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FROM THIS DAY FORWARD: NEW COVENANT
INAUGURATION IN HEBREWS

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FROM THIS DAY FORWARD: NEW COVENANT
INAUGURATION IN HEBREWS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AGJU	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BLGS	Biblical Languages: Greek Series
BTCP	Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>EBib</i>	<i>Études Bibliques</i>
EGGNT	Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament
Hermeneia	Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text

NAC	New American Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum, Supplements
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTL	New Testament Library
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTheol	New Testament Theology
Paideia	Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum, Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WUNT II	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe

PREFACE

This thesis began in the upstate of South Carolina and has traveled across the Atlantic to the east of England. I am grateful for the gracious and sharpening conversations with my advisor, Jonathan Pennington, with my main interlocutors, David Moffitt and Bobby Jamieson, with others at Southern Seminary, including Daniel Stevens, and with those at Tyndale House in Cambridge. The last group is far too numerous to list here, but special gratitude is due to the leadership at Tyndale House who maintain a library and cultivate a community, both of which are beautifully conducive to biblical scholarship for the sake of the church, and to Judson Greene, who has endured my ignorance and incomplete ideas with enthusiasm and encouragement.

Penultimately, my love and gratitude go to my family, and especially my parents, who have prayed without ceasing and have spurred me on toward love and good works.

Ultimately, my praise goes to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our great high priest who has made peace with God for us. May my words accurately reflect his and bring him glory.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background: Scholarship on the Atonement in Hebrews

If asked when and where Christ made atonement, it is common for authors and others to point to the cross.¹ There are, however, at least five views in answer to Hebrews's position on this question in scholarship, ranging from the cross to the heavenly sanctuary.² In the last decade, a few scholars have argued, I think rightly, that Christ made atonement not while on the cross, but after he was raised from the dead and entered the heavenly sanctuary.³ Despite the volume of recent scholarship on the timing and location of the atonement in Hebrews, there has been little attention given to the question of the timing and location of the inauguration of the new covenant. This is the case despite the fact that, as it is often recognized (and I argue below), covenants are inaugurated by sacrifice. So, when and where Jesus made his atoning sacrifice has direct implications for when and where he inaugurated the new covenant. I intend to explore this issue in this thesis.

¹ See, for example, William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, WBC, vol. 47B (Dallas: Word Books, 1991); Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1993); F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).

² In this thesis, I will use masculine pronouns to refer to the author of Hebrews despite the epistle's anonymity, following the author's use of a first person singular pronoun along with a masculine participle in Heb 11:32 (ἐπιλείψει με γὰρ διηγούμενον ὁ χρόνος; "for time will fail me as I describe"). Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Scripture are my own. For scholars who hold each of these five views, see R. B. Jamieson, "When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself? A Taxonomy of Recent Scholarship on Hebrews," *CBR* 15, no. 3 (2017): 338–68.

³ Most notably David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NovTSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2011); David M. Moffitt, *Rethinking the Atonement: New Perspectives on Jesus's Death, Resurrection, and Ascension* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022); R. B. Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering in Hebrews*, SNTSMS 172 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

I will propose that Jesus’s new covenant inauguration took place in a process that involved his death on the cross and culminated in the heavenly tabernacle after his resurrection and ascension. By his death, Jesus satisfied the demands of the old covenant. After his resurrection, he was appointed high priest. By offering himself in the heavenly tabernacle after his resurrection and ascension, he purified the heavenly sanctuary and the people of the new covenant, thereby granting them access to God. With this post-resurrection sacrifice in heaven, he inaugurated the new covenant.

Before exploring new territory, however, I will survey ground previously covered. In the ongoing discussion in scholarship regarding the timing and location of the atonement, David Moffitt and R. B. Jamieson argue for what Jamieson labels “View 5” in his taxonomy of answers to this question.⁴ Moffitt can be credited with initiating this most recent round of discussion with his 2011 monograph.⁵ In this book, Moffitt pushes against what he sees as a common view in Hebrews scholarship that the resurrection is of little significance for the letter.⁶ He argues instead that “*Jesus’ bodily resurrection unifies and drives the high-priestly Christology and the soteriology of [the author’s] homily.*”⁷ On the way to his conclusion, Moffitt argues that Jesus’s atoning offering takes place in heaven after his bodily resurrection and ascension.⁸ He argues this largely on the basis

⁴ Jamieson, “When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself?,” 352–54.

⁵ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 2011. Although I critique various of Moffitt’s positions in this thesis, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to Moffitt. His monograph and subsequent articles were the impetus for my inquiry into the new covenant in Hebrews. Further, as will be evident in this thesis, much of my thinking about Hebrews’s presentation of Christ’s atoning work has been shaped by Moffitt.

⁶ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 40–41, 297.

⁷ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 299; italics original.

⁸ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 42–43, passim. Moffitt has since argued that Jesus’s atoning sacrifice is ongoing. Few Protestants follow him to this conclusion; however, I am here concerned only with the fact that Moffitt argues that Jesus’s atoning sacrifice occurs after the resurrection and ascension and in the heavenly sanctuary, whether or not is it ongoing. David M. Moffitt, “It Is Not Finished: Jesus’s Perpetual Atoning Work as the Heavenly High Priest in Hebrews,” in *So Great a Salvation: A Dialogue on the Atonement in Hebrews*, ed. Jon Laansma, George H. Guthrie, and Cynthia Long Westfall, LNTS 516 (London: T&T Clark, 2019).

that Jesus was made high priest only after his resurrection.⁹ Moffitt also claims that Hebrews plainly locates Jesus's offering in heaven when the author discusses Jesus's priestly ministry (e.g., 4:14; 5:1–3; 7:26; 8:1–2; 9:11–12).¹⁰ The common view that Hebrews maps Yom Kippur's two great moments (i.e., slaughter and presentation of blood in the Holy of Holies) both onto Jesus's death is, Moffitt argues, not accurate.¹¹ Better is to view Jesus's death on the cross as corresponding to the slaughter of the sacrificial victim on Yom Kippur, and Jesus's atoning presentation of his "body/blood/self" in the heavenly sanctuary as corresponding to the manipulation of blood on Yom Kippur.¹² Moffitt also argues at length (and successfully) that Hebrews views the heavenly tabernacle as a real, and not merely figurative, place where Jesus ascended as an embodied human after his resurrection.¹³ Jamieson agrees, pointing out that Hebrews "weave[s] a unified referential web that specifies where [Jesus] went, where he is, and from where he will return."¹⁴ If Jesus's present status in heaven and future return from there to earth are not metaphorical in Hebrews, then neither is his entry into heaven.¹⁵ Jamieson also rightly makes much of the sequence "enter to offer" in 9:11–14 and 9:25–26.¹⁶ In these passages, Hebrews states that Jesus entered heaven so that he could then offer his sacrifice; he did not enter heaven after having already offered his sacrifice.

⁹ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 213–14, 220.

¹⁰ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 220–21.

¹¹ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 295.

¹² For example, Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 295.

¹³ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 145–214; David M. Moffitt, "Serving in the Tabernacle in Heaven: Sacred Space, Jesus's High-Priestly Sacrifice, and Hebrews' Analogical Theology," in *Hebrews in Contexts*, ed. Gabriella Gelardini and Harold W. Attridge, AGJU 91 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 259–79.

¹⁴ Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*, 67.

¹⁵ Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*, 67.

¹⁶ Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*, 49–50, 64.

While Moffitt and Jamieson are by no means alone in their claim that Jesus’s atoning offering takes place in the heavenly sanctuary after his bodily resurrection and ascension, not all share their views. In fact, Jamieson has delineated no less than five distinct views regarding the timing and location of Jesus’s self-offering.¹⁷ Because some of the lines dividing these views also divide views on the timing and location of the inauguration of the new covenant, I will briefly outline these five views.

According to the first of these views, Jesus made his offering entirely while on the cross.¹⁸ Within this view, *blood* in Hebrews refers to death, and *sacrifice* to slaughter. This is the most common view in contemporary scholarship.¹⁹ In this view, unlike in the others, the author of Hebrews sees a key discontinuity between the events of Yom Kippur and the Christ event. On Yom Kippur, the high priest enters the Holy of Holies in order to offer the sacrifice, manipulating the sacrificial blood there. Hebrews, on the other hand, envisions Jesus as entering the Holy of Holies already having offered his sacrifice on the cross.

The second view agrees with the first that Jesus’s death is his offering, but sees his heavenly entrance described in Hebrews as a metaphor for the heavenly significance of his death.²⁰ This view neither requires nor precludes a bodily resurrection; proponents hold variously to bodily resurrection and non-bodily, spiritual ascension.

The third view also sees Jesus’s offering as having taken place when he died.²¹ However, this offering often takes a slightly different form in View 3 than it does in

¹⁷ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 4–12, 342–54.

¹⁸ Jamieson, “When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself?,” 342–46.

¹⁹ Jamieson, “When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself?,” 345. For example, William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*; Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*; John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews with Preliminary Exercitations*, vol. 6, *Exposition of Hebrews, 8:1–10:39*, ed. William H. Gould, vol. 22 of *The Works of John Owen* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2018); Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, BTCF (Nashville: B&H, 2015).

²⁰ Jamieson, “When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself?,” 346–47.

²¹ Jamieson, “When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself?,” 347–49.

View 2. While it is common in View 2 to see Jesus's whole period of suffering on the cross as his offering, proponents of View 3 often consider only the moment of Jesus's death to be his offering.²² While View 3 allows for a bodily resurrection prior to Jesus's ascension, most who hold this view consider Hebrews to portray Jesus's ascension as happening spiritually when he died, rather than physically at a later time.²³

In the fourth view, Jesus began to offer himself at the cross and completed his offering in the heavenly sanctuary after his resurrection and ascension.²⁴ Like View 3, View 4 sees the entire sacrificial process as taking place both on earth and in heaven. However, unlike most who hold View 3, View 4 sees a bodily resurrection between the beginning and end of the process. In View 4, Hebrews envisions the heavenly sanctuary as a physical location where events can take time to take place. Jesus, as high priest, offers himself both on the cross and in heaven. The part of his offering that takes place on the cross corresponds to the slaughter of the sacrificial victim on Yom Kippur, and the part of his offering that takes place in the heavenly sanctuary corresponds to the presentation of blood in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur.

View 5 is similar to View 4 in that it considers Jesus's offering to be part of a process that begins at the cross and culminates in the heavenly sanctuary after his bodily resurrection and ascension.²⁵ Between these two views is one major distinction. In View 4, Jesus's death is referred to as part of his priestly act of offering, while in View 5, his offering takes place fully in heaven. In View 5, Jesus did not become a priest until after his resurrection, while in View 4, Jesus offers himself on the cross as a priest. View 5 holds that, whatever the real benefits and effects of the cross (and there can be many

²² Jamieson, "When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself?," 349.

²³ Jamieson, "When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself?," 348–49.

²⁴ Jamieson, "When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself?," 349–52.

²⁵ Jamieson, "When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself?," 352–54.

within this view), Jesus's actions there were not carried out within the role of high priest. Since atoning sacrifices are performed by priests, Jesus's offering took place only after he had become a priest. In View 5 (and as I argue below), this appointment to priesthood occurred only after his bodily resurrection and ascension. Within View 5, it is still possible for Jesus's death to be part of the sacrificial process; the claim is simply that Jesus's priestly action of self-offering (i.e., the culminating, effective moment of sacrifice) occurred after his bodily resurrection and ascension. View 5 allows that some uses of *θυσίας* or *προσενεχθείς* in Hebrews refer to the entire process that encompasses Jesus's death, resurrection, ascension, and heavenly offering (e.g., Heb 9:28).²⁶ It is for this view that Moffitt and Jamieson both argue: Moffitt as a component of his argument about the importance of the resurrection for Hebrews, and Jamieson as the main focus of his 2019 monograph.²⁷

In his 2019 monograph, Jamieson argues that Jesus's self-offering took place in the heavenly sanctuary after his bodily resurrection and ascension.²⁸ Two primary pillars on which his argument stands are the timing of Jesus's appointment to high priesthood and the tight correspondence in Hebrews between Jesus's actions in the Christ event and the events of Yom Kippur. Because my arguments in this thesis rest on a foundation that includes many of Jamieson's conclusions, I will briefly review these claims.²⁹

First, Hebrews describes the timing of Jesus's appointment to priesthood by describing the qualifications for his priesthood. Jamieson sees Jesus's perfection as his

²⁶ Jamieson, "When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself?," 353.

²⁷ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 289–96; Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*.

²⁸ Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*, 70, *passim*.

²⁹ My own argument for the timing of Jesus's appointment to priesthood is below (see "Timing of Appointment to Priesthood in Hebrews 7 and 8").

qualification for priesthood.³⁰ On the basis of 2:10, 5:8–10, and 7:28, Jamieson argues that Jesus was perfected only after his suffering and death, and only upon his resurrection.³¹ On the basis of the rest of Hebrews 7, Jamieson further argues that Jesus’s indestructible life is part of his perfection, and is part of what qualifies him for his high-priestly role.³² The main contrast in Hebrews 7 between Jesus and the Levitical priests is on the basis of their mortality and his immortality. Each Levitical high priest could not continue in office because his term as high priest was limited by his own death (7:23). Jesus, on the other hand, is qualified as a human for priesthood partly on the basis of the very quality that enables him to serve as priest indefinitely, namely, his indestructible life (7:24; cf. 7:16). It is evident that, before his resurrection, Jesus did not have this indestructible life, since he did indeed die as a human.³³ Therefore, he must have received the indestructible life that he now has upon or after his resurrection: the point at which he, as a human, became no longer subject to death. So, only after his resurrection was Jesus qualified to be appointed high priest, having been perfected and having received indestructible life (cf. 7:16, 28). Since he was appointed to priesthood after his resurrection, he could not have performed actions as a priest until he had been resurrected. Thus, his self-offering as both sacrificial victim and high priest must have occurred after his resurrection.

