes, "Not only was Jesus fully human, he also lived under the law. Those who live under the law, so noted previously, live under the dominion and tyranny of sin. Jesus, however, is the exception that proves the rule. He is the true offspring of Abraham (3:16), the true Israel (cf. Exod 4:22), the true Son of God. He lived obediently to God's law whereas all others violated God's will. As the one who lived under the law, he took the curse of the law on himself (3:13) so that he could liberate and free those who were captivated by the power of sin" (Schreiner, *Galatians*, 270).

⁹³Schreiner states, "The verb 'redeem' (ἐξαγοράζω) harkens back to 3:13, where Paul used the same verb to denote that liberation from the law came because Jesus took the law's curse upon himself. Therefore, this verse points to Jesus' substitutionary death on behalf of sinners and also indicates that the liberation of those under the law came at the cost of Jesus' life" (ibid., 270-71).

⁹⁴Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 182.

⁹⁵Schreiner, *Galatians*, 272.

the law but by faith grounded in Christ's death, Paul shows that Christ's death redeems from the curse of the law, with the result that believers are called children of God and given the Spirit as the result of the atonement. The presence of the indwelling Spirit confirms our adopted status. Gordon Fee summarizes, "The Spirit's presence evidences the 'sonship' that Christ's redemption has brought about. In that sense, Christ is the 'cause' and the Spirit the 'effect' so far as 'sonship' is concerned."⁹⁶

Later in the letter, Paul instructs the Galatians to walk by the Spirit and explains the fruit of walking by the Spirit or living by the desires of the flesh (Gal 5:16-22). Paul declares that the Spirit's transforming power is the result of living in freedom and following the law of love (Gal 1:1-15). Christians live in freedom from the enslaving dictates of the law because Christ has redeemed them from the curse of the law, thereby making them God's adopted children who are indwelt by the Spirit, who is the sign of their adoption. Since the Spirit indwells Christians, Paul commands them to walk by the Spirit. The Spirit's power to govern behavior is the fulfillment of the new covenant promise of a transformed heart:

That the guidance of the Spirit can be experienced as a reality in the life of the believer is a sign that Jeremiah's prophetic word about the new covenant has been fulfilled. In OT times the Israelites knew of God's law as an external code, but in the NT dispensation the law of God is set in his people's understanding and written on their hearts (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12); God's will is now an inward principle the result of the leading of the Spirit within the believer.⁹⁷

Paul emphatically states that the result of walking by the Spirit is not to fulfill the desires of the flesh.⁹⁸ He explains the flesh and Spirit conflict; the flesh is the unredeemed old

⁹⁶Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 408.

⁹⁷Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 249.

⁹⁸Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 243. The "emphatic subjunctive clause ("you will never fulfill" [οὐ μὴ τελέσητε])" should be interpreted as a promise that those who live by the Spirit will not carry out the desires of the flesh. It is not a second imperative statement. See Schreiner, *Galatians*, 343.

order, and it is set against those who are ruled by the Spirit, who are the redeemed, recreated persons in Christ (Gal 5:17a).⁹⁹ Fee observes,

The reason why walking by the Spirit excludes carrying out the desire of the flesh is that flesh and Spirit have “desires” that stand as polar opposites, which is stated by the first two clauses and reaffirmed by the second “for” clause. Paul’s point has to do with the *incompatibility* of life in the Spirit with life in the flesh; they belong to different worlds, to different ways of life altogether. The implication is that to live in one means *not* to live in another. This is why walking by the Spirit excludes carrying out the desire of the flesh; flesh and Spirit, Paul says, are not only incompatible, they stand in unrelieved opposition to one another. There is not a hint in any of this that “warfare” is going on in the human breast, which in effect leaves the believer in a state of helplessness (one *cannot* do what one wishes). These sentences belong to Paul’s overall theological framework within which eschatological salvation is being worked out. The “sphere” of the flesh is obviously still about, and by implication the believer could fall prey to its perspective. In that sense there is always “tension” for the Spirit person. But this is also where the Spirit comes in – as the intractable foe of the flesh. The good news for Paul is not only that the Spirit has come, who is thus opposed to the flesh, but that the Spirit is *God’s enabling power over against the flesh*, which is why he can urge upon them the bold imperative and promise of v. 16.¹⁰⁰

Paul asserts that the reason for the flesh/Spirit tension is that the other will not be able to carry out its desires.¹⁰¹ Then Paul argues that those led by the Spirit are not under the law (Gal 5:18). The law and flesh are closely tied together, for the law gives power to the flesh to disobey. Paul is saying that “the law and the flesh lead to identical results . . . the desires of the flesh cannot be overcome by the Christian remaining under law.” Hence,

⁹⁹Paul’s reference to “flesh” in the flesh/Spirit antithesis means that it “denotes not simply humanity in its creatureliness vis-à-vis God, but humanity in its fallen creatureliness as utterly hostile to God in every imaginable way.” Fee observes that this use of flesh “has become strictly eschatological – and pejorative – describing existence from the perspective of those who do not know Christ, who thus live as God’s enemies. Our point here is that Paul’s understanding such as life describes those *outside* of Christ, and thus describes believers *before* they came to be in Christ and live by the Spirit” (Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 819 [emphasis in the original]). See also Longenecker, *Galatians*, 245; Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 249. Ridderbos argues likewise, and observes that the Spirit represents the new creation. Thus, the flesh and Spirit antithesis is the contrast between the old age and the new age. See Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 66-67.

¹⁰⁰Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 434-35 (emphasis in the original).

¹⁰¹Schreiner, *Galatians*, 344.

only the Spirit can overcome the flesh. Fung continues, “These two truths may be combined by saying that to be under law is no way to overcome the desires of the flesh, and the real solution lies in being led by the Spirit.”¹⁰² After listing the inevitable works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-22), Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit are the character qualities that result from those who walk by the Spirit.¹⁰³ The fruit include all things for which there is no law, which may include two concepts: nothing in the Mosaic Law prohibits these virtues, and the Spirit, not the law, only produces this fruit.¹⁰⁴ Moral transformation occurs as believers walk by the Spirit. Walking by the Spirit is only possible for those who are sons of God, for those who have been justified by faith. Justification is grounded in the death of Christ and is the foundation for the Spirit’s presence and his transforming work. Paul Hartog comments that “the one rightly related to God (justified by faith) is united to Christ and dynamically empowered by the Spirit, resulting in and increasing practical holiness as the believer walks in the Spirit and is led by the Spirit.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰²Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 252. Schreiner helpfully surmises, “Paul makes a salvation-historical argument here, for those who are led by the Spirit do not belong to the old era of redemptive history when the law reigned. To be ‘under law’ as was noted previously . . . is to be ‘under a curse’ (3:10), ‘under sin’ (3:22), ‘under the custodian’ (3:25), ‘under guardians and managers’ (4:2), ‘enslaved under the elements of the world (4:3), and in need of redemption (4:4-5). If one is ‘under law,’ then one is not ‘under grace’ (Rom 6:14-15). Paul’s argument here is illuminating and fits with what he says in Romans 6 as well. Those who are directed by the Spirit are no longer under the law, and therefore they no longer live in the old era of redemptive history under the reign of sin. Freedom from law does not, according to Paul, mean freedom *to sin*; it means freedom *from sin*. Conversely, those who are under the law live under the dominion of sin. Hence, for the Galatians to subjugate themselves to the message of the Judaizers would be a disaster, for it would open the floodgates for the power of sin to be unleashed in the Galatian community. The answer to the dominion of sin is the cross of Christ and the gift of the Spirit. If the Galatians follow the Spirit, they will not live under the tyranny of sin and the law” (Schreiner, *Galatians*, 345-46).

¹⁰³Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 251; Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 262; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 350.

¹⁰⁴Schreiner, *Galatians*, 350.

¹⁰⁵Paul Hartog, “The Integrative Role of the Spirit in the Ethics of Galatians,” *DBSJ* 16 (2011):

Throughout the letter, Paul's argument regarding justification by faith alone becomes clearer in regard to the atonement and the work of the Spirit. Christians are justified by faith, not by adhering to works of the law, because Christ bore the curse of the law, which all Christians would have borne because they cannot keep the law perfectly. Because they receive Christ by faith, they receive the blessing of Abraham and the gift of the Spirit. Believers have been adopted because they have been redeemed from the law because of Christ's death; the Spirit is the sign of their adoption. Furthermore, all with the Spirit are able to live according to God's righteous standards as they walk by the Spirit, thus fulfilling the new covenant promise of transformation. The Spirit causes transformation, and the cause of the Spirit's presence and transforming work in the believer is Christ's penal substitutionary death. Schreiner asserts,

In Galatians the gift of the Spirit is the badge of new life, demonstrating that the Galatians should not yield to circumcision (Gal. 3:3, 5). But the Spirit was given because the Galatians put their trust in Jesus Christ as the crucified one (Gal. 3:2, cf. Titus 3:5). They have received the promise of the Spirit (Gal. 3:14) only because Christ has removed the curse of the law by becoming a curse for believers (Gal. 3:13). The Galatians did not receive the Spirit in general; they received "the Spirit of the Son" (Gal 4:6). Further, Gal. 4:4-5 indicates that the Spirit was given on the basis of Christ's redeeming work, so that believers truly become God's children. The exhortations to walk in, be led by, march in step with, and sow to the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 18, 25; 6:8) are rooted in the redemption that Christ achieved in the cross. Even in the parenetic section the new life in the Spirit is grounded in having crucified the flesh as members of Christ (Gal. 5:24, cf. 2:20).¹⁰⁶

Holy Spirit and New Creation

Having established the causal relationship between penal substitutionary atonement and the indwelling and transformative work of the Spirit, this study briefly

38. Hartog's argument is that the work of the Spirit unites justification and sanctification, so that Paul's ethics are grounded in this theology of justification, which the Spirit brings in believers and also empowers them to live in holiness.

¹⁰⁶Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 487.

examines the Spirit's role in the new created order.¹⁰⁷ The Holy Spirit is the agent who ushers in the new creation in three ways. First, he is the Spirit of adoption, which testifies to the believer's status within the new creation. Second, the Spirit is the guarantee of the full redemption that is to come. Third, he is the agent of the resurrection of the body.

Willem VanGemeren observes,

The Holy Spirit is the gift of God the Father and God the Son to the people of God. He is the Reconciler and Restorer, as he regenerates, indwells, and leads the children of God. He is the Guarantor of the restoration of heaven and earth as he applies the promises and the blessings of God in Christ, as he creates and sustains hope. The very mission of the Spirit of God is eschatological. He is the agent of restoration, as he prepares a new humanity, applies the eschatological blessings, draws the people of God into an ever closer relationship, extends the boundaries of the kingdom, and keeps hope alive in the hearts of God's children living in the world of alienation. This approach does not reduce the soteriological significance of the Spirit's work, but puts soteriology in the broader context of eschatology. The correlation of the Spirit and eschatology gives further ground to the correlation of creation, redemption, and eschatology.¹⁰⁸

The Spirit is the evidence that believers have become children of God. The purpose of Christ's redeeming work is that believers would become the children of God, and that the sign of this adoption is the Spirit (Gal 4:4-6). The cry "Abba, Father" is proof that Christians have received and are led by the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of adoption (Rom 8:14-16). The Spirit continually testifies that believers are children of God.¹⁰⁹ However, the full status of sonship is not realized, or consummated, until the resurrection. Until the resurrection, when sonship is fully revealed, Christians wait for the

¹⁰⁷For the role of the Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul's writings, see Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 803-26; Geerhardus Vos, "The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*," ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), 91-125; Neill Q. Hamilton, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1957); Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 55-67.

¹⁰⁸Willem A. VanGemeren, "The Spirit of Restoration," *WTJ* 50 (1988): 82.

¹⁰⁹Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 59.

redemption of the body (Rom 8:19-23).¹¹⁰ Hamilton observes, “This future redemption of the body is the not-yet-fulfilled, the future aspect of sonship which the Spirit will fulfill. That it is a function of the Spirit is clear from v. 11. Thus in the case of sonship the Spirit’s action in the present is merely preliminary. The Spirit’s properly completed work lies in the future.”¹¹¹ A related concept to adoption is that believers are co-heirs with Christ; the inheritance is “the completion of our sonship,” and “is elsewhere described in terms which clearly refer to the future.”¹¹² Thus, there is an already-not yet aspect of the Spirit’s work of sonship. Thus “the role of the Spirit in connection with our sonship is to assure us that we are indeed sons of God in Christ and heir of God with Christ, but at the same time to remind us that the full riches of this sonship will not be revealed until the Parousia.”¹¹³

Christ gives the Spirit as proof of the Christian’s future blessings of salvation, and the Spirit’s role is described three ways. First, the Spirit is the guarantee, pledge, or deposit of the full inheritance of the believer (3 Cor 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph 1:4). The Spirit is given as a pledge to assure that the future blessings will come to pass.¹¹⁴ Hoekema notes,

The word *arrabōn* as applied to the Spirit, therefore, particularly stresses the role of the Spirit in eschatology. It indicates that the Spirit who is possessed by believers now is the guarantee and pledge of the future completion of their salvation in the eschaton. Whereas the designation of the Spirit as firstfruits indicates the provisional nature of present spiritual enjoyment, the description of the Spirit as our

¹¹⁰Hamilton, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul*, 32.

¹¹¹Ibid., 32.

¹¹²Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 60. Scriptures cited are 1 Cor 6:9, Gal 5:21, Eph 1:14, 18. See also Ridderbos, *Paul*, 203-04, whom Hoekema cites.

¹¹³Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 60. Hoekema helpfully demonstrates that 1 John 3:1-2 shows both the present and future aspects of adoption, though the passage does not mention the Spirit.

¹¹⁴Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 807.

guarantee implies the certainty of ultimate fulfillment.¹¹⁵

The Spirit is given to the believer as a deposit of his eschatological blessings. A second and similar idea is that the Spirit is the firstfruits of what is to come (Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 15:20, 23). The term is described in the Old Testament as the first of the harvest that is set apart for God.¹¹⁶ In a similar fashion, the Spirit as the firstfruits is an eschatological sign that his presence in us points to a later harvest, which is the resurrection of the body.¹¹⁷ The Spirit as firstfruits reflects the already-not yet tension of the Christian life; the Spirit now comes as the first blessing of the harvest, while the resurrection of the body is the harvest.¹¹⁸ A third idea is that believers are sealed by the Spirit (2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 1:14; 4:30). The idea of sealing conveys the idea of ownership, for in ancient times the seal marked an item as the possession of the owner.¹¹⁹ Yet Paul uses the metaphor of a seal to convey that of promise or completion. The Spirit as a seal is the sign that God will fulfill the salvation that he promises.¹²⁰ Therefore, these three metaphors point to the eschatological work of the Spirit, which accounts for the already-not yet aspect of his work and these metaphors come to fruition at the resurrection of the believer in the new created order.¹²¹

¹¹⁵Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 62.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 61.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 62; Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 807.

¹¹⁸Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 807.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*

¹²⁰Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 63. On pp. 63-64, he summarizes, "The teaching that believers have been sealed with the Spirit, therefore, also has eschatological implications. To have received the Spirit as a seal means, first of all, to be assured that we belong to God – an assurance which is to be understood in the light of what was said earlier about the Spirit's witnessing in our hearts that we are sons of God. But the seal of the Spirit also means security for the future, and the certainty that we shall finally receive our inheritance in Christ."

¹²¹Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. "'Life-Giving Spirit': Probing the Center of Paul's Pneumatology,"

The Spirit is the giver of life. The Spirit is the agent of life in the Old Testament because he brings restoration life to the nation of Israel (Isa 44:2-4; Ezek 37:14, 39:29).¹²² The Spirit gives eschatological life through regeneration, the new birth (John 3:3-5; 2 Titus 3:5).¹²³ Paul demonstrates that the Spirit is involved in the resurrection and is the eschatological sign of the new life in Christ.¹²⁴ Regarding Christ's resurrection, Paul does not directly state that the Spirit raises Christ but implies that God raised Christ through the Spirit (Rom 1:4).¹²⁵ The Spirit brings life, and Paul implies that God raises believers from the dead through the Spirit (Rom 8:11).¹²⁶ Among Paul's description of the resurrected body, he states that it is a spiritual body (1 Cor 15:44).¹²⁷ The best interpretive option is that the spiritual body is empowered and given life by the Holy Spirit.¹²⁸ Therefore, any non-material or other-worldly materialistic connotations

JETS 41 (1998): 579.

¹²²Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 56. For a study on the Spirit and eschatology in the Old Testament, see Vos, "The Eschatological Aspect," 95-99.

¹²³For the Pauline doctrine of Spirit and life, see Vos, "The Eschatological Aspect," 111-12.

¹²⁴Contra Fee, who argues that the Spirit is not the agent of the resurrection, but the Spirit is the guarantee of the resurrection. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 808. Hoekema does not use the language of "agent," but he argues that the Spirit is intimately involved in the resurrection of the believer and Christ. Vos and Hamilton argue that the Spirit is the agent of the resurrection. See Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1994), 163-64; Hamilton, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul*, 18-19.

¹²⁵Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 65.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*; Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, 163.

¹²⁷In 1 Cor 15:43-44, Paul states, "It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."

¹²⁸For a helpful discussion of the views of "spiritual body," see Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1272-77.

are ruled out as an interpretive option. Hence, “to live in a resurrected body is to experience a new mode of existence, life directed and empowered by the Spirit, suitable to the age to come, in a body untainted by sin and death in any sense.”¹²⁹

Conclusion

The new covenant in Jeremiah and Ezekiel promises a heart transformation for new covenant members. One form of the promise is that the law would be internalized in the hearts of God’s people so that they would obey it. Another form of the promise is that God would place his Spirit in his people, so that they would obey his law. The reason for the Babylonian exile is that the people sinned and broke God’s law, particularly in the sin of idolatry. Moses recognized that the Spirit was not with all of God’s people, and throughout the Old Testament the Holy Spirit empowered leaders for the purpose of special enabling and prophecy. Joel’s prophecy foresaw a time when the Spirit would be given universally to all of God’s people.

Jesus promised the presence of his Spirit after his death, resurrection, and ascension. Jesus looked toward the cross as he made these promises, both in John 7:37-39 and in John 16:7-11. These promises were fulfilled at Pentecost, when the Spirit was given to the church after Jesus’ ascension. First, the Spirit indwelt all Jewish believers in Acts 2. Second, the Spirit indwelt the Samaritans in Acts 8. Third, the Spirit was given to the Gentiles in Acts 10. Finally, the Spirit was given to those who were saved from the old order in Acts 19. By Acts 19, the Holy Spirit indwelt all believers.

The Scriptures link the presence of the Spirit, and the ability to keep the law by his power, with penal substitutionary atonement. In Acts, the penal substitutionary

¹²⁹Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 817.

character of the atonement is implied when the gospel is preached and in the invitation to believe in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Those who respond in faith will receive the Spirit. Since penal substitutionary atonement secured forgiveness of sins, and Luke shows that the forgiveness of sins and the Spirit's indwelling presence are interconnected blessings of salvation, then implicit in Luke's theology is that the Spirit's coming is grounded in Jesus' penal substitutionary death. In Romans 8:1-4, Paul argues that freedom from sin is grounded in the penal substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, and the purpose of Jesus' death is that God's people would be able to obey the law in the power of the Holy Spirit. Throughout his letter to the Galatians, Paul demonstrates that Jesus' vicarious sacrifice brings about the blessing of Abraham and the presence of the Spirit. The Christ's penal substitutionary atonement is the foundation for the Spirit's presence in the hearts of believers by faith, and he is the sign of the believer's adoption. The Spirit indwells Christians because they are the children of God, and he enables them to live in holiness. The Spirit is the agent of the new created order that is inaugurated when he comes, and he is the guarantee of the full redemption that will come at the resurrection of believers so that they will dwell in the new heavens and the new earth.

Humanity's ultimate problem is sin, and sin is especially displayed by Israel's disobedience to God's law in redemptive history. The Lord promised the new covenant blessing of a transformed heart so that his people would be empowered by him to obey his law. Penal substitutionary atonement provides forgiveness so that the believer no longer suffers the penalty for his sins. This chapter shows that vicarious atonement also deals with the continuing effect of sin because it results in the Spirit's advent, who empowers Christians to live obediently. To summarize, penal substitutionary atonement not only satisfied the penalty of sin, but serves as the basis for the justification of the believer, with the result that every Christian receives the Holy Spirit by faith. The presence of the Spirit removes the continuing effect of sin in an inaugurated form, and the

Spirit will fully remove sin at the believer's resurrection in the new created order. In the current New Testament age the Spirit empowers believers to live in obedience to God's will, which fulfills the new covenant promise of a transformed heart.¹³⁰

¹³⁰While this paper argues for the penal substitutionary atonement as a necessary element for the Spirit's advent and his transforming work, it does not deny the validity of the *Christus Victor* approach in relation to the Spirit. In John 16:11, the defeat of Satan at the cross is one of the reasons that the Spirit will judge the world. In Acts 2:32-33, Jesus is exalted after the resurrection and, at the right hand of the Father, receives the Spirit to be poured out on humanity. Perhaps the spiritual gifts are a good example of Christ as victor giving gifts to his people. In Eph 4:7-8 shows that Christ, after his victory, gave spiritual gifts to men. While penal substitutionary atonement does not wholly explain all aspects of the atonement and the sending of the Spirit, this atonement approach is a vital aspect of the Spirit's coming and of his transforming work. For a helpful study that integrates penal substitution and *Christus Victor*, see Jeremy R. Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014).

CHAPTER 6
PENAL SUBSTITUTION AND
GOD'S PRESENCE

Introduction

This chapter argues that God's abiding presence with his people requires penal substitutionary atonement. The new covenant promise in Jeremiah 31: 33b says, "I will be their God, and they will be my people." The Lord repeated this same promise in Ezekiel 36:28, and in Ezekiel 37:27. His restoration promises to Israel included his promise to dwell with them.¹

God's promise that he would be Israel's God and they would be his people was a consistent covenant promise. He promised this relationship when he delivered the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. At minimum, this promise expressed God's faithfulness to his people. Jeremiah's prophecy conveys God's faithfulness by stating and reaffirming the covenant formula (Jer 32:38). After the promise to transform the heart of his people (Jer 32:39) he added, "I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them" (Jer 32:40). Likewise, God would give his people a new heart so that they would not depart from him (Jer 32:41). Under the Mosaic covenant, God turned away from his people temporarily because of their sin and idolatry.² But in

¹For a helpful extended study on God's presence in redemptive history, see Ryan Lister, *The Presence of God: Its Place in the Storyline of Scripture and the Story of Our Lives* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015). For studies of a biblical theology of the temple, see T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole, eds., *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2004); T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 13-73; Edmund P. Clowney, "The Final Temple," *WTJ* 35 (1973): 155-89.

²Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, AB 21B (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 520.

the new, everlasting covenant, God promised eternal faithfulness as his people would be faithful to him.³

The covenant formula indicates faithfulness, but the deepest meaning of this phrase is that God would make his dwelling with his people. After promising to renew the covenant (Ezek 36:28), God promised to make his dwelling with his people (Ezek 37:27). This prophecy emphasized God's dwelling with two expressions; the term for sanctuary "highlights the holiness of the residence and reflects the transcendent nature of the one who dwells within," while the term for dwell "reflects the immanence, the

³Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 520. The issue of God's presence must be clarified because the Bible presents the idea of God's presence in many ways. The Scriptures affirm that God is omnipresent in all of his creation which may be referred to as his general presence. His special presence is with his people to bless. Daniel Strange presents three categories: (1) God is generally present to sustain the universe, (2) God's special presence comes in order to judge and punish, and (3) God's special presence comes to his people to bless. See Daniel Strange, "A Little Dwelling on the Divine Presence: Towards a 'Whereness' of the Triune God," in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole (Paternoster, Waynesboro, GA: 2004), 217-23. See also Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 61. John Feinberg distinguishes between God's ontological presence and his moral, spiritual, or ethical presence. Ontological presence means that "some entity or being is actually present at a given place and space." Because of God's immensity, "he is simultaneously everywhere ontologically." To guard against pantheism, Christians claim that God is not a part of space or parts of him are not diffused throughout the universe, but the whole being of God is present everywhere. Feinberg states that moral, spiritual, and ethical presence "means that they have a relationship or fellowship with one another. As this relates to God and his people, it means that God has a spiritual relationship by saving faith with an individual and that no sin blocks fellowship and communion between God and that person. . . . In God's case, he is absent morally, ethically, or spiritually from the heathen and the wicked. Likewise, believers who have broken fellowship with God through sin and have not restored it by repentance don't experience God's spiritual presence in the same way as do believers in fellowship with him. Both kinds of believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit according to the NT, but only those in fellowship experience God's moral presence in its fullest" (John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* [Crossway, Wheaton, IL: 2001], 250). John Frame refers to God's special presence as his covenant presence, which means that "God commits himself to us, to be our God and to make us his people. He delivers us by his grace and rules us by his law, and he rules not only from above, but also with us and within us" (John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P. & R., 2002], 96). Ryan Lister states that the presence of God "is the manifestation of God in time and space – mediated in some sense – working to bring forth redemption and redemption's objectives and, simultaneously, the unmediated, fully relational, and eschatological manifestation of God first experienced in Eden and awaiting the elect in the new creation" (Lister, *The Presence of God*, 51 [emphasis in the original]). The key elements in this definition are the relationship among God and his people, his rule, and his redemptive activity with the purpose of manifesting his permanent dwelling with his covenant people in the new created order. These are the working concepts of God's presence for this paper.

condescending presence, of God.”⁴ The same term is used in Exodus for the “‘tent of appointments’ which symbolized Yahweh’s desire for regular contact with his people.”⁵

Block continues,

Ezekiel’s combination of nouns and prepositions is paradoxical. The sanctuary is *in their midst*, among . . . the people; the residence or dwelling place is *over* . . . them. The latter may have been influenced by the image of the *kābôd* [glory] of Yahweh, which resided over . . . the tent of meeting (Exod. 40:35). Like the promise of land, so the promise of the divine presence among his people is often associated with the covenant formula (cf. Exod. 29:45-4). Ezekiel’s statement expresses Yahweh’s definitive rejection of any threat ever to abandon his people again, as he had in 586 B.C., and as was so graphically portrayed in the temple vision of chs. 8-11.⁶

Zechariah’s prophecy of restoration shows a connection between the covenant formula and God’s promise to dwell with his people. After the Lord expressed his jealousy, which is his zealous demand for a relationship with his people exclusively,⁷ he stated that he is in Zion and he promised that he would dwell in Jerusalem; then Jerusalem will be called a faithful city (Zech 8:3). The Lord promised to dwell with his people once again just as he dwelt with them in the tabernacle.⁸ The mention of Zion indicates that the Lord had not completely abandoned his people, and that his future dwelling does not point merely to his presence with the remnant after the exile, but this promise had eschatological connotations that he would permanently dwell with his people.⁹ The Lord said that the remnant would be restored to Jerusalem in peace, from

⁴Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 421.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, 421.

⁷Andrew E. Hill, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 192.

⁸Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, WBC 32 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 232.

⁹Eugene Merrill notes, “Reference to Zion in prophetic literature is by far most often found in eschatological contexts. Thus already in Zechariah and in a passage very similar to this (1:14-17), the Lord

the very young to the oldest in the community (Zech 8:4-6). After bringing his people back from their scattered places, the Lord promised to bring back his people to dwell in Jerusalem, and he added that they would be his people and he would be their God (Zech 8:7-8). The covenant formula shows that God would restore the relationship between himself and Israel.¹⁰ The covenant formula in verse 8 with the promise of God's dwelling in verse 3 signifies that the covenant would be fully realized once God dwells with his people.¹¹ Eugene Merrill observes,

YHWH had said He would dwell in the midst of Jerusalem (v. 3). Now He says He will bring His people back so that they might do the same (v. 8a). When that has come to pass, they will become His people. He in turn will become their God. This is not to say that a covenant relationship will then and there be forged for the first time, for they had been His people from the day of their election in the patriarchs . . . and redemption from Egypt. . . . Their sin, however, had driven a wedge between them and YHWH so that, as Hosea so poignantly put it, they became "not My people" in terms of their functional position. By a mighty act of grace YHWH "will bring them back" (8a). This verb, in the hiphil stem, places all the initiative in God's hands. He is about to save them (v. 7), and He will bring them back. The result of this gracious work is that once more Israel, in function as well as in promise, will be His people.¹²

speaks of His zeal for Jerusalem, i.e., Zion, and promises a glorious restoration in both historical and eschatological times. The same promise, again featuring Zion, occurs in Zech 2:7-13. The eschatological springs from the historical and cannot be separated from it. This is one reason that the two frequently seem to merge and why a 'dual fulfillment' is not only possible but necessary. Here, by way of example, YHWH says He 'has returned to Zion' and will settle in the midst of Jerusalem (v. 3a). His return was a historical event attendant to the return of the remnant from exile. . . . In one sense he already had settled in Jerusalem, but now He says He will live there. The verb here is *שָׁכַן* (*sākan*), which connotes a permanent residence as opposed to a temporary one. Though *יָשַׁב* (*yāšab*) is synonymous with *sākan* and even used in parallel constructions with it (cf. Isa. 18:3; Jer. 49:31), *sākan* is more commonly used in eschatological descriptions of YHWH's residence on earth" (Eugene H. Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Exegetical Commentary* [n.p.: Biblical Studies Press, 2003], 194-95).

¹⁰George L. Klein, *Zechariah*, NAC 21B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008), 238; Hill, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 194; Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 234.

¹¹Lister, *The Presence of God*, 127.

¹²Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 196.

Covenant Presence in the Old Testament

Genesis 2-3

The Garden of Eden was the first place that God established his relationship with man. God set the parameters of his relationship with Adam and Eve by providing purpose for them and giving one prohibition. After God created Adam, he placed Adam in the garden and gave him stewardship over the garden (Gen 2:15). God created Eve (Gen 2:18-23; 1:27) and gave them the mandate to fill the earth and subdue it (Gen 1:28). The Lord also instructed Adam that he may eat from all the trees in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with the consequence that he would die (Gen 2:16-17). God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve, which suggests that he had fellowship with them (Gen 3:8).¹³ Scripture graphically depicts Adam and Eve's alienation from God because they hid themselves after they sinned.¹⁴ Their sin resulted in broken fellowship while the Lord declared curses upon the serpent, Eve, and Adam (Gen 3:14-19). After humanity was sentenced with the curse of death, God banished Adam and Eve from the garden (Gen 3:22-24). Verse 23 indicates that God "sent out" man from the garden and verse 24 states that God "drove the man out"; both verbs highlight that God expelled man from the garden and that they did not leave voluntarily.¹⁵ The Lord set up

¹³Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, NAC 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 239. Mathews shows many parallels with the Mosaic covenant and the tabernacle and the Garden of Eden. Regarding disobedience and God's presence, he states, "As disobedience meant death in the garden, transgressors of God's law in Israel experienced its deathly consequences. The God of the tabernacle was indeed the God of the garden. And, more importantly, as the tabernacle symbolized the presence of God among his people, the descriptive language of the garden's habitat declares that God is present with the first man (ibid., 206)."

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 209-10.

cherubim to guard the entrance to Eden, which made the prospect of Adam and Eve's return impossible (Gen 3:24). Therefore, "such imagery effectively depicts the excommunication of the man and woman from the presence of God."¹⁶ God was with man in the garden, but his sin caused him to be expelled from God's presence. This expulsion from the garden illustrated their loss of fellowship with God.¹⁷

¹⁶Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 258.

¹⁷Some theologians argue that the Garden of Eden is an archetypal temple. See G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 614-48; idem, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 23-122; William J. Dumbrell, "Genesis 2:1-17: A Foreshadowing of the New Creation," in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 57-61; Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 399-404. Beale lists the hints that the Eden was an archetypal temple in Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 66-88. While many support this approach, it does not seem likely because the text never clearly declares that God dwells in the garden. Mathews states, "In ancient Near Eastern mythology is found a 'garden of God' motif that depicts the divine residence on earth; it typically possesses abundant waters, fertile herbage, and beautiful stones. But here 'garden of God' or 'garden of the Lord' is absent; God does not dwell in the garden; rather it is the place where he meets with man" (Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 200). Victor Hamilton concurs: "There are other expressions throughout the OT for *the garden of Eden*, namely, 'the garden of Yahweh' (Gen. 13:10; Isa. 51:3) and 'the garden of God' (Ezek. 28:13; 31:9). The writer of Gen. 2 does not use any such phrase, perhaps to refrain from giving the impression that this garden is where God lives. He is its planter, but not its occupant" (Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, 161). Daniel Block gives a helpful detailed critique of the view of Eden as the archetypal temple. See Daniel I. Block, "Eden: A Temple? A Reassessment of the Biblical Evidence," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013), 3-29. After surveying the textual evidence in Genesis 1-3, Block concludes, "In my response to reading Gn 1-3 as temple-building texts, I have hinted at the fundamental hermeneutical problem involved in this approach. The question is, should we read Gn 1-3 in light of later texts, or should we read later texts in the light of these? If we read the accounts in the order given, then the creation account provides essential background to the primeval history, which provides background for the patriarchal, exodus, and tabernacle narratives. By themselves and by this reading the accounts of Gn 1-3 offer no clues that a cosmic or Edenic temple might be involved. However, as noted above, the Edenic features of the tabernacle, the Jerusalem temple, and the temple envisioned by Ezekiel are obvious. Apparently their design and function intended to capture something of the original creation, perhaps even to represent in miniature the original environment in which human beings were placed. However, the fact that Israel's sanctuaries were Edenic does not make Eden into a sacred shrine. At best this is a nonreciprocating equation" (Block, "Eden: A Temple," 20-21). Furthermore, after he determines that the function of temples in the Ancient Near East was to provide a dwelling for the gods, the temples were built on a "platform of creation theology" rather than the creation being built on a "platform of temple theology." He concludes, "To be sure, the sanctuary provided an

Exodus and Leviticus

A fundamental characteristic of God's relationship with his people is that he dwells with them. God made his covenant with the nation of Israel through Moses because the Lord was faithful to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. An important promise of the Mosaic covenant was that he would dwell with his people as they kept the covenant. The Lord stated that one of the blessings of obedience is his residence among them (Lev 26:11-12). The implication is that their disobedience could result in the loss of his covenant presence.¹⁸ God then commanded the Israelites to make a sanctuary for him so that he might dwell with them (Exod 25:8). After giving instructions for the consecration of the priests and the tabernacle, the Lord announced that he would consecrate the priests and the tabernacle, that he would dwell with his people, and that they would know him because he delivered them from Egyptian slavery (Exod 29:43-46). One important observation from this text is that sanctification is an important theme. The priests and the nation must consecrate themselves before they could come into his presence (Exod 29:1-42). The Lord's presence came to his people for the purpose of sanctifying them.¹⁹ Stuart

earthly dwelling for YHWH in the midst of a fallen people, and its rituals provided a means whereby covenant relationship with him could be maintained even in a fallen world. In its design as a miniature Eden the Israelite temple addressed both the alienation of humanity from the divine Suzerain and the alienation of creation in general. From Zion Eden-like prosperity would flow onto the land that YHWH had given Israel as their grant (Lv 26:1-13; Dt 28:1-14; Ez 34:25-31). While the rabbis surely went too far in suggesting that the heavens and the earth were created from Zion, the temple represented the source of Israel's and ultimately the world's re-creation. The temple symbolized the gracious divine determination to lift the effects of the curse from the land and the people, and the place from which YHWH's blessing and rule (the delights of Eden) could radiate forth (Ps 50:2-4) to the land and nation of Israel" (Block, "Eden: A Temple," 26-27).

