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SHORT TITLE  
THE SINAITIC COVENANT

THE SINAITIC COVENANT

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

by  
Holland Jones

May 1957

Approved by Frederick R. Koenig

Agnes von Eschwege

51824

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OF  
THE SINAITIC COVENANT

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of criticism the analytical approach has dominated most Old Testament research. The result has been that the diversity of Old Testament thought has been emphasized. In recent years some Old Testament scholars have rejuvenated the synthetic approach. Their evident intent is to stress the unity of Old Testament thought. It is in this trend of Old Testament scholarship that we are most intimately interested.

In 1944 Dr. Archibald Hunter published an interesting study concerning the unity of the New Testament. He began with the assumption that Heilsgeschichte is the dominant theme of the New Testament. He determined that the New Testament term for Heilsgeschichte is Kerygma. Then he examined several examples of the Apostolic Kerygma to determine the essential elements of the New Covenant. He found that every apostolic sermon had three parts: (1) "A claim that their message was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy." (2) "A historical exposition setting forth Jesus in His life, death, resurrection, and exaltation (all conceived as one great act of God)." (3) "A summons to repent and accept the forgiveness of sins in Jesus." Having determined these as the essential elements of the New Covenant Kerygma, he continues to show that the various New Testament Books are expanded expressions of this Kerygma. This Kerygma is the core around which the New Testament Gospels and Epistles are built. It is the unifying element in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Archibald M. Hunter, The Message of the New Covenant. pp. 14-38.

This investigation is an attempt to discover the unifying element in the Old Covenant, by applying the methodology of Dr. Hunter to the Old Testament. We began with the assumption that Heilsgeschichte is the dominant theme of the Old Covenant. We were unable to discover an Old Testament word which is used for this theme as Kerygma is in the New Testament. But we assumed that there were proclamations of the Old Covenant which corresponded to the apostolic Kerygma in the New Covenant. We found many such Covenant proclamations. Some were more detailed than others, but, in general, all of them corresponded remarkably to Dr. Hunter's analysis of the New Covenant Kerygma. They too consist of three parts: (1) A claim that the Sinaitic Covenant with Israel was the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (2) An historical reference to the formation of the Sinaitic Covenant. Sometimes this includes a detailed description of the deliverance from Egypt, the giving of the Law, the ratification of the Covenant, and the conquest of Canaan. At other times it includes one or more of these elements. This leads me to think that these events are conceived of as one great act of God by means of which He initiated the Covenant with Israel. (3) A summons to Covenant repentance and allegiance. Because of the similarity of expression we were convinced that we had found the Old Covenant counterpart to the New Covenant Kerygma.

We found four kerygmatic expressions that were remarkably similar. The first is the farewell address of Joshua.<sup>2</sup> The second is Psalm 106.

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<sup>2</sup>Joshua 24.

Third is the sermon of Jeremiah to Israel.<sup>3</sup> The fourth is Ezra's sermon to Israel after the Exile.<sup>4</sup> According to the Scriptural evidence, they are separated from one another by long periods of time. However, I believe, that they are all expressions of what God's Covenant with Israel meant to their author. Therefore they should contain the essential elements of the Covenant between God and Israel. They all, with one possible exception, begin with a reference to the Abrahamic Covenant, continue to describe the deliverance from Egypt, giving of the Law, ratification of the Covenant (Exodus 24), and the conquest of Canaan. They all conclude with a summons to Covenant faith.

In the study of the New Testament Kerygma we can recognize that the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation are one great act of God by which He made the New Covenant. However in our study of these events we separate them for convenience. So in our study of the Old Covenant we can recognize that the deliverance, giving of the Law, ratification of the Covenant, and conquest of Canaan are one great act of God by which He made the Old Covenant. But here too we separated these events for the purpose of clarity in investigating them. And for want of a better term we have referred to these events as the essential elements of the Covenant that God made with the nation of Israel.

We discussed each of the five essential elements of the Covenant in a separate chapter. In chapter one we treated the Covenant promises

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<sup>3</sup>Jeremiah 11:1-8.

<sup>4</sup>Nehemiah 9:6-37.

made to Israel through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Here we found that this is considered to be an essential element of the Covenant with Israel because it proves that the descendants of Abraham are truly the chosen people of God in this Covenant.

In chapter two we discussed the deliverance from Egypt. This is considered to be an essential element of the Covenant with Israel, because every Israelite benefited from this deliverance, and this fact was to lead him to faith in and allegiance to God.

In chapter three we discussed the giving of the Law. We saw that this was an essential element in the Old Covenant because this was the pattern of the holy life for every Israelite who was in the Covenant with God. Moreover it served to remind each covenant person of his unholiness and need for God's deliverance.

In the fourth chapter we treated the actual ratification of the Covenant and the institution of the sacrificial system. This is an essential element of the Covenant with Israel because here God taught Israel the meaning of forgiveness and gave to every Israelite a system whereby he could maintain Covenant forgiveness.

In the fifth chapter we discussed the conquest of Canaan. This is an essential element of the Covenant, because here God taught Israel how He would and could use His power to fulfill His promises. Henceforth every Israelite could trust in this all powerful God and be sure that God would use such power for him.

In the final chapter we demonstrated that this covenant concept is the core of the other Books of the Old Testament. They were written to discuss the Covenant or one of the essential elements of the Covenant.

Therefore we conclude that the Covenant that God made with Israel is the unifying factor of the Books of the Old Testament. The Old Testament, as its name implies, is the literature of the Old Covenant.

In general, this is not the approach to the Old Covenant that is found in the Old Testament studies of those who adopt the historical approach to theology. Because of this the investigations of these men would contribute little to this thesis. It is for this reason, and not because we wish to ignore what has been written, that the author has refrained from a discussion and rebuttal of some of their opinions.

## CHAPTER I

### THE PROMISES OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB

In the proclamations of the Old Covenant which I have chosen, the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are expressed in this way.

Joshua 23:2-4:

And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Your fathers lived of old beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac; and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. And I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.'"

Jeremiah 11:1-3:

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Hear the words of this Covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. You shall say to them, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel."<sup>1</sup>

Psalms 105:1-25:

O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples! Sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of all his wonderful works! Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice! Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually! Remember the wonderful works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered, O offspring of Abraham his servant, sons of Jacob, his chosen ones! He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. He is mindful of his Covenant forever, of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the Covenant which he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting Covenant, saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance." When they were few in number, of little account, and sojourners in it, wandering from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people, he allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their account, saying, "Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm!" When he summoned a famine on the land, and

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<sup>1</sup>For the interpretation of Israel note Jer. 2:4; 5:20; 10:16; 33:26. Israel is "the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

broke every staff of bread, he had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. His feet were hurt with fetters, his neck was put in a collar of iron; until what he had said came to pass the word of the Lord tested him. The king sent and released him, the ruler of the peoples set him free; he made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his possessions, to instruct his princes at his pleasure, and to teach his elders wisdom. Then Israel came to Egypt; Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And the Lord made his people very fruitful, and made them stronger than their foes. He turned their hearts to hate his people.