The second main pillar of Jamieson’s argument has to do with Hebrew’s understanding of how the components of Yom Kippur correspond to the components of

³⁰ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 25. See also Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 194–98; Kenneth L. Schenck, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Hebrews: The Settings of the Sacrifice*, SNTSMS 143 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 6; Georg Gäbel, *Die Kulttheologie des Hebraerbriefes: Eine exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Studie*, WUNT II 212 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 163–70.

³¹ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 25–29.

³² Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 30–33.

³³ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 33. Compare Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 198. For the author of Hebrews’s awareness of Jesus’s death, see, for example, Heb 2:9, 14; 13:20.

Jesus's offering.³⁴ According to Jamieson, the author of Hebrews reads Yom Kippur in Leviticus 16 as indicating that the Levitical high priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrificial victim in the Holy of Holies, and that this moment of blood manipulation was the effective moment in the sacrificial process. It is at this moment that the people and the sanctuary were purified.³⁵ In Hebrews 9:24–25 (as well as 9:11–14), the author of Hebrews aligns Jesus's high-priestly offering with that of the Levitical high priest on Yom Kippur. Just as the Levitical high priest would enter the Holy of Holies in order to offer the blood of the sacrificial victim (9:7), so too, Jesus entered the heavenly Holy of Holies in order to offer, and not already having offered, his own blood (contra View 1).³⁶

So, largely on these two premises—namely, that Jesus was appointed to high priesthood after his resurrection and that Hebrews maps Jesus's actions onto the logic of Yom Kippur in such a way that he entered the heavenly sanctuary in order to make his offering—Jamieson concludes that Jesus offered himself in the heavenly sanctuary after his bodily resurrection and ascension.³⁷

A Neglected Question

A question that is closely related to the preceding discussion regarding the timing and location of the atonement is that of when and where Hebrews describes the new covenant as having been inaugurated. That is, when and where does the action occur after which the new covenant can be said to be in force or operative? As will be evident throughout this discussion, a covenant inauguration involves a process, just as a sacrifice involves a multi-stage process. However, like that of a sacrifice, this process culminates in an effective moment. For an atoning sacrifice, this is the moment when atonement is

³⁴ Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*, 35–70.

³⁵ Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*, 46.

³⁶ Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*, 48.

³⁷ Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*, 70.

accomplished.³⁸ For a covenant, this is the moment in which the covenant is ratified.³⁹ Before this moment, the covenant has not been inaugurated, and after this moment, it has been. Despite the recognized importance of the new covenant for Hebrews (and Christian theology more broadly), the question of when this moment occurs has received very little attention in Hebrews scholarship.⁴⁰

It may be that this lack of attention is a catalyst for the prevalence of logical inconsistencies in statements made regarding this question. C. K. Barrett illustrates one of these inconsistencies. He states, on the one hand, that Jesus's death inaugurated the new covenant.⁴¹ On the other hand, he claims that the covenant is inaugurated by Jesus's sacrifice.⁴² This sacrifice, Barrett maintains, took place in the heavenly sanctuary, after Jesus had died, been raised, and ascended, since Jesus did not carry out priestly duties while on earth.⁴³ So, Jesus inaugurated the new covenant by his death, but he also inaugurated it by his sacrifice, which occurred after his death. Yet, he only inaugurated one covenant.⁴⁴

³⁸ See, for example, Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 292–93.

³⁹ To use an analogy, this moment is similar to the moment when a couple at a wedding is pronounced husband and wife by the officiant. While the entire process (in this case, a wedding) is deeply involved in the making of this covenant, there is also one culminating, effective moment in the process when the relationship between the two parties changes.

⁴⁰ Of the scholars I have surveyed, only two (Moffitt and Jamieson) sustain arguments in answer to this question. For the importance of the new covenant for Hebrews, see, for example, Susanne Lehne, *The New Covenant In Hebrews*, JSNTSup 44 (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1990).

⁴¹ The “death of Jesus effected the cleansing of men's consciences from guilt, the inauguration of a new covenant and the dawn of a new age.” C. K. Barrett, “The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 384.

⁴² “The covenant inaugurated by Jesus's sacrifice of himself is the fulfilment of prophecy; that is so say, it is an eschatological covenant.” Barrett, *The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*,” 384.

⁴³ Barrett, “The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” 384.

⁴⁴ It might be argued that Barrett may have considered the new covenant to have been inaugurated in a process that spanned his death and his heavenly sacrifice. Such an argument would, of course, have to be made on speculation, since Barrett does not describe his view on this issue in detail. There are scholars who see the new covenant inauguration as spanning Jesus's death and ascension (see below). However, there is a key logical difference between these scholars' view and Barrett's. They see the

I mention this not to malign Barrett, but to illustrate three common issues in discussions of the timing and location of the new covenant inauguration. A first is that this is a question seemingly so far from authors' fields of concern that logical inconsistency leaks into even accomplished scholars' statements about it. A second issue is that statements made about this question are rarely explicit and even more rarely argued. Most relevant statements are merely passing comments that authors make while attending to other questions. This renders many scholars' views on this question elusive. A third issue is that common English usage of the word *sacrifice* does not fully agree with Hebrews's use of προσφέρω (*offer*) and θυσία (*sacrifice*).⁴⁵ While *sacrifice* has come to denote *slaughter* in English, προσφέρω in Hebrews and the LXX often indicates the cultic act of presentation, not slaughter.⁴⁶ Hebrews's use of this word aligns with its use in the LXX, as well as with the MT's use of קרב (hiphil; *offer*), which it often translates. Additionally, in Hebrews, θυσία denotes something that is presented to God, where the emphasis is on the presentation, not on the slaughter of the one presented.⁴⁷ These words can refer to the entire sacrificial process (a process that includes slaughter), but when they are used more precisely, they refer to the moment of presentation, not slaughter. This lexical issue may play a role in the common practice of locating Jesus's self-offering at his death, and apparently on this basis, also locating Jesus's covenant inauguration at his death. If *sacrifice* means *slaughter*, then a sacrifice takes place when the victim dies. As can be seen from the variety of views above regarding the timing and location of the atonement, however, not all are convinced that this is the shape of Hebrews's sacrificial

atonement as spanning the same temporal and spatial gap as the covenant inauguration. Barrett likewise aligns the covenant inauguration with the atoning sacrifice, but then (in a move of logical inconsistency) locates the two separately: on earth at Jesus's death (in the case of the covenant inauguration) and in heaven after Jesus's ascension (in the case of the sacrifice).

⁴⁵ For the following lexical points, see Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*, 17.

⁴⁶ For example, Gen 43:26; Exod 32:6; Lev 2:14; Num 15:4.

⁴⁷ For example, Heb 5:1; 7:27; 13:15–16.

logic. In fact, there is a strong case to be made for the claim that the effective moment of Jesus's sacrifice is not his death, but is instead his presentation of blood in the heavenly sanctuary after his bodily resurrection.⁴⁸ I will now examine the three ways that scholars answer the question of when and where the new covenant was inaugurated in Hebrews.

Cross Only

Among those who make claims regarding the timing and location of the new covenant inauguration in Hebrews, most say that it was inaugurated on the cross. This view is taken by scholars across all five of Jamieson's views.⁴⁹ Michael Kibbe speaks for

⁴⁸ See, for example, David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NovTSup 141 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011).

⁴⁹ View 1: Gareth Lee Cockerill, "Structure and Interpretation in Hebrews 8:1–10:18: A Symphony in Three Movements," *BBR* 11, no. 2 (2001): 179; David L. Allen, *Hebrews: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC, vol. 34 (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 358–59; Marie Isaacs, *Sacred Space: An Approach to the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, LNTS 73 (London: Bloomsbury, 1992), 119–20; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 242; Barnabas Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews*, NTTheol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 124; James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1924), 127; Owen, *Exposition of Hebrews, 8:1–10:39*, 321, 331–33; Mayjee Philip, *Leviticus in Hebrews: A Transtextual Analysis of the Tabernacle Theme in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Bern, Germany: Peter Lang, 2011), 57; Christopher A. Richardson, *Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith: Jesus' Faith as the Climax of Israel's History in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, WUNT II 338 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 65; Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 274; Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1903), 263; Norman H. Young, "The Gospel According to Hebrews 9," *NTS* 27, no. 2 (1981): 205, 210; Jared M. Compton, review of *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* by David M. Moffitt, *TJ* 36, no. 1 (2015): 133–35. Compton appears to include Christ's exaltation within the inauguration of the new covenant in his discussion of this issue in his 2015 monograph. Jared M. Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, LNTS 537 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 138. Still, Compton states his view clearly in his 2015 article: "Jesus was raised because of the efficacy of his covenant-inaugurating—and, thus, atonement-securing—death." Compton, review of *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* by David M. Moffitt, 134. View 2: Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 253; David G. Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, SNTSMS 47 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 293n12; James W. Thompson, *Hebrews*, Paideia 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 175, 183–85, 191, 196. View 3: Richard Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology in the New Testament*, WUNT II 328 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 138. View 4: David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 358–59; Darrell J. Pursiful, *The Cultic Motif in the Spirituality of the Book of Hebrews* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1993), 66. However, for a cross-and-heaven view, see David A. deSilva, "The Invention and Argumentative Function of Priestly Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *BBR* 16, no. 2 (2006): 308. View 5: Jared C. Calaway, *The Sabbath and the Sanctuary: Access to God in the Letter to the Hebrews and Its Priestly Context*, WUNT II 349 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 157; Michael Kibbe, "Is It Finished? When Did It Start? Hebrews, Priesthood, and Atonement in Biblical, Systematic, and Historical Perspective," *JTS* 65, no. 1 (2014): 34; Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 289–96; David M. Moffitt, "Wilderness Identity and Pentateuchal Narrative: Distinguishing between Jesus' Inauguration and Maintenance of the New Covenant in Hebrews," in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. Katherine M. Hockey, Madison N. Pierce, and Francis Watson, LNTS 565 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 153–71.

many when he says, “Christ’s death was the inaugural act of the new covenant—this is beyond dispute (Heb. 9:15–22).”⁵⁰ This view is most commonly held by those who understand the atonement to have taken place exclusively at the cross, prior to his entrance into the heavenly sanctuary (View 1, the majority view regarding timing and location of the atonement). The logic for those in View 1 can be laid out as follows: covenants are inaugurated by sacrifice; Christ made his sacrifice when he died on the cross; therefore, Christ inaugurated the new covenant when he died on the cross.⁵¹ The reasoning of those in View 2 can be the same, since they also see Christ’s sacrifice as having taken place at the cross.⁵²

The next two views (Views 3 and 4 in Jamieson’s taxonomy) accommodate a cross-only inauguration less seamlessly, since, in them, the sacrifice of Christ occurs not only at the cross, but spans heaven and earth. Richard Ounsworth, who sees the atonement as having begun at the cross and as having been completed upon Jesus’s immediately subsequent disembodied entrance into the heavenly sanctuary (View 3), seems to see Jesus’s death itself as having inaugurated the new covenant.⁵³ View 4 also sees the atonement as having occurred both at the cross and in heaven. In this view, however, Christ is embodied when he enters the heavenly sanctuary. Darrell Pursiful and David DeSilva articulate this position, but do not elaborate.⁵⁴ It is not as obvious how, in

⁵⁰ Kibbe, “Is It Finished?,” 34.

⁵¹ See, for example, Allen, *Hebrews*, 358–59; Isaacs, *Sacred Space*, 119–20.

⁵² Attridge, *Hebrews*, 253; Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, 293n12; Thompson, *Hebrews*, 175, 183–85, 191, 196.

⁵³ After speaking of “the sacrificial inauguration of the covenant,” Ounsworth mentions “the inauguration through Christ’s sacrificial death of the new covenant.” Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology in the New Testament*, 138.

⁵⁴ DeSilva makes statements in his 2000 work that would place him in this category; however, he adds to these statements in his 2006 work that move him into the next category, since he sees the inauguration as occurring both on the cross and in the heavenly sanctuary after Christ’s bodily resurrection and ascension. DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 308, 313; deSilva, “The Invention and Argumentative Function of Priestly Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” 308. It is not possible to tell whether this represents a development in his thinking on this issue, or merely an elaboration. Pursiful does not add the

Views 3 and 4 of the sacrificial logic of Hebrews, the covenant could have been inaugurated by only the beginning, and not the end, of the sacrificial process.

Lastly, some in View 5 also say that the new covenant was inaugurated at the cross.⁵⁵ Those in this view, however, take a different route to this conclusion, since, in their view, Jesus's sacrifice occurred not on the cross, but in heaven. Jared Calaway and Kibbe take this view, but do not explain their reasoning for saying that the death of Jesus is the event that inaugurates the new covenant.⁵⁶ Instead, their conclusion seems to rely not on a theological argument, but on what they see as a straightforward reading of Hebrews 9, and especially verses 15–22.⁵⁷ I am not convinced that this is the best conclusion reached by a reading of Hebrews 9, and I will examine this passage in detail below.⁵⁸ Moffitt makes the most sustained argument of any for the cross-only view of the new covenant inauguration. I will now review his argument.

In his 2011 monograph, Moffitt concludes from Hebrews 9:15–18 that Jesus's death inaugurates the new covenant. In cultic contexts where blood is ritually manipulated, Moffitt sees *blood* (αἷμα) as denoting life.⁵⁹ Here, however, he understands blood to indicate death. When the author says, “So then, neither was the first [covenant] inaugurated without blood,” Moffitt understands him to indicate that it was Jesus's death that inaugurated the new covenant.⁶⁰ Further, Moffitt sees 9:16–17 as containing a pun

heavenly setting to his statements, though to do so would be consistent with his view. Pursiful, *The Cultic Motif in the Spirituality of the Book of Hebrews*, 66.

⁵⁵ Calaway, *The Sabbath and the Sanctuary*, 157; Kibbe, “Is It Finished?,” 34; Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 289–96; Moffitt, “Wilderness Identity and Pentateuchal Narrative.”

⁵⁶ Calaway, *The Sabbath and the Sanctuary*, 157; Kibbe, “Is It Finished?,” 34.