¹⁸Wenham states, "The blessings reach a great climax in reassuring the people that if they are faithful, all the promises included in the covenant will be fulfilled. God will walk with his people, as he did in the Garden of Eden before the fall. . . . What God had repeatedly promised as the goal of the covenant, 'I shall become your God,' will then be seen to be true" (Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 329).

¹⁹James M. Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testament* (Nashville: B. & H. Academic, 2006), 36; Lanier Burns, *The Nearness of God: His Presence with His People* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 92.

observes,

In saying “the place will be consecrated [made holy] by my glory” – God indicated the real means of sanctification – to which various sacrifices and rituals merely pointed – as his own presence. Where he is, he takes possession, and thus things near him become his and are holy. Nevertheless, the rituals were important, as v. 44 states. The ultimate means of sanctification is God’s presence, but the proximate means was obediently carrying out the ritual consecration actions for the “Tent of Meeting” (tabernacle), “altar,” and “priests” as the chapter earlier describes. With the tabernacle, as well as its place of expiation through sacrifice (altar) as well as God’s servants (priests) to help the people benefit from that expiation, all in place, God could properly “dwell among the Israelites and be their God” – protecting them, blessing them, receiving their worship, and bringing them along toward their eternal salvation. This is the meaning of “I will . . . be their God.”²⁰

A second important point is that God delivered Israel for the purpose of dwelling with them. In the deliverance narrative, the Lord explained that the purpose of his deliverance was that his people would worship him and serve him (Exod 5:1-3, 7:16). In Exodus 29:46, the Lord explicitly asserted that the purpose of the exodus was to dwell with his people.²¹ After its construction, the book ends with the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle (Exod 40: 34-38). The glory of the Lord is “a technical term for God’s manifest presence.”²² Hence, the tabernacle became a symbol of God’s presence among

²⁰Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC 2 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 631.

²¹R. Alan Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1973), 213. See also Peter Enns, *Exodus*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 536; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Exodus* in vol. 1 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 532. Bill Arnold and Bran Beyer explain: “God’s desire was for a ‘priestly kingdom and a holy nation’ that he could indwell (Ex 19:6). The purpose for the exodus from Egypt was so God could dwell in the midst of his people. The coming of God’s glorious presence into the newly constructed tabernacle forms the climax of the Book of Exodus (40:34). Thus the tabernacle was the partial fulfillment of the patriarchal promise that God would be with the descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999], 114).

²²C. John Collins, “כבוד,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 581. Collins continues, “This manifest presence of God . . . is said to accompany Israel throughout the wilderness period . . . but is not limited to that time; God’s presence is to continue via the sacrificial worship.”

his people because his glory rested in the tabernacle.²³

1 Kings

During the monarchial period, God's dwelling place became the temple instead of the tabernacle, and the Lord chose Solomon to build his temple.²⁴ While building the temple, the Lord told Solomon that if he kept his commandments, then he would dwell with them (1 Kings 6:11-13). Even with the grandeur of the temple, God's relationship with his people did not change because he required obedience so that he might dwell with them.²⁵ When the temple was completed, the ark of the covenant entered, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple (1 Kings 8:6-11). William Dumbrell observes, "Yahweh's presence associated with the temple makes it clear that an unbroken covenant relationship with the Sinai structures continues for Israel, thus ensuring a future for national Israel as the people of God. Without that presence there can be no future."²⁶

²³Stuart, *Exodus*, 793.

²⁴Pekka Pitkänen observes that in Psalm 78, God rejects the pre-monarchial worship in Shiloh such that God chooses the Davidic monarchy and the temple in Jerusalem. Regarding vv. 70-72, Pitkänen comments, "The fall of the old tribal order including the abandonment of the leadership of Ephraim and the sanctuary at Shiloh in Ephraim's territory was God's judgment on Israel. . . . Then, God in his grace set up a new order in Judah and Jerusalem, with the establishment of kingship and the Temple in Jerusalem (Ps. 78:67-72)" (Pekka Pitkänen, "From Tent of Meeting to Temple: Presence, Rejection and Renewal of Divine Favour," in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole [Paternoster, Waynesboro, GA: 2004], 32).

²⁵Ian W. Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 67. This particular promise focuses on Solomon's obedience, which is a reaffirmation of the Davidic covenant. Philip Ryken states concerning the promise of God's dwelling, "This was the very reason that Solomon was building a temple: so that God would dwell with his people. It was also the deep promise of the covenant. The best gift that God can ever offer is the gift of himself, in all his love and grace. He had made this promise to his people in the time of Moses. . . . Now God was repeating his covenant promise to Solomon. God's presence with his people depended on the faithfulness of their king. If Solomon obeyed, then the whole nation would enjoy the blessed habitation of their God" (Philip Graham Ryken, *1 Kings*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011), 143. Thus the Davidic covenant required obedience from the king, and the Mosaic covenant required obedience from the people so that God may dwell with his people.

²⁶William J. Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning: Revelation 21-22 and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985). 52.

Therefore, God dwelled with his people as a fundamental expression that he would be their God and they would be his people.²⁷ Yet God also required obedience to the law as a covenant stipulation for his presence to remain with Israel.

Covenant Presence in the New Testament

The new covenant promises that God's presence will be with his people forever, and the Lord fulfills his promise by the work of Jesus Christ. Next, this study considers God's manifestation of his covenant presence in the New Testament.

John

The Lord manifested his presence in the New Testament through the incarnation of his Son.²⁸ The apostle John expresses this truth in the prologue to his Gospel when he says that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). He continues by stating that “we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the

²⁷R. J. McKelvey notes, “The idea of the divine presence is central to the eschatology of the Old Testament and in the intertestamental literature. Eschatology could and often did exist without the figure of a Messiah but never without the thought of God’s dwelling in the midst of his people” (R. J. McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1969], viii.).

²⁸In Matthew’s birth narrative the angel of the Lord quotes Isa 7:14 (Matt 1:23) to declare that the child will be called Immanuel, meaning God with us. The name indicates that in the fullest sense God was with his people in the person of Jesus Christ. David Turner notes, “This ‘name’ is more of a title signifying the character and mission of Jesus as God with his people to save them from their sins. It is not just that God is present in Jesus to help his people. . . . Such an approach implies a mere cyclical pattern between the biblical testaments, not a full typology were the NT antitype transcends the biblical type by bringing it to climatic fulfillment. Judging from the implications of his previous material . . . and his overall high Christology . . . it is likely that Matthew intended this in the fullest sense: Jesus as God’s Son is also God himself with his people, effecting their deliverance. This is the ultimate manifestation of God’s presence. The significance of Isaiah’s typical Immanuel, though great in itself, pales in comparison with Matthew’s antitypical with-us-God, Jesus” (David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 72-73). The theme of God’s presence in Christ recapitulates after the ascension when Jesus promises to be with his disciples forever as he commands them to carry out the great commission (Matt 28:20). See Turner, *Matthew*, 73; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 49.

father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14bc). The presence of God in Christ’s incarnation is expressed in this verse with two key concepts: his dwelling and his glory. The word translated dwelt (σκηνοῶ) literally means “to pitch one’s tent.”²⁹ This term conveys connotations of the tabernacle, which housed God’s presence during the wilderness wanderings. Thus, that the Word dwelt “suggests that in Jesus, God has come to take up residence among his people once again, in a way even more intimate than when he dwelt in the midst of wilderness Israel in the tabernacle (Exod. 40:34-35).”³⁰ The term glory (δόξα) is an important concept in the Gospel of John. David MacLeod comments that the glory is not “God in His essential nature, but is the luminous manifestation of His person, his glorious revelation of himself.”³¹ The apostle’s connection of dwelling and glory presents clear associations with the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle. The Hebrew and Greek terms highlight this point:

In sound and meaning σκηνοῶ recalls the Hebrew verb שָׁכַן, meaning “to dwell,” which is sometimes used of God’s dwelling with Israel ([Exod.] 25:9; 29:46). In postbiblical Hebrew the Jews used the term שְׁכִינָה (“Shekinah,” literally “presence”) of the bright cloud of the presence of God that settled on the tabernacle.

²⁹Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 41; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 127; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 91.

³⁰Köstenberger, *John*, 41. Köstenberger notes that the word is only used in a similar way in Rev 7:15; 12:12; 13:6; 21:3. David J. MacLeod adds, “The use of the term here is significant for two reasons. First, it may suggest that His earthly stay was an episode – albeit, one that lasted a lifetime – between his preexistence and His postexistence in glory. Second, for Greek-speaking Jews this would be significant because σκηνη was the word used by the translators of the Septuagint for the Hebrew מִשְׁכָּן, ‘tabernacle’ (Exod. 25:9). During Israel’s pilgrimage from Egypt to Canaan the tabernacle was the place of worship for the people. The tabernacle or tent in the wilderness was the ‘tent of Jehovah, Himself a pilgrim among His pilgrim people.’” (David J. MacLeod, “The Incarnation of the Word: John 1:14,” *BibSac* 161 (2004): 77). MacLeod cautions that the incarnation itself is not a temporary event, but only his residence on earth. Regarding this caution, see also Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 91.

³¹Severre Aalen, “δόξα,” in *NIDNTT*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 45. See also MacLeod, “The Incarnation of the Word: John 1:14,” 79. This research is based on MacLeod’s article. Kittle argues that the glory is the divine nature in visible form. See G. Kittel and G. von Rad, “δόξα,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 244.

The Shekinah glory was nothing less than the visible manifestation of God.

In the Targums, Aramaic paraphrases of Scripture that are read in the synagogues, the term “Shekinah” was used of the presence of the Lord among His people in the future kingdom. “For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gloom the kingdoms; but the Shekinah of the Lord shall dwell in thee.” The place of His dwelling, John wrote, is the flesh of Jesus. God manifested Himself in the tabernacle, but the incarnate Word is the better Shekinah, the ultimate manifestation of God among human beings.³²

Thus the glory of Christ is the manifestation of God’s presence in the earth.³³ Jesus came to dwell “among us,” which means that the incarnate Son of God is the very presence of God who lives with humanity.

John also describes Jesus’ relationship to the temple in chapter 2. After clearing the temple, Jesus referred to himself as the new temple, indicating that his body would be destroyed and rise again in three days (John 2:19-21). The reference is a cryptic foreshadowing of the crucifixion and the resurrection.³⁴ James Hamilton, Jr. notes that the temple cleansing became more significant after the resurrection (John 2:22):

It would appear that John means for his readers to observe that in this passage “the house of My Father” (2:16) ceases to be the building on mount Zion in Jerusalem and becomes the body of Jesus (2:20-21). Before Jesus came, sacrifice for sin took place at the temple. Jesus claims that temple sacrifice will take place at a new temple, His body, and that He will be raised in three days (2:19-22). . . . John presents Jesus as the replacement of the temple with regard to the presence of God and sacrifice for sin.³⁵

One feature of the temple is that it is the place where God dwells. Jesus replaced the

³²MacLeod, “The Incarnation of the Word: John 1:14,” 79. See also Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 127-28; Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 91-92. MacLeod quotes *The Targum of Isaiah*, 60.2.

³³While “glory” represents God’s presence, in the gospel of John, the fuller meaning of the glory of Christ is displayed through his signs and ultimately through his crucifixion and resurrection. See Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 128; Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 93; Köstenberger, *John*, 42.

³⁴Köstenberger, *John*, 110.

³⁵Hamilton, Jr., *God’s Indwelling Presence*, 152-53.

temple because the presence of God dwells in Jesus Christ.³⁶ Thus Jesus saw himself as the typological fulfillment of the temple.³⁷ In addition, Jesus consistently foreshadowed that he was the true temple that would replace the temple in Jerusalem throughout John's gospel.³⁸

Jesus promised that the divine presence would continue after his glorification. He said that for those who love and obey his commands,³⁹ he would ask the Father to send another helper who would always be present with the disciples (John 14:15-17).⁴⁰

³⁶Hamilton, Jr., *God's Indwelling Presence*, 153.

³⁷For a brief discussion on Jesus as the typological fulfillment of the temple, see Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 182. For an extended discussion, see Paul M. Hoskins, "Jesus as the Replacement of the Temple in the Gospel of John" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 2002).

³⁸Hamilton briefly demonstrates the other functions of the temple which are fulfilled in Jesus: "John appears to connect Jesus and the Temple in other ways as well. Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29) and dies on behalf of the people (11:50-51). Whereas bread was kept in the tabernacle (Exod 25:30), Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:34). Water was expected to flow from the eschatological temple (Ezek 47; Zech 14:8); Jesus offers living water to those who will come to him (John 4:10-14; 7:37-38). Whereas the lampstand stood in the tabernacle (Exod 25:31-40), Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). As God formerly dwelt in the temple, now the Father dwells in Jesus. 'The Father is in Me and I am in the Father' (10:38; 14:10; see 1:14, 51; 2:19; 4:21-26; 10:30). Thus during Jesus' ministry John shows him declaring that a time is coming when worship in Jerusalem will no longer be necessary (4:21-24). Once Jesus finishes his work (19:30), no more sacrifices of atonement need be offered. This enables the possibility of a re-direction of the temple's role in dealing with sin" (Hamilton, Jr., *God's Indwelling Presence*, 153-54). See also 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 (Paternoster, Waynesboro, GA: 2004), 129-31; McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 75-84; Hoskins, "Jesus as the Replacement of the Temple," 157-283.

³⁹Carson notes that love and obedience are not preconditions for Jesus' asking for the Spirit, but that these concepts are interrelated. "The love of the disciples for Jesus should not be seen as the price paid for this gift, any more than it is the price paid for their obedience. Jesus is describing a set of essential relations, not a set of titillating conditions. His true followers will love him; they will obey him; and he on his part will secure for them, from the Father who denies nothing to his Son, *another Counsellor [sic.]*" (Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 499.)

⁴⁰The term *παράκλητος* has been translated as Counselor, Helper, or Advocate. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore this issue at length. For an helpful treatment on *παράκλητος* see Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 587-91; Johannes Behm, "παράκλητος," in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 800-14; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective, Second Edition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 146-48.

The Spirit as “another” helper implies that the Spirit is a helper who is similar to Jesus and one who replaces him.⁴¹ The world cannot perceive and does not know the Spirit of truth, but the disciples know him; he is with the disciples and will be in them (John 14:16-17).⁴² Jesus used two prepositions to describe the Paraclete’s ministry: he would dwell *with* them and would be *in* them. The preposition *with* “suggests rather an association, a personal sharing, some kind of sharing” while the preposition *in* “suggests real indwelling.”⁴³ The *in* terminology in John communicates a closeness of relationship:

What point, then does John (and ultimately Jesus) stress in his use of “in” terminology? It is the intimacy of relationship desired by Jesus with believers, and intimacy even greater in the Spirit than the one possible when Jesus was still physically among his earthly followers. Again, the theme is already sounded in the prologue: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” ([John] 1:14). Thus, in the context of Jesus’ parting words to his disciples, he seeks to impress upon them that his cross-death will result, not in lesser, but in greater intimacy between him and his followers.⁴⁴

Furthermore, the Spirit would be with Jesus’ followers forever, meaning that he indwells believers permanently.⁴⁵ When the Spirit came, the presence of Christ and God the Father would be in believers (John 14:20). Köstenberger notes, “Jesus’ departure will not leave

⁴¹Köstenberger, *John*, 436.

⁴²Köstenberger notes that John uses the concept of truth in five ways. Furthermore “the Spirit is involved in all five aspects: he accurately represents the truth regarding Jesus; his is the eschatological gift of God; he imparts true knowledge of God; he is operative in both worship and sanctification; and he points people to the person of Jesus” (ibid., 438).

⁴³Carson, *The Farewell Discourse*, 55. George Beasley-Murray also expresses the two truths that *with* (πάρα) and *in* (ἐν) communicate. “It is better not to distinguish the prepositions too sharply, but . . . to see in the two brief clauses a single figure of speech, affirming the presence of the Spirit with the disciples, while yet recognizing that the latter points to the Spirit’s inner presence in individual believers” (George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC 36 [Dallas: Word, 1999], 257-58). See also Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 577, note 50.

⁴⁴Köstenberger, *Encountering John*, 144.

⁴⁵Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 577.

them as orphans (14:18); just as God was present with them through Jesus, so he will continue to be present with them through his Spirit.”⁴⁶ Jesus proclaimed that those who love him and keep his commands would have the presence of the Father and himself with them (John 14:20, 23). Thus, both God the Father and God the Son “express their love to believers by dwelling with them. And yet they dwell with believers by means of the Spirit – the same Spirit sent by the Father and the Son.”⁴⁷ Jesus fulfilled his promise on the day of Pentecost when he poured out the Spirit to believers.

Individual Indwelling

Paul uses temple imagery in 1 Corinthians 6:20 to argue that the Holy Spirit indwells individuals.⁴⁸ Paul instructs the Corinthian Christians to reject sexual sin in this

⁴⁶Köstenberger, *John*, 436-37. Contra Morris, who argues that this reference regarding Jesus’ coming to the disciples refers to his post-resurrection appearance. See Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 578.

⁴⁷Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 472. See also Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 504.

⁴⁸This paragraph emphasizes Paul’s use of temple imagery to show that the Spirit is God’s indwelling presence in individual believers. Space does not permit a full investigation of the Spirit’s indwelling presence in individuals. Paul says that Spirit indwells individual believers is Rom 8:9-11. Paul expresses the eschatological contrast between those whose mind is set on the flesh, leading to death versus those whose mind is set on the Spirit, resulting in life and peace (Rom 8:5-8). Then, he mentions the Holy Spirit’s indwelling of the believer four times. Believers are said to be in the Spirit if the Spirit dwells in them (Rom 8:9ab). Paul states that anyone who does not have the Spirit does not belong to Christ (Rom 8:9c); the word “anyone” shows that Paul has in mind individual believers. Paul mentions dwelling twice in the period of verse 11; if the Spirit of God who dwells in the believer, then he will be raised to new life through that same Spirit who indwells the believer. Paul’s focus is on the believer’s eschatological blessings of life, ultimately fulfilled in the resurrection from the dead. But the indwelling Spirit for individual believers is an important aspect of this promise. Moo notes, “Paul believes that every Christian is indwelt by the Spirit of God. Indeed, this is just what Paul affirms in the last part of the verse, where he denies that the person who does not have the ‘Spirit of Christ’ can make any claim to being a Christian at all. In other words, for Paul, possession of the Spirit goes hand-in-hand with being a Christian. However much we may need to grow in our relationship to the Spirit, however much we may be graciously given fresh and invigorating experiences of God’s Spirit, from the moment of conversion on, the Holy Spirit is a settled resident within” (Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 490). Paul’s exhortation in Eph 5:18, though it has a corporate focus, is unintelligible if the members of the church are not individually being filled with the Spirit. See Andreas J. Köstenberger, “What Does It Mean to be Filled with the Spirit? A Biblical Investigation,” *JETS* 40 (1997): 233-35. Paul’s theology of

passage. Paul equates the sexual union of a Christian and a prostitute as becoming one flesh with that prostitute, with the implication that members of Christ are joined to a prostitute (1 Cor 6:14-17). Paul then asks a key question, in which he states that the Christian's body is a temple of the Spirit. The temple imagery is used earlier in the book in 1 Corinthians 3:16 in reference to the corporate church.⁴⁹ Gordon Fee argues,

Through the phenomenon of the indwelling Spirit, Paul now images the body as the Spirit's temple, emphasizing that it is the 'place' of the Spirit's dwelling in the believers' lives. In the same way that the temple in Jerusalem 'housed' the presence of the living God, so the Spirit of God is 'housed' in the believer's body.⁵⁰

Thus, the Spirit inhabits each believer individually.⁵¹ The Spirit's holiness means that the body, like the temple, should not be desecrated but honored.⁵² Paul's focus in describing the body as a temple is ethical. Mark Bonnington comments,

A number of points are worthy of emphasis. First, it is clearly the individual and not the community that is in view as the Temple. Secondly, the focus is soteriological: it is the donation of the Spirit in redemption (not the donation of the body in creation) that makes the body a Temple. The appeal is not to a universal anthropology but to a distinctively Christian anthropology grounded in pneumatology. Thirdly, the immediately preceding concern is with the special character of sexual sin. This Paul argues is different from other sin since in this case people sin against their own

adoption implies that the Spirit individually indwells believers (Rom 8:15-17; Gal 4:4-7), as does his theology of the Spirit's sealing (Eph 1:13-14). 1 John also states that the Spirit has been given to believers (1 John 3:24; 4:13).

⁴⁹Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 264. See below regarding the 1 Cor 3:16 and the church as the temple.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Fee argues, "Here, then, also lies the significance of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, where Paul expresses this motif in terms of his soteriological understanding of the Spirit's presence in the life of the individual believer. The result is that God not only 'dwells' in the midst of this people by the Spirit, but that he has likewise taken up residence in the lives of his people individually, as they are indwelt by the life-giving Spirit. The Spirit for Paul is therefore none other than the way God's presence has returned to his people, not only corporately as they gather for worship, but individually as well" (Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994], 845),

⁵²Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 264.

bodies. This is precisely the concern with the sacral integrity of the bounded entity (in this case the human body not the believing community) that Temple language evokes and articulates. Fourthly, it should be noted that the ‘god’ of the somatic Temple is actually the Holy Spirit – it is his ‘image’ that is to be honoured [*sic.*] in the Temple of the human body.⁵³

Because the Spirit dwells in each person, each person has God’s special presence and should conduct themselves accordingly, especially in regard to their body. Furthermore, each person is a possession of God because they have been brought with a price. This statement refers to the cross, so that God purchased each person by the death of Christ. Fee notes, “Christ purchased us for God. His point here is that even the body is included in that purchase. Thus at the end of the argument he joins the cross to the resurrection, along with the present gift of the Spirit, as evidence that the ‘body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.’”⁵⁴

Corporate Indwelling

The New Testament writers use temple imagery to show that God indwells the corporate church. Paul uses this imagery to encourage the Corinthian church that they should conduct themselves in holiness in 1 Corinthians 3:16. Paul’s reference to the temple is in the context of his rebuke of the Corinthian church because they were creating factions by favoring one leader over another (1 Cor 3:4-5). Paul answered by showing that God was the one who builds and that the apostles are fellow workers. Paul argues that the Corinthian church is God’s building, his temple. After Paul describes his and his fellow workers’ construction of the building, he describes God’s evaluation of their contribution to the building (1 Cor 3:10-15).⁵⁵ He asks, “Do you not know that you are

⁵³Mark Bonnington, “New Temples in Corinth: Paul’s Use of Temple Imagery in the Ethics of the Corinthian Correspondence,” in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond and Simon Gathercole (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2004), 157.

⁵⁴Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 265.

⁵⁵Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 130; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The*

God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" The church is the temple of God because the Spirit dwells in them. Paul's designation of the Corinthian church as the temple functions in three ways. First, they are a temple precisely because the Spirit of God indwells them.⁵⁶ Second, the temple is the corporate church, which emphasizes that "God does not dwell in a multiplicity of temples. He is one, and there can be only one shrine which he can inhabit. To cause disunity in the church is to desecrate the temple of God, and desecration of a holy place leads to its destruction."⁵⁷ The third point is that the temple is holy, and those who cause the factions that destroy the temple will be destroyed (1 Cor 3:17). McKelvey observes,

The church is God's holy preserve, and evil must not be allowed to enter it. . . . Schism is equivalent to profanation of the holy place, which in ancient society was a capital offence, executed by the deity himself. . . . 'If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him.' A stronger warning concerning the unity of the church is scarcely possible. The church is a divine institution and anyone who would attempt to destroy it by shattering it with divisions will incur divine judgment.⁵⁸

First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 311-15.

⁵⁶McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 100; Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 158; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 317. McKelvey also notes that God's Spirit makes them a temple, which coincides with the Old Testament expectations of God's presence. "Secondly, this text indicates what it is that makes the faithful in Christ a temple. It is God's Spirit. Old Testament and intertestamental eschatology, as we saw earlier, linked together the new temple and the presence of God. Without the presence of God there can be no temple. . . . The statement that it is the Spirit of God, i.e., the Holy Spirit, that dwells in the temple . . . also points to Paul's new understanding of the divine tabernacling upon earth, for the gift of the Spirit to his way of thinking is contingent upon the work of Christ, and he does not think of the Spirit without thinking of Christ. The role of the Spirit is essentially unifying. As it creates one body (1 Cor. 12.13), so it creates one temple. It is this unity, the unity of the new people of God, that the Corinthians must zealously guard" (McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 100-01). For the eschatological overtones that show the people of God as the new temple, see also Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 146-47.

⁵⁷McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 101. Since they are God's temple and God's temple is holy, Paul "calls the whole community to corporate responsibility for the integrity of the edifice" (Bonnington, "New Temples in Corinth," 156).

⁵⁸Ibid., 101-02. Paul also presents the temple imagery again in 2 Cor 6:16 to emphasize corporate holiness by forbidding union with unbelievers. He reinforces his exhortation with Old Testament

Paul also presents temple imagery in Ephesians 2:20-22, after explaining that Jesus' death brings reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles. Christians are now one family in God's household because the cross brought peace (Eph 2:19). Paul transitions from a family metaphor to a building metaphor; he shows that the foundation of this building, which is a temple, is the New Testament apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the first foundation stone (Eph 2:20).⁵⁹ In the church's union with Christ, they are being built together into a holy temple (Eph 2:21), a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Eph 2:22). Paul uses the Greek word *ναὸς* for the temple, which indicates that the

quotes showing that God dwells with this people (1 Cor 6:16b), that his people should separate themselves from idols (1 Cor 6:17), and that God will be a father to his people (1 Cor 6:18). Harris notes, "On the basis of . . . the assurance that the Christian church forms the new temple (v. 16a) and the evidence of that fact found in the promises of v. 16b, Paul now issues a threefold call for separation, and then gives the assurance of divine acceptance if that call is heeded (note *καί* [in *καὶ γὰρ*], "then"). The conjunction *διό* introduces natural consequences of the distinctive and privileged relationship between God and his reconstituted people. Being God's temple incurs obligations of purity. It is not that obedience to the call for separation creates that relationship, but once that relationship has been created it demands a separation from all that is unholy (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17). At the heart of Pauline ethics (and NT ethics in general) stands this relation between theological proclamation and moral exhortation, between affirmation and appeal, between the indicative and the imperative. Christians corporately form God's temple (6:16); they therefore must keep that temple pure (6:17). The indicative is prior to and the basis of the imperative" (Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], 507). This verse stresses that the church community, which Paul declares is God's dwelling, must be protected from the external dangers of idols and worldly wickedness in the similar way that the community must avoid the internal dangers of factions in 1 Cor 3:16. See McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 102. For summaries and views regarding Paul's Old Testament citations, see Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 505-11; Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 351-55; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, NAC 29 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 336-41. For a study on 2 Cor 3:1-18 that argues that the Spirit indwells the church as the fulfillment of the new covenant promise of God's presence, see Scott Hafemann, "The 'Temple of the Spirit' as the Inaugural Fulfillment of the New Covenant within the Corinthian Correspondence," *Ex Auditu* 12 (1996): 29-42.

⁵⁹Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 407. For an excellent description of the exegetical challenges of this verse, see *ibid*, 397-407. O'Brien places more emphasis than Hoehner on the apostolic teaching, which legitimately constitutes the theological foundation of the church. O'Brien argues, "Paul seems, therefore, to be making the following points: Christ is the vital cornerstone on whom the building is constructed. The foundation and position of all the other stones in the superstructure were determined by him. . . . Accordingly, the temple is built out and up from the revelation given in Christ, with the apostles and prophets elaborating and explaining the mystery, which had been made known to them by the Holy Spirit (3:4-11, esp. v. 5)" (Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 217-18).

temple corresponds to the Holy of Holies in the Jewish temple as the place of God's presence.⁶⁰ The building, which is the universal church, is continually being built up with both Jew and Gentile believers as stones, or members of this temple as a place for God's dwelling.⁶¹ While the primary focus on verse 21 is the building process, the focus on verse 22 emphasizes the members of that building, which are Gentile and Jewish believers.⁶² The direction of this growth is into the dwelling place of God.⁶³ Hoehner points out that the genitive (τοῦ θεοῦ) is one of possession and carries the idea of a permanent and settled dwelling place.⁶⁴ Paul concludes that the instrument of this dwelling is the Spirit; God dwells in the corporate church by the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵ The main point of this passage is that both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled so that both are the new man, the new temple in whom God dwells. Bruce concludes,

As the God of Israel had once taken up residence in the wilderness tabernacle and later in the Jerusalem temple by his name and his glory, so now by his Spirit he makes the fellowship of believers, Jewish and Gentile alike, his chosen dwelling place.⁶⁶

⁶⁰Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 410.

⁶¹Ibid., 411.

⁶²Ibid., 412. Contra O'Brien, who views v. 21 and v. 22 as parallel clauses. See O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 220.

⁶³Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 413.

⁶⁴Hoehner observes, "The genitive that follows . . . denoting that this place of settled dwelling is God's in reference to the body of believers. It is not only a dwelling place but a deep or settled dwelling place. It has the idea of a dwelling place that is firmly rooted. It signifies the endurance and permanence of God's inhabitation in the body of believers. This is the ἅγιος ναός, 'holy temple' in which God dwells, as mentioned in the previous verse. Not made with hands, it is a temple in which God is pleased to dwell" (ibid., 413-14).

⁶⁵Ibid., 413.

⁶⁶F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 307.

The purpose is that the church, the reconciled community of Jews and Gentiles would become a dwelling place for God's Spirit.⁶⁷

New Heavens and New Earth

The final expression of God's presence is God dwelling with his people in the new heavens and the new earth. After his final judgment and in the eternal state, the apostle states that the dwelling place of God is with man, and John repeats the ancient covenant formula (Rev 21:3). The covenant formula usually uses the singular term (*λαός*), but in this case John uses the plural (*λαοί*), which signifies that the covenant blessings

⁶⁷O'Brien states that the temple in vv. 21-22 refers to a heavenly entity and not the universal church; believers on earth are connected to the heavenly temple through the Spirit, and Paul proclaimed that they are currently seated in the heavenly realms (Eph 2:4-6) and are citizens in the heavenly city. See O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 221; P. T. O'Brien, "The Church as a Heavenly and Eschatological Entity," in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 102-03. Particularly in his article, O'Brien opposes the idea of the universal church as a scattered group of believers throughout the world and offers a critique to this approach. His two critiques are (1) the term *ekklēsia*, which means "gathering" or "assembly" are not valid because the scattered people in the world cannot become an assembly; hence one must redefine the term, and (2) Col 1:15-20 indicates that this assembly is on a heavenly plane. He argues that references to *ekklēsia* that are larger than the local congregation refer to the gathering of saints in the heaven around Christ. See O'Brien, "The Church as a Heavenly and Eschatological Entity," 88-98. Gregg Allison provides a helpful critique of O'Brien's approach. Allison argues that O'Brien illegitimately restricts the term to its normal meaning. He also argues that O'Brien does not consider that the term could be used differently. Allison elaborates, "The fact of the matter is that the New Testament uses *ekklēsia* in reference to a particular group of Christians who indeed gather together in some locality, engage in worship, are led by pastors, baptize and administer the Lord's Supper, and so forth. At the same time, the New Testament also uses *ekklēsia* when referring to another entity: the church for which Christ died, which is his body, which he is building, which he is expanding throughout the world, and which along with the Jews and Gentiles deserves respect. It is this element of the concept of the church to which reference is made in such current statements as 'the church in Islamic lands is suffering persecution' or 'the church in many developing nations is experiencing unprecedented conversions'" (Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 63-64). Thus, he affirms the local and universal nature of the church.

Peter in 1 Pet 2:4-10 shows that believers make up the spiritual house or temple. Paul's temple imagery conveys that the individual and the community are God's temple because the Spirit indwells the individual and the church. Peter's temple imagery emphasizes their role as a holy priesthood who offers spiritual sacrifices. However, David Peterson acknowledges that while this passage does not focus on God's indwelling presence in the church, Peter focuses on the Spirit's work in the sanctification process (1 Peter 1:2). See David Peterson, "The New Temple: Christology and Ecclesiology in Ephesians and 1 Peter," in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond and Simon Gathercole (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2004), 174.

come to all nations who are redeemed.⁶⁸ The covenant promise will be fulfilled with God living with his people. Osborne states,

That promise was fulfilled partially in the new covenant of Jesus and finally in the New Jerusalem. It is also reflected in 2 Cor. 6:16b, which supports Paul's contention that "we are the temple of the living God" (v. 16a): "As God has said, 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.'" Paul saw that covenant promise fulfilled in Christianity, but now we see the final and eternal fulfillment as God's people began actually to live with him. One could even say that this is the theme of the whole of Rev. 21:1-22:5. . . . It is in the eternal reality that we will know this completely and finally.⁶⁹

That God dwells in reality with his people means that he dwells permanently with them.⁷⁰

G. K. Beale remarks,

God's "tabernacling" presence in Ezek. 37:27 and 43:7 would have been understood in its OT context and by its OT readers as being cultically separated from the majority of Israelites; only the few Zadokite priests who strictly kept the temple ordinances would be exposed in the fullest way to God's presence within the "inner court" of the temple. But now in Rev. 21:3 the divine presence is not limited by the physical boundaries of an Israelite temple, since not only all believing Israelites but even all "peoples" experience God's intimate tabernacling presence. Since a physical temple was a particularistic, nationalistic institution, a sign of God's and Israel's separation from the unclean nations, it had no room in John's new Jerusalem, not only because believing Jew and Gentile are united in Christ in the new Jerusalem but also because they have all gained the status of priests serving before God's presence (20:6, 22:3-4). Therefore, this is the first hint that there is no literal temple in the new Jerusalem, which will be explicitly stated in 21:22, where the ultimate redemptive-historical reason for the absence of a physical temple is that God and Christ are the final, enduring form of the temple, to which the physical OT temple always pointed.⁷¹

⁶⁸Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 734; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 383.