Nehemiah 9:6-8:

And Ezra said: "Thou art the Lord, thou alone; thou hast made the heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and thou preservest all of them; and the host of heaven worships thee. Thou art the Lord, the God who didst choose Abram and bring him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees and give him the name Abraham; and thou didst find his heart faithful before thee, and didst make with him the covenant to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Gîrgashite; and thou hast fulfilled thy promise, for thou art righteous."

Besides these references, the other numerous references to God's promise to Israel through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob indicate, that these promises are an essential element of the Sinaitic Covenant.<sup>2</sup>

The promises of the Covenant to which these passages refer are contained in the History of Genesis 11:27-50:26. God called Abraham, along with his father, from Ur to Haran,<sup>3</sup> later He bade Abraham separate from his father's house and continued to Canaan. In Canaan He met Abraham, and promised to give him that land. Some years later He appeared to Abraham and made a covenant with him.<sup>4</sup> There was more to the Abramic

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<sup>2</sup>Gf. I Kings 18:36; II Kings 13:23; I Chron. 16:16-18; 29:18; II Chron. 20:7; 30:6; Psalm 47:9; Isaiah 29:22; 41:8-10; 51:2; Ez. 33:24; Micah 7:20.

<sup>3</sup>Acts 7:2-4.

<sup>4</sup>Genesis 17.

Covenant than the promises which God made through Abraham concerning a future covenant with his descendants, but here we are interested in those promises. In the order of their historical fulfillment they are: I will make a Covenant with you and your descendants after you.<sup>5</sup> Your descendants will become very numerous.<sup>6</sup> To your descendants, after 400 years, I will give this land.<sup>7</sup> By means of you and your offspring other nations will be blessed.<sup>8</sup>

These Covenant promises were repeated to Abraham and proclaimed to Isaac at the time when Abraham obeyed God's command to sacrifice his son.<sup>9</sup> They were repeated to Isaac, when he went to dwell among the Philistines.<sup>10</sup> Isaac transmitted them to Jacob when he sent him away to Haran.<sup>11</sup> God appeared to Jacob and repeated these promises to him on several occasions: the ladder vision;<sup>12</sup> the return to Bethel;<sup>13</sup> when he went to Egypt.<sup>14</sup> Jacob passed the Covenant promises on to his sons,

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<sup>5</sup>Genesis 17:2,4,7.

<sup>6</sup>Genesis 17:4-6, also 15:5; 12:2.

<sup>7</sup>Genesis 17:8, also 15:7-21; 12:7.

<sup>8</sup>Genesis 12:2b-3.

<sup>9</sup>Genesis 22:15-18.

<sup>10</sup>Genesis 26:3-4 and 24-25.

<sup>11</sup>Genesis 28:3-4.

<sup>12</sup>Genesis 28:13-15.

<sup>13</sup>Genesis 35:10-12.

<sup>14</sup>Genesis 46:3-4.

including Ephraim and Manasseh, when he blessed them.<sup>15</sup> The last words of Joseph indicate that he and the children of Israel are waiting for God to appear to them and repeat the promises just as he had to Jacob and Isaac.<sup>16</sup>

The children of Israel did not wait in vain. For in His next appearance to man, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob revealed to Moses that He had appeared to deliver Israel from the hands of the Egyptians and to bring them into "the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites."<sup>17</sup> He commissioned Moses as the leader of Israel and sent him to tell the people of Israel, "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt; and I promise that I will bring you up out of the afflictions of Egypt, to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.'"<sup>18</sup>

When Moses tried to excuse himself, God gave him signs to perform before the elders of Israel, "that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Genesis 48:15-16, also 48:21; 49:28.

<sup>16</sup>Genesis 50:24-25.

<sup>17</sup>Exodus 3:8.

<sup>18</sup>Exodus 3:16-17.

<sup>19</sup>Exodus 4:5.

When Moses gathered the elders of Israel, told them all the words of the Lord, and performed the signs, "the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped."<sup>20</sup>

After Pharaoh had refused Moses' first request and had increased the work of the Israelites so that they turned against Moses, the Lord once more appeared to Moses and said,

I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob, as God almighty, but by my name the Lord I did not make myself known to them. I also established my Covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they dwelt as sojourners. Moreover I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold in bondage and I have remembered my Covenant. Say therefore to the people of Israel, "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment, and I will take you for my people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord."<sup>21</sup>

In spite of the fact that God had chosen Seth and his descendants and Noah and his descendants before this, the choice of Abraham's is considered to be the beginning of God's revelation of his Covenant with Israel. Abraham is the Father of God's people. From this time on a believers' relationship with Abraham is important, if he is to have a part in the blessings of the Covenant.

These Covenant promises, first delivered to Abraham, evidently served a three-fold purpose in Israel. While the Israelites were in

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<sup>20</sup>Exodus 4:31.

<sup>21</sup>Exodus 6:1-8.

Egypt, these promises led them to believe that God would deliver them.<sup>22</sup> When the time for deliverance came, these prophetic promises led the Israelites to believe in the God who had appeared to Abraham.<sup>23</sup> After the deliverance from Egypt and the formation of the Sinaitic Covenant, these promises assured the Israelites that they were children of God because they were descendants of Abraham.<sup>24</sup> So in the later proclamation of the Covenant the promises are referred to primarily because of their value to encourage and admonish the people of God. The Israelites taught and believed that they enjoyed a special relationship with God; because they were descendants of Abraham.

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<sup>22</sup>Genesis 50:24-26.

<sup>23</sup>Exodus 4:31.

<sup>24</sup>This is their apparent use in the passages listed at the beginning of this chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT

In the proclamation of the Old Covenant which I have chosen, the deliverance from Egypt is expressed in this way.

Joshua 24:5-7:

And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in the midst of it; and afterwards I brought you out. Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with Chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. And when they cried to the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and made the sea come upon them and cover them; and your eyes saw what I did to Egypt.

Jeremiah 11:4:

Which I commanded your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace.