⁵⁷ See, for example, Calaway's simple reference following his claim: “The shedding of blood seals a new covenant (9:15–22).” Calaway, *The Sabbath and the Sanctuary*, 157.

⁵⁸ See below, “Covenant Inauguration and Sacrifice in Hebrews 9.”

⁵⁹ See, for example, Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 219, 291.

⁶⁰ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 290.

that allows the author of Hebrews to make the point that covenants and wills (διαθήκη) both become effective upon the death of a pertinent actor.⁶¹ For wills, the required death is that of the one giving the inheritance; for covenants, it is the death of a sacrificial animal. For the new covenant, it is the death of Jesus that activates it. “Animals were slaughtered when a covenant was inaugurated. Similarly, the covenant has a death, that of Jesus, at its inauguration.”⁶² In making this comparison, however, Moffitt does not address the fact that the old covenant (the covenant whose inauguration the author of Hebrews is here treating as a model) does not have mere slaughter at its beginning. In Exodus 24, the covenant is inaugurated with sacrifices, and not slaughter alone. So, the new covenant should be expected to have sacrifice, and not slaughter alone, at its inauguration. Further, Moffitt, uncharacteristically, does not support his assertion that διαθήκη here means *will*. Other scholars, however, have not only demonstrated that the meaning *will* is not a foregone conclusion, but also that *covenant* is more likely the meaning of διαθήκη in this passage.⁶³

In his 2017 article, Moffitt takes a different route to the same conclusion that the new covenant was inaugurated at the cross.⁶⁴ Moffitt sees a distinction in Hebrews between new covenant inauguration and atoning sacrifice on the basis of Hebrews’s analogy of these two events with the old covenant inauguration and cultic ministry, respectively. For Moffitt, the Pentateuchal narrative sets the pattern for Hebrews’s narrative when it includes the exodus, covenant inauguration, and Levitical covenant maintenance as distinct events. Since these are distinct events in the Pentateuchal

⁶¹ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 291.

⁶² Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 291.

⁶³ I will also argue this point in “Hebrews 9:15–17” below.

⁶⁴ Moffitt, “Wilderness Identity and Pentateuchal Narrative.”

narrative, they must also be distinct events in Hebrews.⁶⁵ However, the author of Hebrews nowhere makes this comparison between the Pentateuchal and Christ event narratives. Moffitt helpfully suggests that “Jesus’ defeat of the Devil in Heb. 2:14–16 is conceptually linked with the Passover.”⁶⁶ But, such conceptual linkage does not entail the strict adherence to narrative sequence that Moffitt claims. Even if “Jesus’ death is being conceived of along the lines of a new Passover,” and if Hebrews 3–4 “draws an explicit analogy between the audience and Israel in the wilderness,” it is a non sequitur to map Jesus’s death onto the entire covenant-making ceremony of Exodus 24. Moffitt is right to claim that Hebrews 2:14–16 sets the Passover and exodus in parallel with Jesus’s defeat of the Devil by means of Jesus’s death. However, it is unwarranted to claim that “Passover/exodus *and covenant inauguration* are all directly linked in Hebrews with Jesus’s death.”⁶⁷ The former (Jesus’s death || Passover/exodus) has strong support in Hebrews 2–4, but the latter (Jesus’s death || covenant inauguration) does not.

Cross and Heaven

There are a number of authors in Jamieson’s View 4 regarding their understanding of the atonement who say that the new covenant was inaugurated both on the cross and in heaven. That is, they claim that the covenant was begun in a process that went from the cross through Jesus’s resurrection and ascension to the heavenly sanctuary.⁶⁸ Like many scholars in the cross-only view, these scholars’ view is consistent

⁶⁵ Moffitt, “Wilderness Identity and Pentateuchal Narrative,” 158.

⁶⁶ Moffitt, “Wilderness Identity and Pentateuchal Narrative,” 166.

⁶⁷ Moffitt, “Wilderness Identity and Pentateuchal Narrative,” 167; italics mine.

⁶⁸ Felix H. Cortez, “From the Holy to the Most Holy Place: The Period of Hebrews 9:6–10 and the Day of Atonement as a Metaphor of Transition,” *JBL* 125, no. 3 (2006): 542; deSilva, “The Invention and Argumentative Function of Priestly Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” 308; George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 313; George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 970; Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 424; Richard D. Nelson, ““He Offered Himself”: Sacrifice in Hebrews,” *Interpretation* 57, no. 3 (July 2003): 256–57. However, Guthrie’s 2007 statement may indicate a

with their claims regarding the atonement. Jesus made his offering both on the cross and in heaven; he inaugurated the covenant at the same time and in the same place. Since his offering spanned earth and heaven, so did his covenant inauguration.

This view stands or falls relative to the heaven-only view (below) on the question of whether Jesus was a priest at the time of his crucifixion. This is not because covenant-inaugurating sacrifices have to be made by priests, since the Levitical priesthood had not been established when Moses and the “young men of the sons of Israel” made the sacrifices that inaugurated the covenant at Sinai (Exod 24:5–8). Instead, Jesus’s priesthood is inextricably linked to his covenant-inaugurating sacrifice because Hebrews is insistent that Jesus offered only one sacrifice (e.g., Heb 9:25–28). Hebrews also holds that in order for Jesus’s sacrifice to be atoning, he had to be a priest.⁶⁹ So, his appointment to priesthood is a constraint on the timing of his sacrifice that both made atonement and inaugurated the covenant. Further, as I think Hebrews 7–8 makes clear, and as I will argue below, Jesus became a priest after his resurrection.⁷⁰ If this is the case, and if covenants are inaugurated by sacrifice, then the new covenant could not have been inaugurated until after Jesus’s resurrection. In this case, it cannot be said that the new covenant was inaugurated at the cross (contra the cross-and-heaven view).

Heaven Only

The final view, and the one for which I will argue, is that Jesus inaugurated the new covenant in the heavenly sanctuary after his bodily resurrection and ascension. This is not to say that his death had no role in the process. As will be seen below, the old and new covenants were each inaugurated through a process that involved the slaughter of

development in his thought since he made his 1998 statement. If this is the case, then his 1998 statement would belong in the cross-only view.

⁶⁹ See, for example, Heb 5:1; 8:3. Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 23–35.

⁷⁰ See “Timing of Jesus’s Appointment to Priesthood in Hebrews 7–8” below.

sacrificial victims. This death is a necessary component of the inauguration. However, neither the old nor the new covenant can be said to be inaugurated until the culminating, effective moment of blood manipulation has taken place. What Moffitt says of the sacrificial process articulates well what this view says of covenant inauguration: “A slaughter is the performance of a [covenant inauguration] only when the blood is properly presented to God. Thus, what happens *after* the death of the victim is determinative.”⁷¹

While there are no authors, to my knowledge, who make a sustained argument for the view that Jesus inaugurated the new covenant in the heavenly sanctuary after his bodily resurrection and ascension, *and not* on the cross, there are a few who make statements reflecting this position.⁷² Benjamin Ribbens (whose view on Christ’s self-offering aligns with Jamieson’s View 5) claims, “Christ, the high priest after the order of Melchizedek, offers a sacrifice of his own blood in the heavenly tabernacle, thereby inaugurating the new covenant.”⁷³ While Ribbens does not proceed to argue for this claim, he does refer to this idea repeatedly in his own argument.⁷⁴ Joining Moffitt and others in View 5, Ribbens states that Jesus’s death is a necessary part of his sacrificial process, but that his effective “priestly act of sacrifice,” in which he presented himself to the Father, took place in heaven.⁷⁵ While Ribbens does not argue for the heaven-only

⁷¹ Moffitt, “Wilderness Identity and Pentateuchal Narrative,” 292.

⁷² In her 2005 article, Susan Haber claims that the new covenant was inaugurated by Christ’s sacrifice, and, in her next sentence, that Hebrews presents this “one-time sacrifice” as having occurred when Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary. Susan Haber, “From Priestly Torah to Christ Cultus: The Re-Vision of Covenant and Cult in Hebrews,” *JSNT* 28, no. 1 (2005): 112; Benjamin J. Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice and Heavenly Cult in Hebrews*, BZNW 222 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 1, 123, 225, 238.

⁷³ Ribbens, *Sacrifice and Cult*, 1, cf. 123, 225, 238. Ribbens proceeds to claim a heaven-only, post-resurrection view of Christ’s sacrifice. Jamieson’s View 5; Ribbens, *Sacrifice and Cult*, 2, cf., e.g., 132–135.

⁷⁴ See Ribbens, *Sacrifice and Cult*, 123, 225, 238. Ribbens’s monograph mainly has to do with “the relationship between old covenant sacrifices and Christ’s new covenant sacrifice, especially as they relate to the question of efficacy,” not the timing and location of the new covenant inauguration, per se. Ribbens, *Sacrifice and Cult*, 18. His contention is that the earlier and earthly old covenant sacrifices gleaned their efficacy “proleptically” from Christ’s sacrifice. Ribbens, *Sacrifice and Cult*, 238.

⁷⁵ Ribbens, *Sacrifice and Cult*, 107–8.

view of the inauguration of the new covenant, by holding this view throughout his work, he demonstrates that it does not contradict his (well-received) view of sacrifice in Hebrews.⁷⁶

Jamieson, for his part, has made two statements regarding the timing and location of the new covenant inauguration that, when read together, fall into this category.

In his 2019 monograph, Jamieson argues from Hebrews 9:15–17 that Jesus’s death “at once satisfies the sanctions of the old covenant and ushers in the blessings of the new.”⁷⁷ He quotes Scott Hahn approvingly: “The death of Christ becomes a soteriological ‘Janus’: it is simultaneously the experience and expiation of the curse of death of the Old Covenant, and the inaugural sacrifice that ratifies the new.”⁷⁸ In picturing the sanction of death as a debt owed by covenant-breakers, Hebrews 9:15 says that Jesus’s death redeemed those who had transgressed against the first covenant.⁷⁹ Jesus’s death accomplished this by absorbing the death-sentence due to those who had committed covenant apostasy (cf. Deut 17:2, 6).⁸⁰ Moreover, his death makes it possible for his people to receive the eternal inheritance, “because, in inaugurating the new covenant, it initiates the people’s eschatological restoration.”⁸¹ It does this by making available both “the inner transformation of God’s people and their permanent restoration

⁷⁶ Brian C. Small, review of *Levitical Sacrifice and Heavenly Cult in Hebrews*, by Benjamin J. Ribbens, *Horizons* 44, no. 2 (2017): 513–14; Madison N. Pierce, review of *Levitical Sacrifice and Heavenly Cult in Hebrews*, by Benjamin J. Ribbens, *JETS* 61, no. 3 (September 2018): 663–65.

⁷⁷ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 122. Jamieson agrees with Hughes and Hahn that *διαθήκη* in this passage refers to covenants, and not to wills/testaments. John J. Hughes, “Hebrews IX 15ff. and Galatians III 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure,” *NovT* 21, no. 1 (1979): 27–96; Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises*, AYBRL (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁷⁸ Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 319. as quoted in Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 122.

⁷⁹ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 116–26.

⁸⁰ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 118–19.

⁸¹ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 122–23.

to the land of their inheritance.”⁸² So, while Jamieson takes a path different from Moffitt’s, he similarly arrives at the conclusions in his monograph that Jesus’s atoning sacrifice occurred in heaven and that Jesus’s death inaugurated the new covenant. Jamieson states, “it is Jesus’ death per se that inaugurates the new covenant.”⁸³

On the other hand, and more briefly, in his 2016 article on Hebrews 9:23, Jamieson seems to indicate that Christ’s heavenly sacrifice cleanses the heavenly tabernacle, inaugurates the new covenant, and inaugurates the new covenant cult.⁸⁴ In Hebrews 9:23, “Christ’s priestly self-offering is that which brings the new covenant into effect.”⁸⁵ In his article, Jamieson maintains his view that Jesus’s sacrifice occurred in the heavenly sanctuary.⁸⁶ At the same time, Jamieson sets Christ’s offering in parallel with the “inaugural sacrifices” of the old covenant.⁸⁷ While he does not explicitly express a place and time for the new covenant inauguration, he seems to imply here that the new covenant cannot be considered to be inaugurated until Christ presented his sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary.

So, in his 2019 monograph, Jamieson makes statements indicating that Jesus’s death inaugurated the new covenant, while in his 2016 article, Jamieson seems to describe Jesus’s heavenly offering as the event that inaugurates the new covenant.⁸⁸ While these statements appear contradictory *prima facie*, they are reconcilable if, like Jesus’s sacrifice, the covenant inauguration occurred in a process that begins at the cross

⁸² Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 123.

⁸³ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 158; see also, e.g., 181, 188–89, 156–60.

⁸⁴ R. B. Jamieson, “Hebrews 9:23: Cult Inauguration, Yom Kippur and the Cleansing of the Heavenly Tabernacle,” *NTS* 62 (2016): 580.

⁸⁵ Jamieson, “Hebrews 9:23: Cult Inauguration, Yom Kippur,” 580.

⁸⁶ Jamieson, “Hebrews 9:23: Cult Inauguration, Yom Kippur,” 578.

⁸⁷ Jamieson, “Hebrews 9:23: Cult Inauguration, Yom Kippur,” 580.

⁸⁸ For example, Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 158; Jamieson, “Hebrews 9:23: Cult Inauguration, Yom Kippur,” 580.

as has its effective, culminating moment in the heavenly sanctuary after Jesus's bodily resurrection and ascension.⁸⁹ In personal conversation, Jamieson has confirmed that this schema is his view.⁹⁰ By referring to the inauguration of the new covenant at Jesus's death in the 2019 monograph, Jamieson intends to indicate that soteriological blessing was given there, while Jamieson's meaning in his 2016 article was that access to God and purification was obtained by Jesus in the heavenly tabernacle.⁹¹ In both publications, when Jamieson refers to the new covenant inauguration, he refers to the whole process that resulted in inauguration, beginning with Jesus's death, and ending with his heavenly offering. Further, Jamieson means to place the accent on the end of this process. Thus, Jamieson's view is consistent with my construal of the inauguration of the new covenant as a process that begins at Jesus's death on the cross, but has its effective, culminating moment in the heavenly temple after Jesus's resurrection and ascension. So, while I agree with Jamieson's unpublished logic, I intend to build on his statements by making a more explicit and extensive argument regarding the timing and location of the inauguration of the new covenant in Hebrews.