⁶⁹Osborne, *Revelation*, 734-35.

⁷⁰Mounce explains, "The Greek word for tabernacle (*skēnē*) is closely related to the Hebrew *Shekinah*, which was used to denote the presence and glory of God. In the wilderness wanderings the tabernacle of tent was a symbol of the abiding presence of God in the midst of his people. In the Fourth Gospel, John writes that the Word became flesh and *tabernacled* (*eskēnōsen*) among people so that they saw his glory, the glory of the One and Only (John 1:14). When the Seer writes that the tabernacle of God is with us, he is saying that God in his glorious presence has come to dwell with us. The metaphor does not suggest a temporary dwelling. From this point on God remains with his people throughout eternity" (Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 383).

⁷¹G. K. Beale, *The Book of the Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand

After describing the New Jerusalem, the narrator states that the New Jerusalem has no temple, because the Lord and the Lamb are present (Rev 21:22). This is the first mention of a temple in the city. The usual expectation is that Jerusalem would have a temple, so John unexpectedly emphasizes the absence of the temple.⁷² The next statement explains the reason that there is no temple; there is no temple because both God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. Ezekiel prophesied about the temple in the restored Jerusalem in Ezekiel 40-48.⁷³ The absence of the temple shows that the prophecy is fulfilled with the presence of God and the Lamb in the New Jerusalem with their people.⁷⁴ The presence of the Lamb with God alludes to the earlier image of the Lamb in the throne room, which reminds the readers of the Lamb who was slain (Rev 5:6).⁷⁵ Osborne observes,

Jesus used the imagery of the “temple” when he predicted his death and resurrection . . . It was his sacrificial death that made the temple and its cultus unnecessary (Heb. 9:1-15). Christ the sacrificial Lamb became the conquering Ram (see Rev. 5:6) and takes his place alongside God the Father as the temple of the eternal city.⁷⁶

God’s presence in the new heavens and the new earth carries a perpetual reminder of the cost of his fellowship and the nations’ salvation. While John does not explicitly explain

Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1048.

⁷²Osborne, *Revelation*, 759; David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, WBC 52C (Dallas: Word, 1998), 1166.

⁷³Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1167.

⁷⁴Beale comments, “The primary reason that John throughout [Rev] 21:9-22:5 excludes most of the detailed descriptions of the Ezekiel 40-48 temple and its ordinances is because he understands it as fulfilled in God and Christ’s presence and not in a physical structure. This expectation of a nonliteral temple is, for the most part, a break with Judaism, which consistently affirmed the hope of a final, material temple structure on a scale greater than any before” (Beale, *The Book of the Revelation*, 1091).

⁷⁵Osborne, *Revelation*, 761.

⁷⁶Ibid., 761. Concerning the equality and unity of the God the Father and Jesus, Osborne adds: “This also continues the emphasis in the Apocalypse on the unity of God and Christ on the throne (4:2 = 5:6), as the Alpha and Omega (1:7 = 1:17; 21:6 = 22:13), as worthy of worship (4:8-11 = 5:9-14), as judge (14:17-20 = 19:11-21), and now as the temple in the Holy City.”

the Lamb's sacrifice, "the image of the lamb or slain lamb alludes both to the paschal sacrificial lamb and to Jesus' self-sacrificial death on the cross."⁷⁷ God Almighty and the Lamb have replaced the temple because they dwell in the city with their people in the new created order.

Covenant Absence and Access

Covenant Absence in the Old Testament

God departed from his people in two instances in the Old Testament. The first was when the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant. The second is Ezekiel's vision of God's glory departing from the temple. The Lord required holiness from his people for his presence to remain. He demonstrated this principle twice by departing from the presence of the nation because of their sin.

Ark of the Covenant. The first occurrence of the Lord's departure was during the period of the judges, when the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant and removed it from Israel (1 Sam 4:1-22).⁷⁸ The ark of the covenant was "the visible symbol of God's presence" among his people.⁷⁹ During Israel's conquest of the Promised Land, the ark of the covenant traveled in front of the nation, which represented God's power against the nations and ensured Israel's victory.⁸⁰ The Philistines defeated Israel at

⁷⁷Sun-Bum Choi, "The Restoration Theme in the Book of Revelation: From Creation to New Creation" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003), 73-74.

⁷⁸See 1 Sam 4:1-7:2 for the entire Ark narrative.

⁷⁹John A. Martin, "The Structure of 1 and 2 Samuel," *BibSac* 141 (1984): 33. See also David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 191; Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1998), 230.

⁸⁰For example, the Ark travels in front of the nation as they cross the Jordan (Josh 3:6-9), and the ark travels in the front of the nation prior to the battle of Jericho (Josh 6:8-9).

Ebenezer, and the elders attributed the defeat to the Lord. They then brought forth the ark of the covenant, believing that it would bring victory (1 Sam 4:1-4). The people viewed the ark as a magical charm that would deliver them.⁸¹ Yet the Philistines thoroughly defeated Israel, the sons of Eli were killed, and the Philistines took the ark of the covenant (1 Sam 4:11). Thereafter, Phinehas's wife names her son Ichabod, which means "Where is the glory" or "the glory has departed."⁸² The glory departed because the ark was removed from Israel (1 Sam 4:21, 22). This narrative "urges the readers to think about whose 'glory' was gone: Israel's glory or God's glory. For Phinehas's wife, the loss of the ark meant the loss of 'Israel's glory.'"⁸³ The central questions are why were the Israelites defeated and why did the glory depart? One reason that the glory departed is because of the unfaithfulness of the Eli's sons, which is displayed by their unholy regard for the Lord's sacrifice and their sins.⁸⁴ P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., explains,

The central question that would have been provoked is easy to formulate: How can the Philistines have defied the power of Yahweh and prevailed? As we shall see, the theological purpose of the ark narrative as a whole . . . is to deal with this problem; it will affirm emphatically that Yahweh was in control of the events from the beginning. This requires that the initial question be posed in a different way: Given that Yahweh is in control, why had he permitted this defeat (cf. v 3) and the capture of the ark? The answer to this question . . . is to be found in the account of the

⁸¹Tsumura observes, "The subject of the verb *come* is purposely ambiguous in Hebrew; did the elders mean *he* or *it*? If 'he,' they view the ark as representing the divine presence. However, 'it' is preferable for it was seemingly the cultic object, not Yahweh himself, that they put their trust in; they may have thought that the Lord smote them because they had not trusted in the ark and neglected it. Or perhaps they just thought that the ark of the Lord would perform a miracle, and so they tried to use it magically" (Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 192). See also Ronald F. Youngblood, *1, 2 Samuel* in vol. 3 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 71-72.

⁸²Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 192.

⁸³Ibid, 200. Tsumura shows that Yahweh is supreme, and in the remainder of the ark narrative shows that he is supreme over the Philistines' gods, and Yahweh himself chooses to return to his people.

⁸⁴Youngblood, *1, 2 Samuel*, 72; Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 91, 92.

corruption of the Shilonite priesthood in 2:11-26. . . . The ark was captured because Yahweh had chosen to abandon Israel on account of the wickedness of the Elides. The details in vv 4b and 11b are thus essential, not the incidental remarks of the narrator, and the report to Eli that follows makes the point clear.⁸⁵

Another reason that the ark was captured was that the people were unfaithful to the covenant because they did not live in holiness.⁸⁶ Psalm 78 reinforces that the people's sin is the cause of the loss of Yahweh's presence.⁸⁷ In Psalm 78:56-59, the people's idolatry and disobedience angered the Lord. As a consequence, the Lord departed from his dwelling place into the hands of their adversaries (Ps 78:60-61). Pekka Pitkänen notes,

Even though in Psalm 78 it is the sins of the people and their high places and idolatry, whereas in 1 Samuel 2-3 it is the sin of the priesthood, which causes Yahweh's anger and rejection, the viewpoints of Psalm 78 and 1 Samuel 2-3 are mutually compatible. Moreover, when one considers that both Psalm 78:56-58 and 1 Samuel 2-3 indicate that the sins of the people and of Hophni and Phinehas were of cultic nature and that in general a violation against the cult was one of the worst things that the leaders or people could do against gods in the ancient Near East, it is not surprising that Yahweh is portrayed as greatly angered (ps. 78:59; 1 Sam. 3:11-14) and as rejecting the tent of meeting, Shiloh and Israel.⁸⁸

The ark departed because of the sin of the people and the priests. The departure of the ark did not mean that God completely left his people. The ark returned to his people later in the ark narrative, though it never again resided in Shiloh (1 Sam 7:1). The Lord

⁸⁵P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, AB 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1980), 109. McCarter proposes that vv. 18-21 were edited, and the original ark narrative excluded these verses. He proposes that the narrative was included to contrast Samuel and Eli's sons. Samuel would eventually replace Eli as the ruler and priest rather than his sons. See McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel*, 85. Though McCarter makes an excellent point regarding the theology of the ark, this writer does not endorse McCarter's redactional conclusions regarding the passage.

⁸⁶Stirrup comes to this conclusion after analyzing the whole ark narrative. See A. Stirrup, "Why has Yahweh Defeated Us Today Before the Philistines?" *The Question of the Ark Narrative*, *TynBul* 51 (2000): 99-100.

⁸⁷Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms* in vol. 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 600-01; Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Psalms 73-150: Songs for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 28-29; Pitkänen, "From Tent of Meeting to Temple," 29-31.

⁸⁸Pitkänen, "From Tent of Meeting to Temple," 31.

reaffirmed his covenant presence by exalting David and dwelling in the temple in Jerusalem (Ps 78:65-72).⁸⁹

Departure from the temple. Ezekiel's temple vision in chapters 8-11 is the second depiction of the Lord's departure from Israel. In the temple vision, the Lord showed Ezekiel four abominations that were occurring around the temple (Ezek 8:5-18).⁹⁰ The sin of idolatry was rampant in the temple, as well as their sins against humanity.⁹¹ Duguid summarizes,

In four brief scenes, then, Ezekiel has been shown the comprehensive nature of the sins of Jerusalem. Their sin extends from outside the city gate into the inner courtyard of the temple itself. It involves both men and women, even the seventy elders, symbolic of the leadership of the whole people. It includes idolatry imported from all sorts of surrounding nations (Canaan, Egypt and Babylon) and involving all kinds of gods (male and female human figures, animal figures, and stellar bodies). This is a unified, universalized religion, the ultimate multifaith worship service. From the Lord's perspective, however, the picture is one of abomination piled on abomination.⁹²

God executed his judgment and would not listen to pleas for mercy because of the people's great sins.⁹³ The vision next shows that the Lord executes judgment on his people because of their sin (Ezek 9:1-11). God showed his justice because he spared the righteous people who grieve over the sins of the city.⁹⁴ Regarding the removal of God's

⁸⁹VanGemenen helpfully comments that the presence of God is expressed through the Davidic line, which is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. See VanGemenen, *Psalms*, 602.

⁹⁰For a helpful description of each scene in the vision, see Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 286-300.

⁹¹Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 133. Duguid states that the term "violence" in Ezek 8:17 is a summary the sins against humanity. See also Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 56.

⁹²Duguid, *Ezekiel*, 133.

⁹³Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*, 300.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 310.

covenant and protective presence, House remarks,

The reason for the withdrawal of favor is that the people sin because they do not believe God sees what they do (9:9). They have adopted a polytheistic worldview that claims that a nation's gods are bound when their nation is bound. But Yahweh is not bound, and he does see. They must learn that in this case God seems absent because they have sinned.⁹⁵

The vision then shows that the glory of the Lord departs from the temple in three stages. First, his glory departs from the Holy of Holies into the threshold of the temple (Ezek 9:3, 10:1-8). After describing the chariot wheels and the cherubim, the glory departs from the threshold of the temple to the east gate (Ezek 10:18-22). In the last stage, the glory departs from the east gate to the mountain east of the city (Ezek 11:22-25).⁹⁶ The Lord departed because of the sin and idolatry of the people. His departure was itself an act of judgment. Cooper states,

The departure of the glory of God from the Mount of Olives was the final step in the judgment process. The removal of his blessing signaled the end of his longsuffering with a disobedient and rebellious people. God had exhausted every means of soliciting repentance from the people. Therefore he removed the glory that was the sign of his presence so that judgment might run its full course. The absence of the glory signaled the last stage in the process of reprobation of the self-willed people of the nation.⁹⁷

In redemptive history, the Lord's covenant presence departed was because of his people's

⁹⁵House, *Old Testament Theology*, 333.

⁹⁶John Taylor argues that though the Lord's presence was no longer in the temple, his presence is in Babylon with the remnant; God has not truly abandoned his people. He also argues that the Lord was reluctant to leave the temple. See John B. Taylor, "The Temple in Ezekiel," in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole (Paternoster, Waynesboro, GA: 2004), 65-67. Scripture indicates that in some manner he was with his remnant in exile, but his abandonment of the temple was an act of judgment. Therefore, it seems unlikely that the Lord was reluctant to depart the temple.

⁹⁷Lamar Eugene Cooper, Sr., *Ezekiel*, NAC 17 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 145. House also observes, "Yahweh's glory departs from the midst of the city to a mountain overlooking Jerusalem. The chosen place is now wholly unprotected. God's presence, though still evident, has taken a position that insinuates that of spectator or more probably a general who leads destructive forces. By not acknowledging the Lord's presence in proper ways the people have exchanged the protective presence for a terrible, punishing force" (House, *Old Testament Theology*, 333).

sins. However, within this passage, the Lord promised restoration. He promised that he would be a sanctuary to his exiled people (Ezek 11:16), and the remnant would remove the idols (Ezek 11:18). He would restore his people from their lands and bring them back to the temple, and he would fundamentally change them by giving them one heart and a new spirit that would cause them to live according to his commandments (Ezek 11:19-20a). He would reaffirm his covenant, which implied that his presence would return to his people (Ezek 11:20b). This promise comes to fruition at the end of the book, which shows the glory of the Lord returning to a redeemed Israel (Ezek 43:1-9).

Covenant Access in the New Testament

Two Scriptures directly connect God's covenantal presence to the atonement. The temple veil was ripped from top to bottom in the hour of Jesus' death. The writer of Hebrews states that Christians now have access to the Father because of Jesus' death.

The temple veil. The first scriptural link between atonement and access occurs at the crucifixion. The curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy place was immediately ripped from top to bottom at Jesus' death (Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:44).⁹⁸ The significance of the veil was revealed by its function in the Old Testament

⁹⁸The accounts are unclear regarding which veil is ripped. The outer veil was placed between the courtyard and the Holy Place, and the inner veil stood between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Those who favor that the reference is to the outer veil, their strongest argument is that the outer veil was accessible for public viewing, and therefore the outer veil is the only one that they could view as it was torn. See France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1079-80; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1213; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 656-57; William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 575; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 875. The argument for the veil as the inner veil that separates the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies is preferred for three reasons. First, the Greek word *καταπέτασμα* is used for the inner veil. Second, this Greek word *καταπέτασμα* is also used in Hebrews (Heb 6:19; 9:3; 10:20), which clearly refers to the inner veil in each use. Third, the inner veil is the most significant because the high priest must enter into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement to perform the ritual that brings forgiveness, and the presence of God is in the Holy of Holies. For advocates of this view, see Daniel M. Gurtner, *The Torn Veil: Matthew's Exposition of the Death of Jesus* (New York:

tabernacle and temple. The purpose of the curtain was to separate the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, which was the place where God dwelt. Daniel M. Gurtner argues this point after studying the function of veils, particularly the function of the veil within the temple.⁹⁹ After his lexical analysis, he concludes,

We have seen that with respect to functionality, all *καταπέτασμα* curtains, except those that translate פרכת, can be largely removed from the discussion as none of them is afforded particular cultic functions in the Old Testament. With respect to this veil, its implicit function as seen by particular features converges with the explicit function articulated in the text of the Old Testament itself. The function of the veil was to effect *separation* (לל) *between the most holy and the less holy*. This is a structural feature based on a theological necessity. Moreover, this separation was executed by means of the veil's *prohibiting physical and visual accessibility to*

Cambridge University Press, 2007), 199; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 686; Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC 24 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 595; John Raymond Kimbell, "The Atonement in Lukan Theology" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 109-110; Mark Randall Jackson, "Atonement in Matthew's Gospel" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 196-98; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 190-91. For the lexical arguments regarding *καταπέτασμα*, see Daniel M. Gurtner, "LLX and the Identity of the NT Veil," *NovT* 47 (2005): 344-353; Carl Schneider, "καταπέτασμα," in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 629-630.

Another problem is the significance of the torn veil. For a list of possible meanings of the torn veil in the gospel of Luke, see John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, WBC 35C (Dallas: Word, 1993), 1157; Kimbell, "The Atonement in Lukan Theology," 107-08. For the gospel of Matthew, see France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1080; Donald Senior, *The Passion Narrative According to Matthew: A Redactional Study* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1975), 308-310. For the gospel of Mark, see Timothy G. Geddert, *Watchwords: Mark 13 in Markan Eschatology*, JSNTSup 26 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 141-43; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 1860-61; Stein, *Luke*, 595-96. Jackson's research from "Atonement in Matthew's Gospel," 199n77 was very helpful for this survey. Jackson further notes that many of these suggestions can be narrowed to two broad concepts: (1) God tore the veil to symbolize the judgment on the temple, which points to its ultimate destruction in 70 A. D., and (2) God removes the veil to signify salvation, primarily through the allowance of access to his presence (Jackson, "Atonement in Matthew's Gospel," 199). This paper will argue the second option, though there are good reasons for considering that the torn veil is a sign of judgment. For the judgment approach, see Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 724; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 875; Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 575; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 657. For approaches that affirm aspects of both views, see France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1080-81; Jackson, "Atonement in Matthew's Gospel," 199-203; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1212-13, though Nolland expresses the other theme as "God breaking out in power,"; Peter G. Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance: Atonement in Mark's Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 127; Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2, 1861; Stein, *Luke*, 595-96.

⁹⁹Gurtner, *The Torn Veil*, 29-71.

*the God enthroned by the holy of holies.*¹⁰⁰

The presence of the cherubim on the veil emphasizes this purpose, because the cherubim prevented access to the Garden of Eden after our first parents sinned. Gurtner observes, “Finally, this prohibition is depicted graphically by the presence of cherubim woven into the veil, which resonates with the guardian function they serve in Gen. 3:24, where inaccessibility to the presence of God is first seen in the biblical tradition.”¹⁰¹ In the hour of Jesus’ death, the same veil that separated the presence of God from humanity is ripped from top to bottom. The tearing of the veil from top to bottom indicated that God ripped the veil.¹⁰² Since the veil in the temple served as a barrier to the presence of God during the Old Testament dispensation, it follows that the ripping of the veil represents the removal of the barrier so that people now have access to God’s presence.¹⁰³ Gurtner states,

The death of Jesus removed the cultic barriers between the holy (God) and the less holy (humanity). . . . This meshes nicely with Matthew’s unique portrayal of the atoning significance of Jesus’ death. . . . His death did this by removing the prohibition of physical accessibility to God, as seen especially in Matthew’s Emmanuel Christology. It also did this by removing the prohibition of visible

¹⁰⁰Gurtner, *The Torn Veil*, 70 (emphasis in the original). The Hebrew term בָּדֵל means separation, and is used to show the separation from the Holy place and the Holy of Holies in Exod 26:33. See Cornelis Van Dam, “בָּדֵל,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 604. The term מָסָךְ was used for the veil to the holy of holies (Exod 35:12; 39:34; 40:21; Num 3:31). Domeris notes, “Here was the boundary between the realm of the human and the divine, which only the high priest might cross and then only on the Day of Atonement. Within the idea of the veil is to be found the most important theological contribution of the term *māsāk*. The veil denies access, but also points to the awesome mystery that God inhabits and so signifies the gulf between the holiness of God and humankind’s profanity” (W. R. Domeris, “סָכָךְ,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 252).

¹⁰¹Gurtner, *The Torn Veil*, 70-71 (emphasis in the original). See also Kimbell, “The Atonement in Lukan Theology,” 115n136; Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 70-71; Wenhem, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” 401.

¹⁰²France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1080.

¹⁰³John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, vol. 3, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, trans. A. W. Morrison (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 211.

accessibility to God, seeming to suggest that those able to see God are now made 'pure in heart', again by means of the death of Jesus. Furthermore, the figures of the cherubim woven into the veil are removed when the veil is torn. They no longer depict the physical and visual inaccessibility of God. They are disarmed, so to speak, and moved out of the way so that descendants of Adam, kept from the immediate presence and view of God by them since Gen. 3:24, are now permitted to re-enter that presence.¹⁰⁴

Therefore, the sacrificial system of the old covenant no longer provided access to God, but Jesus himself provided this access. This access is grounded in his sacrificial death.¹⁰⁵

Jesus' death as the cause of the torn veil does not prove penal substitutionary atonement. Yet the torn veil is an important feature of the crucifixion account. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus was born for the purpose of saving his people from their sins (Matt 1:21). Later, he instituted the Lord's Supper, stating that his own sacrifice is given "for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:28). At minimum, Matthew envisions that Jesus' death was connected with the forgiveness of sins. Since the veil was a barrier to the presence of God in the temple, Jesus' death also removed that barrier and provided access to God:

¹⁰⁴Gurtner, *The Torn Veil*, 200. Gurtner observes that the death of Jesus inaugurates the new messianic age which brings about a full restoration of the true Israel. On p. 201, he summarizes, "This turning of the era inaugurated by the death of Jesus and depicted by the Matthean *velum scisum* text resonates with the language of a restoration of the people of God from the exile of their sins. Indeed, from the beginning of the First Gospel, Jesus' primary messianic role is that of Israel's restoration. This restoration is inaugurated at Jesus' death and awaits his return for final consummation. According to Ezek 37, such a restoration will involve people defined not by their ethnicity but by their relation to Jesus, the 'true Israel'. Matthew asserts that the life-giving death of Jesus inaugurates a new age in which the final, eschatological deliverance from bondage to sin is achieved, and that God's presence now dwells among his people and permits a fellowship between man and God not seen since the Garden of Eden."

¹⁰⁵France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1081. Speaking about the gospel of Matthew, Carson notes, "If the death of Jesus opened up a fresh access to God that made the OT sacrificial system and the Levitical high priesthood obsolete, then an entire change in the Mosaic covenant must follow. It is impossible to grapple with Matthew's fulfillment themes . . . and see how even the law points prophetically to Messiah and hear Jesus' promise of a new covenant grounded in his death (26:26-29) without seeing that the tearing of the veil signifies the obsolescence of the temple ritual and the law governing it. Jesus himself in the New Temple, the meeting place of God and man . . . the old is obsolete. The rent veil does indeed serve as a sign of the temple's impending destruction – a destruction conceived not as a brute fact but as a theological necessity" (D. A. Carson, *Matthew* in vol. 9 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 649-50).

The most natural way to understand the evidence seems to be that one cannot divorce Jesus' identity from the nature and purpose of his death and its significance. So, Jesus, as the Christ (16:17-21) came to save people from their sins (1:21). His death was the 'ransom' that paid for their release from captivity to death (20:28), and serves to take away sins (26:28). The 'saving' nature of Jesus' death is underscored even in the cross (27:42), where he is mocked for being unable to 'save' himself by coming down off the cross. The irony is that in remaining on the cross and dying, he is fulfilling his 'saving' role, which was depicted at the very outset of the first gospel. . . . It would be difficult in 27:42 to fail to observe an atoning significance of Jesus' death, perhaps even as explicit as indicating a degree of penal substitution.¹⁰⁶

Jesus' saying that his death is a new covenant sacrifice (Luke 2:20) implies that the sacrifice provided the forgiveness of sins. The torn veil also confirms that Jesus' death was a new covenant sacrifice. Kimbell observes that "it seems fitting that within his narrative that the unusual destruction of a significant cultic element (the veil), which hangs within the most significant existing structure of the old covenant (the temple), and which is torn in conjunction with the death of Christ, functions as divine confirmation of this view."¹⁰⁷ Jesus' death is the new covenant sacrifice that provides for the forgiveness of sins and access to the Father. Furthermore, the death of Christ and the access motif strongly suggest penal substitutionary atonement. Derek Tidball, while not specifying the inner or outer curtain, comes to the same conclusion regarding the atonement and the curtain:

The temple had two curtains. One separated the Court of the Jews from the Court of the Gentiles. The other separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. We cannot be sure which curtain was split in two. The rending of either would be deeply symbolic. The former would mean that the distinction between Jew and Gentile had been abolished by the cross, as Paul explains in Ephesians 2:13-19. Consequently, from then on there would not be separate ways for Jews and Gentiles to approach God, but only one way, and one new humanity would be created in Christ. The latter would mean that the severe restrictions on access to God had been abolished. The curtain that had prevented any human being entering the presence of God (except

¹⁰⁶Gurtner, *The Torn Veil*, 137. In Matt 27:42, Jesus did not save himself, but his death saved others and brought about the forgiveness of sins. His death was substitutionary because he died instead of others.

¹⁰⁷Kimbell, "The Atonement in Lukan Theology" 110-11.

the high priest annually on the Day of Atonement) was no longer a barrier. All men and women could now have access to God at any time through the death of Christ. It is the destruction of this curtain that Hebrews assumes and which is almost certainly intended. Whichever curtain is meant here, the implied effect is the same. *All now have access to God, and, correspondingly, a means of having their sins forgiven, because Jesus died on a cross. The ultimate sacrificial offering has been presented to God and sin has been dealt with once and for all.* The temple is past history in the economy of God, together with all the sacrificial ritual for which it stood. Indeed, not many years after this, it would no longer even exist.¹⁰⁸

Hebrews 10:19-22. The second occurrence of covenant access and atonement is in Hebrews 10. The writer of Hebrews notes that believers now have access to God (Heb 10:19-22). The writer has already established that Jesus' death is penal substitutionary and brings forgiveness. Earlier in the letter, the author encourages believers to draw near to the throne of grace to find mercy because they have a high priest who was tempted as they were and yet without sin (Heb 4:14-16). Now, the writer encourages Christians to draw near and enter the Holy Place on the basis of the blood of Christ (Heb 10:19). The believer's confidence to enter the Holy Place "presupposes Christ's objective work of purging their consciences (v. 22; 9:14) and provides the ground for the following injunction to draw near to God continually (v. 22)."¹⁰⁹ The phrase "blood of Jesus" refers to Jesus' voluntary, sacrificial death by portraying it with the Old Testament sacrificial language of blood.¹¹⁰ Verse 20 continues the thought by stating that there is a new and living way that is opened through the veil by the death that he suffered in the flesh. The way is new because it was not available before Christ provided the access, and it is an enduring, incorruptible blessing tied to the new

¹⁰⁸Derek Tidball, *The Message of the Cross* (Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 2001), 132-33 (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁹Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 302-03.

¹¹⁰Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 518; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, WBC 47B (Waco, TX: Word, 1991), 283.

covenant.¹¹¹ It is a living way because it gives access to eternal life through Christ.¹¹² They enter “through the curtain, that is, his flesh.” The curtain refers to the veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies which symbolized the inaccessibility of God.¹¹³ While the priest had access to the presence of God in the Holy of Holies through the curtain, “the writer asserts that the Christian’s approach to God has its source and parallel in Christ’s approach ‘through the curtain.’”¹¹⁴ This phrase “that is, your flesh” modifies “curtain” by showing that his sacrificial death enabled access.¹¹⁵ Ellingworth summarizes, “By means of his self-offering, Christ has done perfectly and in reality for

¹¹¹Lane observes, “The way is defined as πρόσφατον, ‘new’ a term having both a temporal and qualitative nuance. Temporally, the community possesses a way that had not previously existed, which is the result of the definitive sacrifice of Christ. It is a recently opened way (cf. 9:8), in contrast to the old way into the earthy sanctuary that has been set aside as a mere prefiguration of what was to come. . . . The way is also qualitatively new because it participates in the incorruptible freshness of the new covenant, which will not become old” (Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 283). See also O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 364.

¹¹²Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 283; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 364.

¹¹³Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 284. See pp. 267-70 for the discussion about καταπέτασμα. The best interpretation of this term is to be consistent with its use in 6:9 and 9:3. This approach precludes a metaphorical interpretation of the term. See Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 284, 275; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 364.

¹¹⁴Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 284, 275.

¹¹⁵There are two exegetically complex issues in this verse. The first is the syntax of “that is, his flesh” (τοῦτ’ ἔστιν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ) and if it modifies “curtain” or “way.” It is best to see “flesh” modifying “curtain” because of the word order and the manner that τοῦτ’ ἔστιν is used in Hebrews. O’Brien explains that in each instance in Hebrews with τοῦτ’ ἔστιν (Heb 2:14; 7:5; 9:11; 11:16; 13:15; 10:20) “(1) the clause begins with ‘that is’; (2) it always refers back to a particular referent in the same sentence; and (3) the noun phrase is always in apposition to a previous referent with the same case. If v. 20 fits the same pattern, then ‘flesh’ would stand in apposition to curtain” (O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 364 note 118). See also Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 519. Though O’Brien approvingly cites Stanley’s “New Covenant and Hermeneutics,” on this analysis, they come to different conclusions because Stanley on “other contextual grounds” believes that the phrase modifies “way.” This leads to a second issue. The preposition “through” (διὰ) must govern both “curtain” and “flesh,” and the διὰ is implied for “his flesh.” With curtain, διὰ is in a local sense, so that the high priest passes “through” the curtain. Yet with flesh, the implied διὰ works in an instrumental sense, so that access to God’s presence is accomplished on the basis of his death. See O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 364; Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 520-21. Ellingworth states that the term “flesh” is not merely the incarnation, but is bound with Christ’s voluntary self sacrifice. See Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 520.

his people what the Levitical high priests did imperfectly and figuratively: he gained access by a new way to the living God, not only for himself, but for all who through him will share God's life."¹¹⁶ This interpretation shows the parallel nature of verses 19 and 20.¹¹⁷ O'Brien observes,

Further, this interpretation is supported by the parallel structure of vv. 19 and 20: both speak of the new access to God, its goal, and Jesus' sacrificial death as its basis. The subject of verse 19, however, is Christians, while in v. 20, it is Jesus who is the subject. . . . The phrase 'by means of the blood of Jesus' (v. 19) is picked up and repeated in the phrase 'through [understood] his flesh.' The term flesh, which in Hebrews has reference to the incarnation of Jesus (2:14; 5:7) in this context is an alternate expression for Jesus' obedient death on the cross. Like 'body' in 10:5, 10, 'flesh' can be taken positively as the means by which Jesus accomplishes salvation. Both vv. 19 and 20 thus conclude by stating that Jesus' sacrificial death was the means by which free access to the heavenly sanctuary was attained.¹¹⁸

Believers have this access because Jesus is their great high priest (Heb 10:21). Jesus opened the curtain so that they would have access to the Father. By stating that Jesus is a ruler over God's house, the writer merges the concept of Christ as high priest and as ruler.¹¹⁹ The phrase "house of God" is a reference to the church. Lane notes,

The assertion that Christ exercises an administration over his own household informs the congregation that the Church is the sphere of his activity as high priest enthroned in the presence of God. . . . This statement enriches the conception of the relationship Christ sustains to his people and assures them that their worshipful approach to God will be welcomed.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 521. See also O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 365. One exegetical difficulty is the proper understanding of *καταπέτασμα* in this verse.

¹¹⁷In v. 19, the access to God is expressed by the confidence to enter, and in v. 20 the language of access is the new and living way. In verse 19 the goal is the holy place, or heavenly sanctuary, while the goal in v. 20 is though the curtain. The sacrificial death is expressed in v. 19 in terms of the blood of Christ, while in v. 20 it is expressed by means of his flesh. For charts that helpfully illustrate this parallel nature of these verses, see O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 365; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 275.

¹¹⁸O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 365.

¹¹⁹Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 521.

¹²⁰Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 285.

The writer encourages Christians to confidently draw near to God with a sincere heart because they now have access to the Father and because Christ the high priest is ruler over the church (Heb 10:22a). The true or sincere hearts is analogous to the change of heart that is promised as a result of the new covenant.¹²¹ The two images of a sprinkled heart from an evil conscience and having bodies washed in pure water is a parallel expression for the same event (Heb 10:22b).¹²² The sprinkling heart and washing of pure water expresses the same thought of Old Testament washing and cleansing that is in fulfillment of Ezekiel 36:25-26 and grounded in the work of Christ.¹²³ O'Brien summarizes,

Christians have become participants in the new covenant by the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:19). Thus, the cleansing of believers' hearts from a burdened conscience is associated with Jesus' inauguration of the new covenant through his death. The definitive cleansing through Christ's sacrifice has removed unhindered access to God. So then, with the promises of the new covenant being realized in the community, both individually and corporately, they are urged to approach God with great confidence.¹²⁴

Believers' access to God and purification are new covenant blessings. As a result, the author encourages the Christian community to remain faithful (Heb 10:23) and to encourage one another, to love each other, and to perform good works while continuing

¹²¹Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 286.

¹²²O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 368; Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 523-24. Contra Lane, who interprets the phrase "sprinkled clean" as the new covenant promise of cleansing and the phrase "our bodies washed with pure water" as Christian baptism. See Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 287.

¹²³Ezek 36:25-26 states, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." O'Brien argues that he prefers this approach because there is no indication in the text that the author has changed into Christian imagery. He states, "Instead he continues his use of Old Testament washing imagery in connection with the purification rites found in the Pentateuch (see Heb 9:13) in order 'to communicate that the work of Christ has prepared believers to enter the presence of God.'" (O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 368).

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 367.

to meet together. (Heb 10:24-25).

Covenant Presence and Penal Substitution

The penal substitution argument regarding God's covenant presence hangs on three premises. The first is that positive access to the presence of God required penal substitution. The high priest was only able to enter into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement through the burnt offering and the scapegoat. The Day of Atonement offering was a penal substitutionary sacrifice.¹²⁵ In addition, the torn veil in the temple during the crucifixion hour allowed access to the Father, which occurred because of the death of Christ. Jesus' death was a penal substitutionary sacrifice that is supported in the Gospels, Paul's letters, and the letter to the Hebrews. Consequently, the Christian's new covenant access to God comes only by the death of Christ. This study argues in chapter four that Christ's death brought about forgiveness, which is a new covenant promise. Jesus as the new covenant sacrifice died once and is a better sacrifice than the old covenant sacrifices. If the old covenant sacrifices were penal substitutionary, and if Christ is a better sacrifice and fulfilled the old covenant sacrifices, then he must also be a penal substitutionary sacrifice. Jesus Christ, as a penal substitutionary sacrifice, brings about access to the Father.