PsaIm 105:26-42:

He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen. They wrought his signs among them, and miracles in the land of Ham. He sent darkness, and made the land dark; they rebelled against his words. He turned their waters into blood, and caused their fish to die. Their land swarmed with frogs, even in the chambers of their kings. He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, and gnats throughout their country. He gave them hail for rain, and lightning that flashed through their land. He smote their vines and fig trees, and shattered the trees of their country. He spoke, and the locusts came, and young locusts without number; which devoured all the vegetation in their land, and ate up the fruit of their ground. He smote all the first-born in their land, and first issue of all their strength. Then he led forth Israel with silver and gold, and there was none among his tribes who stumbled. Egypt was glad when they departed, for dread of them had fallen upon it. He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light by night. They asked, and he brought quails, and gave them bread from heaven in abundance. He opened the rock, and water gushed forth; it flowed through the desert like a river. For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.

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Nehemiah 9:9-12:

And thou didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and hear their cry at the Red Sea, and didst perform signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for thou knewest that they acted insolently against our fathers; and thou didst get thee a name, as it is to this day. And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land; and thou didst cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters. By a pillar of cloud thou didst lead them in the day, and by a pillar of fire in the night to light for them the way in which they should go.

Besides these references the other numerous references to God's deliverance of Israel indicate that it is an essential element of the Old Covenant.<sup>1</sup>

The events of this deliverance are recorded in Exodus 1-18. The descendants of Israel lived in Israel long enough to increase greatly. A new dynasty rose in Egypt, who feared the might of the Israelites. So they enslaved them, and gave orders for the male children to be killed. Moses was born under these conditions, but was saved from death and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. After renouncing his adopted land and killing an Egyptian, he fled to Midian.

And the people of Israel groaned under their bondage, and cried out for help, and their cry under bondage came up to God. And God heard their groanings, and God remembered his Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.<sup>2</sup>

In these chapters the need for deliverance is stressed. Israel was suffering severe physical and mental affliction. And it was evident that, if the decree of Pharaoh were carried out, the promises of God

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Young, "Egypt," Analytical Concordance to the Bible (21st American Edition. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, n.d.), pp. 290-291. Over 50 references to "I brought you out of Egypt."

<sup>2</sup>Exodus 1-2.

to Abraham would never be fulfilled. This fact must have placed a tremendous strain on their faith.

After some time, God appeared to Moses and gave him the promise of immediate deliverance. Moses passed on this promise to Israel. At first the Israelites believed, but when Pharaoh refused their request and increased their work they would no longer listen to the words of Moses.<sup>3</sup>

The primary concern in the account of deliverance is the method by which God accomplished it and the purpose of that method. God had indicated something of this in His first appearance to Moses,

You and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, "The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, we pray you, let us go a three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all the wonders which I will do in it; after that he will let you go!"<sup>4</sup>

When Moses addressed this request to Pharaoh, he refused to comply, saying, "Who is the Lord, that I should heed his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover I will not let Israel go."<sup>5</sup> Thereafter Pharaoh increased the burdens of Israel, and they turned against Moses. Then Moses cried to God, "O Lord, why hast thou done evil to this people?"<sup>6</sup> God answered, "now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will drive them out."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Exodus 3-6:14.

<sup>4</sup>Exodus 3:18b-20.

<sup>5</sup>Exodus 5:2.

<sup>6</sup>Exodus 5:14-22.

<sup>7</sup>Exodus 6:1.

Following this, God repeated the promise of deliverance to Moses.<sup>8</sup>

In this same appearance, God also told Moses,

See I make you as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you; and Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you; then I will lay my hand upon Egypt and bring forth my hosts, my people the sons of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.<sup>9</sup>

Then follows the account of God's signs and wonders.

The rod of Aaron was turned into a serpent. "The magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. . . . But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them; as the Lord has said."<sup>10</sup>

Exodus 7:14-18:

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water; wait for him by the river's brink, and take in your hand the rod which was turned into a serpent. And you shall say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness; and behold you have not yet obeyed." Thus says the Lord, "By this you shall know that I am the Lord: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the rod that is in my hand, and it shall be turned to blood, and the fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile shall become foul, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink water from the Nile.'" "vv. 20-22: Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded; in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, he lifted up the rod and struck the water that was in the Nile, and all the water that was in the Nile turned to blood. And the fish in the Nile died; and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts; so Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them as the Lord had said. 8:1-2: Then the Lord said to Moses.

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<sup>8</sup>Exodus 6:2-8.

<sup>9</sup>Exodus 7:1-5.

<sup>10</sup>Exodus 7:10-13.

"Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your country with frogs... vv. 6-10: So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. But the magicians did the same by their secret arts, and brought frogs upon the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said, "Entreat the Lord to take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." Moses said to Pharaoh, "Be pleased to command me when I am to entreat, for you and for your servants and for your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile." And he said, "Tomorrow." Moses said, "Be it as you say, that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God..." vv. 12-13: So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh; and Moses cried to the Lord concerning the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; the frogs died out of the houses and courtyards and out of the fields... vv. 15-19: But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart, and would not listen to them; as the Lord has said. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become gnats throughout all the land of Egypt.'" And they did so; Aaron stretched out his hand with the rod, and struck the dust of the earth, and there came gnats on man and beasts; all the dust of the earth became gnats throughout all the land of Egypt. The magicians tried by their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. And the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them; as the Lord had said... vv. 20-32: Then the Lord said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and wait for Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. Else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there; that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth. Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. By tomorrow shall this sign be..." And the Lord did so; there came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants houses, and in all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by reason of flies. Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land." But Moses said, "It would not be right to do so; for we shall sacrifice to the Lord our God offerings abominable to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us? We must go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as he will command us." So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, to

sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Make entreaty for me." Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you and I will pray to the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow; only let not Pharaoh deal falsely again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord. And the Lord did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go... 9:1-7: Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, behold, the hand of the Lord will fall with a very severe plague upon your cattle which are in the field, the horses, the asses, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. And the Lord will make a distinction between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt, so that nothing shall die of all that belongs to the people of Israel.'" And the Lord set a time, saying, "Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land." And on the morrow the Lord did this thing; all the cattle of the Egyptians died, but of the cattle of the people of Israel not one died. And Pharaoh sent, and behold, not one of the cattle of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go... vv. 8-12: And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Take handfuls of ashes from the kiln, and let Moses throw them toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." So they took ashes from the kiln, and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses threw them toward heaven, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians. But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them; as the Lord had spoken to Moses... vv. 13-30: Then the Lord said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. For this time I will send all my plagues upon your heart, and upon your servants and your people, that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. For by now I could have put forth my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth; but for this purpose have I let you live, to show you my power, so that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. You are still exalting yourself against my people, and will not let them go. Behold, tomorrow about this time, I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. Now therefore send, get your cattle and all that you have in the field into safe shelter; for the hail shall come down upon every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home, and they shall die.'" Then he who feared the word of the Lord among the servants