On the one hand, I agree with those who identify the timing and location of Jesus's covenant inauguration with the timing and location of his sacrifice. On the other hand, Moffitt and others helpfully argue that Jesus's sacrifice took place in the heavenly tabernacle after his bodily resurrection and ascension. At the same time, however, Moffitt unhelpfully bifurcates covenant inauguration and sacrifice. I maintain, with the former

⁸⁹ Such a view differs from the cross-and-heaven view above by virtue of the fact that, in the cross-and-heaven view, Jesus's covenant-inaugural sacrifice takes place both on the cross and in heaven. In the view articulated here, however, Jesus's covenant-inaugural sacrifice takes place only in heaven. Both views involve the cross in the process that results in covenant inauguration, but the cross-and-heaven view includes it as part of the covenant-inaugurating sacrifice, while this view includes it before the covenant-inaugurating sacrifice

⁹⁰ R. B. Jamieson, discussion with Phillip Smith, November 20, 2022.

⁹¹ While Jamieson's monograph was published after his 2016 article, the content of this section of his monograph was largely written before that of the article, since the monograph originated as his 2017 doctoral dissertation. Thus, his 2016 article reflects his more recent articulation of this point (a minor point in both works) when compared with his monograph. Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*.

group, that Jesus's sacrifice and covenant inauguration occurred together, and, with the latter, that his sacrifice was completed in the heavenly tabernacle after his resurrection and ascension.

I mean to argue for the inauguration of the new covenant what Moffitt says about the atonement: "The writer is not denying the importance of Jesus' death in effecting salvation, but clarifying where that event fits in a larger process. The argument of this study is that he does not conflate that event with the [covenant-inaugurating] moment. Rather, he locates Jesus' death at the front end of a process that culminates in the [covenant-inaugurating] moment."⁹²

In order to make this argument, I will first examine the source text for Hebrews's most explicit discussion of covenant inauguration (Exod 24, used in Heb 9) to determine the criteria for inauguration of the old and new covenants. That is, when in the process of covenant inauguration is a covenant actually inaugurated? Second, I will argue from Hebrews 7:11–25 and 8:1–5 that Jesus became a priest after his resurrection, and so did not make his sacrifice while on the cross. Then, I will show that Hebrews 9:14–28 compares the inaugurations of the old and new covenants to the extent that they are both inaugurated by the offering of a blood sacrifice. Further, for the new covenant, this sacrifice took place in the heavenly sanctuary. I will then consider the relationship between covenant inauguration and new covenant blessings in Hebrews 10. Before leaving Hebrews, I will analyze Hebrews 2:9 as a case study for the additional explanatory power that my schema provides for texts regarding Jesus's salvific actions in Hebrews. Finally, I will briefly compare Hebrews's construal of the new covenant inauguration with that of the Synoptic Gospels and Paul.

⁹² Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 292–93.

CHAPTER 2

COVENANT INAUGURATION IN EXODUS 24

In order to discuss covenant inauguration in Hebrews in detail, what constitutes a covenant inauguration in the logic of Hebrews must be determined. What are the criteria that need to be met in order to say that a covenant has been inaugurated? For Hebrews, the focus of this question can be narrowed from all covenants to only the old and new covenant. This is because, as Daniel Stevens observes, “in Hebrews only the ‘Old’ and the ‘New’ are recognised as ‘covenants.’”¹ In Hebrews 9:14–28, the author speaks more explicitly than anywhere else in the letter about the mechanics of covenant inauguration. In this passage, the new covenant is described as operating with the same logic as the old covenant. Hebrews draws on Exodus 24 as its source text to explain covenant inauguration. So, I will consider the mechanics of the covenant ratification ceremony in Exodus 24.

After the people of Israel arrive at Sinai and prepare to make the covenant (Exod 19), the stipulations of the covenant are told to Moses so that he can then declare to the people (Exod 20–23). Moses, Aaron and his sons, and seventy elders from the people go onto the mountain to worship God (24:1). Moses then approaches God (24:2). After this, the covenant stipulations are declared, written down, and agreed to by the people (24:3–4a, 7). Moses sets up an altar along with pillars to represent the people (24:4b). Sacrifices are offered, with the blood of the sacrifices being thrown against the altar and on the people (24:6, 8a). After this high point of the ceremony, Moses, Aaron

¹ Daniel J. Stevens, “A Promise Remains: A Study of Promise in the Epistle to the Hebrews” (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2019), 33.

and his sons, and the seventy elders again ascend the mountain (24:9). This time, they see God, eat, and drink (24:10–11).

It is only when Moses manipulates the sacrificial blood that he calls it “the blood of the covenant,” and says that God “has made” the covenant with the people.² Before this moment, the covenant is not said to be “made,” and at this moment, it has been “made.” So, there is a moment at which the covenant can be said to be inaugurated, and before which it is not inaugurated. That moment occurs when Moses applies the sacrificial blood to the altar and the people.³

Exodus 19–24 describes the inauguration of the covenant at Sinai in a way that starts with a people at a distance from God (Exod 19), and ends with a people in a covenant relationship with God (Exod 24). Further, this people’s leaders share a meal in God’s presence (Exod 24:10–11). The culminating point of the ceremony that enables this change of relationship is the manipulation of blood involved in the sacrifice that is made. It is not until this moment that Moses speaks of the covenant as having been made (24:8).

Hebrews identifies this same moment when the author describes the inauguration of the old covenant as a model for the inauguration of the new. In Hebrews’s narration of the Sinai event, Moses calls the blood “the blood of the covenant” while he is sprinkling the people and the book containing the words of God just declared. Hebrews retells this moment as an explanation of the author’s statement that the old covenant was inaugurated with blood (9:18–19).

² The LXX rightly translates כרת (perfect) in Exod 24:8 with διέθετο (aorist). In 24:6, the manipulation of blood is described as putting (MT וישם) or pouring-onto (LXX προσέχεεν). In 24:8, it is sprinkling (MT ויזרק, LXX κατεσκέδασεν).

³ My understanding of this moment of blood application in the covenant inauguration ceremony is similar to a common understanding of the moment that a wedding officiant declares a man and woman to be husband and wife. In both the wedding and the inauguration ceremony, the effective moment does not occur in a vacuum; the process includes action that precedes it (e.g., declaration of vows) and follows it (e.g., a shared meal). However, this moment is indeed the effective moment of the whole process. Before this moment, the man and woman are not married; after this moment, they are married.

CHAPTER 3

TIMING OF JESUS'S APPOINTMENT TO PRIESTHOOD IN HEBREWS 7 AND 8

The timing of Jesus's appointment to priesthood is relevant to the question of when the new covenant was inaugurated, because, according to Hebrews 9, covenants are inaugurated with sacrifices. Further, Jesus made his sacrifice only after he had become a priest. Jesus's appointment to priesthood is thus a necessary condition for the inauguration of the new covenant. If Jesus was appointed as a priest, and thus performed his single sacrifice, only after his resurrection, then he inaugurated the covenant after his resurrection as well. From Hebrews 7:11–25 and 8:1–5, I will argue that this is indeed the case.

Hebrews 7:11–25

In Hebrews 7, the author compares and contrasts two types of priesthods: the Levitical priesthood and the Melchizedekian priesthood. The latter is superior to the former on every axis discussed in this chapter. The Levitical priests became priests on the basis of their being from the tribe of Levi; Jesus became a priest on the basis of an indestructible life (7:16–17). The Levitical priests became priests without an oath; Jesus became a priest with an oath (7:20–21). That Jesus acquired his superior priesthood by this superior method means that he is the guarantee of a superior covenant (7:22).

The author posits that perfection was not attainable through the Levitical priesthood, as evidenced by the appearance of Christ as a Melchizedekian priest (7:11). If perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood, the author reasons, there would be no need for a change in priesthood. However, there has in fact been a change in priesthood. This switch from the Levitical to the Melchizedekian priesthood brings with it

a switch from one type of qualification for priesthood to another (7:12). A person is qualified for the Levitical priesthood “according to a law of command about fleshly generation” (7:15; cf., e.g., Deut 18:1). That is, it is necessary for a person to be a member of the tribe of Levi in order to become a priest of this order. In contrast, is not on the basis of ancestry that one is able to become a priest of the Melchizedekian order, but is instead “according to the power of indestructible life” (7:16). In this way, a priest of the Melchizedekian order would not be limited in his service by his own mortality, but would be able to continue acting as priest forever, since what qualified him for priesthood (indestructible life) also precluded the cessation of his service on account of his own death (7:17, 23–24). Death cannot stop him from serving, since he cannot die.

The author says that Jesus was appointed to priesthood on the basis of an indestructible life (7:16–17) and with an oath (7:20–21). Two questions then arise. When did Jesus acquire this indestructible life? When was this oath made to him?

Three interpretive options for understanding when Jesus acquired indestructible life are as follows: (1) that he has always had it by virtue of his being divine, (2) that he acquired it upon his incarnation, and (3) that he acquired it upon his resurrection. The first option is not viable for Hebrews, because, in Hebrews, Jesus acts specifically as a *human* priest (2:5–18).¹ The author of Hebrews takes pains to point out that Jesus has “flesh and blood” like “his brothers” whom he represents as their priest (2:14, 17). The last two options then remain. It is difficult to see how the life Jesus possessed before his resurrection could be considered indestructible, since he did, in fact, die. We are then left with the option that Jesus was granted “indestructible life” at his resurrection. This option allows for Jesus to hold his status as high priest specifically as a

¹ David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NovTSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 129–42.

(perfected) human, and for the fact that he is now no longer subject to death.² This fits with Hebrews 7:24–25, where the author accounts for Jesus’s ability to fully save “the ones who draw near to God through him” by grounding this ability in the fact that he lives and appeals for them forever. If Jesus gained indestructible life at his resurrection, then he was qualified for priesthood only once he was resurrected. This means that he could not have made his priestly sacrifice before he was raised from the dead, a conclusion which precludes the interpretation of his death itself as the culminating moment of sacrificial self-offering.

As for the oath was made to Jesus, the author states that it was made to “a son” who had already been put into the state of “having been made perfect/complete forever” (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον; 7:28). We can then locate Jesus’s change of status to priesthood to a time after he was made perfect. This is because he was already perfected when he became a priest. Hebrews 2:10 and 5:8–10 indicate that it was Christ’s suffering that perfected him for his priestly role. Therefore, it was only after he had undergone his suffering of death that he was “perfected” (τελειωθεὶς; 5:9) and thus in the position 7:28 describes him as occupying when he received the oath and was appointed to priesthood.³

The author further defines the timing of Jesus’s appointment by saying that Jesus had already become a priest by the time that he entered “the place inside the curtain” (τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος; 6:20). This is the location that the author describes Jesus as entering in order to make his offering (and thus, before he makes his offering; 9:24–25).⁴ In other words, Christ became a priest before he entered the place where he would carry out his priestly duties.

² For Jesus’s being perfected as involved with his resurrection and serving as heavenly priest, see R. B. Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering in Hebrews*, SNTSMS 172 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 23–35; Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 198–208.

³ So Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 29.

⁴ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 49.

Hebrews 8:1–5

In Hebrews 8, the author continues his discussion of Jesus’s priesthood, and explicitly draws in the new covenant. In 8:1–5, he compares the logic and contrasts the location of Jesus’s priestly ministry with those of the Levitical priests. In 8:6–13, he discusses the superiority of the covenant that Jesus mediates over the covenant governing the Levitical priests’ service.

The author states that Jesus’s high priestly ministry takes place in the heavenly tent, and not on earth (8:2–4). It is “in the heavens” that Jesus currently sits “at the right hand of the throne of majesty” (8:1). The Levitical priests, on the other hand, minister on earth (8:4–5). The Levitical priests minister only on earth in the sanctuary which is a copy of the sanctuary in heaven, while Christ ministers only in heaven in the paradigmatic sanctuary (8:5). Jesus’s priesthood does not operate on earth (8:4). In fact, if Jesus were on earth, “he would not even be a priest.” This strong spatial division locates each priesthood in one and only one of either earth (for Levites) or heaven (for Jesus). Further, the author claims that “the true tent” (τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς) in the heavens is superior to the earthly tent in that it was built by God rather than people (8:2) and is foundational rather than being “a copy and shadow” (8:5). This is because the heavenly pattern predates the earthly copy, as evidenced by the fact that Moses was shown the former as a basis for the latter (8:5).

These tents are each associated with one priesthood and one realm: Levitical or Melchizedekian, earth or heaven. Jesus, as a Melchizedekian priest, could not serve as a priest on earth, since his priesthood’s realm is in heaven. Thus, any action he took while on earth, whatever its covenantal significance, was not carried out through his role of priest. His priestly work resides in heaven.

This heavenly priestly work includes not only covenant maintenance, but also covenant inauguration.⁵ This is because both covenant maintenance and covenant inauguration involve sacrifice, and Jesus made only one sacrifice: that which took place in the heavenly temple (e.g., 7:27).⁶ The author of Hebrews states that priests are appointed to their role so that they can offer sacrifices (8:3). They must be appointed before they make their offerings. So, Jesus was appointed to his role of high priest before he made his offering and, 7:16 and 7:28 add, after his resurrection.