A second premise for this requirement for penal substitution is that in redemptive history after Eden, God's covenant presence was always mediated in some way because of sin. Though God has mercifully related with his people and remained with them through sin, human sin was the cause of the periods of God's covenant absence from his people. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were removed from the garden in judgment for their sin, and the cherubim prevented any reentry into the garden. When the

¹²⁵See chap. 2, pp. 31-37.

priests of Israel and their people sinned during the period of the judges, the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the presence of God, departed from Israel. At the Babylonian exile, Ezekiel prophesized that the glory of the Lord departed from the temple. He departed because of their idolatry and their injustice. Therefore, there was a direct connection between the lack of God's covenant presence and the sin of his people. Penal substitutionary atonement addresses the problem of sin in relationship with God's holiness and justice, and penal substitution removes the effects of sin in the fellowship between God and his people.

A third premise in favor of penal substitutionary atonement, the promise of God's covenant presence with his people, is grounded in his new covenant promises of forgiveness and transformation by the Spirit, and both of these promises require penal substitution. When God promised that he will be their God and they will be his people, he promised forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness of sins has been accomplished by Jesus' penal substitutionary death. The separation between God and his people has been removed because they are forgiven. Second, God transforms his people because the Spirit indwells them. The indwelling Spirit is God's presence within each believer and in the corporate church. In chapter five this study established that the Spirit did not indwell individual Christians and the community at large until after Jesus' death and on the day of Pentecost. Paul in Romans 8:4 indicates that as the result of Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross for sins, believers are transformed as they walk according to the Spirit. Paul also shows in Galatians 3:10-14 that because Christ bore the curse in our place, the blessing of Abraham came as well as the Spirit. Both of these scriptures clearly ground the sending of the Spirit in Jesus' penal substitutionary atonement. Furthermore, in Acts the Spirit's advent, which is the divine presence dwelling with his people, and the forgiveness of sins are grounded in Christ's penal substitutionary atonement. Yet the Spirit's presence in the individual and in the community is just a foretaste of what will

come in the new heavens and the new earth. Then, God's unmediated presence will be with his people. Therefore, the true covenant promises, "I will be your God and you will be my people," and the promise of his dwelling were inaugurated first in the coming of Jesus himself, then in the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, God's dwelling is permanent in the new heavens and the new earth. The basis for God's dwelling and our access is the penal substitutionary death of Christ.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that penal substitutionary atonement is the basis for God's abiding presence with his people. Jesus' death atoned for sin, thereby removing the barrier between God and his people. God resided in the Old Testament in the tabernacle and the temple, but he departed because of his people's sins. Jesus Christ dwelt with his people during his ministry, and he now dwells through his Spirit both individually and corporately. Jesus' penal substitutionary atonement provided access to the Father, which was graphically demonstrated when the veil was torn from top to bottom in the hour of Jesus' death. Jesus' death as a penal substitutionary atonement and as a new covenant sacrifice, allows access to God the Father.

CHAPTER 7
PENAL SUBSTITUTION AND
KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Introduction

This chapter demonstrates that the knowledge of God requires penal substitutionary atonement. Jeremiah 31:34a states, “And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord.” The substance of this promise is a universal knowledge of God. The result or the implication of this knowledge is that there will not be a need for a teacher to tell God’s people to “know the Lord.” First, this chapter surveys the meaning of the knowledge of God in the Old and New Testaments. Second, this chapter examines the meaning of the statement that new covenant members would not need teachers because all of them would know the Lord. Third, this chapter argues that penal substitution is required for biblical knowledge of God.

Biblical Theology of Knowledge

Universal Saving Knowledge

The substance of the new covenant promise is that all covenant partners would know God. Under the old covenant, God disclosed himself to certain leaders of the nation of Israel and they encouraged the people to know God. God’s new covenant promise is that “they all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest.” The phrase “from the least to the greatest of them” indicates that this knowledge would not be limited to age or

class, but all new covenant members would know God.¹ Therefore, since all would know the Lord and have a relationship with him, there would not be any in the new covenant community who will not be genuine covenant members.² House observes,

Yahweh's assertion that all the covenant people will know the Lord provides a profound shift in the definition of the elect. From Abraham onward the chosen nation has consisted of those who believe and nonfaithful persons, a situation that creates the notion of a remnant. Now, in effect, the whole covenant group will be believers, or what has been called the remnant up to now. All will receive the future blessings because none will fail to have had God place the covenant on their hearts. The unbelieving majority will no longer exist.³

Knowing God in the Old Testament

The Hebrew word יָדַע conveys the concept of knowledge in the Old Testament. The term has a range of meanings: knowledge through experience, intellectual knowledge, and it includes intimate knowledge in relationship.⁴ Terence Freitheim states, "To know God is to be in right relationship with him, with characteristics of love, trust, respect and open communication. . . . This language likely has its origins in the marriage relation, often used as a metaphor for the God-Israel relationship."⁵ The Old Testament

¹Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*. WBC 27 (Dallas: Word, 1995), 135; John L. Mackay, *Jeremiah*, vol. 2, *Chapters 21-52* (Fern, Scotland: Mentor, 2004), 238. Keown, Scalise, and Smothers explain that Jeremiah expresses the same universal aspect (from least to greatest) in the prophecy of Jer 6:11-13, where the Lord declares that wickedness and greed for unjust gain is a universal trait of the community. Some people in the community had a saving knowledge of God, which was expressed by their obedience to the law. Yet all Mosaic covenant members did not know him or have a saving relationship with him. As expressed below, knowledge of God is linked to obedience. Since many in the community failed to obey, the implication made in the texts below is that they did not have a saving knowledge of God.

²Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 510.

³Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 318.

⁴Terence E. Freitheim, " יָדַע ," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 410-11. The aspect of knowledge that the new covenant and this paper emphasize is relational knowledge. For other definitions of knowledge for יָדַע , see *ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.*, 413.

concept of knowing God is to have fellowship with him, having a right relationship and having closeness with him.⁶

Jeremiah. Knowing God is an important feature in Jeremiah’s prophecies. He uses the term in a positive way when the Lord promised that he would restore the exiles into the land. Then he states, “I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart” (Jer 24:7). God would initiate the change of heart in his people so that they would return to him. God would restore his people to himself in the same way that he would restore them to their land.⁷ By emphasizing the people’s return in obedience, the text shows that knowing God is not mere intellectual assent.⁸ F.B. Huey, Jr., observes that “the statement further implies that the only way a person can know God is for God to

⁶While the Greek term *γινώσκω* many times means intellectual knowledge, the word carries a similar meaning to the Hebrew word *יָדָע* in Christian use. Rudolf Bultmann states, “The Christian view of knowledge is thus largely determined by the OT. An obedient and grateful acknowledgment of the deeds and demands of God is linked with knowledge of God and what He has done and [what he] demands. It is in keeping that this Christian knowledge is not a fixed possession but develops in the life of the Christian as lasting obedience and reflection. For this reason *γνώσις* is regarded as a gift of grace which marks the life of the Christian by determining its expression” Rudolf Bultmann, “*γινώσκω, γνώσις, ἐπιγινώσκω, ἐπίγνωσις,*” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittell, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 707-08. See pp. 703-08 for other uses of the word *γινώσκω*.

⁷Mackay argues, “Because of the change God will sovereignly bestow they will be given a new inner capacity of mind and will to know, that is, to commit themselves totally to the Lord in his capacity as God of the covenant.” After noting that God will dwell with his people and they will return, Mackay continues, “This is the response that Jeremiah had always wished to see in the people. It is now proclaimed as a result of a saving change they will experience in their exile, when there will come a total commitment to the Lord so that a true relationship with him will prevail. Throughout vv. 5-7 the subject of the verbs is predominantly ‘I’ referring to the Lord and emphasizing his initiative and control in the process by which the new community will come into existence” (Mackay, *Jeremiah*, 2:83-84). Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr., *Jeremiah 1-25*, WBC 26 (Dallas: Word, 1991), 359. Craigie, Kelley and Drinkard, Jr. argue that the phrase *כִּי-יָשׁוּבוּ אֵלַי בְּכָל-לֵבָם* should be translated “if they will return to me with all their hearts,” which emphasizes the need for repentance. See p. 360.

⁸Tremper Longman III, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 168.

give that person a heart (i.e. mind, will) to do so.”⁹ Jeremiah also proclaims that the believer should not boast in their knowledge, courage, or riches but that they should only boast in the fact that they know God and that they know his ways (Jer 9:23-24). People should boast in the fact that they know God, meaning that they have an absolute commitment to God, and they demonstrate this commitment by their conduct.¹⁰

Thompson notes,

In this brief statement therefore we have a succinct summary of the religion of Israel at its highest. Wisdom, strength, and riches, however valuable they may be when properly used, are altogether subordinate to the knowledge of God. True religion consists in acknowledging the complete sovereignty of God in life and allowing him to fill life with those qualities of steadfast faithfulness, justice, and righteousness which he possesses, in which he delights, and which he desires to find in his people.¹¹

Jeremiah also uses the knowledge of God in a negative sense, showing that when Israel disobeyed, they did not know God. Jeremiah cried out in anguish for his people in Jeremiah 4:19-21. Then, in Jeremiah 4:22 the Lord indicated that his people are fools because they did not know God and they did not know how to do good. The passage sets a clear contrast between Jeremiah’s anguish at Judah’s plight because of their sin and Judah’s apathy regarding their standing with God and his impending judgment.¹² Verse 18 clarifies that they were judged because of their rebellion and their deeds. Thus, “the people do not know him, which means that they do not live according to his will as revealed in his commandments.”¹³ In Jeremiah 5 the Lord searched Jerusalem for those

⁹F. B. Huey, Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, NAC 16 (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 321.

¹⁰John L. Mackay, *Jeremiah*, vol., *Chapters 1-20* (Fern, Scotland: Mentor, 2004), 365-66.

¹¹J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 321.

¹²Craigie, Kelley and Drinkard, Jr., *Jeremiah 1-25*, 79-80. Thompson observes that this knowledge of God “touches the whole man-mind, emotion, and will. It is a total commitment and response to God of one’s whole being” (Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 229).

¹³Hetty Lalleman, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic,

who would seek truth, and he went to the poor and the great in this search. Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard comment, “He says, perhaps to himself (vv 4-5), that he has looked to the wrong people: the ‘poor’ (v 5) probably refers simply to the ordinary citizens, the people in the streets. If he were to turn to Jerusalem’s elite citizens, then surely he would find persons who knew the Lord’s way and lived accordingly.”¹⁴ The implied conclusion is that neither the poor nor the great knew God, and their actions of injustice and evil demonstrated this lack of knowledge and their distance from God.¹⁵ Keown, Scalise and Smothers summarize, “In Jeremiah knowing God includes awareness of God’s character and the nature of divine actions (9:23), the memory of what God has done for Israel (2:6-8), and the acceptance of God’s rule by obeying the commands (9:3, 22:15-16, 24:7).”¹⁶

Hosea. The prophet Hosea also presents the positive and negative aspects of his people’s knowledge of the Lord. In the midst of a prophecy of restoration (Hos 2:14-23), Hosea declares that the Lord promised restoration for his people by using marital language (Hos 2:19-20). The characteristics of the restored relationship are the same that should have been realized under the old covenant: permanence, righteousness, justice, steadfast love, mercy, and faithfulness.¹⁷ The Lord committed to his people as their

2013), 93.

¹⁴Craigie, Kelley and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 88.

¹⁵See also Jer 9:1-6. The Lord indicted the people for their evil ways, exposing their evil through lying and oppressing others. God stated that they did not know him because of their wickedness (Jer 9:3, 6).

¹⁶Keown, Scalise and Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 135. Lalleman also observes, “The theological meaning of the verb has the sense of ‘living in a relationship with God’ – it is not that the people do not know anything about God, but their relationship with him does not influence their daily behaviour [sic.]” (Lalleman, *Jeremiah and Lamentations* 115).

¹⁷Stuart says, “The marriage will be permanent, לעולם ‘forever’ implies indefinite duration in the sense of a practically, though not technically infinite, permanence. The hope of the original covenant was for a faithful relationship between Yahweh and his people for all time (Deut 4:40) and this hope is reflected here in terms of the restoration of the true covenant. ‘Rightness’ (צדק) includes both salvation /

husband, and as a result, they would know him. Duane Garrett notes, “To know God implies the deepest relationship with him. It is to love him, to be one of his people, to abandon all other gods, and to be eternally wedded to him.”¹⁸ In Hosea 4:4-6, the prophet indicts the priests because the people’s lack of knowledge is leading to their destruction. The evidence of this lack of knowledge is that they did not know or obey the law. The prophet uses the term “forgetfulness” to indicate their disobedience. Stuart states,

Forgetting God’s תורה “law” is an elaboration of the concept of rejecting God’s covenant knowledge. In Hosea, “forget” functions as the opposite of “know” and can mean “disobey.” Knowledge (דעת) involves a constant awareness of and obedience to the covenant relationship. Within this relationship the תורה is the content of the actual requirements of the covenant “contract.” The clergy were supposed to support this תורה, not merely by obeying it themselves, but also by instructing the people in his demands (Deut 31:9-13). Prophets like Hosea would not have needed to call people back to the covenant if the priests had done so.¹⁹

In the most complete sense, knowledge of the Lord includes being in relationship with him, and it involves knowing his righteous standards and acting in accordance with them. The people had a lack of knowledge because the priests failed to teach the law, which would govern their actions. The priests failed to teach the law of God, and as such “the priesthood failed in their task as mediators of divine instruction, and the ripple effect

deliverance and fairness / equity. ‘Justice’ (משפט) is the action and relationship whereby equity and fairness are established. ‘Loyalty’ (חסד) is the unflinching, binding devotion that keeps a covenant relationship alive and well. ‘Compassion’ (רחמים), once denied to Israel as a judgment (1:6), is the parental attentiveness which includes protective love and forgiveness, as well as concern for the person in need. ‘Faithfulness’ (אמונה) includes truth as ‘truth’ – reliability, honesty, believability, dependability. Both partners will display these six qualities, their tone being set by Yahweh’s generous initiative, to which Israel need only respond” (Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, WBC 31 [Waco, TX: Word, 1987], 59-60). See also J. Andrew Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 126-28.

¹⁸Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, NAC 19A (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 94. Garrett also observes that this is an early form of the new covenant in Jeremiah. Stuart shows that ידע is used for the sexual relationship between a man and woman in marriage, communicating the deepest intimacy. God and Israel will be in a deeply committed close relationship so that they will not have any other lovers, or gods. See Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 60.

¹⁹Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 78. See also Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, 158-59.

permeates the community.”²⁰ In Hosea 8:1, the Lord charged Israel because they had broken the covenant and disobeyed the law. In verse 2, the people claimed that they knew God.²¹ However, the next verses (Hos 8:3-14) demonstrate that they did not know God. The people presupposed that they knew God because of his covenant with them as his elect people and that he would always preserve them.²² Yet, the people did not realize that an important component for knowing God was consistent obedience to his law. The evidence of their lack of knowledge about God was their idolatry and corruption. Garrett notes,

The outcry “Israel” refers to their confidence that they were the people of the covenant and therefore the special recipients of his favor. . . . This confidence was misplaced, of course, as were their claims to know Yahweh. In the texts that follow, Yahweh and Hosea will demonstrate that the people did not know Yahweh or have him as their God and that they embodied the worst, not the best, of what it meant to be Israelites.²³

Knowing God in the New Testament

The above passages demonstrate that in the Old Testament, knowing God denotes a relationship with God. This relationship is expressed by his covenant people as obedience to his holy law and by their fidelity only to Yahweh as their God. The New Testament presents a similar idea, except that to know God is to know his Son, and knowing his Son means that one has a saving relationship with him. Furthermore, obedience to Christ is the evidence of this saving relationship.

²⁰Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, 158.

²¹The ESV translates the cry: “My God, we-Israel-know you.” Garrett states that the cry is better translated, “‘My God!’ (and) ‘We know you!’ (and) ‘Israel.’” He also states that these are “three fragments of the liturgical prayers offered at the shrines” (Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 181).

²²Francis I. Anderson and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 24 (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 490.

²³Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 181. See also Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 131.

Matthew. Near the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that many would call him Lord, and they would claim that they performed signs and prophesied in his name, yet their hearts were far from him (Matt 7:21-23). Jesus indicated that only those who actually do the Father's desires will enter into the kingdom of heaven. After they attempted to justify themselves according to their works that were performed in his name, Jesus would dismisses them. He states that he never knew them, meaning that he did not have a relationship with them.²⁴ This point shows that those who truly know Jesus obey him. He labels those who performed the exorcisms and miracles as lawbreakers, indicating that their call to him as Lord "was merely a veneer on a life fundamentally opposed to the will of God."²⁵ "Lawlessness" refers to behavior that does not please God.²⁶ Their disobedience was evidence that that they did not have a relationship with Jesus, i.e., he does not know them.²⁷ As a result, Jesus would banish from his presence those who did not know him by showing that they were lawless. The consequence of not knowing him is exclusion from the kingdom as a final eschatological judgment.²⁸ Jesus also taught, "no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matt 11:27). The

²⁴R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 295; David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 220; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 341.

²⁵France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 295.

²⁶Ibid. Contra Turner, who argues that lawlessness are those who fail or have little regard for God's law. See Turner, *Matthew*, 220; Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 181.

²⁷Nolland contends, "To lack a relationship with Jesus is not to be seen as different from failure to do the will of the Father. Nor does it identify an underlying reason for the failure. One's relationship with Jesus is seen as established in the readiness to do the will of his Father, as articulated in his (Jesus') teaching" (Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 341).

²⁸D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 9 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 230.

Son and the Father have an established relationship, and no one can have a relationship with the Father unless the Son reveals the Father to that person. Thus, France shows the full meaning of knowledge and its relationship to saving faith:

In biblical literature, to “know” is more a matter of relationship than of intellectual attainment; it is personal rather than formal. When both OT and NT writers speak of people other than the Son as “knowing God” . . . this “knowledge” is understood not as information available to all (except in a very limited sense in Rom. 1:21), but as a special gift of God, and in the NT is specifically associated with faith in Jesus. Jesus’ saying here provides the basis for that extension: “anyone to whom the Son is willing to reveal him.”²⁹

John. Jesus prayed that his Father would unify and protect his disciples during his high priestly prayer. In the course of his prayer, Jesus described eternal life as knowing the true God and himself, whom the Father sent (John 17:3). The essential of eternal life is the knowledge of God.³⁰ Carson adds, “Eternal life turns on nothing more and nothing less than knowledge of the true God. Eternal life is not so much everlasting life as personal knowledge of the everlasting one.”³¹ It is interesting that the author uses the word “know” rather than “believe” because the believer’s faith in Christ shows that he or she knows the Father and his Son.³² John’s gospel shows that “knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ entails fellowship, trust, personal relationship, faith.”³³ Jesus asked that they would know the true God, and the only way to have this knowledge is through

²⁹France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 446.

³⁰Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 638.

³¹D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 556.

³²Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 562.

³³*Ibid.* See also Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 488; George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 297-99.

Christ, whom the Father has sent.³⁴ Furthermore, a faith relationship expressed in the knowledge of God is an important focus of John's theology in his gospel.³⁵

Philippians 3:7-11. Paul declares that he desires to know God in Philippians 3:7-11. In this conversation, his main point is that he would sacrifice all of his reasons for having confidence in the flesh in exchange for his fellowship with Christ. He states that he counts everything as loss in exchange for the ultimate value of knowing Christ as Lord (Phil 3:7-8a). This passage is the only time that Paul speaks about knowing Christ.³⁶ Knowing Christ means to have a close relationship with him, and it is "knowledge that has to do with personal experience and intimate relationship."³⁷ He restates this by saying that he counts everything as garbage to gain Christ (Phil 3:8b). Paul says that he is to be found in Christ, indicating his union with Christ.³⁸ In union with Christ, Paul rejects any

³⁴Morris states, "It is not knowledge of 'a god' that is meant, but knowledge of the supreme Ruler of the universe. This is linked with the knowledge of Christ. The only way to know God is through the revelation he has made, and he has revealed himself in his Son. It is not possible to know God in any way that we choose. We must know him in the one whom he has sent, namely Jesus Christ" (Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 638).

³⁵Schreiner notes, "Believers 'know' Jesus as God's holy one (John 6:69). They 'know that this is indeed the savior of the world' (John 4:42). Those who are willing to do the Father's bidding will know whether Jesus is truly from God (John 7:17; cf. 17:8, 25). The world is condemned for not knowing Jesus (1:10) or the Father (John 7:28; 8:19). Knowing the truth is what liberates human beings, and it is the Son himself who is the truth that sets people free (John 8:32, 36). Jesus' sheep know him and follow him (John 10:14) because they know his voice (John 10:4-5). Those who know Jesus also know the Father (John 14:7), but those who persecute believers reveal that they have not known the Son or the Father (John 8:55; 16:3 cf. 17:25)" (Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 563).

³⁶Though Paul uses the phrase "knowledge of God" in Rom 11:33; 2 Cor 2:14; 4:6; 10:5. See Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 387. Rom 1:21 says that the Gentiles knew God, but this was not a saving knowledge. V. 19-20 indicate that this knowledge is about God's attributes and his power in creation, but they did not respond to this knowledge by faith. Ironically, they demonstrated their lack of a salvific relationship by their actions, described in vv. 28-32.

³⁷Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 318.

³⁸Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 162-63.

righteousness based on the self effort that was typical of his former life, but he now has righteousness from God that was obtained by faith in Christ (Phil 3:9).³⁹ This clause indicates “the manner in which he will be found perfectly in Christ, that is, as one who does not have a righteousness of his own.”⁴⁰ He explains his overwhelming desire to know Christ in verse 10. The statement “in order that I may gain Christ” parallels “to be found in him.”⁴¹ The way that Paul sought to know Christ is in the power of the resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.⁴² Thus, because the phrase *fellowship of his suffering* is coordinate with *power of his resurrection*, the verse stresses that knowing Christ involves both in his power and in his suffering (Phil 3:10ab). Paul says that he wants to know Christ in the power of his resurrection, which means that he wants to know the power of God in all of his operations, including the resurrection.⁴³ O’Brien

³⁹Silva, *Philippians*, 161. Silva indicates that justification is in view. Fee argues that forensic justification is not in view in this verse, rather the verse is “referring to the means to and expression of one’s relationship with God” (Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 326). The thrust of the passage seems to indicate the relationship with God is in view, yet the reference to God’s righteousness need not exclude forensic justification. Both Silva and Fee interpret πίστewς Χριστου as “faith in Christ,” which is preferred. For their arguments, see Silva, *Philippians*, 161; Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 324-26. Contra O’Brien, who translates the phrase as Christ’s faithfulness. See O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 398-400.

⁴⁰O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 393.

⁴¹The “genitive articular infinitive” τοῦ γνωῶμαι αὐτόν χτλ generally communicates purpose, though it may be an explanatory of the two ἵνα-clauses. O’Brien notes that in either way, Paul’s point is that knowing Christ far exceeds anything that he has gained and it conveys his wish to be united perfectly with Christ. This phrase also “enlarges” or expands on the meaning of knowing Christ. See *ibid*, 401; Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 327-28; Silva, *Philippians*, 163.

⁴²O’Brien observes that both “power of his resurrection” and ‘fellowship of his suffering’ are conjoined by καί and may have been governed by one definite article τήν. He notes, “while each expression draws attention to separate facets of knowing him (and thus may be isolated in order to clarify their meaning), they are nevertheless to be regarded as a single entity. . . . it is the power of his resurrection, known and experienced ‘in and under the concrete “participation of his sufferings,”’ that is in view. (O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 403). See also Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 328; Silva, *Philippians*, 163.

⁴³O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 404. Contra Fee, who argues that the “power of his resurrection” means “the power that comes to believers on the basis of Christ’s resurrection” (Fee, *Paul’s*

notes, “The power of his resurrection is the life-giving power of God, the power which he manifested in raising Christ from the dead, and which he now manifests in the new life which the Christian receives from the risen Christ and shares with him.”⁴⁴ Paul also refers to the fellowship of his sufferings, and the term “sufferings” refers to “the afflictions in which all Christians participate as part of the sufferings of Christ.”⁴⁵ A consistent teaching in Paul’s theology is that Christians will suffer with Christ before they enter into glory.⁴⁶ O’Brien observes,

For him, it was an honour to share in Christ’s sufferings, to enter into a deeper and closer personal relationship with his Lord, and thus to become more like him each day. He also knew that to share in Christ’s sufferings was evidence that he was truly one of the messiah’s people, destined for salvation and future glory (Phil. 1:29; Rom. 8:17).⁴⁷

In the next phrase Paul states that he wishes to be conformed to his death or to become like him in his death (Phil 3:10c). The phrase is governed by the infinitive “that I may know him,” and this phrase describes all of verse 10.⁴⁸ Thus, one is conformed to Christ’s

Letter to the Philippians, 329). Fee summarizes, “But here ‘knowing Christ’ first of all means knowing ‘the power of his resurrection’ because the present subject matter is ‘knowing Christ,’ and the empowering dimension of knowing him is reflected in his resurrection. Thus Paul has come to know, and continues to desire to know, the power of Christ’s resurrection at work in his present mortal body” (Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 330). Both approaches may be true in some sense, but O’Brien argument is preferred because the focus of the grammar seems to focus on the power of God that effected the resurrection.

⁴⁴F. W. Beare, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, 2nd ed, (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969), 122. See also O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 404.

⁴⁵O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 405. See also Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 332.

⁴⁶O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 406; Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 332-33.

⁴⁷O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 406.

⁴⁸O’Brien notes that many commentators see a chiasmic structure with this phrase, as it only qualified “the fellowship of his suffering.” However, O’Brien argues that a chiasmic structure fosters more ambiguity to the relationship between verse 10 and verse 11 (“that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead). For his argument, see *ibid.*, 406-07. For the view that verses 10 and 11 forms a chiasm, see Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 313, 329.

death both by participating in the fellowship of his sufferings and by experiencing the power of his resurrection.⁴⁹ Conformity to his death means dying with Christ, and it is a metaphor of union or incorporation.⁵⁰ O'Brien provides a lengthy explanation:

The expression means that as Paul participates in Christ's sufferings, strengthened to do so through the power of his resurrection, he is continually being conformed to Christ's death. The passive voice of *συμμορφιζόμενος* may imply that it is God who is engaged in this transforming activity. Often the apostle speaks about the believer's being united with Christ in his death as a past event. . . . But the perfect tense *γεγόναμεν* at Rom. 6:5 . . . indicates that this past event has continuing effects in the present as well, and *συμμορφιζόμενος* *χτλ* in Phil. 3:10 shows how those effects are manifested: Paul who was united with Christ in his death on the cross is continually being conformed to that death as he shared in Christ's sufferings. The decisive break with the old aeon of sin and death must be continually maintained and affirmed, for the Christian is still exposed to the powers of that old aeon. Accordingly, the believer is exhorted to put to death the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13), or all that belongs to one's earthly nature (Col. 3:5). That dying with Christ is a present reality made plain earlier in Phil. 3 when the apostle spoke of continuing to count all things as loss for the sake of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord. . . . And this was all of a piece with his rejection of any 'confidence in the flesh'. As the apostle passed through trials of the kind mentioned in 2 Cor. 11:23-28, those very afflictions which caused him to waste away, the Spirit of God was transforming him more and more into the likeness of his Lord, the crucified and risen Christ (note 2 Cor. 4:16-18 with 3:18).⁵¹

Paul's conformity with Christ means that he is continually dying with Christ. By living a life that is in union with Christ, he is being conformed to live as Christ would. Finally, Paul states that he wants to attain to the resurrection from the dead (Phil 3:11), which means that he looks forward to the future eschatological promise of the resurrection.⁵²

⁴⁹O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 407. Contra Fee, who argues that "being conformed to Christ's death" qualifies only "the fellowship of his sufferings." Though he sees that "resurrection" and "sufferings" are not "antithetical," and thus this phrase becomes a transition to the resurrection reference in v. 11. See Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 333-35.

⁵⁰For the interpretive options on this phrase, see O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 408-410. Fee argues that the phrase means suffering that is akin to Jesus' suffering, such as suffering for the sake of the gospel. See Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 334.

⁵¹O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 410.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 411.

The terms εἰ πως (“if, in some way”) does not indicate doubts about the resurrection, but they indicate that Paul has not presumed upon the resurrection.⁵³ From an already-not yet perspective, the resurrection has not yet been attained, but it is dependent on being conformed to Christ’s death. O’Brien summarizes,

Being conformed day by day to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, and especially to his death, is a process that will be completed for Paul at the resurrection of the dead, that is, at the time of the parousia. This ongoing transformation is a prerequisite for his participation in ἡ ἐξανάστασις ἢ ἐκ νεκρῶν. But in principle this is no different from other statements of the apostle to the effect that sharing in Christ’s sufferings is necessary in order to share in his glory (Rom. 8:17) or that enduring with him is a prerequisite to reigning with him (2 Tim. 2:12). Similarly, the notion of Paul’s participation in the resurrection being dependent on this process of being conformed to Christ’s death is, fundamentally, no different from his strong sense of accountability at the judgment day.⁵⁴

Paul emphasizes that knowing Christ intimately by sharing in Christ’s sufferings, being conformed to his death, and experiencing the power that brought about his resurrection is worth more than his lifelong credentials in the Jewish community.

1 John. The apostle John states that knowing Christ includes a change of lifestyle, a forgiven status, the believer’s identity as children of God, and loving one another. After stating that believers should not sin and that they have an advocate who is the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, John states that those who know God keep his commandments, and those who do not keep his commandments but claim to know

⁵³O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 412-13. O’Brien notes that Paul’s terminology may reflect an answer to his opponents, the Judaizers, who argue that the resurrection “is a completed reality,”; Paul thus emphasized that the resurrection is a future reality. See *Ibid.*, 413-14. Fee states that the phrase “if, in some way” indicates that “attaining to the resurrection” in some way depends on each believer “being conformed to his death.” Since this is a lifelong experience for the believer, then the resurrection is not truly in doubt. The phrase “if, in some way” encourages other Christians to continue in faithfulness. See Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 335-36.

⁵⁴O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 413. See also Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 336,

him are liars (1 John 2:1-4). The object of the knowing in the context of 1 John 2 is God the Father.⁵⁵ The commandments may refer to God's law, the Ten Commandments, or to Christ's command of loving one another.⁵⁶ The best interpretation of "commandment" is to give it a broad referent; it may be Jesus' teaching or the apostolic gospel, and the term may not rule out the Old Testament commandments.⁵⁷ The central issue is the meaning of knowing. In the Old Testament, the prophets would call on people to know God and complain that they did not know God. During Old Testament times, "to know God thus involves knowledge of his character and requirements and obedience to these requirements."⁵⁸ The apostle John shows that knowing denotes a relationship with God rather than merely an intellectual knowledge of him. Kruse argues,

Knowing him is not knowing facts about him, nor simply being able to recognize him operating in circumstances or in other people; it is knowing him personally for oneself. For the author of 1 John knowing God involves fellowship with him (1:4), walking in his light (1:7), and being 'in him' (2:5-6). However, as will become very evident as the letter unfolds, the author is more concerned to unpack the moral concomitants of knowing him than he is to define the nature of that knowledge itself. And in this context, the moral concomitant he highlights is obedience to his commands.⁵⁹

The person who knows God obeys his commands.⁶⁰ John states the converse of this truth,

⁵⁵Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 78.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 78-79.

⁵⁷Regarding ἐντολή, Yarbrough notes, "'Commandment' in 1 John 2:3 can therefore mean the 'word' delivered by Jesus, a concept as specific as his didactic discourse recorded in the Gospels and as broad as the apostolic gospel and its application as seen in other NT writings. Nor can 'commandment' in John's usage be sharply separated from OT directives, since both Jesus and his followers (as exemplified by NT authors) so clearly regard them as oracular, ethically suggestive if not binding, and through proclamation and associated sacrament constitutive of God's living presence in their communities" (Robert W. Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 83). Contra Kruse, who argues that the term means the Jesus' command to love one another. See Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 79.

⁵⁸I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 122.

⁵⁹Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 78. See also Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 83.

⁶⁰Marshall helpfully shows that perfect obedience or sinlessness is not required, but that the

that those people who claim to know God but disobey his commands prove that they are liars and do not know God. The apostle later declares that only the one who loves is born of God and knows God, and conversely, the one that does not love does not know God, for God is love (1 John 4:7-8). In the language of John 3, to be born of God means to be born from above. Kruse states, “Being born of God, then, is quite distinct from natural human procreation. It is brought about by God through his Spirit, in conjunction with faith in Christ on the part of those concerned.”⁶¹ The person who loves shows that he is born again by the Spirit and has a relationship with God.⁶² Yarbrough shows the consequences of the believer’s lack of love for his brother: “He [John] has called for believers to love one another (1 John 4:7). To fail here, 4:8 asserts is not merely to fail ethically; it is to fail in the whole matter of salvation. Loving other people and knowing God are components of one inseparable whole.”⁶³ God’s love should have a transforming effect, as Marshall explains,

A person who does not love does not know God. His lack of love demonstrates that he does not belong to the divine sphere, since God is love. The implication is that

person makes a sincere effort at keeping God’s commands. See Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 123-24. John presents a clear tension between absolute statements that believers should not sin (1 John 3:6, 9) with passages that believers should confess their sins and depend on the atoning work of Christ (1 John 1:6-2:2). For a survey to resolve or harmonize the tension, see Christopher D. Bass, *That You May Know: Assurance of Salvation in 1 John* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2008), 134-42.

⁶¹Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 157.

⁶²Kruse summarizes, “When the author says that ‘God is love’, he is not making an ontological statement describing what God is in his essence; rather, he is, as the following verses (4:9-10) reveal, speaking about the living nature of God revealed in saving action on behalf of humankind. Verse 9 speaks of God showing his love by sending his Son so that people might have life through him, and verse 10 explains that this involved sending his Son as an atoning sacrifice for people’s sins. (ibid., 157). For a helpful exposition on “God is love,” see Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, WBC 51 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 239-40.