of Pharaoh made his slaves and his cattle flee into the houses; but he who did not regard the word of the Lord left his slaves and his cattle in the field. And the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch forth your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man and beast and every plant of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." Then Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt; there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. The hail struck down everything that was in the field throughout all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and the hail struck down every plant of the field, and shattered every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, there was no hail. Then Pharaoh sent, and called Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time; the Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Entreat the Lord; for there has been enough of this thunder and hail; I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer." Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth is the Lord's. But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God."... vv. 33-35: So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and stretched out his hands to the Lord; and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured upon the earth. But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder has ceased, he sinned yet again, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people of Israel go; as the Lord had spoken through Moses... 10: 1-2: Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your son's son how I have made sport of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them; that you may know that I am the Lord..." vv. 3-6: So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land; and they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat every tree of yours which grows in the field, and they shall fill your houses, and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians; as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.'" Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh... vv. 12-20: Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left." So Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night; and when

it was morning the east wind had brought the locusts. And the locusts came up over all the land of Egypt, and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever shall be again. For they covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left; not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. Now therefore, forgive my sin, I pray you, only this once, and entreat the Lord your God only to remove this death from me." So he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord. And the Lord turned a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go... vv. 21-27: Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt." So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days; but all the people of Israel had light where they dwelt. Then Pharaoh called Moses, and said, "Go, serve the Lord; your children also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind." But Moses said, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. Our cattle also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the Lord our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there." But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me; take heed to yourself; never see my face again; for in the day you see my face again, you shall die." Moses said, "As you say! I will not see your face again."... 11: 1, 4-10: The Lord said to Moses, "Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence; when he lets you go, he will drive you away completely." And Moses said, "Thus says the Lord: About midnight I will go forth in the midst of Egypt; and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sits upon his throne, even to the first-born of the maid-servant who is behind the mill; and all the first-born of the cattle. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever shall be again. But against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, not a dog shall growl; that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these your servants shall come down to me, and bow down to me, saying, 'Get you out, and all the people who follow you.' And after that I will go out." And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen to you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land...

12:29-32: At midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where one was not dead. And he summoned Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise up, go forth from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also!"... 13:17-18: When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest the people repent when they see war, and return to Egypt." But God led the people round by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt, equipped for battle... vv. 20-22: And they moved on from Succoth, and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud and lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night; the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people... 14:1-4: Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baalzephon; you shall encamp over against it, by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are entangled in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord." And they did so... vv. 5-9: When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, and took six hundred picked chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pihahiroth, in front of Baalzephon... vv. 10-18: When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were in great fear. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord; and they said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be still." The Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your rod, and stretch

out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go on dry ground through the sea. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, so that they shall go in after them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."... vv. 19-31: Then the angel of God who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness; and the night passed without one coming near the other all night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down upon the host of the Egyptians, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel; for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians." Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." So Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its wonted flow when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled into it, and the Lord routed the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore, And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord; and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

From the time that God began to unfold His plan in chapter 3 until He took final vengeance on Egypt in chapter 11, it is evident that He was planning the deliverance in such a way that He would be glorified. The successive hardenings of Pharaoh's heart, so that miracle after miracle had to be performed; God's method of predicting the plagues and executing them just as predicted; His plan for Israel to camp by the Red Sea and wait for Egypt to catch up with them so they could lure

the Egyptians to their death; all work together that God may be glorified. All of these events were planned and executed in such a way that the Israelites would confess, "My God saved me." The most scientifically minded man in Israel, as he stepped out of the dry bed of the Red Sea and turned to witness the destruction of the Egyptian army would be forced to say, "I believe that God saved me."

Chapter 14:31 tells us the result of this miraculous deliverance "The people feared the Lord; and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses."

In chapter 15 is recorded the great hymn of praise with which Moses and the people of Israel glorified God. It exhibits a true faith in the God who will reign forever and ever.

God, who had led Israel to believe in Him by the miraculous deliverance, sustained this faith as Israel traveled from the Red Sea to Sinai by feeding Israel with "manna" and quails,<sup>11</sup> sweetening the waters of Marah,<sup>12</sup> giving them water from a rock,<sup>13</sup> and giving them victory over the Amalekites.<sup>14</sup>

By the deliverance God had set out to win Israel's allegiance. To accomplish His purpose He performed many mighty acts. By these acts which accomplished the complete deliverance of Israel God led the Israelites to believe in Him. Thus He won Israel's allegiance.

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<sup>11</sup>Exodus 16:13-15.

<sup>12</sup>Exodus 15:25.

<sup>13</sup>Exodus 17:6.

<sup>14</sup>Exodus 17:9-13.

In the proclamations of the Covenant this Deliverance has a three-fold purpose. It is Israel's constant assurance that God is the only God.<sup>15</sup> It is Israel's proof that God loves them.<sup>16</sup> It is Israel's constant motivation to serve Him.<sup>17</sup>

Every Israelite who lived after this enjoyed the benefits of this deliverance. Therefore this deliverance had this threefold significance for him. But it is particularly the last one that is stressed in the life of Israel. God delivered you so that you would glorify Him by your life of total allegiance to Him. God delivered Israel so that He might have a "kingdom of priests."<sup>18</sup> He delivered them in this miraculous way so that this "kingdom of priests" would believe in Him and display complete allegiance to Him.

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<sup>15</sup>Deuteronomy 4:34-35.

<sup>16</sup>Psalms 136:10-15.

<sup>17</sup>Deuteronomy 4:40-6:20-25. Passages listed at beginning of chapter.

<sup>18</sup>Exodus 19:6.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GIVING OF THE LAW

In the proclamation of the Sinaitic Covenant which I have chosen, the giving of the Law is expressed in this way.

Joshua 24:7:

And you lived in the wilderness a long time.

Jeremiah 11:3-5:

Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man who does not heed the words of this Covenant . . . Listen to my voice, and do all that I command you.

Psalms 105:45:

- to the end that they should keep his statutes, and observe his laws. Praise the Lord!

Nehemiah 9:13-14:

Thou didst come down upon Mount Sinai, and speak with them from heaven and give them right ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments, and thou didst make known to them thy holy sabbath and command them commandments and statutes and a law by Moses thy servant.

Since the giving of the Law is not stressed in some of these accounts, we submit other specific passages that describe its importance in these Books.

Joshua 8:30-35:

Then Joshua built an altar in Mount Ebal to the Lord, the God of Israel, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the people of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, "an altar of unhewn stones, upon which no man has lifted an iron tool"; and they offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings. And there, in the presence of the people of Israel, he wrote upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. And all Israel, sojourner as well as homeborn, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark

of the covenant of the Lord, half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded at the first, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, and the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them.