According to Hebrews 7–8, Jesus was appointed as high priest on the basis of indestructible life and by an oath. He gained this indestructible life and received this oath after his resurrection. Further, Jesus’s priesthood operates only in heaven, and not on earth. So, Jesus could not have made his sacrificial offering while he was on earth and not yet appointed to priesthood. His sacrifice must have its spatial location in heaven and its temporal location after his resurrection. Since he made only one sacrifice, and the effective moment of covenant inauguration aligns with the effective moment of sacrifice (i.e., the moment of blood application), Jesus inaugurated the new covenant in heaven after his resurrection.

⁵ Contra David M. Moffitt, “Wilderness Identity and Pentateuchal Narrative: Distinguishing between Jesus’ Inauguration and Maintenance of the New Covenant in Hebrews,” in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. Katherine M. Hockey, Madison N. Pierce, and Francis Watson, LNTS 565 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 153–71.

⁶ See also David M. Moffitt, “Serving in the Tabernacle in Heaven: Sacred Space, Jesus’s High-Priestly Sacrifice, and Hebrews’ Analogical Theology,” in *Hebrews in Contexts*, ed. Gabriella Gelardini and Harold W. Attridge, AGJU 91 (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

CHAPTER 4
COVENANT INAUGURATION AND SACRIFICE IN
HEBREWS 9

Hebrews 9 contains the author's most explicit discussion of the process by which the old and new covenants were inaugurated. In this chapter, he describes the necessity of death for these inaugurations (9:15–22) and the heavenly location of Jesus's sacrifice (9:23–28). I begin this section with an overview of Hebrews 9 and a summary of my argument as it relates to 9:15–28.

Overview of Hebrews 9

In 9:1–5, the author describes the earthly sanctuary in which Levitical priests perform their cultic duties. In 9:6–10, he says that priests' sacrifices in the earthly sanctuary are temporary and effective only for the body. In contrast, Christ's sacrifices take place in the heavenly sanctuary, are eternal, and are spiritually effective for internal purification of the people (9:11–14).

In 9:15–22, the author describes the covenantal reasons for Christ's death. In 9:15–18, he explains that Christ's death satisfied the old covenant. In 9:15, Christ is the mediator of a "new covenant." He mediates a *new*, rather than old, covenant because the old covenant is satisfied by his death. The purpose of his being the mediator of this covenant is that the people receive the inheritance that has been promised. In 9:16–17, it had to be a death that redeemed the covenant people, since broken covenants require death. In the Torah, death, along with exile from the land, is the final sanction for breaking the old covenant (see, e.g., Lev 26:14–39; Deut 28:15–68). Since covenants require death in the case that they are broken, they also require death for the drohritus

(i.e., acted-out self-maledictory oath) at their inauguration.¹ So, both the old and new covenants were inaugurated with blood that was acquired through death (9:18–20).

This blood was used for purification in the inauguration and maintenance of the old covenant (9:20–22). In addition to being necessary for purification, blood was also necessary for forgiveness (9:22). In 9:23–26, the author describes the purificatory purpose of Christ’s sacrifice. The earthly holy places, which were copies of the heavenly holy places, had to be purified with blood that was applied during sacrifice. So, the heavenly holy places after which the earthly ones were patterned needed to be purified with blood that was applied during a better sacrifice (9:23–26). In these verses, there is first a general contrast of quality: the earthly copies were purified with sacrifices; the heavenly patterns were purified with better sacrifices (9:23). Then, there is a contrast of location: the earthly sacrifices took place in hand-made holy places, while Christ’s sacrifice took place in heaven itself before God (9:24). Finally, there is a contrast of iterations and material: the Levitical high priests present animal blood repeatedly; Christ presented his own blood once (9:25–26). In 9:27–28 the author reasserts the uniqueness of Christ’s actions in the Christ event. Christ died once and dealt with sin. He will return from heaven to earth, not to deal with sin again, but to save people.

Summary of Argument

In Hebrews 9:15–28, the author of Hebrews explains the role of blood and sacrifice in the inaugurations of the old and new covenants. He compares these covenants with respect to their processes of inauguration and contrasts them with respect to various qualities (delineated below) that render the new superior to the old. In 9:18, he states that blood was used to inaugurate the old covenant and implies that blood was used to inaugurate the new as well. For the old covenant, the blood of sacrificial victims was

¹ See Scott W. Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death: A Study of Hebrews 9:15–22,” *CBQ* 66 (2004): 432.

sprinkled on various objects and people in order to purify them (9:19-20, 23). For the new covenant, purification was effected through sacrifice as well (9:23). Just as the moment of purifying by sacrifice was the moment of covenant inauguration for the old covenant (9:19–22; cf. Exod 24:8), by comparison, the moment of purifying by sacrifice was also the moment of covenant inauguration for the new covenant.

Further, since Christ offered only one sacrifice, the sacrifice of which the author speaks in 9:23–25 is the one by which Christ both purified “the heavnlies” and inaugurated the covenant (9:26–28). Since Christ made his covenant-inaugurating sacrifice after entering “heaven itself,” this moment of entrance is the earliest possible moment of the inauguration of the new covenant (9:24).

In saying that the new covenant was inaugurated by sacrifice, what I mean is that the culminating and effective moment of the process by which Christ made the new covenant was the culminating and effective moment of his sacrifice. Further, I claim that this moment occurred when he presented his blood in the heavenly sanctuary and purified both the people and items (i.e., tabernacle and its furnishings) of the new covenant. This claim does not imply that Jesus’s death had no part to play in the inauguration of the covenant, any more than the slaughter of a sacrificial victim has no part to play in the process of sacrifice. It does, however, mean that the moment of Jesus’s death is not to be identified with the culminating and effective moment of covenant inauguration. If the Christ event would have ended at Jesus’s death, the new covenant would not have been inaugurated. It was instead his post-resurrection self-offering in the heavenly sanctuary that inaugurated the covenant.

I will now examine 9:14–28 in more detail.

Hebrews 9:15–17

An interpretive crux in this passage significantly affects its translation. So, for the sake of a clear discussion, I provide my translation of 9:15–17 below.²

And because of this he is a mediator of a new covenant: so that (a death having happened for redemption from the transgressions committed against the first covenant) the called ones might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For, since there is a covenant, it is necessary for the death of the covenanter to be borne [by another], because a covenant [that has been broken] becomes firm on the basis of dead individuals, since it is never strong when the covenanter lives.

In 9:15–17, we see that blood acquired through death is required to satisfy a covenant in the case that it is broken. This principle is here applied to the old covenant. In 9:15, the covenant of which Christ is the mediator is the *new* covenant. It must be new because the covenant people have been released from the death sentence they were under for having broken the old covenant. They are released from this sentence by Christ's substitutionary death.³ That is, Christ's death satisfied the covenant sanctions against the people for having broken the terms of the old covenant (i.e., for having committed "the transgressions committed against the first covenant").⁴ Since Christ satisfied the old covenant by his death, he was then in a position to make a new covenant that would not be hindered by the problem that prevented the old covenant from effecting full purification, forgiveness, and access to God: the people's sin (cf. 8:7–8).⁵ The purpose of Jesus's being the mediator of a new covenant is that the people receive the inheritance

² My translation of 9:15–17 largely, but not completely, follows that of Hahn. Hahn, "A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death: A Study of Hebrews 9:15–22," 432. Phrases in brackets find no corresponding phrases in the Greek, but indicate my understanding of the passage nonetheless.

³ See R. B. Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering in Hebrews*, SNTSMS 172 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 116–26.

⁴ Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*, 124; Dana M. Harris, *Hebrews*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019), 230; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, WBC, vol. 47B (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 241–42.

⁵ In Heb 8, the old covenant is said not to be faultless. However, its fault is not its own, but the people's, on account of their sin (8:7–13). It is this sin that the new covenant will take away (8:12–13).

that was promised to Abram (cf. 6:13–20).⁶ The old covenant, by contrast, had been unable to cause the people to receive this inheritance.⁷

A significant interpretive crux in this passage is whether *διαθήκη* here means *covenant* or *testament/will*. While the majority view is that it means *testament*, there are good reasons to accept the reading *covenant* instead.⁸ If these verses refer to wills and not to covenants, then they likely claim that covenants are inaugurated at death. In this case, it would be difficult to sustain a claim that Hebrews 9 places the inauguration of the new covenant anywhere except at the death of Jesus on the cross.

Many modern English translations of these verses indicate that the new covenant was activated in the same manner that a will or testament is activated, that is, at the moment of the death of the one who made it. In the case of the new covenant, this moment would be that of Christ's death. If *διαθήκη* means *testament*, then these verses contain a legal illustration that the author uses to make the point that, like a testament, the old and new covenants began at the moment someone or something died. For the illustrative testament, it is the testator who dies; for the old covenant, it is the sacrificial animal(s); for the new covenant, it is Christ. This view is reflected in the rendering of 9:16–17 in the NIV: “In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living.”⁹ These verses, then, are taken to point to

⁶ For the fact that the new covenant makes available (certain aspects of) the Abrahamic promise, see Daniel J. Stevens, “A Promise Remains: A Study of Promise in the Epistle to the Hebrews” (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2019), 68–84.

⁷ For a similar period of waiting to receive the promise, see 11:39–40.

⁸ For *will/testament*, see, for example, Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 255–56; Brian C. Small, *The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews*, BIS 128 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 298; Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 275–77. For *covenant*, see, for example, David G. Peterson, *Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 214; Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Plan*, NSBT 23 (Nottingham: Apollos, 2007), 203–6.

⁹ For *will*, see, for example, NLT, CSB, and translations in the KJV tradition (e.g., ESV, NRSVue). For *covenant*, see translations in the NASB tradition (e.g., LSB).

death as the moment when a will (and, by virtue of the illustration, a covenant) is activated.

There are, however, numerous serious problems with this position, as John Hughes and Scott Hahn have pointed out.¹⁰ First, in Greco-Roman culture, wills did not require the death of the testator in order to become legally valid. Instead, they became valid when they were “written down, witnessed, and deposited with a notary.”¹¹ Second, in Greco-Roman legal contexts, φέρω takes a word-related item as its object (e.g., a report or claim), but not does not take a death as its object.¹² So, if the context set by διαθήκη is that of wills, then for the author to use θάνατον as the object of φέρεσθαι would be non-standard. Third, the meaning *the time of death* does not fit the plural substantive adjective in the phrase ἐπί νεκροίς. A better construal is *dead bodies/individuals*.¹³ Fourth, in all his other uses of διαθήκη, the author of Hebrews uses this word in the sense of *covenant*.¹⁴ While this fact does not by itself require that he use διαθήκη in the same way here, it does set up *covenant* as the default expectation for this word’s meaning in this letter. This implies that the audience should understand this word in this document to have this meaning unless the author indicates otherwise. Fifth, the tight flow of logic (reflected in syntax) in 9:11–22 would be interrupted if the author were to switch senses of διαθήκη for one sentence in the middle of the passage, and thus in the middle of his flow of logic.¹⁵

As evidence for the view that διαθήκη here means *covenant*, the texts preceding and following 9:16–17 (i.e., 9:15 and 9:18–22) involve the broken old covenant, so it is

¹⁰ John J. Hughes, “Hebrews IX 15ff. and Galatians III 15ff.: A Study in Covenant Practice and Procedure,” *NovT* 21, no. 1 (1979): 27–96; Scott W. Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death: A Study of Hebrews 9:15–22,” *CBQ* 66 (2004): 416–36.

¹¹ Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death,” 418.

¹² Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death,” 419.

¹³ Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death,” 419.

¹⁴ Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death,” 419–20.

¹⁵ Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death,” 420–21.

likely that these verses center on the same topic.¹⁶ Second, on the meaning of φέρω, it is not unheard of for figurative burdens to be carried by individuals for the sake of others in the context of a covenant. In Isaiah 53, for example, there may be both grammatical and theological links to Hebrews 9:16–17.¹⁷ In Isaiah 53, the Servant of Yahweh bears a number of burdens for the covenant people, a task which involves his own death.¹⁸ This is similar to a claim in Hebrews 9:15–17 that Jesus, for the sake of the covenant people, bore the burden of death required by the covenant. Third, if διαθήκη here means *covenant*, the logic of Hebrews 9:16–17 is reflected elsewhere in Hebrews as well.¹⁹ That is, the author operates in multiple passages with the logic that the people who were under the old covenant broke it, and were therefore owed the covenant sanction of death for disobedience (2:2; 10:28). Christ died in the place of the people and, by this death, freed them from their death sentence (2:14–15). Christ also makes a new covenant for the people (10:15–17; 12:24).

So, it is more consistent with the language and logic of Greco-Roman legal practice, the grammar of 9:15–22, and the covenantal reasoning of the letter to understand διαθήκη in 9:16–17 as *covenant* rather than *testament*. The author of Hebrews does not here compare the process of covenant inauguration with the validation of wills, but instead explains a reason for Jesus’s death. Jesus’s death satisfied the sanctions of the broken old covenant.²⁰

In 9:15–17, the author argues that Christ’s death served to redeem “the called” from the effects of the transgressions committed “against” the old covenant (9:15). This

¹⁶ Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death,” 436.

¹⁷ This passage is also potentially alluded to in Heb 9:28. See, e.g., Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death,” 433; Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 169–74.

¹⁸ Isa 53:3, 4, 11, 12 LXX. See also Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death,” 433.

¹⁹ Hahn, “A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death,” 435.

²⁰ See also Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 115–25.

was necessary because death is required in the case of a broken covenant, and covenants are made under the threat of death to be dealt if are broken (9:16–17). With the old covenant broken and its corresponding curse meted out against Christ (representing the people), there is opportunity for the new covenant to be made between God and his people. It is this reasoning that underlies the *διὰ τοῦτο* of 9:15 that links *διαθήκης καινῆς μεσίτης ἐστίν* with *θανάτου . . . παραβάσεων*. The purpose of Jesus’s mediation of the new covenant, as opposed to the old covenant, is that the situation can come about where Jesus’s death brings redemption from the transgressions that were committed against the old covenant and the covenant people receive the promised inheritance. Jesus’s death accomplishes this, not by inaugurating the new covenant, but by satisfying the death-demand of the transgressed old covenant.²¹

Hebrews 9:18–22

Having explained how death relates to the satisfaction of a covenant, the author turns to the relation between death and the beginning of the old covenant. Since the covenant would require the death of the covenant maker if they should break faith (9:16–17), the covenant was inaugurated with a *drohritus*, that is, an acted-out self-maledictory oath that involved killing one or more sacrificial victims as a portrayal of the covenant’s potential death sentence against a covenant breaker.²² Since blood is required to satisfy a covenant if it should be broken, as the author’s logic goes, it is also required to inaugurate one.²³ The purpose for which blood was used in the inaugurations of these covenants was purification by sprinkling/throwing/pouring. It was not until the blood had been applied,

²¹ Contra Moffitt, Lane, and Attridge.