⁶³Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 236. Kruse concurs, “The point here is that the absence of love for one another is evidence that a person does not know God, because God is love, and there can be no real knowledge of God which is not expressed in love for fellow believers.” (Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 157).

knowledge of God as love leads men to love one another. A person cannot come into a real relationship with a loving God without being transformed into a loving person. John does not explain how this transformation comes about. He speaks of it as an obligation in verse 11, but he also implies that the love of God takes control of our natures and transforms us.⁶⁴

Therefore, the person who has a saving relationship with God demonstrates that he loves God by loving his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Covenant Mediators

The result of the people's universal knowledge of God is that there will no longer be a need for each one to teach his neighbor. This promise cannot mean that the new covenant community will not have teachers. The Israelite community has teachers throughout, and the Spirit empowers teachers in the new covenant church. The best meaning of this promise is that the community will not need teachers in the form of human covenant mediators. Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and other leaders served as mediators.⁶⁵ Gentry and Wellum observe,

It [the new covenant] will indeed have a (human) covenant mediator, namely Jesus Christ, who is prophet, priest, and king in one person. 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.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 212. Yarbrough expands on the impact that "God is love" should have on the believer: "What is the relation between God being love and John's certainty that to know God is to be impelled to love? The relationship may be explained like this: God's communicable attributes, like light and love and truth (or faithfulness), are transformative. The person who receives Christ's cleansing from sin (1:9) and seeks Christ's mediation with the Father (2:1) has a relationship with the Father established by which the Father's traits increasingly mark the believer. For example, this relationship actualizes a will to obey divine commands (2:5) and follow Christ's example (2:6). No trait is more inherent to God as depicted in 1 John than the active will to love. Therefore, to know God results, quite simply, in loving like God loves. Paul breaks down this same religious psychology into more explicitly and christologically specific terms in Eph. 5:1-2: "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (NIV). For both Paul . . . and John, loving people goes hand in hand with [a] saving knowledge of God" (Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 237).

⁶⁵Longman III, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 212.

⁶⁶Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 510. The section is indebted to the ideas

Thus, the teaching to know God is no longer dependent upon man but will be provided by God himself.⁶⁷ God teaches through the final covenant mediator, Jesus Christ, and by the indwelling Spirit who indwells all believers. By implication, the office of priest is no longer limited to a few but is now expanded to all believers.

Isaiah 54:13

Isaiah presents God as the teacher of his people in Isaiah 54:13: “All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.” The idea that underlies this text is that God will teach Israel to follow his character, which occurs within the fullness of salvation in the vision of the New Jerusalem. The result of this new relationship with God is holistic peace:

The greatest wealth that Isaiah can image for Israel is that her children could become disciples of (those who are taught by) the Lord. Throughout the book, and indeed, the Bible, this is seen as the essence of a relationship with God. It is not metaphysical union with God that is sought but the learning of his ways and a replication of his character. It is not accidental that this learning is closely associated with the giving of the Spirit of God. We are not absorbed into him, losing our identity; rather he fills us with himself, cleansing us from the impurity of sin and allowing us to be seen in our truest individuality. The result of all of that is *peace*. . . . The disciples of the Lord, the ones filled with his Spirit, are no longer at war with God. They are thus no longer at war with themselves. They are not at war with others: they no longer need to destroy others so that they can aggrandize themselves. They are no longer at war with God’s creation; they do not need to carve their initials in it. Such persons have wholeness in themselves, and that wholeness affects all their relationships. Again, it is no accident that this promise should come directly after 53:5, with its announcement that the Servant was punished so that we could have peace.”⁶⁸

The priests taught God’s word to his people. Motyer observes that “when the Servant has

and research of Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 508-10

⁶⁷C. F. Keil, *The Prophecies of Jeremiah*, vol. 2, in *Commentary of the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, vol. 8, ed. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, trans. James Kennedy (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 40.

⁶⁸John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 428.

completed his work, this too will reach completion and all those whom he has redeemed will stand in the Lord's presence to be taught his word of truth."⁶⁹ When the Lord teaches his people, there is not a need for covenant mediators to teach God's word. Consequently, these mediators taught the people about God's work and encouraged them to know God. However, when the new covenant is fulfilled, there will be no need for another human covenant mediator because the mediator of the new covenant brings forgiveness and the knowledge of God to all covenant members.⁷⁰

1 John 2:20, 27

The Apostle John speaks about the anointing and knowledge in this passage while warning his readers about the antichrist (1 John 2:18-27). The apostle warns his readers that the antichrist denies Christ and the Father, and John encourages his readers that while the truth abides in them, the Father and the Son abide in them.⁷¹ During this

⁶⁹J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993). 450.

⁷⁰Regarding the fulfillment of this promise as a new covenant promise, Ridderbos notes, "They will be instructed by the Lord; what was said earlier of the Servant of the Lord (50:4) applies to all the inhabitants of the new Zion, though in a somewhat different way. They, too, by daily communion with the Lord and by his instruction, will be introduced to the mysteries of His redemption and will first of all get to know him, so as not to need human instruction (Jer. 31:34). This statement, too, points beyond the earthly Jerusalem to a better dispensation, one that has in principle arrived in the days of the new covenant . . . and still awaits its perfect realization" (J. Ridderbos, *Isaiah*, trans. John Vriend [Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library: 1985], 495).

⁷¹ Kruse summarizes, "He urges his readers to allow the message they heard from the beginning to remain in them because already there are many antichrists in the world, and the antichrists will try to deceive them. Surprisingly, these antichrists are identified as people who were once members of the author's own Christian community but have seceded from it. The readers' protection against being deceived by these people is threefold. First, they are to remember the truth that they heard from the beginning. Second, they are to recognize the deceivers for what they are: by their denial that Jesus is the Christ, God's Son, they show that they are antichrists. Third, they are to remember that they have an anointing from the Holy One, an anointing which teaches them all things so that they do not need others (namely the secessionists) to teach them anything. As the anointing teaches them, so they are to remain in Christ" (Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 97).

encouragement, he makes two statements about the anointing. He first indicates that the anointing is in them and they have all knowledge (1 John 2:20). While the term for “anointing” only appears in this verse and in verse 27, its cognate is used several times in the New Testament and usually in reference Jesus’ anointing by the Spirit.⁷² Kruse argues that “apart from the one metaphorical use of the verb ‘to anoint’ in Heb 1:9, its consistent use in the NT is in relation to an anointing whose agent is God and whose medium is the Holy Spirit.”⁷³ Hence, the best referent of the anointing is the Holy Spirit who confirms the gospel that they received.⁷⁴ The Holy One is the source of the anointing. While 1 John does not mention this person, the Gospel of John refers to Jesus as the Holy One and Jesus promised to send the Spirit after he was glorified; the Spirit would teach Jesus’ disciples the truth.⁷⁵ Hence, the best interpretation is that Jesus is the sender of the anointing, the Holy Spirit, in light of John’s gospel.⁷⁶ Because they have the Spirit,

⁷²Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 103; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 107.

⁷³Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 103.

⁷⁴Ibid., 103; Bass, *That You May Know*, 99-100. Smalley argues that a strong case can be made for the word of God’s truth. After noting the case for the Spirit, he concludes, “(a) the primary meaning of *χρῖσμα* is undoubtedly “anointing by the Spirit” (b) It is possible that some of the heretical and schismatic members of John’s church had appealed directly to the teaching of the Gospel on the Paraclete, as the Spirit of truth, precisely in order to support their own claims to possess the right knowledge of Jesus and his gospel. If so, John is indicating that the objective word of God’s truth cannot be detached from the interior testimony of the Holy Spirit, present in the believer” (Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 107). For his whole argument, see pages 104-07. Contra Yarbrough, who argues that the anointing is “the effect of the apostolic message that they have received.” While he agrees that the theology of the Spirit who provides saving knowledge is correct, He notes that in this context, the teaching that the people received is the main focus of the passage and that 1 John 2:27 does not necessitate that the anointing is the Spirit. See Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 149, in the text and note 14. Marshall argues that the anointing is the primarily word of God as received in the heart by the Holy Spirit. See Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 153-55. For an argument against Marshall’s view (originally expressed by Ignace de la Potterie), see Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 109-110.

⁷⁵Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 103.

⁷⁶Ibid., 103; Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 155. Smalley agrees that the Holy One is most likely Jesus, but he cautions against a strong distinction between God the Father and God the Son, because in John’s Gospel the Holy Spirit proceeds from both God the Father and God the Son. See Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 107-08. Similarly, Bass states that a distinction should be avoided because either the Father or the

John's audience has knowledge, which refutes the Gnostics' argument that they had special access to knowledge.⁷⁷ Smalley explains,

The argument in this section of the chapter determines that originally John must have written *οἶδατε πάντες*, meaning "you all have knowledge." He is attacking the heretics on two grounds: their claim that only a chosen few had a real knowledge of God; and their insistence that those few knew everything. Against such esoteric claims the writer emphasizes that the knowledge of God (through Jesus) is the inheritance of "all" Christians (*πάντες*) inclusively. . . . By saying this, moreover, and not "the Christian knows everything," John implicitly denies the belief of the heretics that they possessed all knowledge.⁷⁸

Further in the passage, after stating the truth of Jesus' identity and warning the people about the antichrist, John says, "But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him" (1 John 2:27). Because the anointing, the Spirit, teaches them all things, they have no need for a teacher.⁷⁹ The reference to all things is the truth about Jesus, and the author "asserts that what the anointing, the Holy Spirit, teaches them is true, and is not a lie."⁸⁰ The anointing has taught his people the truth, and it has taught them to abide in him. The next

Son could be the Holy One. See Bass, *That You May Know*, 99 note 3. Contra Yarbrough, who argues that the Holy One may be any member of the Trinity. See Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 150-51.

⁷⁷Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 107. The textual variant in this passage renders the Greek either as "you all know," "and you know all things," and "and you all know." Yarbrough summarizes the issue and interprets as "you all know." He argues the anointing teaches all the blessings that John's audience should know in the content of the whole letter. See Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 151-54. Smalley interprets similarly, "you all have knowledge." Kruse interprets the phrase as "you know all things" and argues that it refers to the truth in context concerning Jesus is the Christ who came in the flesh. See Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 103-04.

⁷⁸Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 108. See also Bass, *That You May Know*, 101-02.

⁷⁹Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 108. Contra Yarbrough, who argues that John uses irony to convey that the false teachers among them are in error and the community does not need their teaching. See Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 166-67.

⁸⁰Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 108-09.

verse implies that believers should abide in Christ.⁸¹ Therefore, “the thrust of this verse is that as the Holy Spirit has taught them the truth about Jesus Christ, so the readers are to remain in him (Christ).”⁸²

This passage alludes to Jeremiah’s new covenant promise, which states that new covenant members do not need a teacher, because the anointing teaches them.⁸³ The opponents claimed a mediating position to give knowledge to the people. The anointing, the Spirit, gives all people knowledge of God. All covenant members have the anointing, and the anointing signifies that the teacher is God himself. If every covenant member no longer needs a teacher and knows God, then the nature of the new covenant must be different from the old covenant. D. A. Carson proposes that the new covenant changes the tribal system that was active in the old covenant. In the old covenant, the nation would be rewarded or punished on the basis of the sin or faithfulness of one of its leaders. The new covenant no longer uses this system, but covenant members are held accountable and blessed individually. Before the formal new covenant passage, Jeremiah quotes the proverb: “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the teeth are set on edge” (Jer 31:29). The reason that they will no longer present this proverb is because each person will be accountable for their own sin (Jer 31:30). Carson teaches that the tribal

⁸¹Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 109.

⁸²Ibid. Sinclair Ferguson references Moses’ wish that all of God’s people were prophets and the Lord’s Spirit would rest on them (Num 11:29). He argues that the “prophecy” “is a metonymy for sharing the messianic Spirit and experiencing the knowledge of the Lord which only the Spirit of God could give” (Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 63).

⁸³Bass succinctly comments, “Therefore, there seem to be at least three reasons for viewing John’s teaching on the “anointing” in 1 John 2:20-28 as an allusion to the promise of Jer 31:33-34. First, both passages refer to the importance of God’s interior working in the lives of the people. In Jeremiah 31:33, the Law will be placed within them and written on their hearts. In 1 John 2:20-27, the anointing and the message abide within John’s readers. Second, the result of this inner working is that ‘all’ have knowledge and not just a select few (Jer 31:34; 1 John 2:27). Third, the interior work in the lives of the people results in the fact that they no longer need anyone to teach them” (Bass, *That You May Know*, 102).

system, where the nation was punished for the actions of a few, will no longer be in force. Therefore, each person will be accountable for his own sin, and each person as a covenant member will know the Lord for themselves. Carson explains,

The history of Israel under the Mosaic covenant has been characterized by the outworking of this proverb. The covenantal structure was profoundly racial and tribal. Designated leaders – prophets, priests, kings, and occasionally other leaders such as the seventy elders or Balaam – were endued with the Spirit, and spoke for God to the people and for the people to God (cf. Exod. 20:19). Thus when the leaders sinned, the entire nation was contaminated, and ultimately faced divine wrath. But the time is coming, Jeremiah says, when this proverb will be abandoned. “Instead” God promises, “everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes – his own teeth will be set on edge” (Jer. 31:30). This could be true only if the entire covenantal structure associated with Moses’ name is replaced by another. That is precisely what the Lord promises: he will make “a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” that “will not be like the covenant” he made with their forefathers at the time of the Exodus. The nature of the promised new covenant is carefully recorded: God will put his law in the hearts and in the minds of this people. Instead of having a mediated knowledge of God, “they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” and therefore “no longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord’” (31:31ff). This does not foresee a time of no teachers; in the context it foresees a time of no mediators, because the entire covenant community under this covenant will have personal knowledge of God, a knowledge characterized by the forgiveness of sins (31:43) and by the law of God written on the heart (31:33).⁸⁴

Thus, there will no longer a human covenant mediator, whether they are a priest or a prophet, who teaches the people to know the Lord. Carson continues,

The context of Jer 31 makes it clear that what is in view is the *mediating* teacher. Under the old covenant, ideally teaching was mediated to the people through specially endowed prophets, priests, kings; there would be no need for such mediation under the new covenant, for all who are under this covenant would know the Lord. Thus if any group claims, as some Gnostics were wont to do, a special insight that only they and those who joined them enjoyed, part of John’s response is in terms of Johannine theology that itself claims to fulfill Old Testament promises regarding the dawning and nature of the new covenant, a new covenant that would guarantee the gift of the Spirit and consequent illumination to all within its embrace, forever relegating to the sidelines those who claim the authority of specially

⁸⁴D. A. Carson, “Evangelicals, Ecumenism and the Church,” in *Evangelical Affirmations*, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer and Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Academie, 1990), 359-60. See also D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 151-52; idem, “1-3 John,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G.K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1065-66.

endowed mediating teachers.⁸⁵

Thus, the new covenant is fulfilled and a human mediator is no longer needed to teach each covenant member to know the Lord. The anointing ensures that each person is taught and is saved, thereby knowing the Lord. The background of the new covenant promise that all of God's people have the knowledge of God enhances John's argument because since all of God's people have the anointing, they do not need intermediaries to know God.⁸⁶

Priesthood of Believers

Exodus 19:6. One way that the teaching office has been expressed is in the office of a priest. One of the few Scriptures that designates a whole community as priests is Exodus 19:6. The Lord delivered his people from Egyptian slavery and brought them to Mount Sinai. There, he urged them to obey his covenant and told them that they would be a treasured people. Then, he states that they would be a kingdom of priests and a holy

⁸⁵D. A. Carson, "'You Have No Need That Anyone Should Teach You' (1 John 2:27): An Old Testament Allusion That Determines the Interpretation," in *The New Testament in its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B. W. Winter on His 65th Birthday*, ed. P. J. Williams, Andres D. Clarke, Peter M. Head, and David Instone-Brewer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 278-79. See also Carson, "1-3 John," 1066.

⁸⁶Bass summarizes, "This interpretation of Jeremiah is helpful for understanding how John's allusion to this passage in 1 John 2:26-27 strengthens his argument against the secessionists and bolsters the assurance of his readers. In 2:26, he makes clear that he is warning his readers about the false teachers who are trying to deceive them. From the context of 1 John, it is most plausible that the false teachers have made claim to some special revelation from God (and therefore place themselves in the position of special authoritative teachers) with which they were attempting to mislead John's readers. It is therefore in the context of protecting his readers from these false teachers that John alludes to Jeremiah 31:27-34. Here the false teachers' ploy to lead the people astray is countered by John's reminder that all his readers already know all things (20, 27) because of the 'anointing' (Holy Spirit) abiding in them. The Holy Spirit, then dwells within individual believers and teaches them all things (2:27). Hence, in the midst of the teaching of the secessionists, John reminds his readers that they are members of the new covenant community and therefore do not need a teacher who has put himself in a special place of authority (in the likeness of the tribal representative teachers of the old covenant) by appealing to some special revelation or knowledge. This passage therefore serves to reassure his readers that they will not be led astray because the anointing abides in them" (Bass, *That You May Know*, 108-09).

nation. God's covenant people were a kingdom and the Lord was their king, "but within that kingdom, ideally considered, each citizen is a priest, with the privilege of priestly access to the king's presence."⁸⁷ Motyer states that the priests in the Old Testament performed sacred works, especially sacrifices.⁸⁸ The priests had many other duties, including an interceding and teaching function.⁸⁹ Douglas Stuart states that "priests stand between God and humans to help dispense God's truth, justice, favor, discipline, and holiness to humans."⁹⁰ Though these are not specified, Israel would be priests to the nations in the following ways:

(1) Israel would be an example to the people of other nations, who would see its holy beliefs and actions and be impressed enough to want to know personally the same God the Israelites knew. (2) Israel would proclaim the truth of God and invite people from other nations to accept him in faith as shown by confession of belief in him and acceptance of his covenant, as Jethro had already done. (3) Israel would intercede for the rest of the world by offering acceptable offerings to God (both sacrifices and right behavior) and thus ameliorate the general distance between God and humankind. (4) Israel would keep the promises of God, preserving his word already spoken and recording his word as it was revealed to them so that once the fullness of time had come, anyone in the whole world could promptly benefit from that great body of divinely revealed truth, that is, the Scriptures.⁹¹

Israel was a kingdom of priests because they had access to God. Yet, the nation also had a mediatorial role to be a witness and an example to other nations regarding the true

⁸⁷J. A. Motyer, *The Message of Exodus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 199.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 199n8.

⁸⁹Motyer comments, "The priest had religious/ritual duties (Exod. 29), state functions (e.g. as judge, Num. 27:3, and in the holy war, Deut. 20:2). Priests were obligated to holiness (Lev. 22; Jer. 23:11); they were teachers (Deut. 17:18; Neh. 8; Mal. 2:7), medical doctors (Lev. 13:13), and were called upon to intercede (Ps. 99:6) and to enquire of the Lord (1 Sam. 30:7). All these functions were in the context of the relationship between Israel and the Lord. The substantial truth, therefore, of the 'priesthood of all believers' in both the Old and New Testaments (cf. Heb. 10:19-22) is access into the holy presence" (*ibid.*).

⁹⁰Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC 2 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 423.

⁹¹*Ibid.*

God.⁹² Thus, God's intent was that the people would serve as an example and a witness to the nations, so that the nations would know God's goodness. Therefore, the Abrahamic promise would be fulfilled through Israel and they would be a blessing to all the nations.⁹³

1 Peter 2. Peter encourages believers of God's regard for them, and he uses the imagery of priesthood. Peter notes that Christ himself was rejected by men but precious to God (1 Pet 2:4). Then, he compares the people, who are living stones, to Christ, who is the living stone.⁹⁴ The people are being built as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood to

⁹²Cole argues that the Old Testament priesthood may include the role of a witness, an example, and as one who had access to God. Regarding the phrase "kingdom of priests" he argues, "The phrase does not occur elsewhere in the Old Testament (Hyatt), although Isaiah 61:6 is similar. Such a phrase certainly implies a king, and this king can only be YHWH. . . . By the time of the judges it was axiomatic that, since YHWH ruled over his people, no mortal man might use the title of 'king' (Judg. 8:22). But the true stress does not lie here; since kingship was virtually the only type of state known in the ancient world, 'kingdom' could well be translated today as 'state.' It is the universal priestly status of Israel to which attention is called. This is all the more understandable in view of the fact that there does not as yet seem to have been any priestly caste within Israel itself. Presumably the basic thought is of a group set apart peculiarly for God's possession and service, with free access to his presence. The thought of acting as God's representative for, and to, the other nations of the world cannot be ruled out. Whether realized at the time or not, this was to be the mission of Israel (cf. the ultimate promise to Abraham in Gen. 12:3). God's 'particularist' choice of Israel has a wider 'universalist' purpose" (R. Alan Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1973], 152-53). For other studies that emphasize both the teaching and sacrificial aspects of the priestly office in the Old Testament, see Philip Jenson, "כהן," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 600-605; Paul Ellingworth, "Priests" in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 697-98.

⁹³Stuart, *Exodus*, 423. In the new covenant prophecy, Isaiah states that God's restored people would be priests of the Lord and ministers of God (Isa 61:6). Priests are mediators between humans and God, and the nation would be a priest to other nations. See Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*. 571-72. This text emphasized that all covenant members will be priests. Regarding the church of the new covenant, Young states, "The Church of the new covenant possesses no outward priesthood, but every member is a priest before God and needs no human mediator other than the God-Man Jesus Christ. The offerings each priest brings are spiritual, for each is to present himself as a living sacrifice (cf. Rom. 12:1)" (Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah, The English Text, with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes: Volume III, Chapters 40 through 66* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972], 462-63).

⁹⁴Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC 37 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 104-05.

offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet 2:5). The emphasis is most likely corporate, meaning that believers together function as priests.⁹⁵ Schreiner notes, “Despite the emphasis on the corporate priesthood, what Peter said applies by implication to individuals as well. That is, all believers have direct access to God by virtue of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”⁹⁶ The spiritual sacrifices are sacrifices that are made in the power of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁷ The sacrifices themselves should not be limited to any one thing but should be designated as anything that pleases God.⁹⁸ Karen Jobes states, “The spiritual sacrifices in view may be understood as all behavior that flows from a transformation of the human spirit by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (1:2).”⁹⁹ While unbelievers exhibit their unbelief by their disobedience, Peter says that the Christians are a holy nation and royal priesthood, a people for God’s own possession, who proclaim God’s excellences (1 Pet 2:9). The church is God’s people who are set apart for his purposes and who belong to him. Peter encourages the church to be holy and obedient, in a similar way that the nation of Israel was to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation in Exodus 19:5-6.¹⁰⁰ Jobes explains,

⁹⁵Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 106.

⁹⁶Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 106.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 107.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 107. Karen Jobes lists some possibilities of spiritual sacrifices: “The specific nature of these sacrifices has been debated. They have been variously specified as the evangelization of the world . . . the ‘praise of God and a holy, righteous and honorable way of life’ . . . the Eucharist . . . the response of the human spirit to the Holy Spirit . . . the ‘dedication of the entire person to God’ . . . and self-surrender. . . . Even though 2:9 states that the ‘royal priesthood’ is to share the praises of God, that declaration is not to be by mere verbal expressions but also by living good lives among the pagans (2:12)” (Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005], 150).

⁹⁹Jobes, *1 Peter*, 151.

¹⁰⁰Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 87; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 161.

An ancient priesthood was to be sanctified and set apart from the people at large for their ministry to the deity, to whom they had special access. Accordingly, the entire nation of ancient Israel was to be set apart from the nations of the world to serve God through obedience to the covenant with him, which obedience constituted Israel's holiness. Peter now declares similarly that collectively Christian believers are to perform that same function with respect to the nations among which they are scattered. By obedience to the new covenant in Christ's blood (1 Pet. 1:2) they are to be sanctified and set apart from the peoples of the world.¹⁰¹

Peter describes the priesthood as "royal," which indicates that the priesthood is loyal to God their king.¹⁰² The purpose of this priesthood is that they would proclaim the excellencies of God, which are acts of worship, and share the good news of Jesus Christ to all people.¹⁰³ Davids states that the praise to God likely refers to his mighty acts:

Christians are to "publish abroad" the might works of God, which include both his activity in creation and his miracle of redemption in the life, death, resurrection and revelation of Jesus Christ. Examples of this can be seen in the hymns of Revelation . . . and the gospel proclamations of Acts. This heraldic praise is their reason for existing.¹⁰⁴

They were once a people who did not belong to God, but now they belong to God and have been shown mercy (1 Pet 2:10). Peter shows that the nature of the priesthood is a people who have access to God, who live in obedience, and who proclaim the mighty works of God to their neighbors.

Revelation. John's revelation of Jesus Christ refers to those saved as priests, and in two passages it directly connects the atonement and priesthood. Revelation 1:5-6 states that Christ loved us and freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom and priests. Paige Patterson comments,

The picture is of those formerly shackled by sin but now liberated on the basis of a

¹⁰¹Jobes, *1 Peter*, 161.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 115-16.

¹⁰⁴Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 93.

transaction, the currency for which is the blood of Christ. Familiarity with the Old Testament is again paramount in John's thinking as he recalls Lev 17:11 and its prohibition against the eating of blood since "the life of a creature is in the blood," and blood has been authorized as the appropriate sacrifice upon the altar. Precisely because the author sees the shed blood of Christ as the life of Jesus poured out in substitution, he understands that sacrifice as providing liberation from sin and death.¹⁰⁵

John also uses the terms kingdom and priests which may allude to God's designation of his people in Exodus 19:6.¹⁰⁶ Christians are now the new Israel, and are a kingdom of priests.¹⁰⁷ They are a kingdom in the sense that they show "their royal standing in connection with the exaltation of Christ as ruler of all earthly kings."¹⁰⁸ They are priests, which emphasizes "their role in serving God as a result of Christ's sacrificial death."¹⁰⁹ As priests, they also have direct access to God.¹¹⁰ A similar exhortation is made by the elders as they sing a song that states that by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus ransomed his people from every tribe and nation, and they have been made a kingdom and priests (Rev 5: 9-10). Again, the author highlights the redemptive aspect of the Lamb's death.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, NAC 39 (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 61. See n. 12 regarding the textual variant on this verse.

¹⁰⁶G. K. Beale, *The Book of the Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 193.

¹⁰⁷Beale explains, "This application of Exod. 19:6 to the church as a priestly witness is attested also by 1 Pet. 2:5-10. . . . In view of the redemptive-historical and prophetic-eschatological fulfillment context of Revelation, use of the Exod. 19:6 description of God's people does not merely compare the church to the nation of Israel but also conveys the tacit notion that the church now functions as true Israel, while unbelieving ethnic Israelites, who claim to be true 'Jews but are not, but are a synagogue of Satan' (2:9), are 'liars' (3:9) τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ('to God and Father') is a dative of reference or advantage; that is, Christ has made believers to serve as kings and priests in service to his Father, which is to be for his Father's eternal glory and dominion" (ibid., 193-94).

¹⁰⁸Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 50.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 66; Patterson, *Revelation*, 61-62.

¹¹¹Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 359.

Jesus' death establishes his people and a kingdom and priests.¹¹² They reign and worship which foreshadows their role in the millennium and the new heavens and new earth:

The saints are corporately a "kingdom" and individually "priests." As priests they serve him in worship and witness. This makes more explicit the mission theme that is implicit in 1:6. The saints belong τῶ θεῶ . . . and thus serve him by participating in the universal mission to the nations. . . . As royalty, they reign with God in his kingdom This is especially emphasized here with the added βασιλεύουσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (*basileuousin epi tēs gēs*, they are going to reign on earth) There is a progression to this theme elsewhere in the book. In 11:15, 17, and 19:6 it is God and Christ who reign, and in 20:4, 6 and 22:5 it is the victorious saints who "reign with him." All the promises given to the people of God in the OT are about to be fulfilled, especially those related to the rule of the people of God in the final kingdom. . . . In the NT the saints will "sit on thrones" judging the earth Moreover, this promise relates both to the millennial reign (20:4) and to eternity (20:5). Through the death of Christ as the final victory over evil, we will be kings serving Christ in authority over his creation.¹¹³

Finally, those who were saved and resurrected and are not under the power of the second death and they will be called priests (Rev 20:6). As a kingdom of priests, they will reign with Christ for a thousand years.¹¹⁴ Then, the priestly aspect of believers is fully realized as they reign with Christ and have full access to God in the millennial kingdom.¹¹⁵

¹¹²Osborne, *Revelation*, 261.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Mounce, *The Book of the Revelation*, 371.

¹¹⁵Patterson states, "Under normal circumstances, a priest was the representative between man and God. He represented God to the people in teaching, but he also represented the people to God in intercession and sacrifice. Since none of that will be necessary in the millennium or the eternal state to follow, the other aspect of priesthood must be invoked. In the Old Testament the individuals who were allowed into the holy place were the priests, and the only single individual who was allowed into the Holy of Holies was the high priest and then only on Yom Kippur. The priest had access to the symbolic presence of God in a way far removed from the common Israelite. The fact that every New Testament believer is a priest for God carries then the significance that each individual has personal access to and the experience of fellowship with the God of the universe. . . . Nevertheless, that the transcendent God may be known and experienced by every individual constitutes one of the great mysteries of eternity. This concept is also the essence of the doctrine of the priesthood of the believers" (Patterson, *Revelation*, 354-55).

Summary

A second dimension of the new covenant promise that all covenant members will know God is that they will not need a teacher. The teacher is usually a covenant mediator or priest. Beale notes, “The revelatory position of knowledge that every believer will now have that formerly was unique to the priests (and prophets)”¹¹⁶ removes the need for a covenant mediator or priest. This position is grounded in the forgiveness of sins that brings a new relationship with God. Beale notes,

Because God will decisively forgive the sin of Israel in the future, there will be no need for mediation by human priests to offer sacrifice and to teach other Israelites about the intricacies and need of the OT sacrificial system. Also in mind is that forgiven Israelites will be in an intimate relationship with God, such that they have access to revelation and to God’s presence that previously only the priests and prophets of the former epoch had. In the new era all of God’s people will have more exposure to divine revelation and the divine presence than did even the priests and prophets of old. Thus, consummative forgiveness wipes away the need for a particular class of human priests to minister to the rest of the people. Such a decisive forgiveness is also a new feature of the new covenant.¹¹⁷

Atonement and Knowledge

The Old Testament prophets proclaimed that knowing God is to have close fellowship with him and to understand his ways. Conversely, the one who does not know God does not experience his fellowship and does not follow his ways. The evidence of someone’s knowledge of God is the degree to which they obey God; Israel’s and Judah’s

¹¹⁶Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 734.

¹¹⁷Ibid. Beale also shows that the democratization of the priestly office goes hand in hand with the new temple among God’s people. “Consequently, if Jeremiah has in mind the Leviticus text (in light of Jeremiah’s affinity with Ezek. 37), the notion of God’s establishment of a tabernacle appears to be implicit in Jeremiah with the making of a future covenant. This would help explain the priestly democratization that I perceive in Jer. 31 and have noted above. The point would be that in the end-time covenantal conditions, all people will function as priests in the tabernacle, being in God’s direct presence. New covenant and end-time tabernacle thus go hand in hand. This would also explain better than any other proposal that I have encountered the fact that the directly preceding context of the Jeremiah quotation in Heb. 8:8-12 is about the new tabernacle in which Christ dwells as a new priest in contrast, to the old, flawed temple. The Jeremiah quotation is introduced to support this perspective of the old and new temples in Heb. 8:1-5 as a part of the old and new covenants” (ibid., 736-37).

disobedience showed that they did not know God. Therefore, sin is a barrier to knowing God. Sin must be removed or atoned for if a sinner is to have fellowship with God and if the sinner is to be empowered by the Spirit to live obediently.

Jesus is also the high priest.¹¹⁸ The priesthood, particularly the high priest, performed the sacrifices. Jesus himself is the perfect sacrifice, who was sacrificed once for all and entered the greater tabernacle, heaven itself, of which the earthly tabernacle is only a shadow. This raises the issue: In what sense is Jesus' high priestly work a penal substitutionary atonement.¹¹⁹ Jesus' death typologically fulfilled the Levitical sacrifices. In both offerings, a death is required. The death of the sacrifice is a substitute for the sinner. Just as the Levitical sacrifice was the substitute for the sinner, so Jesus, as the better sacrifice, was the substitute for his people. The sacrifice is penal because the punishment was death as a result of the sins of the offender. Since the death of the animal was the result of the sins of the people, and by implication, all people are appointed to die and after this the judgment, Jesus' sacrificial death bore the punishment of death because of the sins of his people. The results of his high priestly sacrifice are the complete forgiveness of sins, the cleansing of the conscience of his people, and the provision of access to the Father.

Access to the presence of God is a very important component to knowing God. Knowing God means fellowship and relationship with God, which is evidenced by obedience. This relationship with God is impossible without being in his presence. As believers, their corporate priesthood, which is applied individually, indicates that each

¹¹⁸For a helpful summary of Jesus' high priesthood in the New Testament, see Alex T. M. Cheung, "The Priest As the Redeemed Man: A Biblical-Theological Study of the Priesthood," *JETS* 29 (1986): 269-73. Cheung argues that the priest is the ideal man.

¹¹⁹For purposes of this section, the high priestly work of Christ focuses on his sacrificial death. Jesus continues his priestly work as he is seated at the right hand of God and in his intercessory ministry (Heb1:3, 7:25).

believer has access to God. Furthermore, the presence of God rests more intimately with his people because of the indwelling Spirit. Phillip Hughes grounds the knowledge of God in the covenant presence of God. He states,

A further point of contact is found in that the promise, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people," is the same as the promise that God gave to the Israelites, with the condition that its fulfillment was dependent on their observance of the Mosaic covenant. . . . By their repeated acts of apostasy, however, the people cut themselves off from the enjoyment of the blessings of this promise; and it is only now, following the redeeming work of the Son and the universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit by the ascended Lord, that God, in Christ, dwells in the innermost being of his people, who together constitute the temple of the living God. . . . But it is only eschatologically, with the introduction of the new heaven and the new earth, populated with the multitude of the redeemed, that this covenant promise attains its ultimate fulfillment. Then at last, and everlastingly, God "will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them" (Rev. 21:3). In this intimate and uninterrupted relationship there will be no need to urge others to "know the Lord," because all, "from the least of them to the greatest," will know him. The reason for their being there is, indeed, that they know God; for to know God is itself life eternal (Jn. 17:3). *As the essence of sin is unwillingness to know God and to glorify him as God (Rom 1:18ff.), so without forgiveness and removal of sin there can be no knowledge of God and of the blessing of his presence.* Hence the promise of mercy with which this quotation ends; and this forgiving and reconciling mercy has been procured for us by the high-priestly mediation of our Savior Christ.¹²⁰

The new covenant promises build on each other. Knowledge of God is impossible without forgiveness and the removal of sin. Jesus accomplished this forgiveness and removal through his penal substitutionary death. Knowledge of God also is impossible without the evidence of obedience, which is made possible by the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is also the agent who teaches believers, so that they are no longer dependent on a human covenant mediator or priest. The Spirit fulfills this role, and God gave the Spirit as a result of Jesus' penal substitutionary death. The Spirit is the presence of God who resides with believers. And true knowledge of God is impossible without access to his presence. This access came because of Jesus' penal

¹²⁰Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 301-02 (emphasis added).

substitutionary death. Therefore, the knowledge of God requires penal substitutionary atonement. While the Scriptures do not directly link atonement and knowledge, penal substitutionary atonement can be inferred because it provides the conditions that lead to a saving knowledge of God

Conclusion

This chapter argues that penal substitution provides for the universal knowledge of God for all members of the new covenant. The Old and New Testament passages affirmed that knowledge means a close fellowship with God that is marked by obedience to him. New covenant believers will no longer need covenant mediators for two reasons. First, they will be taught by God himself, and this promise is fulfilled by the indwelling Spirit. Second, God has changed them into a kingdom of priests, and a mark of the priesthood is access to his presence.