Psalm 78:1-8:

Give ear, O my people, to my teachings; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders which he has wrought. He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children; that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Note also Psalm 19 and 119 for the emphasis on the Law in the Book of Psalms.

Besides these references the other numerous references to the Law indicate that this is an essential element of the Old Covenant.<sup>1</sup>

The Law which God gave to Israel is recorded mainly in Exodus 20-23; 25-31; Leviticus 11-15; 17-27; Numbers 5-6, 15, 18-19, 28-30, 35-36.

The Law begins with the giving of the Commandments, which were spoken by God.<sup>2</sup> His first statement tells Israel why they will keep this Law. "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Young, "Law," Analytical Concordance to the Bible (21st American Edition. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, n.d.), pp. 590-591.

<sup>2</sup>Exodus 20:1.

Egypt."<sup>3</sup> Then God states the one basic law of the Covenant, "You shall have no other gods besides me."<sup>4</sup> And this is the way you shall practice this law.

Exodus 20:4-17:

You shall not make yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but on the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.

At this point God was interrupted,

Now when all the people perceived the thunderings and lightnings and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled; and they stood afar off, and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die."<sup>5</sup>

According to the account in Deuteronomy God was pleased with this reaction, and agreed that He would hereafter reveal His Law to Israel

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<sup>3</sup>Exodus 20:2.

<sup>4</sup>Exodus 20:3.

<sup>5</sup>Exodus 20:18-19.

through Moses.<sup>6</sup> So, from here on Moses mediated the Law to the people.

There are many repetitions in the laws that follow. In many instances a law is recorded in connection with the historical event which caused God to reveal it. In our presentation of the Law, we shall try to omit the repetitions and historical material. Also it will be necessary to summarize the material in sections.

Exodus 20-23 gives the penalties that God imposed on those who broke the Commandments. The death penalty is imposed for murder;<sup>7</sup> striking or cursing parents;<sup>8</sup> kidnapping;<sup>9</sup> sorcery;<sup>10</sup> idolatry.<sup>11</sup> The "eye for eye" penalty or some penalty equivalent to it is to be imposed for personal injury.<sup>12</sup> The penalty for theft was repaying twice, sometimes more, the amount stolen.<sup>13</sup> Payment in kind was required for any loss which one caused his neighbor.<sup>14</sup>

Included in this section on penalties is the command to drive out all the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, to make no Covenant

<sup>6</sup>Deuteronomy 5:22-31.

<sup>7</sup>Exodus 21:12.

<sup>8</sup>Exodus 21:15-17.

<sup>9</sup>Exodus 21:16.

<sup>10</sup>Exodus 22:19.

<sup>11</sup>Exodus 22:20.

<sup>12</sup>Exodus 22:18-27.

<sup>13</sup>Exodus 22:1,3-4.

<sup>14</sup>Exodus 21:33-35; 22:5-15.

with them or their gods. And the purpose for this is stated; "Lest they make you sin against me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."<sup>15</sup>

In Exodus 25-31, God gave the rules for the construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings. It was to be a sanctuary where God could dwell in the midst of Israel and it was to be constructed according to the pattern that God showed Moses.<sup>16</sup> The section concludes with a command to keep the Sabbath, with the penalty of death imposed on those who profane it.<sup>17</sup>

Leviticus 11-14 deals with the laws of ceremonial uncleanness. Certain foods were unclean. Women who had borne children were unclean. Lepers were unclean. People who had a discharge from the body were unclean. The period of uncleanness in each case is stated along with the rules for purification. The purpose for these regulations is stated in chapter 15:31. "Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst."

Leviticus 17-27, excluding chapter 26, can best be divided into three sections.

Leviticus 17-20 deals primarily with Commandments whose transgressions demand the penalty of death or expulsion from the community.

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<sup>15</sup>Exodus 23:31-33.

<sup>16</sup>Exodus 25:8-9.

<sup>17</sup>Exodus 31:12-17.

Harlotry,<sup>18</sup> giving one's seed to Molech,<sup>19</sup> and lying with a beast<sup>20</sup> are sins mentioned here for the first time that demand the death penalty. Eating blood,<sup>21</sup> eating sacrificial meat after the specified time,<sup>22</sup> and marrying certain relatives<sup>23</sup> are sins that demanded the penalty of expulsion from the Holy Community.

The purpose for inflicting these penalties is given in Leviticus 18:24-30:

Do not defile yourselves by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am casting out before you defiled themselves; and the land became defiled, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you shall keep my statutes and my ordinances and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you (for all of these abominations the men of the land did, who were before you, so that the land became defiled); lest the land vomit you out, when you defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. For whoever shall do any of these abominations, the persons that do them shall be cut off from among their people. So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs which were practices before you, and never to defile yourselves by them: I am the Lord your God.

An example of such a penalty is given in Leviticus 24:10-23.

Also included in this section are several positive commands dealing with the treatment of one's neighbor. Here the Lord instructs Israel.

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<sup>18</sup>Leviticus 19:29.

<sup>19</sup>Leviticus 20:2.

<sup>20</sup>Leviticus 18:23.

<sup>21</sup>Leviticus 17.

<sup>22</sup>Leviticus 19:5-8.

<sup>23</sup>Leviticus 20:17-19.

to leave part of the harvest for the poor;<sup>24</sup> pay their hired men every-day;<sup>25</sup> treat sojourners in a kindly way;<sup>26</sup> love their neighbors as themselves.<sup>27</sup>

Leviticus 21-22 contains certain rules for priests. In general they indicate that the priests must be particularly careful to maintain God's standards of holiness. The reason for maintaining these strict rules is stated in 22:9, "Lest they bear sin for it, and die thereby when they profane it."

Leviticus 23-27, excluding 26, treats the laws concerning the Sabbath;<sup>28</sup> the appointed feasts;<sup>29</sup> the oil for the lamps;<sup>30</sup> the shew-bread;<sup>31</sup> the sabbatical year;<sup>32</sup> and the Jubilee year;<sup>33</sup> special vows;<sup>34</sup> various offerings including the tithe.<sup>35</sup> Together with the rules for the sacrificial system, which we shall study in another connection, these rules regulated the worship life of Israel.

<sup>24</sup>Leviticus 19:9-10.

<sup>25</sup>Leviticus 19:13.

<sup>26</sup>Leviticus 19:33-34.

<sup>27</sup>Leviticus 19:18.

<sup>28</sup>Leviticus 23:3.

<sup>29</sup>Leviticus 23:4-44.

<sup>30</sup>Leviticus 24:1-4.

<sup>31</sup>Leviticus 24:5-9.

<sup>32</sup>Leviticus 25:1-7.

<sup>33</sup>Leviticus 25:8-55.