²² See, for example, Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 204; Scott W. Hahn, “From Old to New: ‘Covenant’ or ‘Testament’ in Hebrews 9?,” *Letter & Spirit* 8 (2013): 25–26.

²³ As part of the covenant ratification ceremony, the *drohritus* vividly pictures the death that will befall the covenant maker if they should break the covenant. See, e.g., “Chapter Six: ‘Covenant [בְּרִית]’ and ‘Oath’ Defined,” in Gordon Paul Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, VTSup 52. (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 168–215.

and thus the people and objects of the covenant had been purified, that the covenant (whether old or new) was ratified. The whole inauguration process, including the death of the sacrificial victim, was necessary, but only the cultic manipulation of blood constituted the effective moment for covenant inauguration.²⁴ So, blood acquired through death was required to inaugurate both the old and new covenants. Importantly, the author does not here claim that it is at the moment of slaughter that a covenant is inaugurated.²⁵ Still, the covenant is inaugurated with the blood procured by the slaughter, since it is this blood that is presented as an offering. This use of blood in the covenant inaugurating process, the author implies, was not restricted to the inauguration of the old covenant. The new covenant, because it operates with the same logic, was also inaugurated with blood (9:18).²⁶

Again, the author does not here say that covenants are inaugurated upon the shedding of blood. Such a statement would, of course, imply that the new covenant was inaugurated at the cross. The author instead claims in 9:18 that blood is necessary for inauguration; this statement does not specify the timing of the covenant inauguration, but only specifies one of the elements needed for it.

What part, then, did blood play in the inaugurations of the old and new covenants? The author first says that blood was sprinkled on various objects. During the old covenant inauguration ceremony, it was sprinkled on “the whole people” and “the

²⁴ See the discussion above regarding Moses’s actions and statement in Exod 24:8: “And Moses took the blood and he sprinkled the people and said, ‘Behold the blood of the covenant that Yahweh made with you’” (under “Covenant Inauguration in Exodus 24”).

²⁵ The idea that the moment of slaughter is not the moment of covenant inauguration is also present in the making of the covenant between Yahweh and Abram. It is only after the entire ceremony, not only the slaughter, has taken place that this covenant is described as having been made (Gen 15, especially 15:17–18).

²⁶ In 9:18, the author says, “So then, neither was the first inaugurated without blood.” In this statement, he is either comparing the inauguration of the old covenant (“the first”) with that of the new covenant, or comparing the inauguration of the old covenant with the logic of covenant inaugurations in general. In the former case, the application of this logic to the new covenant can be made directly. In the latter, it can be made indirectly, since logic of covenant inaugurations in general would apply both to the old and new covenants.

book itself” (9:19). Likewise and later, Moses sprinkled the tent and the equipment used for cultic service (9:21).²⁷ In 9:22, the author says that this sprinkling with blood accomplished purification: “almost everything is purified with blood according to the law.”

The author concludes this subsection (9:15–22) with the aphoristic statement that without the outpouring of blood (*αἱματεκχυσίας*), there is no forgiveness of sins (9:22). The meaning of *αἱματεκχυσίας* in 9:22 is another interpretive crux. It may refer either to the spilling of blood in slaughter or the pouring/sprinkling/manipulating of blood in subsequent ritual actions.²⁸ Word studies here yield meager results, since *αἱματεκχυσία* is unattested in Greek literature before Hebrews. Even after the writing of our letter, it remains a very uncommon word.²⁹ Given that the author of Hebrews uses this word in the context of an argument about the necessity of death for cultic purposes (cf. especially 9:16–17), the meaning *bloodshed* rather than (*ritual*) *pouring out of blood* seems the more likely option here. However, my argument does not depend on this conclusion. Whichever the meaning of this word here, there is no necessary disagreement with the logic of this passage that I propose. If *αἱματεκχυσίας* here refers to the manipulation of blood in sacrifice after slaughter, then this verse states that such manipulation is necessary for the forgiveness of sins. If, on the other hand, *αἱματεκχυσίας* here refers to the shedding of blood in the slaughter of a sacrificial

²⁷ So John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews with Preliminary Exercitations*, vol. 6, *Exposition of Hebrews, 8:1–10:39*, ed. William H. Gould, vol. 22 of *The Works of John Owen* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2018), 345.

²⁸ For slaughter, see, for example, James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1924), 130; Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 141–53. For ritual manipulation, see, for example, Attridge, *Hebrews*, 259; David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NovTSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 291n157.

²⁹ The only other extant use of the word before the third century AD occurs in the writing of the second-century author Tatian, where it is used to describe the shedding of blood in gladiatorial fights. Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 23.5, in *Oratio ad Graecos / Rede an die Griechen*, ed. and trans. Jörg Trelenberg, BHT 165 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 148; Thesaurus Linguae Graecae Digital Library, ed. Maria C. Pantelia, (University of California, Irvine, 2023).

victim, then this verse states that such slaughter is necessary for the forgiveness of sins. Neither meaning conflicts with my proposal. It is necessary for the blood that effects forgiveness to be spilled in slaughter if it is later to be presented by manipulation (pouring, sprinkling, etc.). In either case, 9:22 does not specify the moment that forgiveness is granted, but instead points to one of the necessary steps in the process that results in forgiveness, whether that step is in the middle of the process (slaughter) or at the end (blood manipulation).³⁰

Hebrews 9:23–28

Having demonstrated that neither 9:15–17 nor 9:18–22 locate Jesus’s inauguration of the new covenant on the cross, I will now attempt to show that 9:23–28 locates the inauguration in the heavenly sanctuary on the basis of the fact that Jesus made his purifying and covenant-inaugurating sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary.

In 9:23, the author draws a comparison between the operations of the old and new covenants, namely, that the holy places of both covenants were purified by sacrifices. The earthly sacrifices described in 9:18–22 purified the tent and furnishings of the old covenant, but the heavenly tabernacle required another type of sacrifice. Underlying the author’s comparative logic is that the earthly “tent and also all the instruments of service” were patterned after similar items in heaven (9:21, 23). This logic appears in 8:5 as well, where the author quotes Exodus 25:40 to ground his claim that the priests who serve in the tent on earth “serve a copy (*ὑποδείγματι*) and shadow of the things of heaven.” In 9:23, the earthly cultic tent and instruments are again called *ὑποδείγματα* and operate in ways similar to their heavenly counterparts. Because the earthly cult is patterned after the heavenly cult, some things that are known to be true

³⁰ Similarly, Jamieson: “Hebrews 9:22b does not say that slaughter is sufficient for atonement, merely that it is necessary, and why.” Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 131.

about the earthly copies can also be known to be true about the heavenly exemplars.³¹ Since the earthly tent and instruments were purified by sacrificial blood, the author reasons that the heavenly things upon which these are patterned must also be purified by sacrificial blood (9:23). So, the sacrifice that Jesus offers in 9:24–28 effects purification of the heavenly cultic exemplars.

In the inaugurations of the old and new covenants, blood was used to effect purification through its manipulation in sacrifice (9:22–24). For the old covenant, Moses took “the blood of bulls and goats” and manipulated it by sprinkling the people and items of the covenant (9:19; cf. Exod 24:5–8). Because the author of Hebrews says that heaven is purified with “better sacrifices,” the purifying earthly actions to which these “better sacrifices” are compared should also be considered sacrifices. In the case of the new covenant, then, Jesus suffered on the cross, and thereby obtained his own blood for use in sacrificial presentation (9:22, 26). He then entered “into heaven itself” in order to offer himself and purify the people and items of the covenant, presumably by sprinkling his blood (9:23–25, 14).³² So, Moses’s purificatory sacrifices inaugurated the old covenant, and Christ’s single sacrifice, in which he obtained and manipulated his blood for the purpose of purification, is what inaugurated the new covenant.

Because much is made in Hebrews (and this thesis) of the fact that Jesus made one, and only one, sacrifice, it seems prudent to briefly address the fact that the author refers to *θυσίαις* (plural) as occurring in heaven (9:23). It is common to explain this plural form as being “attracted” to the plural of *τούτους*, as a general reference to the category of

³¹ So Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 427. The author of Hebrews does not elaborate on how to determine which inferences can be drawn between the earthly and heavenly cults and which cannot. Still, my argument here is based on something he says can be known.

³² Since in 12:24, Jesus’s blood is the “sprinkled blood,” we can know that his blood was at some point sprinkled. It seems likely that this moment of sprinkling occurred during the Christ event when Jesus manipulated his blood in order to purify the people and items of the new covenant. In my view, this occurred in the heavenly sanctuary after his resurrection and ascension.

sacrifices, or as both.³³ Ceslas Spicq concisely describes *τούτους* here as a “generic or category plural brought about by parallelism.”³⁴ I agree. The author of Hebrews is here explaining how the new covenant is both similar and superior to the old. There are tents: earthly and heavenly; vessels of worship: earthly and heavenly; priests: earthly and heavenly; and sacrifices: earthly and heavenly. The author’s use of a plural form for *θυσίαις* here does not indicate that more than one sacrifice was made by Christ. Indeed, both in this subsection (9:23–28) and elsewhere in the letter, the author repeatedly claims that Christ made only one sacrifice (Heb 7:27; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10, 12, 14).

While identifying similarities, the author of Hebrews draws out a number of differences between the two systems of sacrifice in 9:23–28. The earthly sacrifices purified the earthly copies; Christ’s purified the heavenly exemplars (9:23). The earthly sacrifices took place in hand-made holy places; Christ’s took place in heaven itself (9:24). The earthly sacrifices were offerings of animal blood; Christ’s consisted of his own blood (9:25–26). The earthly sacrifices occurred many times; Christ’s occurred only once (9:25–26, 28). So, Christ’s new covenant sacrifice was superior to those of the old covenant in number (once), content (his own blood), location (heaven itself), and objects of purification (heavenly exemplars). While Christ’s sacrifice was superior to those of Moses (9:18–22) and the Levitical priests (9:22–26), it operated on the same logic. That is, his sacrifice also effected purification and, like Moses’s, inaugurated a covenant.

³³ See Ceslas Spicq, *L’Épître aux Hébreux, EBib* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1953), 266; Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 379; Norman H. Young, “The Gospel According to Hebrews 9” 27, no. 2 (1981): 206; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 261; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 247; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1993), 478; Koester, *Hebrews*, 427; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 243; Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 416; Albert Vanhoye, *The Letter to the Hebrews: A New Commentary* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2015), 155. Johnson thinks that *θυσίαις* is attracted to become plural not by *τούτους*, but by *τὰ ἅγια* of 8:2; 9:8, 12, 24, and 25.

³⁴ “pluriel générique ou de catégorie . . . amené par le parallélisme” (Spicq, *L’Épître aux Hébreux*, 266.)

As surveyed in the introduction of this thesis, the sacrifice that Jesus made is commonly considered to have been made while he was dying on the cross.³⁵ However, as Jamieson has helpfully pointed out, 9:24–25 indicates “that the sequence ‘enter in order to offer’ is common to both the earthly high priests and Christ.”³⁶ The earthly high priest entered the place where he would present his offering (that is, the earthly holy places) in order to make, and prior to making, his offering. In the same way, Christ entered the place where he would present his offering (that is, the heavenly holy places) in order to make, and prior to making, his offering. This is similar to the progression described earlier in Hebrews 9 where, as high priest, Christ entered the tent that is not “handmade, that is, not of this creation,” and there “offered himself blemishless to God” (9:11–14). Neither 9:11–14 nor 9:24–25 describe Christ’s sacrifice as having taken place on the cross. Instead, they set his offering in the heavenly sanctuary.³⁷ Since Christ made his single sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary, and since, by his sacrifice, he inaugurated the new covenant, Christ inaugurated the new covenant in the heavenly sanctuary.

Hebrews 9:14

A final issue to address regarding purification in Hebrews 9 is the future tense of the verb *καθαριεῖ* in 9:14. It may be argued that the fact that this verb is in the future tense precludes any possibility that Jesus’s purifying actions took place in the past. However, when one considers uses of the construction “*ποσω μαλλον* + (future tense verb)” in the New Testament and other Greek literature before AD 200, it is evident that the future tense verb in this construction can either refer to future events or to what is to

³⁵ For a survey of recent views regarding when and where Jesus’s sacrifice occurred, see discussion in “Introduction” above, and R. B. Jamieson, “When and Where Did Jesus Offer Himself? A Taxonomy of Recent Scholarship on Hebrews,” *CBR* 15, no. 3 (2017): 338–68.

³⁶ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 49.

³⁷ See also Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 47–51; Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection*, 278–81.

be expected given a certain condition.³⁸ In the latter case, it has the sense of the consequent in the following sentence, “If A is true, then B can be expected to happen.” In such a case, the use of the future tense verb could be termed a gnomic future.³⁹ So, semantically, *καθαριεῖ* could refer either to a future purifying, or an expected purifying in a logical scheme.