CHAPTER 8
PENAL SUBSTITUTION AND
RECONCILIATION

Introduction

This chapter argues that penal substitution is required for reconciliation. While the Old Testament does not use the term reconciliation, it conveys the idea through restoration and in the concept of peace. This chapter examines the Pauline passages to show that penal substitution brings reconciliation. Finally, this study demonstrates that God's people will be fully reconciled to him in the new created order.

Reconciliation "may be defined as the restoration of fellowship between estranged parties"¹; it is a necessity for fellowship between sinful humanity and God. The Old Testament shows reconciliation between God and his people in various ways. God exiled his people because of their sins of disobedience and idolatry. The new covenant promises forgiveness, a heart change, and a renewal of God's covenant, which will result in his presence with his people and their intimate knowledge of God. Therefore, the new covenant itself brings restoration of fellowship between God and his people.

Reconciliation in the Old Testament

While the term for reconciliation with God does not appear in the Old Testament, the concept of reconciliation is expressed in four ways. First, the prerequisite for reconciliation with God is forgiveness. God must forgive in order to have a restored

¹Robert W. Yarbrough, "Forgiveness and Reconciliation," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 502.

relationship. Forgiveness is perhaps the foundational promise of the new covenant. A second expression of reconciliation is peace. Once God has peace with his people, then their relationship can be restored. A third manner of expressing reconciliation is restoration. When God restores his people to the land, he also restores his relationship with them. This study briefly explores the restoration flow of Isaiah 40-66 to show that through the work of the Servant, God's restoration of his people is reconciliation with them. Finally, the restoration of God's presence with his people implies a restored relationship. When the Lord departed, his fellowship with his people was broken. His return during the restoration shows a reconciled relationship. This section emphasizes the theme of peace and Isaiah's restoration prophecies as support for an Old Testament approach to restoration.² Thus, the Old Testament is a story of reconciliation for God to have fellowship with his sinful people. Christopher Seitz concludes,

The OT has reconciliation at the heart of its Torah. There we see the elaborate and carefully worked out system for bringing the people of Israel into right relationship with God. The life is in the blood, and God has given it for atoning for sin (Lev. 17:11). With this simple insight, all else spills out into the gracious giving of the Torah whereby Israel can be brought back after she falls. It is a never-ending process, as Hebrews sees it, but it is a process whereby Israel sustained her walk with God all the same.³

Peace

Definition. The Hebrew term שלם means "a state of wholeness or fulfillment."⁴

²Both forgiveness and God's covenant presence have been dealt with earlier in this paper. For forgiveness in the Old Testament, see chap. 4. For God's covenant presence in the Old Testament, see chap. 6.

³Christopher Seitz, "Reconciliation and the Plain Sense Witness of Scripture;" in *The Redemption: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on Christ as Redeemer*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 41.

⁴Philip J. Nel, "שלם," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 130.

When the verbal form has Yahweh as the subject, it carries the negative connotation that God brings retribution on Israel's enemies or punishes Israel for their sins with a view to restoring order.⁵ As a religious and theological concept, the word communicates the Lord's salvation because peace is a blessing from God.⁶ Peace is a sign of a restored relationship with God. Nel notes, "Because peace designates the state or condition of a renewed relationship with God as part of his salvation, the messianic child is called *šar šālôm*, 'Prince of Peace' (Isa 9:6[5])."⁷ The pre-exilic prophets argued that true peace could not come while sin was in the nation.⁸ God promised that peace and righteousness would come as a result of obedience to his commands, and his future kingdom that exemplifies God's salvation is characterized by peace and rulers who act in righteousness (Isa 48:18; 60:18-22; 32:1, 16, 17).⁹ Therefore, predictions of peace regarding the future era of restoration are "closely linked with righteousness as the ideal category of existence in accordance with God's will. Such an existence is blessed with divine peace as fulfillment of the ultimate purpose of being."¹⁰ Hence, God is the ultimate giver of peace and this peace reflects a reconciled relationship with him. Barker summarizes,

Peace is more than the somewhat bland definition of "wholeness" or "totality." It is

⁵Nel, "שלום," 130-31.

⁶Ibid., 132.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid. 132-33. Nels also observes on p. 134 concerning the New Testament, "Because peace in its religious sense can be seen only as God's blessing of a restored relationship, the NT can proclaim the fulfillment of the eschatological state of peace (Zech 9:10) in Jesus (Matt 5:9; 21:1; Luke 2:14). Through his death, reconciliation and peace with God are possible (Rom 5:1; Eph 2:14), and also between human beings (Eph 4:3; James 3:18). The NT, thus, continues the religious perception of *šālôm* and sees it in the Messiah's triumph the concretization of *šālôm* (Luke 10:18; Rom 8:6; 16:20)."

more than absence of warfare and hostility. It is the state of positive friendship and security between two parties, often a result of restitution and reconciliation. The Aaronic blessing directs us to the source of peace and the key relationship in which it is to be enjoyed. The Mosaic Laws show that a necessary corollary of peace with God is peace between his people. Leviticus 26:6 promises peace to those obedient to Yahweh. Disobedience destroys the prospects of peace both with God and with each other.¹¹

Peace offering. The goal of the peace offering was to celebrate fellowship with God. While the procedure for the offering is important, this account will emphasize the occasion and significance of the offering. The peace offering involved an animal sacrifice (Lev 3:1-17), was not a required to be performed daily, and the offering was enacted either as a thanksgiving offering, a freewill offering, or as a vow offering (Lev 7:12, 16). The offering could be a male or female from cattle without blemish (Lev 3:1). The offerer laid his hand on the offering and killed it, and the priests sprinkled the blood on the sides of the altar (Lev 3:2). After the priests cooked the offering, the Lord considered this sacrifice a soothing aroma (Lev 3:5). The instructions are similar for offering sheep (Lev 3:6-11) and goats (Lev 3:12-16). The Lord indicated that the people should eat neither the fat nor the blood (Lev 3:17). God also directed that the fat, two kidneys, the caul and liver were burned and reserved for him.¹² Wenham notes that “very often the peace offering is associated with occasions when the covenant was emphasized.”¹³ While confession of sin is associated with the offering, the tone of the offering is celebratory and festive for the community.¹⁴ The peace offering is the only

¹¹Paul A. Barker, “Rest, Peace,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 690.

¹²John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, WBC 4 (Waco, TX: Word, 1992), 42,

¹³Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 79.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

offering in which the common person could partake of the sacrifice.¹⁵ The occasion of the offering was usually joyous, thanking God for his blessing.¹⁶ It is a meal where God's presence was presumed to be close to those eating the peace offering.¹⁷ Hartley observes,

The oblation portions of an offering of well-being were burned on top of the whole offering. This may indicate, though certainly not in all cases, that whoever presented an offering of well-being first presented a whole offering. It also meant that the offering of well-being was prepared after the morning whole offering. Theologically this procedure indicates that the whole offering with its atoning merits was foundational to an offering that emphasized fellowship. The whole offering rendered the offer acceptable to God. Afterwards he was free to fellowship with his family or clan before God in a festive meal featuring portions of the offering of well-being.¹⁸

Yet one issue that the peace offering points to is the high cost of peace, which is sacrificial blood. Stanley Porter reflects,

Nevertheless, their general character gives insight into what is required in order to establish peace with God. The essential elements of the peace offering are the sacrifice of animals and the pouring out of the blood. These actions strike the modern Western reader as almost grotesque, but they serve several useful purposes, including that of drawing attention to the costliness of peace. Peace is not simply an empty wish; it is the result of a process that, in this instance enacts the high cost of life. Peace is not confined to present circumstances but is part of a larger perspective on life and the world pointing towards the demands of a holy and righteous God on his followers, who are prone to strife with him and among themselves.¹⁹

¹⁵Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 123.

¹⁶Hartley, *Leviticus*, 41. He adds, "in partaking the meal, the participants released God's blessing on themselves, a blessing that would prosper their labors and protect the family members from harm. When this sacrifice was offered during a time of distress, the intention was to recapture God's presence, for God's nearness would drive away the cause of agony" (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 42).

¹⁷Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 81.

¹⁸Hartley, *Leviticus*, 42.

¹⁹Stanley E. Porter, "Peace," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 682. Averbeck shows that the "blood manipulation" was an important aspect of the peace offering. He explains, "This atonement was not limited to the blood and its manipulation but instead, as in the case of the burnt offering, it included all the things associated with the ordination peace offering from which parts were offered to produce 'a pleasing aroma to the Lord, an offering made to the Lord by fire,' . . . Nevertheless, the blood manipulation was clearly a primary part of the ritual and its atoning efficacy. In this instance, therefore, as an ordination offering the peace offering was in essence made into an atoning offering even though it was not normally

Peace was costly, and peace with God required a sacrifice. Nel observes, “The burning of the fat, the sprinkling of the blood, and the eating of the meat of the . . . [peace] offering suggest a reconciliation between parties, particularly with Yahweh involved. The eating of the meal is the cultic appropriation of the restored relationship.”²⁰

Covenant of peace. Another way that peace is established is the prophetic promise that God would make a covenant of peace (Isa 54:1-10; Ezek 34:25). In Isaiah 54:9-10, the Lord compared his promise of peace to Israel with the promise that he gave to Noah. Just as the Lord promised that he would not judge the earth though destruction by flood, so he swore to Israel that he will not be angry. He proclaimed that his covenant of peace would not be removed and that his steadfast love would remain with his people. The peace with God and his people was not merely a cessation of hostilities but “describes a condition of wholeness. God commits himself that the relationship between him and his people will be one of productivity, fruitfulness, and blessing; and he commits himself that their lives will be marked by those same characteristics.”²¹ Thus, the covenant, which is grounded on the work of the Servant, is God’s expression of reconciliation between him and his people. Gentry and Wellum explain,

There will be a new covenant, called a covenant of peace in verse 10 to emphasize the fact of reconciliation. God’s anger has been appeased and finished. Israel may now benefit from the healing of a broken relationship in a new covenant. The new covenant renews and restores the broken old covenant. But it is more than that. It is a new covenant, different from the old one and superior to it, because it depends not upon God’s people but instead upon the everlasting kindness of God. Momentary

associated with atonement” (Richard E. Averbeck, “Sacrifices and Offerings,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003], 716).

²⁰Nel, “שלום,” 134.

²¹Ibid., 423.

wrath is contrasted with everlasting love and mercy.²²

The Lord also uses the term “covenant of peace” in Ezekiel 37:26-28.²³ Ezekiel first shows that Israel will be resurrected in the vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezek 37:1-14). The result of the resurrected nation is that his people would obey his laws as they live under the rule of the Messiah. Then God promised that he will make a covenant of peace, which is similar language to Ezekiel 34. However, he also refers to this as an “everlasting covenant.” The five-fold occurrence of the Hebrew term for “forever” in verses 24-28 highlights the permanent status of this covenant.²⁴ Block continues,

With his fivefold affirmation of the eternity of the restoration, Yahweh transforms this oracle into a powerful eschatological statement, envisaging an entirely new existence, where the old historical realities are considered null and void, and the new salvific works of God is perceived as final.²⁵

He promised first that he would give back the land and would multiply them in the land

²²Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 443.

²³The phrase is also used in Ezek 34:25-31. God’s shepherd-king, unlike the unfaithful shepherds of Israel, will bring a time of peace, which “signifies much more than the absence of hostility or tension. It speaks of wholeness, harmony, fulfillment, and humans at peace with their environment and with God” (Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 303). Ezekiel’s prophecy shows peace tangibly because they will be protected from wildlife, they will have abundant vegetation and crops, and they will be protected from their oppressors. See Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 282. Wright also observes that Ezek 34:25-29 draws heavily on the covenantal curses in Lev 26 and Deut 28, yet during the covenant of peace the curses will be reversed. Ian Duguid summarizes, “In place of the monarchy divided by sin, God’s people will be united under one shepherd. In place of an undistinguished procession of monarchs, they will be given a ruler after God’s own heart, a new David. In place of famine, plague, drought, and the sword, they will see a new level of peace and prosperity so that they will no longer bear the reproach of the nations. . . . Then indeed they will know that the Lord their God is with them – for blessing and not for curse – and that they are his-people” Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 396-97.

²⁴Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, 415-16. Block adds, “In this context, the meaning ‘forever, to eternity’ is assured by prefixing ‘*ôlām*’ with the separable preposition ‘*ad*’ and the inseparable preposition ‘*lê*’. Along with the sense of duration, the word bears nuances of permanence, durability, inviolability, irrevocability, and immutability, and in so doing serves as the designation of the definitive nature of the coming salvation” (ibid., 416).

²⁵Ibid., 416.

(Ezek 37:26). A second and perhaps greater promise was that God would dwell with the people in the land (Ezek 37:27). This promise was a reversal because earlier in the book the glory of the Lord departed from Israel because of their sin. “The reason the covenant will not be broken is that the Lord will dwell in their midst forever. . . . This presence will guarantee sanctity, obedience and witness . . . thus removing both the possibility of sin and the necessity of the Lord’s withdrawing ever again to a position of judgment.

Reconciliation will culminate in never-ending fellowship.”²⁶ Block argues,

Like the promise of land, so the promise of the divine presence among his people is often associated with the ancient covenant formula. . . . Ezekiel’s statement expresses Yahweh’s definitive rejection of any threat ever to abandon his people again, as he had in 586 B.C., and as was so graphically portrayed in the temple vision of chs. 8-11.²⁷

Isaiah’s Restoration Prophecies

The restoration prophecies in Isaiah 40-66 explain the Lord’s reconciliation with his people. God indicted Judah for their sins (Isa 1:1-17), yet he invited them to come back, and he would cleanse them if they repented (Isa 1:18-19). When chapter 40 begins, God comforted his exiled people and reassured them of his ability and willingness to deliver them from exile (Isa 40-48).²⁸ His deliverance was not only from exile but from the sin that caused the exile. While Cyrus was the pivotal person who would allow the remnants’ return to the land, the Servant would atone for their sin and restore them into right relationship with God.²⁹ God’s reconciliation with his people is grounded in the

²⁶Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1998), 342.

²⁷Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, 421.

²⁸John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 8-9.

²⁹Peter J. Gentry, “The Atonement in Isaiah’s Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13-53:12),” *SBJT* 11 (2007): 22.

Servant's sacrifice. Among the many blessings of the New Exodus, Gentry observes,

He dies as a *restitution sacrifice* to pay the penalty for the offenses, sins, and transgressions of the many. This brings the forgiveness of sins and a right relationship to God. This brings reconciliation with God resulting in a new, everlasting covenant of peace where faithful and loyal love and obedience are maintained in our relationship to God.³⁰

Isaiah's restoration oracles in chapters 54 and 55 are directed to those who will return to the land. While chapter 52:1-12 exhorts Israel to believe that God can restore them, chapters 54 and 55 are announcements of salvation.³¹ The Servant's death and resurrection would result in blessings and restoration to many because he bore their sin. Therefore, the natural interpretation of chapters 54 and 55 is in light of the Servant's work, which accounts for the change in tone from Isaiah 52:12.³² Isaiah first described the reconciliation between God and his people (Isa 54:1-10). He then prophesied concerning the restoration of the city (Isa 54:11-17). Isaiah 55:1-5 highlights the compassion of the Lord; he would express his compassion through their restoration to the land, which is grounded on his reconciled relationship with them. This compassion is far-

³⁰Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song," 43. While Gentry does not propose a particular theory of the Servant's death, this paper argues that his sacrifice is penal substitutionary atonement. See chap. 2, pp. 37-50.

³¹Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah 40-66*, 413.

³²Oswalt explains, "Even though 52:7-12 is somewhat more lyrical than 49:14-52:6, it is still continuing the tone of disputation and exhortation that characterizes that section as a whole. Israel is being called on to believe that it can be restored to God. In chs. 54 and 55 that is all changed. Israel *is* restored – in the mind of the writer, at least – and is called back in that reality. If nothing intervenes between 52:12 and 54:1, the shift is unaccountable. But if 52:13-53:12 is understood as an expression of the means by which a restored relationship between God and his people is possible, then the change in atmosphere is entirely understandable. That this is the correct understanding is shown by the sequence in 49:1-13. For example, 49:13 has a number of similarities with 54:1-10 in particular, and that verse is clearly a response to God's salvation that has been accomplished by the Servant (49:1-12). Thus we have in 52:13-55:13 an amplification of the same theme that was introduced in the beginning of the segment as a whole. A further confirmation of the significance of 52:13-53:12 for chs. 54-55 is the continued emphasis throughout the two chapters on the issues of sin, righteousness, mercy, pardon, and relationship with God. Cyrus had to do with the physical bondage of Israel. The Servant had nothing to do with that, but with matters of sin and righteousness, and that is exactly the focus of these chapters" (ibid., 413-14).

reaching because it would never leave his people, and he would make an everlasting covenant with them. Gentry and Wellum comment, “This covenant is described as the acts of loyal love performed by David, i.e., the atoning death of the Servant king in chapter 53. Here Isaiah is connecting the Davidic covenant and the new. The new covenant will accomplish what was promised in God’s covenant with David.”³³ This everlasting covenant was God’s promise of permanent reconciliation between himself and his people. The Lord also proclaimed that his promises would be fulfilled (Isa 55:6-13) and the final outcome would be restoration for the nation. The prophet pictured this restoration with the vision of the new heavens and new earth (Isa 66). For those who repented, God promised comfort; he would bring healing and peace (Isa 57:18-19).

Willem VanGemerén summarizes,

The Lord affirms to his people that he will renew his covenantal love in such a way that the time of present judgment and wrath will seem a trifle in comparison with the future blessedness. Isaiah states how the Lord hid his face from them with a little wrath, but also how he will love them with an everlasting love (Isa. 54:8). The time when God renews his love is also known as the year of God’s favor. Isaiah uses this concept to denote the time in which God proclaims to his people a message of comfort and reconciliation (49:8, 61:1).

God’s favor consists of reconciliation and forgiveness. The people in exile were under God’s anger and needed the assurance that he would forgive them.³⁴

Isaiah’s prophecies demonstrate that God’s plan of restoration results in his reconciliation with his people, and the death of the Servant effects this reconciliation.³⁵

³³Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 445.

³⁴Willem VanGemerén, *The Progress of Redemption: The Story of Salvation from Creation to the New Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 302.

³⁵Seitz’s argument is a helpful articulation of the reconciliation in the restoration prophecies in Isaiah, and the prophecies are typical of God’s reconciling work in the Old Testament. See Seitz, “Reconciliation and the Plain Sense Witness of Scripture,” 25-47. Seitz’s main conversation partner is N. T. Wright and his approach to the Old Testament scholarship regarding the Suffering Servant and Jesus. In his book, his main argument is that “Jesus’ public persona within first-century Judaism was that of a prophet, and that the content of his prophetic proclamation was the ‘kingdom’ of Israel’s God” (N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996], 11). He also explores Jesus’ beliefs

New Testament Atonement and Reconciliation

Romans 5:6-11

In Romans 5:6-11 Paul teaches that Christians have been reconciled by Christ's blood. Prior to this passage, Paul states that they have peace with God through Jesus Christ because they are justified by faith (Rom 5:1). In chapter 4, Paul presents Abraham as an example to show that justification comes by faith.³⁶ Moo notes that peace has a positive connotation, meaning that salvation is rooted in the Old Testament concept of peace:

“Peace” is a word that, like so many in Paul and in the NT, must be understood according to its use in the LXX, where it translates the wide ranging Hebrew word *shalōm*. As a result, the word “peace” moves beyond the largely negative signification of the word in secular Greek – “peace” as the cessation or absence of hostilities – to a more positive nuance – the well-being, prosperity, or salvation of the godly person. These are often expressly treated as the gifts of God, as in the well-known benediction, “The Lord lift up his countenance on you and give you peace” (Num. 6:26). But especially important for Paul’s usage is the OT prophets’ use of the term peace to characterize the salvation that God would bring to his people in the “last days.” This background defines for us what Paul means by “peace with God”; not an inner sense of well-being or “feeling at peace” . . . but the outward situation of being in a relationship of peace *with God*.³⁷

about his role concerning Israel, the manner in which his mission would be achieved, and his beliefs about himself. See *ibid.*, 12. Within his argument, his approach to forgiveness minimizes the individual aspect, which he acknowledges. He places forgiveness in the context of exile and states, “forgiveness of sins is another way of saying ‘return from exile’” (Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 268). For his complete argument regarding forgiveness, see pages 268-74. Seitz opposes Wright’s argument on this point. He shows that exile is not the primary issue in Isaiah 55-66, but the separation of Israel’s righteous remnant and a call and answer to all nations. He concludes, “The movement from chapters 40-55 to 56-66 . . . is chiefly a movement from the Servant’s work to the work of the Servants, and return from exile is subsidiary to it. . . . The work of the Servant is, conclusively, his suffering and atonement for Israel (53:4-9), which work has a consequence, paradoxically, the confession of the nations (52:13-15). In the final chapters, this reconciliation for Israel, accruing as well as for the nations, brings about strife within the household of God, with the consequence that, by the final chapters, Israel is herself pruned (Isa. 65:13-16), and ‘unnatural branches’ are brought in . . . to fulfill the work of the Servant, who was to be ‘light to the nations’ (42:6). The point is that all this activity takes place with only a loose reference to ‘return from exile’ and certainly not in dependence upon its having been completed. Reconciliation and forgiveness of sins are decidedly not the same things as ‘return from exile’” (Seitz, “Reconciliation and the Plan Sense Witness of Scripture,” 32).

³⁶Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 226.

³⁷Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 299. See also C.

The peace comes through our Lord Jesus Christ, which means that this peace comes because of his death and “it was by his atoning sacrifice that our sins were dealt with so that they are no longer counted against us.”³⁸ He also states that we have access to this grace through him and we rejoice in that access. We also rejoice in sufferings, because sufferings ultimately produce hope, and because the Spirit has poured out God’s love in our hearts (Rom 5:2-5). The main theme of verses 5:1-11 is the hope that believers have because of Jesus Christ.³⁹

Paul argues that the hope that is expressed in verses four and five is objectively grounded in the historical event of Jesus’ death.⁴⁰ He sets the foundation for reconciliation by showing that Christ died for the ungodly at the right time and while believers were weak (Rom 5:6). By the “right time” Paul expresses that Christ died at God’s appointed time in salvation history.⁴¹ Paul uses the term ungodly in a pejorative way, and weak “designates that ‘total incapacity for good’ which is characteristic of the unredeemed.”⁴² Schreiner surmises, “The reason for using these various terms is clear.

E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol.1, ICC (New York: T & T Clark, 1975), 258. In n. 28, Moo indicates that peace is sometimes synonymous with “salvation.” In the Old Testament, peace is the fullness of God’s goodness to his covenant people when his covenant promises are fulfilled. See Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 253. For an extended study on the use of εἰρήνη and the Old Testament background of שָׁלוֹם, see Werner Foerster, “εἰρήνη, εἰρητεύω, ειρηνικός, ειρηνοποιός, ειρηνοποιέω,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittell, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 400-408.

³⁸Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 226.

³⁹Schreiner, *Romans*, 251-52; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 297.

⁴⁰Schreiner, *Romans*, 259. Kruse notes that the preposition “for” connects the idea in verse 5 of God’s love poured out by the Holy Spirit to God’s love expressed in the sending of his Son to die for sinners. See Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 233.

⁴¹Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 307; Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 233; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:264.

⁴²Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 306. Regarding weakness, Schreiner notes that the best understanding of the term is moral weakness, which is consistent with the other terms in the passage of

Paul wants to underscore the greatness and distinctiveness of God’s love in sending Christ to die for those who are wicked and rebellious, who hate him.”⁴³ Paul observes the rare instances that one would die for another person, and it may even be possible for this to occur for a good person (Rom 5:7).⁴⁴ Yet God, showing his great love, sent Christ to die for believers while they were sinners (Rom 5:8). The “for” in verses 6 and 8 represents the substitutionary aspect, and Paul communicates that Christ died as a representative and as a substitute for sinners.⁴⁵ Paul emphasizes the greatness of God’s love by comparing it to human love; human love would rarely sacrifice one’s own life even for a righteous person, yet God showed his love by sending Christ to die for undeserving people.⁴⁶ As a result, Paul reinforces the greatness of God’s love and the “dependability of our hope” that is referred to in verses 4-5.⁴⁷ Kruse demonstrates that

sinner and ungodly. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 261. See also Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 233.

⁴³Schreiner, *Romans*, 261. See also Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 306; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:264.

⁴⁴Moo states, “The main point of this verse is clear enough. Paul accentuates the love of God manifested in the cross of Christ reminding us that the pinnacle of human love is the giving of one’s life for a person one is close to – a spouse, child, or combat buddy – whereas God sent his son to die for people who hated him” (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 307-08). For a summary of the complex meaning of the verse and a comparison of *δικαίου* (a righteous person) and *τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ* (a good person), see Schreiner, *Romans*, 261-62. Schreiner understands *τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ* as a benefactor and *δικαίου* as a good person, indicating that human action is more likely to die for a benefactor. See also Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 235; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:264-65.

⁴⁵The preposition *ὑπέρ* may indicate substitution or representation. Moo notes that *ὑπέρ* in Paul’s writings frequently designates substitution, and *ἀντί* more clearly conveys substitution. Even if *ὑπέρ* focuses on representation, Moo states that “the idea of substitution is not necessarily lost; many instances of *ὑπέρ* include both, and it is probably the case here. . . . In any event, the nature of Christ’s death ‘for’ us cannot finally be understood apart from the clear NT teaching that his death is *for* us because it is a death suffered *in our place* (Mark 10:45; Rom. 3:25; Gal. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2:6)” (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 307 note 65 [emphasis in the original]). See also Schreiner, *Romans*, 260.

⁴⁶Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 305-06.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 306.

God's love in sending the Son is emphasized here in comparison with Paul's earlier statement that God's justice was demonstrated in Christ's death:

The apostle has already said that God, by presenting his Son "as a sacrifice of atonement", demonstrated his justice while justifying sinners (3:25-26). Now, he stresses that this action was at the same time a demonstration of God's love for sinners. And this demonstration of God's love was made while the objects of that love were still at enmity with him.⁴⁸

Paul argues that, being justified by his blood, Christians are saved by Christ from the wrath of God (Rom 5:9). The status of "being justified" indicates that those who believe in Christ are fully acquitted of their sins.⁴⁹ "Blood" signifies Jesus' sacrificial death, and alludes to the bloody Levitical sacrifices.⁵⁰ The prepositional phrase ἐν τῷ αἵματι indicates that "the means by which the justifying act takes place is Christ's blood," or sacrificial death.⁵¹ Paul employs a greater to lesser argument. If God has acquitted believers on the basis of Jesus' death, which is the more difficult thing, then certainly they shall be saved from the wrath of God.⁵² The future tense conveys that on the last day, believers will be saved from eschatological wrath.⁵³ Moo summarizes,

⁴⁸Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 235-36.

⁴⁹Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 310.

⁵⁰Schreiner, *Romans*, 263; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 310.

⁵¹Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 310. Moo surmises that the preposition ἐν is most likely instrumental.

⁵²Ibid. Kruse notes, "The ultimate threat confronting sinners is neither sin itself, nor the power of Satan, nor even death, but the wrath of God . . . and we are saved from that only through the death of Christ" (Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 236).

⁵³Moo argues, "The justified status conveyed to the believer on the basis of Christ's sacrificial death issues in salvation from wrath. The temporal element in the verse makes clear that wrath refers here to eschatological judgment. . . . 'We will be saved' is, then, a genuine temporal future. As he typically does, Paul uses salvation language to depict the final deliverance of the believer from sin, death, and judgment" (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 310). See also Schreiner, *Romans*, 263. In note 91, Moo notes that Paul usually uses the term σῶζω to indicate future eschatological salvation from sin, death, and judgment.

It is precisely the tension set up by this “already-not yet” perspective that gives rise to the need to proclaim the unbreakable connection between the believer’s justification and his or her salvation from the wrath of God still to be poured out on the last day. Paul suggests the unbreakable connection between the two by insisting that, as initial salvation is “through his blood,” so final salvation is also “through him.”⁵⁴

He states that believers were reconciled to God by the death of his Son while they were enemies. Now that they are reconciled, they will be saved by his life (Rom 5:10).

Christians were enemies from both the human side, and they were alienated from God and inclined to evil behavior, and from God’s side because of his opposition to all evil, including sinners.⁵⁵ Yet the great truth of this section is that God initiated reconciliation while they were enemies.⁵⁶ In verse 9, justification carries legal overtones, but reconciliation refers to restoration of a relationship.⁵⁷ This reconciliation was accomplished through the Christ’s death, which is the instrumental cause of reconciliation.⁵⁸ Since God has reconciled his enemies through Christ’s death, then they

⁵⁴Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 311.

⁵⁵Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 236-37.

⁵⁶Ibid., 237; Schreiner, *Romans*, 264. David Garland gives a helpful description of the relationship between sin and reconciliation: “Reconciliation assumes ruptured relationships, alienation, and disaffection. The problem, however, is not with God, as if God were some cruel taskmaster from whom humans rebelled. Human sinfulness created the problem, and this sinful condition had to be dealt with before there could be any reconciliation. Sin incurs God’s holy wrath, so it could not be treated lightly or swept under the rug. God can never be reconciled to sin, but God does not turn away from sinners in disgust and leave them to their just desserts. Instead, while humans were still in open revolt, God acting in love (Rom. 5:8) to bring the hostility to an end and to bring about peace (see Rom 5:1; see Isa 32:7). This peace is not simply a cessation of hostilities or an uneasy truce. It refers to the mending of the broken relationship that results from God justifying us (making us right) through faith and changing us from enemies to friends” (David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, NAC 29 [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999], 289-91).

⁵⁷Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 311. Schreiner notes, “Justification emphasizes that believers stand in right relationship with God, while reconciliation stresses that we, who were formerly enemies, are now God’s friends. Neither metaphor should be exalted above the other; both are constituent aspects of what God has done for us in Christ” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 263).

⁵⁸Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 312.

will certainly be saved by Jesus' life.⁵⁹ The phrase "saved by his life" has been unclear to some commentators. Moo observes that verse 9 and 10 are in parallel, such that "justified" is in parallel to "reconciled."⁶⁰ The instrumental cause for both is Christ's death; verse 9 uses the language of "blood" with its sacrificial overtones, and verse 10 states that reconciliation comes through Christ's death. In light of the parallelism, the phrase "saved by his life" must be related to "saved from the wrath of God" in verse 9. Paul most likely means that "the new life won by Christ and in which believers share is the means by which they will be saved in the judgment."⁶¹ At the end of this section, Paul proclaims that believers rejoice in God through Jesus Christ, through whom they have received reconciliation (Rom 5:11). The section has come full circle. In verse 1, Paul states that we have peace with God because we have been justified by faith through our Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 11, Paul reaffirms in different words that Christians have been reconciled to God, and thus have peace, through Jesus Christ. Kruse concludes,

Here he points out that we boast because we have even *now* received reconciliation. Paul began this section of his letter by listing the benefits for believers of having *now* been justified by faith (5:1-5), and in 5:11 he concludes it by saying that we can boast in having *now* received reconciliation. Justification and reconciliation are closely related in Paul's thought. Believers are both justified and reconciled by the death of Christ ("by his blood" / "through the death of his Son"), and, being justified/reconciled, they shall be saved by him on the last day ("saved through him from the wrath of God" / "saved by his life"). While justification and reconciliation are closely related, they are not identical concepts. Justification highlights the

⁵⁹Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 310.

⁶⁰Ibid., 309. Schreiner likewise indicates that v. 10 is a restatement of v. 9, with some differences. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 263.

⁶¹Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 312. Moo shows that the phrase "through his life" may indicate that our salvation takes place with Paul's frequent use of the phrase "in Christ," meaning in union with Christ or that "our salvation as occurring 'in the sphere of' Christ, or his life." A second option, which Moo favors, indicates that Paul rarely uses a noun between "in" and "Christ", and "the phrase seems to be parallel to 'through him' in v. 9, where an instrumental meaning is certain." Schreiner states that being saved by his life may be a reference to Jesus' resurrection and his present intercessory ministry. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 264.

forensic aspect and reconciliation the relational aspect of the salvation made possible through Christ's death, though, of course, justification cannot be said to be without its relational significance, and reconciliation presupposes a resolution of the forensic problem.⁶²

Furthermore, verses 6-8 in this passage show that this hope, the justified and reconciled status came through Jesus' penal substitutionary death.⁶³

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

While defending his apostolic ministry, Paul argues that he and his ministers are ministers of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:16-21). Paul emphasizes that people must be reconciled to God.⁶⁴ Paul states that one should no longer regard anyone according to the flesh, not even Christ who was once regarded according to the flesh (2 Cor 5:16). The phrase "know according to the flesh" means to regard someone according to worldly wisdom.⁶⁵ This approach is reinforced by Paul's reference to those who judged by

⁶²Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 238-39. Cranfield acknowledges this point in his introduction to Rom 5:1-11: "The reconciliation Paul is speaking of is not to be understood as simply identical with justification (the two terms being understood as different metaphors denoting the same thing), nor yet as the consequence of justification, a result following afterwards. The thought is rather that – in the case of the divine justification of sinners – justification necessarily involves reconciliation. Whereas between a human judge and an accused person there may be no really deep personal relationship at all, the relation between God and the sinner is altogether personal, both because God is the God He is and also because it is against God Himself that the sinner has sinned. So God's justification of sinners of necessity involves also their reconciliation, the removal of enmity, the establishment of peace. This sub-section, then, is drawing out something already implicit in 3:21-26. The fact that men have been justified means that they must also have been reconciled. The fact that they're righteous by faith means that they now live as God's friends" (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:256-57). Cranfield's point may be nuanced in one way. While justification and reconciliation are two aspects of our salvation, the logical priority may be justification. Peace with God in any way requires righteousness with God. See Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 77.

⁶³Schreiner, *Romans*, 264.

⁶⁴Seifrid comments, "While in 2 Corinthians 3 his attention is focused on the hidden glory of the new covenant and on the life and communion with God that it brings, here he presents the content of the new covenant, the Gospel, in the form that is most relevant for the needs of the Corinthians at this moment: they must be reconciled afresh to God" (Mark A. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014], 239).