<sup>34</sup>Leviticus 27:1-8.

<sup>35</sup>Leviticus 22:9-33.

The sections mentioned in Numbers contain instructions concerning various vows, offerings and rituals. The ritual of the jealousy trial;<sup>36</sup> the ordinance of the Nazarite vow;<sup>37</sup> the ritual for blessing Israel;<sup>38</sup> rules concerning the cereal and drink offering;<sup>39</sup> the rules governing the income of priests and Levites;<sup>40</sup> the ritual for the preparation of holy water;<sup>41</sup> the sacrifices required each day and on special occasions - Sabbath and appointed feasts;<sup>42</sup> the sanctity of vows;<sup>43</sup> various duties of the Levites;<sup>44</sup> rules governing the marriage of women who have an inheritance.<sup>45</sup>

In Numbers 15 we find one of the clearest statements concerning which offenses are to be punished by expulsion from the Holy Community. "The person who does anything with a high hand. . . . reviles the Lord, and that person shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off."<sup>46</sup> Following this statement

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<sup>36</sup>Numbers 5.

<sup>37</sup>Numbers 6:1-21.

<sup>38</sup>Numbers 6:22-27.

<sup>39</sup>Numbers 15:1-21.

<sup>40</sup>Numbers 18.

<sup>41</sup>Numbers 19.

<sup>42</sup>Numbers 28-29.

<sup>43</sup>Numbers 30.

<sup>44</sup>Numbers 35.

<sup>45</sup>Numbers 36.

<sup>46</sup>Numbers 15:30-31.

we have the account of Israel inflicting the penalty of death on a Sabbath - breaker.<sup>47</sup>

In this Law, God gave the Children of Israel rather detailed instructions concerning how they ought to live. These included positive principles and prohibitions. The prohibitions were complemented with certain penalties that were to be imposed on those who disregarded them. These penalties were to be imposed by the community in order to keep itself holy. If the land became filled with wickedness, God threatened to drive the Israelites out like He would drive out the Canaanites before them.

So the purpose of the Law, including its penalties, was to keep the nation of Israel holy.

The revelation of the Law culminates in Leviticus 26, which promises great blessings for keeping the Law<sup>48</sup> and threatens severe punishment for breaking the Law.<sup>49</sup>

As Israel retained its holiness by using the legal enactments given by God it would receive the promised blessings. If Israel failed to maintain its holiness by refusing to follow God's instruction it would receive the threatened punishment.

By following God's Law, Israel would not only obey God, but would also assure themselves of His continued blessings. They would enjoy a good life in a good land protected by their God.

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<sup>47</sup>Numbers 32-36.

<sup>48</sup>Leviticus 26:3-13.

<sup>49</sup>Leviticus 26:14-45.

The Law, as it is presented, is primarily intended to be a guide by means of which the Holy Community of God can lead a holy life. But one overlooks some important events in the giving of the Law and some important emphases of the Law itself if he assumes that this is its only purpose.

The Law is also the means by which God revealed His essential holiness to Israel and demanded from them a holiness they could never maintain. The giving of the Law was preceded by a glorious appearance of God as He descended on Mt. Sinai.

Exodus 19:16-25:

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God; and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. And the Lord said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the Lord to gaze and many of them perish. And also let the priests who come near to the Lord consecrate themselves, lest the Lord break out upon them." And Moses said to the Lord, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for thou thyself didst charge us, saying, 'Set bounds about the mountain, and consecrate it.'" And the Lord said to him, "Go down and come up bringing Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, lest he break out against them." So Moses went down to the people and told them.<sup>50</sup>

The giving of the Law was interrupted by the people, when they became afraid, went away from God, stood afar off, and said to Moses,  
<sup>50</sup>Exodus 19:16-25

"You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die."<sup>51</sup>

In Moses' discussion of this event in his interpretation of the Law, he describes it thus:

Deuteronomy 5:22-27:

These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the deep gloom, with a loud voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them upon two tables of stone, and gave them to me. And when you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; and you said, 'Behold, the Lord our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire; we have this day seen God speak with man and man still live. Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire, as we have, and has still lived? Go near, and hear all that the Lord our God will say; and speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you; and we will hear and do it.'<sup>52</sup>

Then He continues,

Deuteronomy 5:28-31:

And the Lord heard your words, when you spoke to me; and the Lord said to me, "I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you; they have rightly said all that they have spoken. Oh that they had such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their children forever! Go and say to them, 'Return to your tents.' But you, stand here by me, and I will tell you all the commandments and the statutes and the ordinances which you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess."<sup>53</sup>

Here he points out that God was pleased with Israel's reaction. God desired that Israel maintain their reverential attitude forever.

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<sup>52</sup>Deuteronomy 5:22-27.

<sup>53</sup>Deuteronomy 5:28-31.

And God agreed to their plan. God obviously was pleased because He had accomplished His purpose. He had set out to reveal His holiness to Israel and He had succeeded. They understood that they were not fit to stand in the presence of the holy God. They had learned God's first lesson concerning the transcendence of God.

This lesson was continued in the construction of the tabernacle. It is true that the tabernacle was built so that God could dwell in the midst of Israel. But even when He dwelt in their midst, He was separated from the congregation by the "holy place" and from the priests by the veil that partitioned off the "holy of holies."

The lesson continues with the recurring phrase in Leviticus, "I the Lord your God am holy."<sup>54</sup>

It concludes with the recurring phrase "Be holy."<sup>55</sup> This phrase points out the holiness God demanded of his people. This holiness is to be intensified in the priests.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, through the revelation of the Law, God revealed His holiness to Israel. He taught them that even a life lived in accordance with the Law which avoided its penalties of death and exclusion and resulted in blessing still fell far short of that holiness which His own Holy nature demanded.

By this revelation God showed Israel that, in the final analysis, their existence depended entirely on His mercy. Only by means of the

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<sup>54</sup>Leviticus 11:44-45, et al.

<sup>55</sup>Leviticus 11:44-45, et al.

<sup>56</sup>Leviticus 21-22.

forgiveness of sins, which would ever be His unique gift to them, could they hope to maintain a holiness that corresponded to His essential holiness.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RATIFICATION OF THE COVENANT

The ratification of the Covenant is referred to in the proclamations of the Covenant which I have chosen in the following ways.

Joshua 23:14-16:

And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God promised concerning you; all have come to pass for you, not one of them has failed. But just as all the good things which the Lord your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you, if you transgress the Covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land which he has given to you.