The question then arises, does the author of Hebrews see purification as a present experience, or only as a future reality? In 10:22, he describes the present state of his audience and himself as having their “hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and [their] bodies washed with pure water.” In 13:18, the author describes himself and others as having a “good conscience” (*καλὴν συνείδησιν*). While he does not here use a word from the same root as *καθαριεῖ*, it would be unwarranted to infer from this that he is not discussing the same reality. It is difficult to imagine where in the logic of the author of Hebrews there could be a place for a clean conscience that is bad, or a good conscience that is unclean. On the basis of 10:22 and 13:18, therefore, the author likely does not see himself and his audience as currently having defiled consciences, but instead as having been purified.⁴⁰

So, it is grammatically possible and probably conceptually consistent with the rest of the letter to understand *καθαριεῖ* in 9:14 to indicate not a future cleansing, but a logical expectation of cleansing: If animal blood and ashes cleanse the body, how much

³⁸ Indication of logical expectation is especially prevalent in conditional sentences beginning with *εἰ*, such as that in 9:13–14. See, for example, Matthew 7:11: “εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὄντες οἴδατε δόματα ἀγαθὰ διδόναι τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν, πόσῳ μᾶλλον ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς δώσει ἀγαθὰ τοῖς αἰτουῦσιν αὐτόν.” Thesaurus Linguae Graecae Digital Library.

³⁹ See also “gnomic” use of the future tense in Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament with Scripture, Subject and Greek Word Index* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 571; Heinrich von Siebenthal, *Ancient Greek Grammar for the Study of the New Testament* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019), 336; F. Blass, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 178; Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed., BLGS (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1994), 44. Porter uses the terms “timeless” and “omnitemporal” to describe similar uses.

⁴⁰ My gratitude to Judson Greene for helping me think through the point in this section.

more will Christ's blood be expected to cleanse the conscience (9:13–14). As 9:23–24 indicates, this cleansing happened when Christ made his sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary.

Conclusion

In Hebrews 9, the author compares the old and new covenants in a number of ways, and especially with reference to their method of inauguration. In the priestly working of Christ, his blood purifies the consciences of the new covenant people (9:14). This purification is accomplished at the sacrifice that Christ makes (9:23). Since his death satisfied the sanctions of the old covenant that were active against those who had broken it, he would then become the mediator of a new covenant (9:15). The purpose of his being the mediator of the new covenant is that his death would then serve to redeem the people of the covenant from the sins committed against the old covenant (9:15). This was necessary because covenants bring with them the threat of death should they be broken. If this threat is not fulfilled, then the covenants are not enforced, and they are shown to be impotent, or not “strong” (*ισχύει*; 9:16–17). Because of the necessity of death in the case of a broken covenant, blood of the drohritus was likewise required in the inaugurations of both the old and new covenants (9:18). In the inauguration of the old covenant, Moses sprinkled the people with blood that he declared to be “the blood of the covenant” (9:20; cf. Exod 24:8). With this act, he purified the people (9:22). Moses likewise purified “the tent and all the instruments of service” with blood (9:21). In the inauguration of the new covenant, Jesus, with his own blood and by his sacrifice, purified both “heaven itself” and the people of the covenant (9:14–15, 23–24). He accomplished this purification and inauguration when he made his sacrifice upon entering the heavenly sanctuary after his bodily resurrection and ascension.⁴¹

⁴¹ Regarding the timing and location of Jesus's self-offering, see Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering*.

To reiterate my argument as it pertains to Hebrews 9, Christ made one sacrifice (9:26). He made this sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary (9:24). By this sacrifice, he purified a people (9:23, 14) and inaugurated the new covenant (9:18), thus becoming the mediator of this new covenant (9:15). In this way, Christ inaugurated the new covenant when he made his sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary.

So, while Hebrews 7–8 specifies the timing of Jesus’s sacrifice (and therefore covenant inauguration) as being after his resurrection, Hebrews 9 specifies the location of Jesus’s sacrifice (and therefore covenant inauguration) as being in the heavenly sanctuary.

CHAPTER 5

NEW COVENANT BLESSINGS IN HEBREWS 10

In Hebrews 10, the author links the inauguration of the new covenant with the blessings of the new covenant in such a way that one is not actualized apart from the other. Access to God, along with full and final forgiveness, comes to the people of God when the new covenant is inaugurated. Further, the inauguration of the new covenant co-occurs with the last sacrifice made for the people.

Forgiveness

In 10:15–18, the new covenant brings with it forgiveness of sins and therefore the cessation of sacrifices. This is because, under the new covenant, once sins have been forgiven, no more sacrifices are made. After the new covenant offering is made, there is no need for Jesus to continue offering sacrifices, since those who would benefit from offerings have already received forgiveness, and so are not in need of additional offerings made on their behalf.

In Hebrews 9, the author says that the new covenant was inaugurated with a sacrifice (9:18–26) and that the making of sacrifice is what enables the forgiveness of sins (9:22–23). In 10:16–17, forgiveness of sins is a blessing that comes with the new covenant (cf. 8:7, 12–13). Because 10:18 identifies the beginning of the new covenant with the cessation of offerings on account of sins, no covenant sacrifices can be made once the covenant is inaugurated. This means that any schema that places the culminating, effective moment of sacrifice for the new covenant after the inauguration of the new covenant is not tenable (*pace* Moffitt). The inauguration of the new covenant coincided with the first and only offering made under it. If Hebrews 7:11–28 gives the

earliest possible timing for the inauguration of the new covenant (Christ's post-resurrection appointment to priesthood), 10:15–18 provides the latest possible timing (the end of sacrifices). These two boundaries narrowly encompass the single sacrifice of Christ, in which he purified the heavenly sanctuary (9:18–26).

So, the new covenant was inaugurated no later and no earlier than the culminating moment of its single sacrifice. Since this sacrifice occurred in the heavenly sanctuary after Christ's resurrection and ascension, this is when and where the new covenant was inaugurated as well.

Access to God

One of the recurring issues in Hebrews is that of access to God. The author repeatedly points out that the old covenant could not provide access to God (e.g., 7:18–19; 9:6–8; 10:1). The fault was not in the covenant itself, but in the people (8:7–8). The covenant people continually sinned, and thus prevented themselves from approaching God. The old covenant made provisions for temporary and partial access through sacrifices, especially through the Yom Kippur sacrifice (9:6–7). However, even this highest of all Levitical sacrifices did not provide permanent and full access to God, since it did not purify the people of their sin (9:8–9; cf. 9:13). As the author reasons, this lack of purification is demonstrated by the fact that the Yom Kippur sacrifices were repeated yearly. If “the sacrifices that are offered always” could, in fact, “perfect those who approach” God, then “would they not have ceased being offered” (10:1–2)? By their repetition, these sacrifices are shown not to purify the people of their sin, and thus not to provide them with full access to God.

On the other hand, there is an offering through which the covenant people are now purified, that of “the body of Jesus,” made “once and not again” (ἐφάπαξ; 10:10).¹ It

¹ I am treating ἁγιάζω (*sanctify*) and καθαρίζω (*purify*) synonymously because the author of Hebrews does not distinguish them from each other in Hebrews 9–10. Both words refer to the removal of

is by this “one offering” that “he has perfected for always the ones who are being sanctified” (10:14). Because of Jesus’s offering, the covenant people have access into the holy places “by the blood of Jesus, which is the new and living way that he inaugurated for us” (10:19–20). The audience is thus exhorted to “approach with a true heart and in certainty of faith, having [their] hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience” (10:21–22). So, the manner by which Jesus “inaugurated” this “new and living way” that grants the covenant people access to God is purification from their uncleanness that results from their sin (10:1–4, 10, 14; cf. 9:11–14). Christ accomplished this purification with his offering (10:10, 14). As I will argue, 10:14–18 shows that this offering occurs at the same time that the new covenant is made. Since Jesus made his offering in the heavenly tabernacle after his resurrection and ascension, this is also where and when he purified the covenant people and obtained access for them to God.

The new covenant brings with it purification and forgiveness of sin. Once the people are purified and forgiven, they need no more sacrifices and have access to God. The final and fully effective sacrifice is made by Jesus once he enters the sanctuary in heaven (9:12; 10:18). Just as the Levitical priests are able to enter the earthly holy places because of the blood they carry in order to offer it there, so Jesus enters the heavenly holy places through his blood in order to offer it there (9:12, 24–26; 10:10, 19–20).² If the location that the covenant people enter “by the blood of Jesus” while they are following him is explicitly called “the holy places,” then “the new and living way . . . through the curtain” that he himself also traveled leads to the heavenly holy places (10:19–20).³ So,

sin and to internal/moral cleansing. Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), s.v. ἁγιάζω, καθαρίζω; Walter Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), s.v. ἁγιάζω, καθαρίζω.

² Moffitt, David M. *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NovTSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 283.

³ So R. B. Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, SNTSMS 172 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 86–91.

10:18–20 envisions Jesus as carrying out his new covenant offering within the heavenly sanctuary and thereby granting the covenant people access to God there.

The author here places Jesus’s final offering, purification, and granting of access to God in the context of the inauguration of the new covenant, and not after the new covenant has already been made. In 10:16–17, the author quotes “the Holy Spirit . . . saying, ‘This is the covenant I will make with them.’” One of the blessings of this covenant is, “I will certainly not remember their sins and their lawless actions anymore.” The author then reasons, “Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer an offering for sin” (10:18).⁴ It is on the basis of this new covenant forgiveness and cleansing that the author exhorts the audience, “Therefore, brothers, having confidence for access to the holy places by the blood of Jesus . . . let us approach [God]” (10:19, 22).

In 10:16–18, the new covenant and its benefits are inextricably linked (e.g., “This is the covenant . . . I will put my laws on their hearts;” 10:16). There is not a time envisioned when the new covenant is active while its benefits are not bestowed. A schema in which the covenant inauguration and availability of covenant blessings coincide in one and the same event (i.e., Jesus’s heavenly sacrifice) makes better sense of the logic of this passage than does a schema that requires a temporal separation between inauguration and availability of blessings. This is because, in order for the new covenant to have been made at the cross, there would need to be a delay between the making of the covenant and the availability of its various blessings (forgiveness, purification, access to God, having God’s laws on the people’s hearts, etc.). There seems not to be any such delay in Hebrews 10.

In Hebrews 9, the author says that the new covenant is made by a sacrifice that purifies the covenant people (9:18–26). That which is offered in this sacrifice (i.e., the blood of Christ) purifies the people (9:14). It is with this sacrificial blood that forgiveness

⁴ See discussion above, “Forgiveness.”

is obtained (9:22). In Hebrews 10, the author remains consistent in his construal of the Christ event. Christ enters the heavenly sanctuary to offer his sacrifice (10:19–20). The benefits of this sacrifice include the new covenant blessings of purification, forgiveness, and access to God (10:10, 14, 18–21). Because the author does not conceptualize the establishment of the new covenant apart from its blessings, the new covenant's inauguration occurred at the time of Christ's heavenly sacrifice.

CHAPTER 6

COVENANT BENEFITS IN HEBREWS 2:9

Before concluding this study, I will first test the explanatory power of my thesis on 2:9 as a case study for the exegetical payoff of the schema I present. I will then compare Hebrews's presentation of the inauguration of the new covenant with those of other passages in the New Testament to see if Hebrews is consistent with these passages on this issue.

In Hebrews 2, the author describes the significance of Jesus's humiliation and exaltation. In 2:8, the author claims that everything has been subjected to the "son of man," even though not everything is currently seen as being subjected to him. The author claims that Jesus has been made to fit the humiliation and exaltation of Psalm 8 (2:9). Jesus "for a little while was made less than angels" and is now "crowned with glory and honor" (2:9a). I will argue that Jesus was crowned in this way because of his suffering and death, and that he gained this glory and honor for the purpose of his death being made to benefit "all" (2:9b). So, Jesus's exaltation bestowed his humiliation with salvific significance for many people.¹

Much in the meaning of this sentence hinges on the identity of the phrases that ὅπως connects. The purpose clause is, simply, "by the grace of God, he might taste death on behalf of all" (χάριτι θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσεται θανάτου). That is, the purpose of the preceding phrase (whatever its identity) is Jesus's gracious, substitutionary death.

¹ Similarly, R. B. Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering in Hebrews*, SNTSMS 172 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 116.

The identity of this preceding phrase is less clear. Four options for the referent of the purpose clause preceding ὅπως in 2:9 are 1) “the one made less than the angels” (τὸν παρ’ ἀγγέλους ἡλαττωμένον), 2) “we see” (βλέπομεν), 3) “crowned with glory and honor” (δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον), and 4) the entire sentence preceding ὅπως (“The one who was briefly . . . crowned;” τὸν δὲ βραχύ . . . ἐστεφανωμένον). I will examine each of these options below.

If the referent is “having been made less than the angels” (παρ’ ἀγγέλους ἡλαττωμένον), then this sentence states that the purpose of Jesus’s humiliation is that his death would be made beneficial for everyone. While this is certainly consistent with what the author states in the following sentences (2:11–18), it is not the most likely construal of the grammar of this sentence. The participial phrase τὸν παρ’ ἀγγέλους ἡλαττωμένον is the object of the main verb (βλέπομεν), and is therefore on a lower syntactic level than βλέπομεν. Further, βλέπομεν occurs in the sentence between τὸν παρ’ ἀγγέλους ἡλαττωμένον and ὅπως. It is unlikely that the ὅπως clause overlooks a proximate main verb to find its referent in an object clause that is farther away. So, while this option works conceptually, on grammatical grounds, παρ’ ἀγγέλους ἡλαττωμένον is not the most likely referent of the purpose clause.

The second option is the main verb itself: “we see” (βλέπομεν). The meaning of the sentence in this case would be “we see him who was made lower than the angels, that is, Jesus, with the purpose that he tasted death for everyone.” In Hebrews, the actions of Jesus regularly affect the status of the people of God, but their actions are not elsewhere described as changing the effectiveness of Jesus’s actions. Further, within the logical scheme of Hebrews, it is not clear how the action of seeing Jesus could have the effect of imbuing Jesus’s death with the quality of being beneficial for all. The flow of effective action in Hebrews seems to go in one direction: from Jesus to the people. On conceptual grounds then, βλέπομεν is also not the most likely referent of the purpose clause.