⁶⁵Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 247; Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 283. Both verbs οἶδα and γινώσκω mean to "know," "view," or "regard." The meanings of the two verbs in New Testament

outward appearance and not the heart (2 Cor 5:12).⁶⁶ Paul affirms that “we” no longer regard or know those in the world according to worldly standards. The “we” refers to Paul but is true for all believers.⁶⁷ The reason that Paul and believers no longer regard anyone according to human standards is the transforming love of Jesus, because they no longer live for themselves but now live for Christ (2 Cor 5:14-15).⁶⁸ Paul states that he once regarded Christ according to the flesh, which refers to his pre-conversion disposition of judging Christ according to Paul’s own worldly standards and through the lens of his Jewish religion.⁶⁹ A person who no longer regards Christ according to the flesh means that he no longer has false, worldly and superficial ideas about Christ.⁷⁰ Conversely, Paul and his companions now have true discernment about the identity of Christ and his saving benefits. Seifrid explains,

His focus rests on our reception of Christ, our knowledge of him. By the power of his saving work, we no longer know Christ as a mere teacher or miracle-worker, nor as a mere moral ideal and example. We know him as the One who died for us that we might live for him (vv. 14-15). For Paul, the true knowledge of Christ consists in the knowledge of Christ’s saving benefits. These saving benefits include the

times are virtually synonymous. The phrase *κατὰ σάρκα* means according to worldly or human standards. For his analysis, see Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 427.

⁶⁶Paul does not specify these worldly standards, but those who used these standards likely caused more division within the Corinthian church. Those who use these standards may be the false apostles among them, and those who were opposing Paul’s apostolic ministry according to outward appearances. See Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 283; Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 294-95.

⁶⁷Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 294; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 425. Throughout the passage, the first person plural, with the exception of 6:1, refers to Paul and his associates but is true for all believers.

⁶⁸Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 293; Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 281; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 429-30; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 246.

⁶⁹Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 295.

⁷⁰Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 429.

overturning of our understanding of the world: we are not those who may see and judge, but the blind who have been judged and yet have been granted sight. The work of God in Christ calls into question our capacity to know and understand God, the world, and our own hearts. In the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God (1 Cor 1:21). We require a word from God, an *effective* word, that tells us who Christ is – and who we are – in such a way that we are transformed by the light of the first day of creation. Contrary to what the Corinthians imagine, “having known Christ according to the flesh” cannot in itself confer any authority, wisdom, or power.⁷¹

This new knowledge of Christ has an effect on how we regard one another, such that we regard one another through spiritual rather than worldly or external qualities.⁷² Therefore, anyone in Christ is a new creation, with the old passing away and the new coming (2 Cor 5:17). This new creation occurs in Christ, which means that a person is in union with Christ.⁷³ The phrase “new creation” does not have a grammatical subject, and the implied subject is most likely a person (he is a new creation) because of the personal reference “if anyone is in Christ.”⁷⁴ The second clause indicates that the old has completely passed away, but the new is present with continuing results.⁷⁵ Paul argues that for the Christian,

⁷¹Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 249-50. See also Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 429-30.

⁷²Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 429.

⁷³Barnett indicates that the person who is “in Christ” has responded in faith to the gospel, has become a baptized believer in the community of the church, and is regarded as “in the Spirit.” The phrase “in Christ” itself communicates overlapping concepts. See Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 296; Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 286. Harris lists the uses of the preposition and concludes that the phrase “may be paraphrased ‘united in faith to the risen Christ’” (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 432).

⁷⁴Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 432; Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 296. Contra Garland and Seifrid, who argue that the new creation refers to the general eschatological change that occurs is because of Christ’s death and resurrection. His translation would be “there is a new creation.” For their argument, see Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 286-87; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 252-53. While the reference to a person is preferred, the argument that Paul refers to as the new eschatological age does not exclude individuals, they are also new creations because of Jesus’ death and resurrection and their union with Christ. Similarly, Paul’s reference to the person as the new creation would “imply the recreation of all things” (*ibid.*, 252). Seifrid contends for the broadest possible reading that would include both cosmic and personal aspects of the new creation.

⁷⁵The aorist form *παρῆλθεν* (“gone”) indicates a completed action and points to the end of the old age and the Christian’s former life. The perfect form *γέγονεν* (has come) indicates a current and

the person who is in union with Christ, the old ways of a life dominated by the flesh and judging others by external standards have passed away.⁷⁶ However, “when a person becomes a Christian, he or she experiences a total restructuring of life that alters its whole fabric – thinking, feeling, willing, and acting.”⁷⁷ The new creation has come about because now all have died and live for Christ, and their lives have been transformed.

Harris helpfully summarizes the connection of verse 17 to the previous verses:

The relation of v. 17 to what precedes is significant. Christian conversion, that is, coming to be in Christ (v. 17a), produces dramatic change (v. 17b): life is no longer lived *κατὰ σάρκα*, but *κατὰ πνεῦμα*. Paul implies that a change of attitude toward Christ (v. 16b) brings about a change of attitude toward other people (v. 16a) and a change of conduct from self-pleasing to Christ-pleasing (vv. 9, 15), from egocentricity to theocentricity.⁷⁸

Paul also notes that this new creation is a gift from God, completely his work,⁷⁹ and he has reconciled believers through Christ and has given Paul the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18).

continuing effect of the new life. See Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 297.

⁷⁶Harris argues that the created order itself has not passed away and is future, so the new creation cannot refer to the cosmic order. See Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 433-34.

⁷⁷Ibid., 434. Harris also notes Paul’s acknowledgement of the believer’s continuing renewal. Harris argues that the combination of “new,” “if anyone is in Christ” and “new creation” indicates individual rather than cosmic realities. See pp. 433-34.

⁷⁸Ibid. Barnett describes the relationships between the new covenant and the new creation: “But this ‘new creation’ is coterminous with the ‘new covenant’ mentioned earlier (3:6); together they divide history into two epochs. The ‘old’ things of creation and the ‘old covenant’ (3:14) coincide as do the ‘new’ things of the ‘new covenant’ and the ‘new creation.’ The inauguration of both the ‘new covenant’ and the ‘new creation’ occurs ‘in Christ,’ and at the same time, that is, when he died and was raised for all, bringing to their respective ends the ‘old’ in the former creation and in the ‘old covenant.’ The ‘old’ in the former creation are the things to which those who are ‘in Christ’ have ‘died,’ that is, to the godless, self-centered living, ‘according to the flesh,’ of those ‘in Adam’ The ‘old’ in the ‘old covenant’ relates to law-keeping as the method of relational acceptance with God, which Paul also characterizes as ‘according to the flesh’ Both the ‘old’ in the former creation and the ‘old’ in the ‘old covenant’ have ‘now’ passed and ‘no longer’ govern those who are ‘in Christ.’ Those who are ‘in Christ’ are – and are to be – governed by the Spirit” (Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 298).

⁷⁹Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 289.

Harris helpfully shows that there are four aspects of reconciliation that verse 18 communicates. First, God the Father initiates reconciliation with humanity and he is the “goal” of reconciliation.⁸⁰ Harris continues, “For Paul, reconciliation does not occur apart from God or in spite of God, but because of God. Once God has taken the initiative in removing the obstacle to fellowship, there is no need for humans to try to assuage God’s anger.”⁸¹ Second, the agent of reconciliation is Jesus Christ.⁸² God reconciled us “through Christ,” which refers to his death. The parallel phrase “not counting their sins against them” is the elaboration in the verse that reconciliation came “through Christ” and the context of the passage points to Jesus’ death.⁸³ Barnett notes,

It is through Christ’s death, by which he does not count sins against people, that God has reconciled the world to himself. This is made clear in the climactic text, v. 21, where, on account of the sinless one being “made . . . sin, we become the righteousness of God.” The relational blessing (“reconciliation with God”) rests on forensic forgiveness (“righteousness”) as in the parallel passage in Romans where “being reconciled to God” (5:10) depends on “being justified” (5:1, 9).⁸⁴

⁸⁰Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 436; Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 229. Harris notes that the Greek construction τοῦ καταλλάξαντος modifies τοῦ θεοῦ and it indicates that God is the subject who begins reconciliation. He also notes that in the Greek use of the term, only Paul uses God, who is the aggrieved party, as the subject of καταλλάσσω who takes initiative to reconcile. Garland notes, “When the verb is used in the active voice, Christ or God is always the subject; when it is used in the passive voice, humans are the subject. In other words, ‘God reconciles, man is reconciled’” (Garland, *2 Corinthians* 289).

⁸¹Ibid., 437.

⁸²Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 437.

⁸³Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 302. Harris helpfully notes the various constructions in Paul that indicate that reconciliation came through Christ’s death. He argues, “To bring about reconciliation, God acted διὰ Χριστοῦ, ‘by means of Christ,’ a sentiment that is expressed in Col. 1:20 by δι’ αὐτοῦ . . . δι’ αὐτοῦ ‘through him . . . through him alone’; in Rom. 5:10 by διὰ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ [through the death of his Son]; in Col. 1:22 by ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου, ‘through Christ’s death in his physical body’; and in Eph. 2:16 by διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ, ‘through the cross.’ Thus ‘the message of reconciliation’ (v. 19) is ‘the message of the cross’ (1 Cor. 1:18)” (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 437).

⁸⁴Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 302.

Third, God reconciles humanity to himself.⁸⁵ The first appearance of “us” the object of the reconciliation, probably applies first to Paul, then believers, and to all humanity because the recipient of God’s reconciling action in verse 19 is the world of humanity.⁸⁶ Fourth, God’s work of reconciliation requires a human response.⁸⁷ The second reference to “us” is limited to Paul and his ministers because he is charged with bringing the message of reconciliation. Having received the blessing of reconciliation, Paul was now entrusted with the message of reconciliation so that people may respond and be reconciled to God.⁸⁸ Paul restates his point from verse 18, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19ab).⁸⁹ It is best to understand the phrase “God was in Christ” as God accomplishing his reconciliation through Christ’s sacrificial death.⁹⁰ While some commentators understand the phrase “God in Christ” as referring to the incarnation, in the context of 2 Corinthians 5:14-21, the death of Christ is in view which brings reconciliation.⁹¹ Barnett elaborates,

⁸⁵Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 437.

⁸⁶Ibid. Contra Barnett, who argues that the pronoun refers to Paul and believers as a part of his autobiographical approach. See Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 304.

⁸⁷Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 438.

⁸⁸Ibid., 439. Seifrid succinctly adds, “God’s reconciling work through Christ on the apostle is inseparable from the mission given to the apostle, as we have seen repeatedly in the letter: God has reconciled Paul to himself and has given him the mission . . . of reconciliation. Paul acts out of that which he has received. He accomplished in the world only that which has been accomplished for the world by God in Christ” (Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 257).

⁸⁹The phrase ὡς ἔστι is best understood as explanatory of verse 18, translated “that is.” For a summary of exegetical options, see Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 305-06; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 440.

⁹⁰Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 306; Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 289.

⁹¹Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 306; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 442.

Rather, the death of Christ, which dominates the passage (vv. 14-15 and v. 21) and which overarches vv. 18-19, provides the key to the interpretation. The phrase “in Christ” repeats from v. 17, which in turn points to the “one” who died and was raised “for all” (vv. 14-15). Moreover, “in Christ” in this verse equates with “through Christ” (see on v. 18), that is, through the death by means of which God reconciled the world to himself. Further, the second part of the verse (“not reckoning their trespasses to them”) further anchors the meaning of the *death* of Christ. The focus of this passage is the death and resurrection of Christ, in particular his death; the incarnation is not prominently in view.⁹²

God was in Christ reconciling the world, and the word “world” refers to all humanity.⁹³

God did not count their trespasses against them (2 Cor 5:19c), which further elaborates the phrase “God was in Christ reconciling the world”; reconciliation involves not counting their trespasses against them.⁹⁴ The word for “reckoning” is an accounting term, and the verse indicates that God will no longer account sins against that person.⁹⁵ This language is consistent with the language of Jeremiah 31:34, where God says that he will forgive their sin and remember it no more; to no longer remember sin means that he will

⁹²Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 306 (emphasis in the original).

⁹³Garland explains, “It is more likely that ‘the world’ refers to humankind in this context rather than to the whole created order. . . . It picks up the ‘all’ from 4:14-15 and points to the references ‘to their trespasses’ and ‘against them’” (Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 293). Contra Barnett and Seifrid, who interpret “world” as including all creation. See Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 307; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 258.

⁹⁴Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, ICC (Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1994), 435; Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 294.

⁹⁵Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 444. The word λογίζομαι was usually used negatively meaning to “count/hold something against someone.” The word in the ESV for “trespasses” is frequently translated as “transgressions” and usually means rebellion. Garland comments, “Transgressions are not simply sins that one commits in ignorance. Transgression is deliberate sin, doing what we know to be disobedience to God. This defiant mutiny is far more serious and created what seemed to be an unbridgeable gulf between us and God” (Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 294). Seifrid’s observation is helpful, that transgressions occur only when God revealed his law. See Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 258. However, Harris states that the term παραπτώματα (transgression) and the term ἁμαρτία (sin) in verse 21 are virtually synonymous. See also Wilhelm Michaelis, “πίπτω, πτώμα, πτώσις, ἐκπίπτω, καταπίπτω, παραπίπτω, παράπτωμα, περιπίπτω,” in *TDNT*, Vol. ed. Gerhard Kittell, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 172; Douglas J. Moo, “Sin in Paul,” in *Fallen: A Theology of Sin*, eds. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 109-10.

no longer take action against sin.⁹⁶ God entrusted the message of reconciliation to Paul (2 Cor 5:19d). The “message of reconciliation” in verse 19 is similar to the “ministry of reconciliation” in verse 18.⁹⁷ Harris notes, “Whether God is said to ‘give the ministry of reconciliation’ . . . or ‘to entrust the message of reconciliation’ . . . to Paul and others, the emphasis is on the privilege and obligation of the task of proclaiming that reconciliation.”⁹⁸ God’s act of reconciliation included provision for the apostolic preaching of the message of reconciliation.⁹⁹ Thus, Thrall notes that “the scope of the divine work of reconciliation is shown to be world-wide, it is shown as dealing with human sin, and the *διακονία* [ministry] (v. 18) which brings it into effect is shown to be apostolic preaching.”¹⁰⁰ Therefore, God appeals to the world through Paul and his ministers, who are ambassadors of Christ, to be reconciled to him (2 Cor 5:20). Two points come from this verse. First, though Paul and his ministers are ambassadors, they do not merely represent God, but they are the instruments that God uses to speak.¹⁰¹ Second, in the command to be reconciled to God, Paul reaches out to any unconverted

⁹⁶Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 444. Harris notes that οὐ μὴ . . . ἔτι, indicating that God no longer counts sin, refers only to the believer post conversion. See n. 139.

⁹⁷Ibid., 445.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 258; Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 308.

¹⁰⁰Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 436.

¹⁰¹Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 298. Harris states, “Whoever declares ‘the message of reconciliation (v. 19) is both a delegated representative of Christ and an actual spokesperson for God. But for all their exalted status, such persons are not plenipotentiaries; they have not been invested with the full power of independent action, for they deliver rather than create the message and lack any authority to alter that message” (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 447). For the background on the office of ambassador in the ancient world, see Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 295-98.

audience that he addresses.¹⁰² Thus, though God has done the work of reconciliation through Christ, sinners are required to respond. Harris summarizes,

In the divine economy, the declaration of “the message of reconciliation” (v. 19), or, in other words, the preaching of the cross of Christ (1 Cor 1:18; 23) with the attendant entreaty to be reconciled to God, is the link between the objective work of reconciliation accomplished by Christ and the subjective appropriation of its benefits by the sinner. Paul saw himself and everyone who proclaims reconciliation in Christ as trustees of a message (v. 19), ambassadors for Christ, and mouthpieces for God (v. 20). As such they enjoy incomparable dignity, yet their task is the lowly one of *παρακλήσις* and *δέησις*. This simultaneous conjunction of dignity and humanity forms an exquisite paradox first exemplified in the person and ministry of Christ.¹⁰³

The basis of this reconciliation is explained, that God made Christ to be sin who did not know sin, so that believers could become the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor 5:21). This verse explains how God no longer accounts sins against his people and brings about reconciliation.¹⁰⁴ It is because Jesus himself became sin so that they could become the righteousness of God.¹⁰⁵ Paul demonstrates that reconciliation and justification are two blessings of salvation with justification emphasizing the legal aspect, and reconciliation displaying the relational aspect.¹⁰⁶ Reconciliation ultimately comes about because of

¹⁰² Harris summarizes the options regarding the audience that Paul commands to be reconciled. See Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 447-48. The three options are that Paul is talking to unbelievers in the Corinthian church, the Corinthian believers, or a general evangelistic audience. He rightly advocates the third option because (a) The message to be reconciled is distinctly salvific and it “encapsulates” the apostolic message, (b) this approach fits the context better by defining the message of reconciliation and providing a transition to v. 21, which shows that Jesus’ penal substitutionary death is the ground for reconciliation, (c) Paul does not address the Corinthians directly until 6:1, and (d) verse 5:11 closely parallels v. 20. For this approach, see also Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 259, Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: Volume 1*, 437-38. Contra Barnett and Garland, who argue that the command is directed to the Corinthian church. See Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 311-12; Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 298-99.

¹⁰³ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 449.

¹⁰⁴ Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1439.

¹⁰⁵ For an exposition of 2 Cor 5:21, see chap. 2, pp. 77-83.

¹⁰⁶ Thrall comments, “The juxtaposition in vv. 18-21 of the themes of reconciliation and justification raises the question of their relationship to one another. It is possible that they are simply

Jesus' penal substitutionary atonement. Barnett concludes,

This verse explains how the "one" / "he" effectively "died for all," how he revealed his "love" for them (vv. 14-15), how eschatologically and personally a "new creation" occurs "in Christ" (v. 17), and how God reconciled the apostle/his people/the world to himself (vv. 18-19). Above all, the vicarious death of Christ in v. 21 provides the emotional and spiritual basis for the heart-rending appeal of the previous verse. That God made the Sinless One sin for us leaves sinful ones like the Corinthians, and all readers since, with no real alternatives but to heed the apostolic call, "Be reconciled to God."¹⁰⁷

Colossians 1:20-23

Paul emphasizes the cosmic aspect of reconciliation in Colossians 1:20-23.

Paul presents this focus in the final part of his argument concerning Jesus Christ's supremacy over all created things, that everything was created through him and for him, that he sustains all things, that he is head of the church, and that he is the firstborn from the dead (Col 1:15-18). Paul argues that all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell in him (Col 1:19). He shows that everything that can be known about God is found in Christ, and "God in all his fullness has chosen to dwell in Christ."¹⁰⁸ God's fullness

'different metaphors describing the same fact.' The one would indicate that the new relationship with God resembles the cessation of enmity between rebels and their overlord, whilst the other will express the same relationship in terms of the offender before the judge who acquits him and brings the case to an end. Or, to put it another way, justification is reconciliation expressed in terms of law court. Since, however, the images are distinct, it may be preferable to see them as relating to two separable aspects of the believer's relationship with God. God, as judge, might formally relieve man of guilt and remit penalty for his offence, thereby justifying him, without entering into any deeper personal relationship with him. That he is said by Paul also to reconcile humanity with himself means that he does so enter into genuine personal relationship, by means of the Christ-event in which his love for men and women is seen in action (Rom. 5:8)" (Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 444).

¹⁰⁷Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 315.

¹⁰⁸Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 132-33. Moo also argues that Paul's opponents in Colossae were perhaps some pre-Gnostic false teachers who argued that the "fullness" may come through their philosophy. Thus, Paul argues that all things that the false teachers proclaim regarding the fullness of God is found only in Christ. *ibid.*, 132-33. Pao adds, "This note on the incarnation reminds the readers that the Christological point acquires a soteriological function here. All fullness dwells in Christ, so that through him universal reconciliation can be accomplished (v. 20). What is striking, however, is the focus on Christ as the embodiment of full deity in a section that begins with a reference to his own death (v. 18c). Instead of

dwells in Christ for the purpose of reconciling all things.¹⁰⁹ Next, Paul says that all things were reconciled to himself through Christ (Col 1:20a). In Romans and 2 Corinthians, God reconciles his people to himself through the work of Christ. However, because Christ is the focus of the Colossians 1:15-20, the context suggests that Christ is the agent of reconciliation and he is the subject; Christ is reconciling all things to himself.¹¹⁰ Paul's purpose for this focus on Christ is "to highlight the close identification between God and Christ."¹¹¹ Furthermore, all things in heaven and earth are reconciled (Col 1:20b). With the reference to things in heaven and things on earth, Paul argues that reconciliation pertains to "all things," which refers to the entire created order.¹¹² Paul explains the means of reconciliation in his next phrase, "making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20c).¹¹³ The concept of peace alludes to the Old Testament promises that God will

resting his argument on the abstract assurance of Christ's exalted status, Paul shows how Christ's exalted status is relevant for those who are alienated from God, particularly in his work on the cross" (David W. Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012], 102).

¹⁰⁹Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 102.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 104.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 134-35; Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 103. One debate is the meaning of reconciliation for "all things." The text is not saying that every person will be saved in the end, so it does not argue for universalism. Yet, for those things that are set against God, reconciliation means that there will eventually be peace because God has triumphed over them, and these forces recognize their defeat. Bruce explains, "The peace effected by the death of Christ may be freely accepted, or it may be imposed willy-nilly. This reconciliation of the universe includes what would otherwise be distinguished as pacification. The principalities and powers whose conquest is described in Col. 2:15 are certainly not depicted as gladly surrendering to divine grace but as being compelled to submit to a power which they are unable to resist. Everything in the universe has been subjected to Christ, even as everything was created for him. By his reconciling work 'the host of the high ones on high' and sinful human beings on earth have been decisively subdued to the will of God and ultimately they can but subserve his purpose, whether they please or not. It is the Father's good pleasure that all 'in heaven and on earth and under the earth' shall unite to bow the knee at Jesus' name and to acknowledge him as Lord (Phil. 2:10-11)" (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*. NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 198], 476).

¹¹³Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 136.

bring eschatological peace on the last day, which includes the fullness of well being, security, and blessing.¹¹⁴ While these blessings will come to his people, the prophecies also “suggest that the wider creation in general suffers from the effects of human being’s fall into sin and is in need of restoration.”¹¹⁵ Paul’s language suggests that this peace is fulfilled by Christ’s death. Bruce contends that the phrase “blood of his cross” “means his death by crucifixion, with some emphasis on the sacrificial character of his death.”¹¹⁶

O’Brien summarizes,

Paul affirms that this universal reconciliation has been brought about, not in some other-worldly drama, but through something done in history, the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. Further, at chapter 2:14, 15 it is asserted that God, in Christ, destroyed the “certificate of indebtedness” that stood over against the Colossian Christians, nailing it to the cross, and also vanquished the principalities and powers leading them in his triumphal procession.¹¹⁷

In verse 21, Paul narrows his argument to believers, specifically the church in Colossae.¹¹⁸ He reinforces the reconciliation of believers by recalling his readers’ pre-

¹¹⁴Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 136.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 75n168. See also Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 123. Pao argues that the phrase “through the blood of his cross” is not an interpretive addition to correct the hymn, and therefore enumerates the sacrificial language used in connection with reconciliation in Paul’s letters. He explains, “In his earlier writings, Paul’s discussions of reconciliation also contain references to Jesus’ death or his shedding of blood, because it is only through his atoning death that the sinful humanity can be reconciled with God (cf. Rom. 5:9-13; 2 Cor 5:14-21). The full ecclesiological significance of this reference to the ‘blood of his cross’ is explicated in Eph 2:13-16, a passage that contains references to ‘blood’ and ‘cross,’ as well as ‘peace,’ ‘reconcile,’ and ‘death.’ In the context of Ephesians, the focus is on the creation of the new humanity, where Jews and Gentiles can become one. In Colossians, one finds both the focus on the atoning death of Christ (Col. 2:13-14; 3:13) and the creation of the new humanity (3:11, 15). In any case, in light of the presence of the same conglomeration of ideas elsewhere in Paul, ‘through the blood of his cross’ should not be considered as an ‘interpretive phase’ interrupting the flow of the original hymn” (Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 105). The point is that Paul’s previous use of blood and Jesus’ death indicates that in this section, the “blood of the cross” refers to Jesus’ atoning death that brings reconciliation. In Col 1:20, Paul emphasizes cosmic reconciliation, but in v. 22, Paul emphasizes reconciliation of God and believers.

¹¹⁷O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 56.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 65. O’Brien argues that Paul’s central focus is the believers in Colossae.

conversion state, that they were doing evil deeds, hostile in their minds and were alienated from God and from one another (Col 1:21). The main thought of the passage begins with the object “you” and the main verb is in verse 22, “he has reconciled.” The remainder of verse 21 is a descriptive phrase that modifies “you,” which is the Colossian church.¹¹⁹ Pao observes that “the mention of ‘mind’ and ‘deeds’ points to the alienation of the entire person and thus also the predicament of humanity apart from the redemptive act of God.”¹²⁰ Thus, the hostility in the mind is the cause of the evil behavior.¹²¹ While they were formerly hostile, Christ has reconciled them in his “body of flesh” through his death, with the purpose of presenting them as holy before God the Father (Col 1:22). Paul uses the phrase “body of flesh” to distinguish that Jesus had a physical body.¹²² When he adds “through death,” Paul emphasizes that Jesus died in his physical body, and because Jesus died in a physical body he was capable of experiencing suffering.¹²³ Bruce explains, “It is highly probably that some such insistence on the real incarnation of Christ was a necessary corrective to a tendency in the Colossian heresy; more particularly, these

¹¹⁹Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 106.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 140; O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 66. While the justification of the believer is not mentioned here, Bruce points out that true reconciliation is grounded in a right relationship with God. Bruce comments, “The distinction between justification and reconciliation, in which logical priority is given to justification, is rooted in the insight that peace, to be worthy of the name, must be founded on righteousness. If human beings are to be reconciled to God, to enjoy peace with him, they must have the assurance that he who will by no means clear the guilty has nevertheless accepted them, sinful as they are. Those who were offenders have been set right with him through the merit of another; those who were hostile have become his friends; his love, revealed in Christ is poured out and wells up in their hearts” (Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 77).

¹²²Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 107.

¹²³O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 56; Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 142.

words emphasize that there is a necessary bond between his incarnation and atoning death.”¹²⁴ The purpose of reconciliation is that believers would be presented as holy and blameless at the eschatological judgment. Paul urges the believers in Colossae to live in holiness, which is appropriate for justified believers.¹²⁵ He concludes by encouraging his readers that the reality of their faith is proven by their continued faithfulness to the gospel that they have received (Col 1:23).¹²⁶ Furthermore, the gospel, which Paul has been appointed to preach, has been universally proclaimed as the hope for all people and it “speaks of Jesus’ lordship in creation and redemption.”¹²⁷ Paul reminds his readers of the gospel that they heard (Col 1:5-6) and “to stand firm in a gospel that has already begun to work among them and has proven to be effective among them.”¹²⁸

¹²⁴Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 78.

¹²⁵Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 143. Bruce adds, “The incarnation of the Son of God was real and necessary for the demonstration of God’s righteousness in the bestowal of his peace on sinners. Those who have received his peace have direct access to him already and will have it in fullness when at length they are introduced into his presence holy, blameless, and free from every charge against them. . . . The pronouncement of justification made in the believer’s favor here and now anticipates the pronouncement of the judgment day: the holiness of life which is progressively wrought by the Spirit here and now is to issue in perfection of glory at Christ’s *parousia*” (Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 79 [emphasis in the original]).

¹²⁶O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 72. Moo observes this statement as a part of Paul’s encouragement against false teachers. He says, “Paul urges the Colossians to focus on the hope that comes through response to the gospel in distinction from the false how being held out by the false teachers” (Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 145).

¹²⁷*Ibid.*

¹²⁸Marshall, *Aspects of the Atonement*, 104-05. Paul deals with reconciliation between Jew and Gentile in Ephesians 2:11-22. Specifically, Jesus’ death effects reconciliation between Jew and Gentile. Paul recounts the Gentiles’ former condition when they were alienated from the laws of God and were without God (Eph 2:11-12). But “now” they were “brought near by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:13). Christ is “our peace” who removed the division between Jew and Gentile to make one new man and establish peace (Eph 2:14-15). Paul emphasizes the reconciliation between Jew and Gentile, and Jesus’ sacrificial death is the means by which reconciliation occurs between Jew and Gentile. See Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 363; Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 295. V. 16 is particularly important, because Paul shows that both Jews and Gentiles have been reconciled to God through the cross. Hoehner observes, “Regardless, one thing should not go unnoticed, namely, both the reconciliation to God

Reconciliation and the New Creation

John does not use the term reconciliation in his description of the new heavens and the new earth (Rev 21:1). However, there are a few features that display God's reconciliation with his people. The first is the general idea of transformation. God has transformed the new heavens and the earth.¹²⁹ The old order of things has passed away, the sea has been removed, and God declares that he has made all things new (Rev 21:1, 5).¹³⁰ God's statement that all things are made new is probably an allusion to Isaiah 43:19.¹³¹ The river of life will flow through the midst of the New Jerusalem, and the tree of life will grow on both sides of it. The tree will produce twelve types of fruit each

and to each other was by means of Christ's death. Reconciliation exacted a heavy price, the death of God's Son. Reconciliation between human beings and God is mentioned elsewhere by Paul and is always mentioned in connection with the sacrifice of Christ" (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 383). Peace was preached to both those who were near (Jews) and who were far (Gentiles) and through Christ both have access in one Spirit to the Father (Eph 2:16-18). For a helpful study that argues that the penal substitutionary atonement is the basis for racial reconciliation, see Jarvis J. Williams, *One New Man: The Cross and Racial Reconciliation in Pauline Theology* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010). However, this horizontal relationship is grounded in the vertical reconciliation. This emphasis is consistent with Paul's theology in Ephesians regarding the restored relationship between the sinner and God, the concept is implied with the forgiveness of sins in Ephesians 1:7, the regeneration that occurs when we were once dead in our transgressions and sins and being seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph 2:1-7).

¹²⁹Scholars debate if the new created order is in continuity with the current created order and renewed, or if the present order is destroyed and the world is re-created. If the new creation in any way corresponds to the resurrected body, then there is some continuity with the current creation just as the resurrection body has some continuity with the body of this current order. For an advocate of the renewal view, see Gale Z. Heide, "What is New About the New Heaven and the New Earth? A Theology of Creation From Revelation 21 and 2 Peter 3," *JETS* 40 (1997): 37-56; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 730.

¹³⁰The reference to the sea most likely alludes to the representation of the time of tribulation, based in Isa 65. For a list of possible interpretations, see G. K. Beale, *The Book of the Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1042. Osborne summarizes, "The sea as a symbol of evil would best explain why it is added here. In the new order, not only will the old creation be gone, but evil will 'be no more.' The false trinity and the nations that cause so much suffering will have been cast into the lake of fire, so temptation and pain will be gone forever" (Osborne, *Revelation*, 731).

¹³¹David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, WBC 52C (Dallas: Word, 1998), 1125. Aune observes that Paul perhaps alluded to the Isaiah text as the background for his statement that believers are new creations in 2 Cori 5:17.

month, and its leaves will be for the healing of the nations (Rev 22:2). The imagery of trees on the both sides of the river is an allusion to Ezekiel 47:12, and the New Jerusalem will grow many trees of life.¹³² The availability of fruit each month means that there are no seasons and God will provide abundantly in the new created order.¹³³ The healing leaves represent the complete healing of God's people because of his care and his redemptive work.¹³⁴ Like the new created order, God's people have been resurrected from the dead (Rev 20:4), and in the new order they have imperishable, glorious, powerful bodies that are animated by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 15:42-44). Just as the cosmic world has been transformed, people of God have been transformed and are suited to inhabit the new created order.¹³⁵

A second characteristic of the new heavens and the new earth that points toward reconciliation is the removal of sin. While the text does not say that sin itself has been removed, there are two keys that imply this truth. First, there is no longer a curse, and death has been removed, along with mourning, crying, and pain, because the old things have passed away (Rev 21: 4; 22:3); the effects of sin have been removed. The physical world has not only been transformed, but the curse, which brought in death, has

¹³²Beale, *The Book of the Revelation*, 1107-08; ; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 399; Osborne, *Revelation*, 771-72.

¹³³Osborne, *Revelation*, 772.

¹³⁴Osborne comments, "Those nations who reject God's offer of repentance . . . will be destroyed. . . . But those who repent will enter the Holy City . . . and be "healed." . . . This does not mean healing is still needed. Rather, it symbolizes the healing that has already occurred at the eschaton and descending of the eternal city. This probably refers both to physical healing (no hunger and no disease in the New Jerusalem) and spiritual healing (all will be in right relationship to God)." In addition, Osborne cites Wong, stating the healing "symbolizes both the past healing of God's redemptive work and the future spiritual care of God's people for eternity" (ibid.).

¹³⁵Beale, *The Book of the Revelation*, 1052.

been removed from the created order.¹³⁶ Just as the earth was under a curse because of Adam's sin and death came (Gen 3:17-19), so at the resurrection of the saints the world was freed from its bondage of futility (Rom 8:18-23). The created order was subjected to futility because death was God's judgment on the created order for Adam's sin.¹³⁷

Mounce observes,

Death had entered the world as a consequence of sin (Gen 4; Rom 5:12), and the human race not only became subject to death (Heb 9:27) but also was enslaved by the fear of death (Heb 2:15). In an eschatological section of the Isaiah Apocalypse God is said to "swallow up death forever" (Isa 25:8). Paul echoes the theme in his triumphant announcement, "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor 15:54). Now at last prophetic declaration receives its fulfillment, and death exists no longer. With the extinction of death, grief and affliction disappear as well. The old order marred by sin and its accompanying distress gives way to the new and perfect order of eternal blessedness.¹³⁸

Penal substitutionary atonement brings cosmic reconciliation (Col 1:20), which is grounded on the reconciliation between man and God by the death of Christ (Rom 5:10-11; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Col 1:22). Once the cosmos is reconciled to God, his people must necessarily be reconciled to him. Second, those who committed sins have been removed. Satan and those in the demonic realm have been cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20: 41). Sinners and all who are not in the Lamb's book of life are not present in the new heavens and the new earth. The cowardly, faithless, detestable, murderers, sorcerers, sexually immoral, idolaters, liars, and by implication anyone who is unclean has been sent to the lake of fire (Rev 21: 8, 26).¹³⁹ The removal of the effects of sin and unredeemed sinners

¹³⁶For a good argument on this removal, see Lee Daniel Tankersley, "The Courtroom and the Created Order: How Penal Substitution Brings About New Creation" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010).

¹³⁷ James Stambaugh, "Creation and the Curse," Paper presented at the far west regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Sunny Valley, CA, April 1996, 6-7. See also Beale, *The Book of the Revelation*, 1112.

¹³⁸Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 384.