Joshua 24:14-25:

Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if you be unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land; therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God." But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the Lord; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." And the people said to Joshua, "Nay; but we will serve the Lord." Then Joshua said to the people; "You are

witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve Him." And they said, "We are witnesses." He said, "Then put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord, the God of Israel." And the people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey." So Joshua made a Covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

Jeremiah 11:3-4:

You shall say to them, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man who does not heed the words of this Covenant which I commanded your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Listen to my voice, and do all that I command you. So shall you be my people, and I will be your God.

Jeremiah 11:7-8:

For I solemnly warned your fathers when I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, warning them persistently, even to this day, saying, Obey my voice. Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but every one walked in the stubbornness of his evil heart. Therefore I brought upon them all the words of this Covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did not.

Psalms 105:8-10:

He is mindful of his Covenant forever, of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generation, the Covenant which he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting Covenant.

Nehemiah 9:16-20:

But they and our fathers acted presumptuously and stiffened their neck and did not obey thy commandments; they refused to obey, and were not mindful of the wonders which thou didst perform among them; but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their bondage in Egypt. But thou art a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and didst not forsake them. Even when they had made for themselves a molten calf and said, "This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt"; and had committed great blasphemies, thou in thy great mercies didst not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud which led them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night which lighted for them the way by which they should go. Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them, and didst not withhold thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

## Nehemiah 9:26-31:

Nevertheless they were disobedient and rebelled against thee and cast thy law behind their back and killed thy prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to thee, and they committed great blasphemies. Therefore thou didst give them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer; and in the time of their suffering they cried to thee and thou didst hear them from heaven; and according to thy great mercies thou didst give them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies. But after they had rest they did evil again before thee, and thou didst abandon them to the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them; yet when they turned and cried to thee thou didst hear from heaven, and many times thou didst deliver them according to thy mercies. And thou didst warn them in order to turn them back to thy law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey thy commandments, but sinned against thy ordinances, by the observance of which a man shall live, and turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey. Many years thou didst bear with them, and didst warn them by the Spirit through thy prophets; yet they would not give ear. Therefore thou didst give them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. Nevertheless in thy great mercies thou didst not make an end of them or forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.

## Nehemiah 9:32-38:

Now therefore, our God, the great and mighty and terrible God, who keepest Covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to thee that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all they people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day. Yet thou hast been just in all that has come upon us, for thou hast dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly; our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept thy law or heeded thy commandments and thy warnings which thou didst give them. They did not serve thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness which thou gavest them, and in the large and rich land which thou didst set before them; and they did not turn from their wicked works. Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that thou gavest to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves. And its rich yield goes to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins; they have power also over our bodies and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. Because of all this we make a firm Covenant and write it, and our princes, our Levites, and our priests set their seal to it.

These references to the Covenant and the revelation that God made concerning Himself in ratifying it indicate that the ratification

of the Covenant at Sinai is a central event in the Old Testament. Also note the many other references to the Covenant in the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup>

The material on the ratification of the Covenant is found in Exodus 24. In interpreting this event we shall also consider Exodus 19, 32-34, Leviticus 1-9; and 16-17.

The story begins with Israel's arrival at Mount Sinai. God talked to Moses and informed him that He was going to make a Covenant with Israel.

Exodus 19:3-6:

And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my Covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."<sup>2</sup>

When Moses announced this to the Children of Israel, they answered, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do."<sup>3</sup> Then God told the people to prepare to meet Him after three days. Their preparation included cleansing their bodies and clothing. During this time, they were warned to stay away from the mountain under penalty of death.<sup>4</sup>

On the third day, God came down on the mountain displaying His glory to Israel. Once again He warned the Israelites that any-

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Young, "Covenant," Analytical Concordance to the Bible (21st American Edition. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, n.d.), pp. 208-209.

<sup>2</sup>Exodus 19:3-6.

<sup>3</sup>Exodus 19:8.

<sup>4</sup>Exodus 19:10-13.

one who attempted to come into His presence would be destroyed.<sup>5</sup>

Then God spoke the Ten Commandments to Israel, and was interrupted when they became afraid and ran away. He then agreed to continue the revelation of the Law through Moses.<sup>6</sup> Then He revealed the penalties for transgressing the commandments, which ended with the command to completely drive out the people of Canaan.<sup>7</sup>

Then God permitted the priests and elders to come up on the mountain, but they were still forced to worship God from a distance. Only Moses could come into His presence. "The others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him".<sup>8</sup>

After this experience, Moses repeated "all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances"; and the people agreed to keep them. Then he wrote all of the words of the Lord. The next morning he built an altar, and sent the young men of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord. Half of the blood from the sacrifices was saved in vessels. Half was poured out on the altar. Moses took the book of the Covenant, read it to the people, and they replied, "all that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." Then Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people, and said,

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<sup>5</sup>Exodus 19:16-25.

<sup>6</sup>Exodus 20:18-22.

<sup>7</sup>Exodus 21-23.

<sup>8</sup>Exodus 24:1-2.

"Behold the blood of the Covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."<sup>9</sup>

Exodus 24:9-11:

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.<sup>10</sup>

The best discussion of this event that I have found is in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary.

The ceremony described in vv. 3-11 is called "the Covenant which Jehovah made with Israel" (ver. 8). It was opened by Moses, who recited to the people "all the words of Jehovah". . . . ; whereupon the people answered unanimously. . . . , "all the words which Jehovah hath spoken will we do." This constituted the preparation for the conclusion of the Covenant. It was necessary that the people should not only know what the Lord imposed upon them in the Covenant about to be made with them, and what He promised them, but that they should also declare their willingness to perform what was imposed upon them. . . . The next day. . . . he built an altar, . . . and erected twelve boundary stones or pillars for the twelve tribes. . . . so as to prepare the soil upon which Jehovah was about to enter into union with the twelve tribes. As the altar indicated the presence of Jehovah, being the place where the Lord would come to His people to bless them (chapter 20:24), so the twelve pillars. . . . were to indicate the place of the twelve tribes, and represent their presence also. - Verse 5. After the foundation and soil had been thus prepared in the place of sacrifice, for the fellowship which Jehovah was about to establish with His people; Moses sent young men. . . . to prepare the sacrifices, and directed them to offer burnt offering and. . . . peace offerings for Jehovah. . . . The blood was divided into two parts. One-half was swung by Moses upon the altar. . . . ; the other half he put in basins, and after he had read the book of the Covenant to the people, and they had promised to do and follow all the words of Jehovah, he sprinkled it upon the people with these words: "Behold the blood of the Covenant, which Jehovah has made with you over all these words." . . . . The division of the blood had reference to the two parties to the Covenant, who were to be brought by the Covenant into a living unity; . . . . it was a division of one blood, and that sacrificial blood, in which animal life was offered instead of human life, making expiation as a pure life for sinful man, and by virtues of this expiation restoring the fellowship between God and man

<sup>9</sup>Exodus 24:3-8.