The next option is “crowned with glory and honor” (δόξη καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον). This would yield the following meaning for the sentence: Jesus was crowned with glory and honor with so that he tasted death for everyone. Since this is the phrase that immediately precedes ὅπως, this option is grammatically likely (like the second option, and unlike the first option). As will be seen below, this option is logically consistent with Hebrews’s construal of Jesus’s actions in other passages (like the first option, and unlike the second option). If this is the best reading of the sentence, then the author here states that Jesus’s exaltation has the purpose of making his death beneficial for everyone.

The fourth option is that the referent is not any single phrase, but is instead the entire sentence, with its progression from humiliation to exaltation.² This option is grammatically possible, though slightly less so than the third option.³ Conceptually, however, this option is similar to the third, since the main claim of the sentence as a whole is found in the participle ἐστεφανωμένον.⁴ The sentence is of the form subject–verb–object–object complement (i.e., We–see–him–crowned). Because ἐστεφανωμένον is the object complement, it is what is being predicated about the object (τὸν δὲ βραχὺ τι παρ’ ἀγγέλους ἡλαττωμένον). That is, the claim being made about “the one made less than the angels” is that he was crowned.

So, on the basis of grammatical and conceptual considerations, the best options for the referent preceding ὅπως are the third (δόξη καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον) and fourth (whole sentence). Whether one takes the whole sentence or only the predicate participial

² Attridge, Cockerill, and others take this view, though Attridge considers “the precise relationship” to be “unclear.” Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 76; Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 134.

³ Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 105.

⁴ The argument of this paragraph regarding the form of Heb 2:9 is dependent on Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 105.

phrase as the referent of the purpose clause, the force is similar: Jesus was crowned with glory and honor so that he tasted death for everyone.

We are now at the point where the my thesis regarding the timing and location of Jesus's new covenant inauguration provides additional explanatory power for the claims of this passage. Both the third option (δόξη καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον as antecedent) and the fourth option (the entire sentence as antecedent) fit well with the idea that something happened upon Jesus's exaltation that brought "all" people into the category of those who benefit from his death. If what happened at Jesus's exaltation was the inauguration of the new covenant, this would explain how his exaltation retroactively imbued his death with substitutionary significance for "all."

This is because Jesus died in order to release the old covenant people from the old covenant's demand of death for having broken it (9:15). By virtue of his death in itself, that benefit of redemption was available only to the people of the old covenant. Jesus's inauguration of the new covenant after his resurrection and ascension brought this benefit to all those who are included in the new covenant (a group described in various ways throughout Hebrews, and designated in 2:9 as πάντες ["all"]). So, it was not Jesus's death, per se, that made his death beneficial for members of the new covenant. Instead, it was his exaltation that accomplished this expansion of benefits. Specifically, in my view, it was the inauguration of the new covenant, which occurred at his exaltation, that made his death beneficial for "all."

The above explanation accounts for the logic of this passage more fully than is permitted by a view in which Jesus inaugurated the new covenant at the cross. If Jesus had inaugurated the new covenant at the cross, then it would not be his exaltation that expanded the benefits of his death to members of the new covenant, but would instead be his death itself that accomplished this.

CHAPTER 7
COMPARING HEBREWS WITH THE SYNOPTIC
GOSPELS AND PAUL

A final issue to consider is how Hebrews's presentation of the inauguration of the new covenant compares with those of the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 26; Mark 14; Luke 22) and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 11).

Hebrews and the Synoptic Gospels

The Synoptic Gospels narrate Christ's discourse with his disciples when he celebrated the Passover with them on the night before he was crucified. During this meal, Jesus equated the wine of the meal with the blood associated with the new covenant. In Matthew and Mark, this blood is called "the blood of the covenant" (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24); in Luke, the cup of wine is described as "the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20).

The phrase *(my) blood of the covenant* (τὸ αἷμα [μου] τῆς διαθήκης) is used in biblical texts only in Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, Exodus 24:8, Hebrews 9:20, and Hebrews 10:29. In these passages, there are two options for referents of this phrase: blood with an emphasis on its being shed in the slaughter that is involved in the sacrifice that will inaugurate a covenant, and blood with an emphasis on its being manipulated in the presentation that is involved in the same sacrifice. In Matthew 26, Mark 14, and Hebrews 10, the referent is not explicitly specified between these options. In Exodus 24:8 and Hebrews 9:20 (as a quotation of Exod 24:8), the blood referenced is the blood manipulated, not the blood shed in slaughter, as such. Luke, for his part, specifically describes the action taken with respect to the wine-symbolizing-blood as pouring (Luke

22:20).¹ So, it is likely, though not certain, that the phrase in each of the Synoptic Gospels refers to blood that is ritually manipulated for the sake of inaugurating a covenant.²

Therefore, it is unwarranted to assume that this phrase refers to Jesus's death, and then conclude that Jesus is making a claim here that his death inaugurates the new covenant. There are two reasons for this. The first is that in this saying, Jesus does not identify the moment of covenant inauguration. Jesus symbolically identifies the wine of the Passover meal with his blood that will be used to inaugurate the new covenant, but not when this inauguration will take place. Second, because the covenant inauguration occurred as part of a process that includes the death of Jesus, it would be possible for Jesus to refer synecdochally to an element of that process without specifying which part that element plays in the whole. Jesus could refer to the process that culminates in covenant inauguration by naming only one element (his blood).

So, there is no necessary contradiction between my thesis and Jesus's statement at his final Passover meal in the Synoptic Gospels. When Jesus calls the wine the blood of the new covenant, he is not identifying the timing and location of the inauguration of that covenant.

¹ While this fact does not require the same sense of ἐκχέω to be implied for the symbolized blood, it does establish this meaning as the default expectation in this Lukan passage.

² It may be argued that, given the fact that the utterance of this phrase identifies the moment of covenant inauguration in Exod 24:8 and Heb 9:20, it must identify the moment of covenant inauguration in the Synoptic Gospels as well. The implication would then be that Matthew, Mark, and Luke present Jesus as having inaugurated the new covenant at the final Passover meal that he shared with his disciples. However, this does not likely reflect the best understanding of this phrase's meaning here. This is because the Synoptic Gospels do not present the events of the Passover and exodus with a strict adherence to the narrative in Exodus. On the other hand, when Hebrews discusses Israel at Sinai (the context for the quote of Exod 24:8 in Heb 9:20), there is precise mapping of narrative detail from that event onto the Christ event. The Synoptics do not commit themselves to using the phrase in the same way as Exodus does. Hebrews 9, on the other hand, is more likely to use the phrase to mark the same moment as Exodus does, because Hebrews explicitly aligns the processes of covenant inaugurations for the old and new covenants.

Hebrews and Paul

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul discusses the church's commemoration of the Passover that Jesus celebrated with his disciples before he was crucified. In this passage, Paul relates a saying of Jesus: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (11:25). By itself, this phrase indicates little beyond Jesus's statement as enscriptured in the Synoptics (that is, that the blood of Jesus was, in some way, used to inaugurate the new covenant, without specifying when and where that inauguration would happen). However, at the end of Paul's description of the church's celebration of the "Lord's supper" (11:20), he describes their act of remembrance as an act of announcing Jesus's death (11:24–26). Paul thus connects the symbol of the wine of the Lord's Supper with Jesus's blood, and, notably, Jesus's death. While Paul's emphasis on Jesus's death is different from that of Exodus and Hebrews, it is by no means inconsistent with their claims. In all passages considered in this thesis, death is necessary for covenant inauguration.³ As in the other passages, the necessity of death for covenant inauguration does not equate death with the effective moment of covenant inauguration. It is instead at the moment of the presentation of the sacrifice that the covenant is said to be made and the relationship between the involved parties is changed (cf. Exod 24:8).

In my view, Hebrews presents the process that involves Jesus's covenant-inaugural offering as beginning at the cross and culminating in the heavenly tabernacle. Paul's emphasis on the beginning of this process does not require the beginning to contain the effective moment. Paul here identifies elements in a process (e.g., blood and death) without specifying the way that process unfolded.⁴ The statement of Jesus that Paul relates could be paraphrased as, "This cup contains the wine that represents the blood that I will shed on the cross and then later present as a sacrificial offering. In this

³ See especially the discussion above, "Hebrews 9:18–22."

⁴ See also Jamieson's discussion comparing Hebrews's and Paul's conception of Jesus's atoning sacrifice. R. B. Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering in Hebrews*, SNTSMS 172 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 190–91.

way, I will use this blood to inaugurate the new covenant.” The blood of which he spoke was to be procured at Christ’s death and presented later in the sacrifice that inaugurated the covenant. Even in that sacrifice, the blood carried with it a reminder of the death necessary to procure it.⁵ There is, therefore, nothing in 1 Corinthians 11 that makes it necessary to understand Christ’s death itself as having inaugurated the new covenant. Paul’s statement is thus complementary, not contradictory, to my view of Hebrews’s presentation of the timing and location of the new covenant inauguration.

⁵ See Jamieson, *Jesus’ Death and Heavenly Offering*, 165–77.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Building on the work of Moffitt and Jamieson regarding the timing and location of Jesus's atoning sacrifice, I have attempted to show that Hebrews presents the inauguration of the new covenant as having happened at a different time and in a different place than is often assumed. I have argued that the inauguration did not occur at Jesus's death on the cross, but after Jesus's resurrection in the heavenly sanctuary.

First, I examined the primary source text of Hebrews 9 regarding covenant inauguration (Exod 24) to determine the criteria for a covenant inauguration. Most materially, is there an effective moment in the process of inauguration? If there is, at what point does this moment occur? I argued that there is such a moment, and that this moment is the same as the effective moment of the covenant-inaugural sacrifice: the point at which the blood is ritually manipulated (thrown/poured/sprinkled).

Next, I asked when it is that Hebrews says Jesus was appointed to high priesthood. Hebrews 7:11–25 and 8:1–5 place his appointment at or after the point at which he gained indestructible life, which he obtained at his resurrection. Additionally, these passages place his appointment to priesthood at a time before he makes his sacrifice. This implies that Jesus did not perform his atoning sacrifice until after his resurrection. Since Jesus made only one sacrifice, the sacrifice by which he inaugurated the new covenant is the same sacrifice by which he made atonement. Since he made his high-priestly atoning sacrifice after his resurrection, he made his covenant-inaugural sacrifice after his resurrection.

From 9:14–28, I argued that the author presents the logic of covenant inauguration as a shared feature between the old and new covenants. In this passage,

Jesus satisfied the old covenant by his death and freed the covenant people from any further burden of that covenant's sanctions (9:15–17). After his bodily resurrection, he then ascended into the heavenly sanctuary and presented his blood before God in an act of offering that purified the heavenly sanctuary and the people of the covenant (9:23–28; cf. 9:14).¹ As the old covenant was inaugurated with blood at the culminating, effective moment of sacrifice (i.e., the manipulation of blood, 9:18–22; cf. Exod. 24:5–8), so too with the new covenant. With his act of self-offering, Jesus inaugurated the new covenant with a sacrifice of blood when he presented his blood in the heavenly sanctuary.

I then analyzed how Hebrews 10 presents the relationship between the inauguration of the new covenant and the bestowal of new covenant blessings, especially forgiveness of sins and access to God. I argued that the author links these blessings to the new covenant in such a way that there is no gap between the inauguration of the covenant and the availability of blessings. Since these blessings come only along with sacrifice, the covenant could not have been inaugurated before the sacrifice was made. Further, Hebrews 10 describes the beginning of the new covenant as the end of sacrifices (10:15–18). This is because the sacrifice of the new covenant affects full and final forgiveness of sin, and so no additional sacrifices are necessary. This means that the new covenant could not have been inaugurated at the cross, that is, before the sacrifice was made in heaven.

I then examined 2:9 as a case study for the exegetical payoff provided by my view of when and where the new covenant was inaugurated. I argued that my view offers more explanatory power than a schema in which the new covenant is inaugurated at the cross. Because the inauguration of the new covenant occurred at Jesus's exaltation, his

¹ This single sacrifice made by Christ is also the sacrifice by which he atoned for sins. For example, R. B. Jamieson, *Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering in Hebrews*, SNTSMS 172 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 48–51; David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NovTSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 187, 228.

exaltation expanded the benefits of his death to “everyone.” His death now benefits not only the people of the old covenant, but also those of the new.

Finally, I briefly compared the presentations of the timing and location of the new covenant inauguration in Hebrews, the Synoptic Gospels, and 1 Corinthians. I found these to be complementary, not contradictory.

On the basis of the covenant inauguration narrative in Exodus 24, the timing of Jesus’s appointment to priesthood in Hebrews 7–8, the logic of covenant inauguration and sacrifice in Hebrews 9, and the bestowal of new covenant blessings in Hebrews 10, I conclude that Hebrews presents Jesus as having inaugurated the new covenant in a process that includes the cross, but that has its culminating, effective moment in the heavenly sanctuary after his bodily resurrection and ascension.

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ABSTRACT

FROM THIS DAY FORWARD: NEW COVENANT INAUGURATION IN HEBREWS

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It is often assumed that Hebrews presents Jesus as having inaugurated the new covenant at the cross. Building on the work of David Moffitt and R. B. Jamieson, I explore this topic, asking when and where the new covenant was inaugurated in Hebrews.

I examine the covenant inauguration narrative in Exodus 24, the timing of Jesus's appointment to priesthood in Hebrews 7–8, the logic of covenant inauguration and sacrifice in Hebrews 9, and the bestowal of new covenant blessings in Hebrews 10. I also analyze Hebrews 2:9 as a case study for my schema's explanatory power and compare the inauguration of the new covenant in Hebrews with the discussions of Jesus's final Passover meal in the Synoptic Gospels and 1 Corinthians. I conclude that Hebrews presents Jesus as having inaugurated the new covenant in a process that includes the cross, but has its culminating, effective moment in the heavenly sanctuary after his bodily resurrection and ascension.

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