¹³⁹While the New Testament generally regards this group as sinners and as those who will not

shows that sin is not present in the new created order. Beale notes,

The point of identification of God's people with the temple, the high priest, and the garden of Eden is to show the saints' intimate relationship with God, which is unhindered by any of the old-world obstacles that formerly restrained full communion with God. Thus, the purpose of the temple vision in this section is very close to the idea of reconciliation or returning from exile or alienation to a full and close relationship with God.¹⁴⁰

In addition, only those who have been forgiven of their sin are in the Lamb's book of life, and have a new relationship with God.

A third characteristic of reconciliation is God's presence and his relationship with his people. This text gives a few clues of this redeemed relationship. One is that God's eternal presence dwells with his people in the new heavens and the new earth (Rev 21:3; 22:3). Ladd observes,

This is a reality which we cannot visualize; but direct, unmarred fellowship between God and his people is the goal of all redemption. This is further expressed by the phrase "they shall be his people." This is an echo of the Old Testament idiom, "I shall be their God and they shall be my people," which expresses the oft-repeated aim of the divine self-revelation and of all of God's dealings with his people. All the promises of God's covenant with men, made first through Abraham, renewed through Moses, and embodied in Christ, are at last brought to full realization.¹⁴¹

His presence is so great that he and the Lamb become the light of the new created order, which renders the sun and moon unnecessary (Rev 21:23-24; 22:5). Another indication of a reconciled relationship is the description of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. The city itself came down, and it is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev 21:2). Osborn notes that the city itself "represents heaven as both the saints who inhabit it and

inherit the kingdom of God (cf. Gal 5: 18-21), in the context of the Revelation of John, these groups may have been those who departed from the faith and also those who engaged in the temple cults and persecuted believers. See Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 386-87.

¹⁴⁰Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 554.

¹⁴¹George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 277. For more on the Revelation passages on God's presence, see chap. 6 pp. 230-33.

their dwelling place.”¹⁴² The bridal imagery clearly refers to the saints, the wife of the Lamb, in verses 9-10. Mounce notes, “As the bride the church is pure and lovely, and as wife she enjoys the intimacy of the Lamb.”¹⁴³ God describes those who are with him as conquerors who have this heritage, and he reaffirms his commitment as their God and the people as his son (Rev 21:7). The conqueror or overcomer is the one who perseveres in spite of persecution.¹⁴⁴ They receive their inheritance because of Christ’s representation and their adoption as children of God.¹⁴⁵ A striking privilege of these people is that they will see God’s face (Rev 22:4a). Moses was unable to see God’s face and live; only Jesus was able to reveal the Father as the one who was the Word become flesh. In the new heavens and the new earth, people will have an unmediated relationship with God, and see him face to face. Seeing the face of God means possessing “a true understanding of who God is and a right relationship with him . . . and was considered a special eschatological blessing. . . . Thus, this is the culmination of some of the greatest hopes of the Bible. In the transformed Eden, God’s people will both live eternally and see his face.”¹⁴⁶ Beale observes,

Now the divine presence fully permeates the eternal temple and dwelling place of the saints, since “they will see his face,” a hope expressed by OT saints. . . . All in the community of the redeemed are considered to be priests serving in the temple

¹⁴²Osborne, *Revelation*, 733.

¹⁴³Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 389. Mounce observes that the timing of the marriage is not the most important element as the relationship of the bride to the lamb. For a contrast of the church, the bride, with the Babylonian whore, see Beale, *The Book of the Revelation*, 1064.

¹⁴⁴Beale, *The Book of the Revelation*, 1057.

¹⁴⁵Beale observes, “Since saints are ‘in Christ’ . . . they will inherit fully what he inherits. . . . Christ is still God’s unique, divine son, but those whom he represents receive the privileges of sonship” (ibid., 1058).

¹⁴⁶Osborne, *Revelation*, 774, who cites Aune. For a more complete analysis of the Israel’s eschatological hopes to see God’s face, see Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1179-81.

and are privileged to see God's face in the new holy of holies, which now encompasses the entire temple-city. The assertion that "his name will be on their foreheads" intensifies the notions of intimate fellowship with God. It is beyond coincidence that God's name was written on the high priest's forehead in the OT. He was the only one allowed entrance into God's very presence in the holy of holies once a year. The entire assembly of saints will have this position in the coming new order. This expresses further the high priestly nature of God's new people and thus their unhindered relationship with God. Nothing from that old, fallen world will be able to hinder the saints from unceasing access to the full divine presence.¹⁴⁷

They will also have God's name on their foreheads (Rev 22:4b), which points to God's ownership and his transformation of their character.¹⁴⁸ Finally, his people will worship him (Rev 22:3b) and they will reign with him forever (Rev 22:5). Their worship carries the connotation of Old Testament priestly service in the tabernacle, because they are now a kingdom of priests.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, because Christ is both king and priest, believers now identify with these roles.¹⁵⁰ Thus, believers will "participate in the rule of Christ over the eternal kingdom" and fulfill Adam's mandate, given by God, to rule over creation.¹⁵¹ These qualities point to a transformed relationship with God, showing reconciliation. Beale concludes, "The finale of Revelation points to the picture of the consummation of the restored and reconciled community in its glorified and resurrected state, which has made it fit for experiencing unimpeded relationship with God."¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 554.

¹⁴⁸"On the foreheads of God's Servants will be stamped the name of God. His name stands for his character. The faces of those who have experienced the beatific vision will reflect the unmistakable likeness of their heavenly Father. The process of transformation now under way in the life of the believer (2 Cor 3:18) will be brought to completion when the church enters its ultimate and ideal state. As the followers of the beast bore his mark upon their foreheads (Rev 13:16), so the faithful will bear the name of God upon theirs. . . . The metaphor stresses ownership and likeness" (Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 400).

¹⁴⁹Osborne, *Revelation*, 772.

¹⁵⁰Beale, *The Book of the Revelation*, 1116.

¹⁵¹Osborne, *Revelation*, 776. Osborne sites Beale, and for more insight into the mandate to rule, see Beale, *The Book of the Revelation*, 1116-17.

¹⁵²Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 555.

An Opposing View

Argument

Belousek offers his biblical foundation for his theology of reconciliation in chapter 27. His argument centers on the centrality of making peace in the Scriptures. The main point of his exegetical argument is that reconciliation to God is inseparable from social reconciliation. He first contends that the gospel presents one universal message of peace. By grounding his theology on Ephesians 2:11-22, he explains,

The Pauline vision helps us to see both the unity and universality of the gospel. The unity of the gospel is evident in that the message of salvation and the good news of peace are one gospel proclaimed by and fulfilled in Jesus. Paul's gospel cannot imagine divorcing salvation from peacemaking, or peacemaking from salvation; for God's salvation in Jesus is peace – indeed, Jesus himself “is our peace” (v. 14). And the universality of the gospel is evident in that there is one message of salvation and peace for the peoples of all nations: the message of Jesus proclaimed to Jews (“the near”) is the same as proclaimed to Gentiles (“the far”) – peace. Through Christ, Paul envisions, the peoples of all nations are made citizens of God's city and thereby enjoy the salvation of God's peaceable reign (vv. 19-22).¹⁵³

After establishing that peacemaking and salvation are to be universally proclaimed as the good news, he states that peace with humanity is inseparable from peace with God. He states that Ephesians 2 implies that “both groups, Jew and Gentile, can be reconciled to God ‘in one body’ *only if* they are reconciled to one another in Christ to make ‘one new humanity,’”¹⁵⁴ He supports this argument by alluding to a variety of passages. The first passage from Leviticus 5:14-6:17 describes the guilt offering that requires restitution;

¹⁵³Darrin W. Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace: The Message of the Cross and the Mission of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 510. On p. 510, Belousek cites Isa 52:7, 10 to show that “salvation and peace are inseparable aspects of evangelism in God's kingdom.” He also states that the good news is to be preached to all nations.

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 513 (emphasis in the original). On p. 514, he continues, “The spiritual peace between humans and God that is the ‘vertical’ effect of salvation is not independent of the social peace among humans that is the ‘horizontal’ effect. There can be no ‘separate peace’ with God, therefore – no standing justified before, or in right relationship with, God independent of reconciliation and right relationship with one's neighbors.”

Belousek states that this restitution requirement is “a key principle of atonement making in the Levitical-code.”¹⁵⁵ He reinforces this principle by appealing to a second passage; he argues that Jesus proclaimed that salvation came to Zacchaeus’ house because before meeting with Jesus, Zacchaeus was convicted of his wrongdoing against others and repented by making restitution (Luke 19: 1-10).¹⁵⁶ A third passage that Belousek cites is Matthew 5:23-24, before one presents an offering, he must be reconciled to the person whom he offended.¹⁵⁷ In his final passage for this point, he explains that Jesus, at the Sermon on the Mount, teaches that one must forgive others before he receives forgiveness from God (Matt 6:14-15).¹⁵⁸ He also shows that Jesus answered Peter’s question about forgiveness by telling the parable of the unmerciful Servant, which highlights the requirement of forgiveness to one another in relation to God’s forgiveness.¹⁵⁹ After sharing a story of the Amish forgiveness concerning the school shooting near Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, Belousek summarizes,

The relationship between the “vertical” and the “horizontal” dimensions of reconciliation – as emphasized in the Pauline vision of the cross and the teachings of Jesus on forgiveness and as evident in the stories of Zacchaeus in Jericho . . . implies that salvation is essentially a *corporate-social*, as well as individual-personal, reality. The implication is profound: right spiritual (“vertical”) relationship with God is inseparable from right social (“horizontal”) relationship with one’s neighbor; there is no personal salvation from God apart from peaceable dealings with one’s neighbor. Effectively, personal salvation is embedded within a matrix of corporate peace: reconciliation with God and reconciliation with the neighbor are inseparable dimensions of one’s salvation, a single atonement. Salvation may be by God’s grace alone, but we are not saved “alone,” in isolation from others. Our

¹⁵⁵Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace*, 514.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 514-15.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 515-16.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 516-17.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 517.

salvation through peace with God in Christ is thus personal, but not private.¹⁶⁰

Belousek argues that peacemaking and reconciliation occur only through the cross. Belousek states that the cost of peace for God was the sacrifice of his Son. While commenting on Ephesians 2:14, he argues,

Unlike the warring ways of the nations which secure peace at the expense of the blood of the enemy, God does not make peace through Christ at the expense of the blood of his enemies, but at the expense of his own blood. The cost of God's peace is God's own life graciously given for our sake through Christ, and the measure of God's outpoured grace is the cross.¹⁶¹

Jesus' way of peace is in contrast to way that the world makes peace. Jesus' death brings peace by destroying division, specifically he "breaks down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile by abolishing the law that separates them into two unequal classes before God (vv. 14-15)."¹⁶² By "murdering" the hostility between people in his body, Jesus brings reconciliation.¹⁶³ Belousek summarizes,

The persistent message of the gospel is that we are saved, not by retributive violence, but through God's "transforming initiative" in Christ to freely give his own life rather than take the lives of even his enemies, for the sake of love of humanity. Jesus does not make peace by waging violent conflict against human enemies estranged from and rebellious against God. Jesus "murders hostility" through "the violence of love" – not by defending and destroying human enemies, but by defeating the sinful conditions that impede and destroy peace, by destroying division that engenders hostility of one group over against another in the first place, by nullifying criteria and marks of identity and difference that exclude and oppress in offense against God's mercy. Jesus "murders hostility" through "the violence of love" – not by returning violence for violence or shedding blood for blood shed, but by returning forgiveness for injustice, love for hate, blessing for cursing. And this Jesus does supremely though the cross.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace*, 521.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 526. He also cites Col 1:20 to make the same point.

¹⁶²Ibid., 543.

¹⁶³Ibid., 545-47.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 548-49. Belousek argues for an atonement theory that has real world implications for bringing peace between people and for removing war. His approach truly seeks peace in a geopolitical sense. Space could not suffice to follow the implications of his argument. For his proposal for reconciliation and a description of the character of cruciform peacemaking, see *ibid.*, 524-604.

Response

Belousek rightly points to a concern for social reconciliation. It is important to remember that the cross does have social effects, and Jesus' death is the basis for the removal of division between Jew and Gentile. In addition, there can be a tendency in some evangelical circles to emphasize the individual/vertical dimension of reconciliation over the horizontal dimension.

However, Belousek's proposal presents a few problems. The first that will be examined is his contention that horizontal reconciliation is perhaps a prerequisite to vertical reconciliation. A second problem is his conclusions from Ephesians 2:11-22. A third problem is that his proposed atonement approach may not accomplish his purposes.

Belousek states that reconciliation between people is inseparable from reconciliation between God and people, and in some statement he prioritizes horizontal reconciliation over vertical reconciliation. He argues that the reparation/guilt offering shows "a key principle of atonement making in the Levitical-code." Belousek overstates this point, because of all the offerings in Leviticus, the guilt offering is the only offering that has restitution as a requirement. If restitution was a key to atonement, restitution should be required of all offerings, especially the Day of Atonement offerings. In addition, he cites Jesus' teachings to reinforce his position. The most powerful appeal is to Matthew 6:14-15. Does the text demand Belousek's strict, conditional reading that seems to contradict other Scriptures? Belousek's reading suggests a *quid pro quo*, implying that one must forgive others in order to get God's forgiveness. Yet Matthew, while stating a connection between the believer's forgiveness and God's forgiveness, need not be read as a strict condition. Hagner notes that "it is a given that God's forgiveness is always prior. . . . These verses are a forceful way of making the significant point that it is unthinkable – impossible – that we can enjoy God's forgiveness without in

turn extending our forgiveness toward others.”¹⁶⁵ Belousek concentrates on Jesus’ parables, but these parables and accounts, while they do show the importance of reconciliation between people, may indicate that the willingness to forgive and be reconciled is characteristic of those who are forgiven and reconciled, rather than as a condition of reconciliation.¹⁶⁶

Belousek uses Ephesians 2:11-22 for two purposes. One purpose is to show that horizontal reconciliation is prior to vertical reconciliation. Belousek has not considered the entirety of chapter 2. The first three verses show the spiritual condition of the believer in his pre-converted state. They are utterly sinful and are depicted as children deserving of God’s wrath. Yet God makes them alive because of Christ. There seems to be a vertical reconciliation that has occurred because of Christ’s death. Furthermore, while the community is emphasized in Ephesians chapter 2, reconciliation with God in the community would seem to require reconciliation with God of each individual within that community, because each individual is sinful. Belousek’s theology of reconciliation does not deal adequately with Romans 5:1-11 or 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. Both of these passages present the requirement for vertical reconciliation. A Pauline vision of reconciliation must account for these passages.

A third problem is that Belousek’s atonement theology may not result in peace on the earth. Belousek’s theory seems to be a combination of *Christus Victor* with some hints of the moral influence theory. If this is the case, then Jesus’ death should influence others to live peacefully, and his death breaks down the divisions among us. Though

¹⁶⁵Donald Alfred Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, WBC 33A (Dallas: Word, 1993), 152. France notes that the emphasis on the ethical perspective fits Matthew’s approach in his gospel. Furthermore, the parable in Matthew 20:1-15 argues against a strict formulaic approach to salvation. See France, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 253.

¹⁶⁶Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 149.

Jesus defeats the sinful conditions that are the problems, the issues seem much deeper. Removing the social sinful conditions does not transform the human heart that causes the social sinful conditions. The only way to remove the sinful conditions that lead to hostility and violence is to transform the hearts of men and women so that they will act in accordance with God's desires. Belousek's theory does not address the true condition of humanity that leads to hostility and violence. His atonement theory may reveal a theological anthropology that is inadequate to account for the true cause of hostility and violence.

Conclusion

This chapter argues that reconciliation requires penal substitutionary atonement. First, it examines the meaning of reconciliation in the Old Testament. Second, it surveys key Pauline passages regarding reconciliation and atonement. Third, it shows that the result of the atonement is a renewed relationship of God and his people in the new heavens and new earth. Finally, the chapter addressed an objection that reconciliation requires penal substitutionary atonement.

Reconciliation is the renewal of relationship between two parties that were hostile or alienated. In the Old Testament, the concept of peace means wholeness or well-being, not merely the cessation of hostilities. Peace with God in the Old Testament was marked by obedience and righteousness. When people failed to obey, they no longer had peace with God. Yet God has taken action to have peace with his people. One example is the peace offering, which shows that the death of something and the sprinkling of blood is required to celebrate peace. Reconciliation is also shown in the covenant of peace. God promises to be in peaceful relationships with his people after exile, when he restores them to the land, changes their hearts, and is present with them. Of note is that the penal substitutionary sacrifice of the Servant enables the covenant of peace and the renewal of fellowship between God and his people.

Jesus' penal substitutionary sacrifice results in reconciliation. In Romans 5:10-11 Paul affirms that those who have been justified by means of Jesus' death are also reconciled by his death. In 2 Corinthians 5:15-21, Paul shows that Jesus' penal substitutionary atonement is the basis for reconciliation. These Scriptures also demonstrate that forgiveness is a prerequisite for reconciliation. God's justification of the believer no longer hold sin against him, and believers as new creations have been forgiven of their sins. Christ became sin so that believers could become the righteousness of God. The believer's righteous standing before God brings reconciliation with God. The new created order displays this reconciled relationship, when the saints serve God as a kingdom of priests, and they enjoy complete fellowship with him as he dwells with them and they see his face.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Summary

This study demonstrates that the fulfillment of the new covenant promises of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 26:24-28 require penal substitutionary atonement, and these promises are consummated in the new created order. This study focuses on the new covenant promises of personal renewal rather than the promise of the renewed physical creation. The method of this study was a biblical theological approach, with the purpose of showing that both the Old and New Testaments support this thesis.

In chapter 2, this dissertation argues that the Scriptures support penal substitutionary atonement. In the Old Testament, this study examines the Passover sacrifice, the Day of Atonement sacrifices, and the Suffering Servant's sacrifice. The Passover sacrifice was substitutionary because the sacrificial lamb died in place of the firstborn of each Israelite household. The sacrifice was penal because all Israel sinned and worshiped other gods, and they would have borne the punishment of death if not for the Passover sacrifice. The Day of Atonement sacrifice was also a penal substitutionary sacrifice. The scapegoat represented the removal of sin from the camp. Both the sin and burnt offerings were substitutes for the priest and the assembly, respectively, resulting in a cleansed sanctuary. The deaths of Nadab and Abihu showed that death is the sentence for improper worship of God. The Suffering Servant's sacrifice was substitutionary because he bore the effect of sin in the place of his people. It was penal because the sentence for sin was death, which the Servant bore as a guilt offering.

The New Testament writers show that Jesus' crucifixion was a vicarious

sacrifice. The gospels present Jesus as a penal substitutionary sacrifice in several ways. Jesus accepted the cup of God's wrath during his hour on the cross. He taught that he gave his life a ransom for many, which shows that his sacrifice is of a substitutionary nature. The events of the crucifixion hour, including the cry of dereliction and the earthquake, show that Jesus bore the sin of the world and the wrath of God at that hour. John presents Jesus' death as a penal substitutionary sacrifice. Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus is the good shepherd, who gives his life as a substitute for many. Jesus' invitation to believe in him implies that his impending death as a penal substitutionary atonement grounds his invitation. Jesus said that if they did not believe, they would remain in their sins, which implies that they would bear their own sin and receive judgment if they would not believe.

Paul shows that Jesus died a penal substitutionary death in four passages. In Romans 3:25-26, Jesus' death is penal because he is the mercy seat, the place of atonement, who bears the wrath of God and in doing so demonstrates God's judicial righteousness because he had, prior to Jesus' death, left sins unpunished. It is substitutionary because all sinned and fell short of God's glory, and Jesus died as a substitute, taking their punishment of sin. Paul shows that in Romans 8:3, God sent his Son in human flesh, which was not sinful, but Jesus was the sinless substitute who experienced the condemnation of sin in his flesh. Paul argues in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that Jesus, who was sinless, became sin for his people's sake. He was their substitute, and by becoming sin in their place, they became the righteousness of God. In Galatians 3:10-14, Paul argues that Jesus, as a substitute for believers, became a curse for them. He became a curse in order to redeem them from the curse of the law, and he experienced the curse by dying as their substitute. Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures attest that Jesus prefigured the Passover, and Suffering Servant penal substitutionary sacrifice, and Jesus is the vicarious sacrifice who suffered the penalty of death as our substitute.

In chapter 3, this study surveys three issues surrounding the new covenant. First, it defined the term covenant as a binding agreement on two parties that is usually grounded in a prior relationship. This section also argues that the nature of the new covenant is permanent, international, and it culminates all other covenants. Second this chapter enumerates the new covenant promises, based on Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:24-31. These promises are forgiveness, a transformation of the heart by the Spirit, God's presence with his people, a universal knowledge of God by all covenant members, and a renewal of the land. In addition, this section surveyed the pertinent new covenant passages of 2 Corinthians 3:1-21 and Hebrews 8:1-13. These Scriptures indicate that the new covenant is a better covenant than the old because it is an everlasting covenant, has a better mediator, and the old covenant was merely a shadow of the new covenant. Third, this chapter examines the connection between atonement and new covenant. Luke 2:20 and Hebrews 9:1-28 affirm that Jesus is the new covenant sacrifice. Thus, the purpose of this section to discover and list the new covenant promises and to show that Jesus' death inaugurated the new covenant.

In Chapter 4, this study illustrates that the new covenant promise of forgiveness of sins requires penal substitutionary atonement. The guilt and sin offerings were performed to atone for unintentional sins, and forgiveness was the result of each offering. The offering was a substitute for the offerer, and it suffered death as a penalty for the offerer's sins. The Suffering Servant was a penal substitutionary sacrifice, and his sacrifice secured forgiveness because his death resulted in healing and peace instead of our wounds and chastisements. Forgiveness includes removal of the effects of sin and the positive declaration of righteousness, which the Servant accomplished. The New Testament clearly indicates that penal substitutionary atonement effects forgiveness. Matthew's account of the Lord's Supper shows that Jesus' death was for the forgiveness of sins. John's account attests to the negative effect of the judgment of God for those who

did not believe in Christ and are dead in their sins. While Luke does not present a systematic theology of penal substitution and forgiveness, his view of Jesus' death as a new covenant sacrifice implies forgiveness of sins, because the new covenant promises forgiveness. In Acts, the apostles' preaching invited their audiences to believe in Jesus' death and resurrection, so they would receive the forgiveness of sins. Paul states that believers have redemption in Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. He further notes that the certificate of debt against Christians has been nailed to the cross. The fact that the debt has been canceled constitutes forgiveness. Lastly, the letter to the Hebrews shows that Jesus' new covenant sacrifice, which is a penal substitutionary sacrifice, inaugurates full and final forgiveness as a new covenant benefit.

In chapter 5, this study contends that penal substitutionary atonement grounds the Spirit's advent and transformative work. The chapter first recalls the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament. The Spirit's work in the Old Testament is generally limited to leaders and prophets for specific tasks. The prophecies foretell a new age when the Spirit would rest on all of God's people. Jesus predicted that the Spirit would not come until after he was glorified. Holy Spirit indwelt believers as a result of Jesus' glorification and in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The evangelistic message is that if they believed in Christ, they would be forgiven of their sins and would receive the Holy Spirit. Paul shows in Romans 8:4 and Galatians 3:14 that God's provision of the Spirit and his transforming work is the purpose of Jesus' vicarious atonement. The Spirit's brings forth the new creation because he is an agent in the believer's resurrection, and he is the deposit for his future inheritance.

Chapter 6 demonstrates that God's covenant presence requires Jesus' penal substitutionary atonement. The chapter briefly lists the various ways that God manifested his presence in both the Old and New Testaments. Then the chapter surveys two occasions when the presence of God departed from Israel because of their sin: (1) the ark

of the covenant was removed from Israel to the Philistines because of the sin of the priests and the people, and (2) the glory of the Lord departed from the temple in Ezekiel's vision because of the unfaithfulness of God's people. This chapter next explores the connection between atonement and access to God's presence. At the moment of his death, the veil was ripped from top to bottom as a result of Jesus' death. In addition, Jesus' penal substitutionary atonement allows access to God. God will dwell with his people in the new heavens and the new earth, which is the complete fulfillment of God's promise that he would be their God and they would be his people. Therefore, this chapter showed that penal substitution allows the believer's access to God because God's covenant presence is grounded in the forgiveness of sins and the Spirit's indwelling presence in the believer.

In Chapter 7, this study argues that penal substitution is required for knowledge of God for every covenant member. The implication that each covenant member has knowledge of God is that they are priests, and are no longer in need of a teacher to tell them to know the Lord. The Hebrew concept of knowledge conveys a closeness and intimacy of relationship. The Old Testament asserts that knowledge of God is proven by obedience to his law. The New Testament passages affirm that knowledge has a relational aspect that is expressed in obedience to God. The Old Testament prophesied that for those in the new covenant, not only will they not need a teacher but the Lord will be their teacher. This prophecy is fulfilled by the indwelling presence of the Spirit, who is the anointing who teaches all things. Furthermore, believers have become priests and are a kingdom of priests in the new heavens and the new earth. Penal substitution is required for forgiveness and the transformation by the Spirit so that believers may live obediently, and enjoy God's presence. In short, they must be forgiven and be empowered by the Spirit to live rightly, in order to have access to God.

In chapter 8, this study demonstrates that reconciliation requires penal

substitutionary atonement. The chapter focuses on the meaning of peace and the restoration prophecies of Isaiah. Peace means the fullness of well-being and in relationship to God, many texts state that peace accompanies righteousness. The peace offering was a celebration offering that graphically shows that peace requires sacrifice. The covenant of peace is another term for the new covenant and it envisions a peaceful, reconciled relationship between God and his people. The idea of restoration includes reconciliation, and Isaiah in his prophecies shows that reconciliation occurs because of the Servant's death. In Romans 5:9-11 and 2 Corinthians 15-21, Paul argues that reconciliation is grounded in the penal substitutionary atonement. Colossians 1:20-23 states that atonement brings both cosmic and personal reconciliation. God's people, because of his presence and the benefits of salvation, have been reconciled to him in the new created order.

Implications

One implication of this study is that the relational aspect of the atonement cannot be separated from the legal aspect of the atonement. The new covenant highlights the relational aspect. If a person sins and breaks God's law, it has a negative effect on the relationship. Since penal substitutionary atonement inaugurates all new covenant promises, it follows that the restored relationship with God occurs because his righteousness is satisfied. The legal aspect and the relational aspect of salvation cohere.

A second implication is related to the first. The penal substitutionary requirement for new covenant promises reinforces simplicity as an attribute of God. One cannot rightfully isolate God's love from God's holiness. The new covenant is a display of God's love for his people and his work to restore them to himself. Yet restoration requires repentance and obedience, and these only occur when God's justice is satisfied at the cross. The blessing of the new covenant by sacrifice is that God's people are empowered to obey him and are now able to enjoy his presence in a restored relationship.

A third implication reinforces the unity in the work of the Son and the advent and work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' penal substitutionary atonement death results in the coming and the transforming work of the Spirit. Thus, any attempts to sever the work of the Spirit and the Son are biblically untenable. This implication especially applies to theologians who argue that the Spirit's work in other religions can be detected apart from the work of the Son. Jesus' penal substitutionary atonement brings salvation to believers, and the Spirit's salvific work and transformation is specifically for believers.¹ The relationship between penal substitution and the new covenant highlights this aspect of the trinitarian operations in the believer's salvation.

A fourth implication of this study is that there is no separation between the recreation and retribution. The new created order, and the transformative dimension of the personal life of the believer, are grounded in retributive justice. Biblical-theological study shows that God justifies through retributive justice. Yet, because he justifies, God's retributive justice also results in the work of the Spirit, the transformative agent of the new creation.

A fifth implication somewhat justifies the value of a biblical-theological

¹For those who argue the inclusivist vision that the Spirit may work in other religions that either brings salvation through Christ or that the Spirit brings salvation in other religions, see Clark H. Pinnock, "An Inclusivist View," in *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*, ed. Dennis L. Okholm and Timothy Phillips (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 93-123; idem, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1996), 185-214; Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); idem, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003); Amos Yong, "A P(new)matological Paradigm for Christian Mission in a Religiously Plural World," *Missiology* 33 (2005): 175-91. For responses to this type of inclusivism, see Stephen J. Wellum, "An Evaluation of the Son-Spirit Relation in Clark Pinnock's Inclusivism: An Exercise in Trinitarian Reflection." *SBJT* 10 (2006): 20-22; W. Gary Phillips and R. Douglas Geivett, "Response to Clark H. Pinnock," in *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*, ed. Denis L. Okholm and Timothy R. Phillips (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 133-40; Matthew Barrett, "'I Will Pour out My Spirit on All Flesh': Are Acts 2 and Acts 10 Proof-texts for Inclusivism?" *DBSJ* 17 (2012): 79-98; Todd LeRoy Miles, "Severing the Spirit from the Son: Theological Revisionism in Contemporary Theologies of Salvation" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006); Todd L. Miles, "He Will Glorify Me: Evaluating the Pneumatology of Inclusivists and Pluralists," *SBJT* 16 (2012): 74-94.

approach. The crucial issues in this study are consistently displayed throughout the canon, and are not limited to a particular author or section of the canon. The new covenant promises of forgiveness, transformation, God's covenant presence, and knowledge of him are themes that are present throughout redemptive history. Consequently, human sin and alienation from God is a consistent biblical theme. The reconciliation of God's people to himself is also pervasive throughout the Scripture. Furthermore, penal substitutionary atonement is presented throughout the whole canon. While the theory does not deal with all issues, the Scriptures are consistent that each person has sinned, and the penalty for sin is death. The Scriptures consistently assert that God requires a substitute who bears the sinner's penalty and guilt. The Levitical sacrifices are typological and find their fulfillment in Jesus' sacrifice. Furthermore, the renewal of God's relationship with his people through a penal substitute underlies the biblical narrative.

Areas for Further Study

Michael Gorman rightly states that many theologians have neglected the new covenant as an aspect of the atonement. Though I would disagree with some of his methods and conclusion, more research should be done regarding Christ's saving work and the new covenant. Some have generally argued that Jesus as the Messiah has enacted the new covenant by his death. Yet a systematic study of the work of Christ in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension in relation to the new covenant would be a great contribution to systematic and biblical studies. Additionally, the manner in which the resurrection fulfills or contributes to new covenant promises could be explored.

The work of Christ for our salvation includes his life, death, resurrection, and ascension. The resurrection is a crucial aspect of penal substitution, yet it is not frequently articulated. Some have studied the resurrection and penal substitution, but more work could be done in this area. One fruitful study may trace the way in which the

resurrection is foreshadowed in the Old Testament, and its relationship to penal substitution. The Suffering Servant is a good start to this type of study, because the passage argues that the Servant's sacrifice is vicarious and that he will be resurrected.²

While many have presented a defense of penal substitution, a helpful study may examine the atonement doctrine in Revelation. The Lamb is clearly a sacrificial allusion. One might trace the effects of the Lamb's sacrifice and the allusions to the Old Testament. Charles Hill presents a good study, but more could be done regarding God's wrath exhibited in the Revelation as a consequence of sin, as well as an exploration between the Lamb's sacrifice and the salvation of his people.³ This investigation might include the theme of judgment and the consequences for unbelievers.

Another area of further study is a comprehensive answer to critics regarding violence and the atonement. Jarvis Williams presents a helpful response to these critics in his analysis of Paul's theology.⁴ Another study might trace the reason for sacrifice in the Old Testament to demonstrate that God himself instituted the sacrifice. Furthermore, one could argue for the continuity between the Old Testament sacrifices and Jesus' crucifixion. The underlying presuppositions against violence in the atonement might be examined.

Vernon White argues that there is an inherent contradiction between retributive and re-creative logic. While this dissertation dealt with penal substitution, new covenant,

²See Chapter 1, note 20 for works that address penal substitution and the resurrection. For a historical and biblical analysis of the resurrection, see N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

³Charles E. Hill, "Atonement in the Apocalypse of John," in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 190-219.

⁴Jarvis Williams, "Violent Atonement in Romans: The Foundation of Paul's Soteriology," *JETS* 53 (2010): 579-99.

and new creation, it does not deal specifically with retributive justice as such.⁵ A helpful study could explore whether there is a true conflict between retributive justice and restorative or relational justice. It might examine the presuppositions regarding a retributive verses a re-creative vision of salvation. A full treatment of retributive justice in relationship to re-creative logic, which may include restorative and relational justice, would be a great contribution to atonement theology.

Conclusion

Penal substitution can account for the moral transformation of the saint and the new created order. Consequently, because of the impact of sin, vicarious atonement is necessary for these new covenant blessings. Penal substitution is not a hurtful doctrine. It does not encourage abuse nor does it value retribution over reconciliation or restoration. Penal substitution, when rightly understood, shows God's retributive justice with a goal of the restoration of all things. It is inherently about reconciliation. It is a glorious doctrine that displays the awesome love and majesty of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

⁵ For a biblical-theological survey of retributive justice, see Charles Gregory Jackson, "The Retributive Justice of God" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012).

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ABSTRACT

PENAL SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT AS THE BASIS FOR NEW COVENANT AND NEW CREATION

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This study will demonstrate that penal substitutionary atonement is necessary for the new creation. The new covenant promises are inaugurated at Jesus' death and at Pentecost when the Spirit indwells Christians; the promises are consummated in the new heavens and the new earth. Jesus says that his death inaugurates the new covenant at the Last Supper (Luke 22:14-20). This study will argue that the new covenant promises of forgiveness, transformation by the Spirit, God's abiding presence, and the believer's knowledge of God require penal substitutionary atonement.

Chapter 1 recounts the critique that penal substitution cannot account for transformation and the new creation. The chapter sets up the thesis and methodology of this study, and the rationale of a new covenant approach. Various critiques against penal substitution are also explored.

Chapters 2 and 3 serve as foundational chapters in three respects. Chapter 2 presents a defense of penal substitutionary atonement by examining key passages in the Old and New Testaments. Chapter 3 explores the meaning of covenant and enumerates new covenant promises. In addition, the nature of the new covenant is explored by

surveying relevant New Testament passages. Finally, the chapter shows that atonement inaugurates the new covenant.

Chapters 4-7 each argue that penal substitution is required to fulfill the promises for personal renewal: the forgiveness of sins, the transformation of the heart by the Holy Spirit, God's everlasting covenant presence, and an intimate knowledge of God by all covenant members. Each promise of the new covenant provides forgiveness of sins, enables empowerment over sin, or overcomes sin's effects that form a barrier to a relationship with God.

Chapter 8 argues that reconciliation requires penal substitutionary atonement, and reconciliation is the ultimate goal of the new covenant; God restores his relationship with his people so that he dwells with them in the new created order. Chapter 9 concludes with the affirmation that penal substitutionary atonement is necessary for the new created order, and it explores implications and areas of further study.

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