<sup>10</sup>Exodus 24:9-11.

which had been destroyed by sin . . . . Thus the people were received . . . . into the fellowship of the divine grace manifested upon the altar, in order that, through the power of this sin forgiving and sin destroying grace, they might be sanctified to a new and holy life . . . . In the blood sprinkled upon the altar, the natural life of the people was given up to God, as a life that had passed through death, to be pervaded by His grace; and then through the sprinkling upon the people it was restored to them again, as a life renewed by the grace of God. In this way the blood not only became a bond of union between Jehovah and His people, but as the blood of the Covenant, it became a vital power, holy and divine, uniting Israel and its God; and the sprinkling of the people with the blood was an actual renewal of life, a transposition of Israel into the kingdom of God, in which it was filled with the power of God's spirit of grace, and sanctified into a kingdom of priests, a holy nation of Jehovah (chapter 19:6) . . . . vers. 9-11. Through their consecration with the blood of the Covenant, the Israelites were qualified to ascend the mountain, and there behold the God of Israel and celebrate the Covenant meal; of course, not the whole of the people, . . . . but the nation in the persons of its representatives. . . . "They saw the God of Israel." This title is very appropriately given to Jehovah here, because He, the God of the fathers, had become in truth the God of Israel through the Covenant. "He laid not His hand upon the nobles of Israel," i.e. did not attack them. "They saw God, and did eat and drink," i.e. they celebrated thus near Him the sacrificial meal of the peace offerings, . . . . and received in this Covenant meal a foretaste of the precious and glorious gifts with which God would endow and refresh His redeemed people in His Kingdom.<sup>11</sup>

Here we see how God, in simple understandable steps, formed His Covenant with Israel, and taught them the meaning of the Covenant relationship. First He informed them of His intention of making a Covenant with them, in which they would be His kingdom of priests and holy nation. Then He manifested His glory to them, and, by the order to stay off the mountain and the giving of the Law, God taught them the lesson of His unapproachable holiness and awakened within them the consciousness of their sinfulness. Then in the blood of the Covenant God gave them the forgiveness of sins, and brought them into

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<sup>11</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, "The Pentateuch," Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), II, 156-160.

fellowship with Him. The exact nature of this fellowship was exemplified by the elders of Israel eating and drinking in the very presence of God.

So, by the formation of the Covenant, which occurred when God forgave the sins of Israel, God and Israel became one. In this Covenant the Israelite would dwell in the sphere of God's sin-forgiving grace.

To demonstrate the reality of this fact more clearly and to keep it constantly in the consciousness of the people God told Moses to have Israel build a sanctuary for Him where "I may dwell in their midst."<sup>12</sup>

While Moses was on the mountain receiving the instructions for the tabernacle, Israel broke the Covenant by making and worshipping the golden calf.<sup>13</sup> God threatened to destroy Israel for this sin.<sup>14</sup> Moses interceded for Israel, "and the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do to His people."<sup>15</sup> Then Moses went down to the people. By breaking the two tablets of the Law, he demonstrated to the people what they had done to their Covenant with God.<sup>16</sup> By the destruction of those who refused to return to God, he taught them the terribleness of their idolatry.<sup>17</sup> Thus he led them to repentance. When they repented, he returned to God to make atonement for their

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<sup>12</sup>Exodus 25:8.

<sup>13</sup>Exodus 32:1-6.

<sup>14</sup>Exodus 32:7-10.

<sup>15</sup>Exodus 32:11-14.

<sup>16</sup>Exodus 32:15-20.

<sup>17</sup>Exodus 32:25-28.

sin.<sup>18</sup> Thereupon the Lord declared that He had forgiven His repentant people; "and He said, 'My presence will go with you and I will give you rest.'<sup>19</sup> Then God explained the meaning of His name Jahwe to Moses; "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy."<sup>20</sup> And again He explained the name Jahwe to Moses; "The Lord, the Lord (is) a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin."<sup>21</sup> After this proclamation of mercy, God renewed the Covenant; "Behold, I make a Covenant."<sup>22</sup>

In the occurrences of this event we see how Israel's idolatry inflamed God's wrath, how Israel's repentance awakened His love and mercy. Here we have a basic revelation of the essence of God. He is gracious and merciful, as well as holy. And He pours out this grace and mercy in the form of forgiveness of sins upon those who are in the Covenant of His grace.

Thereafter Israel completed the tabernacle.<sup>23</sup> And God demonstrated the reality of the Covenant unity that existed between Himself and

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<sup>18</sup>Exodus 32:30.

<sup>19</sup>Exodus 33:14.

<sup>20</sup>Exodus 33:19 (Note that this is expressed in the same form as the "I am who I am" of Exodus 3:14).

<sup>21</sup>Exodus 34:6-7.

<sup>22</sup>Exodus 34:10.

<sup>23</sup>Exodus 35:1-40:30.

Israel by coming to dwell in the tabernacle. "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."<sup>24</sup>

Leviticus 1-7 describes the sacrificial system which God instituted in Israel. Through the ritual of this system God declared to Israel the continuous reality of forgiveness. The sacrificial system is nothing more or less than an extension of that great event that took place at Sinai, when God declared Israel holy by the shedding of the "blood of the Covenant."

In this description of the sacrificial system we find five different offerings mentioned: the burnt-offering, the cereal-offering, the peace-offering, the sin-offering, and the guilt-offering. Two of these, the burnt-offering and the peace-offering were instituted in the ratification of the Covenant (Exodus 24). In the description of these two offerings there, we assume that the burnt-offering offered and demonstrated the forgiveness of sins, and the peace-offering which was eaten in God's presence demonstrated the fellowship that now existed between God and Israel. The first was an atonement sacrifice; the other a communion sacrifice.

This corresponds with their description in Leviticus. The burnt-offering was to be killed, its blood thrown on the altar, its flesh burned. The offerer was to bring it to the door of the tabernacle, lay his hand upon its head, "and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him."<sup>25</sup> Thus the burnt-offering is described as a general

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<sup>24</sup>Exodus 40:34.

<sup>25</sup>Leviticus 1:3-9.

atonement sacrifice. It was to be used as it was used at the ratification of the Covenant to atone for the sins of the congregation or the individual. The peace-offering was to be killed, its blood thrown against the altar, and its fat burned on the altar. The offerer was to bring it to the door of the tabernacle, lay his hand upon its head, and eat the flesh on that same day.<sup>26</sup> Thus the peace-offering is described as a communion sacrifice by means of which God and the offerer partook of the sacrifice together. It was to be used as it was used at the ratification of the Covenant to demonstrate the fellowship that existed between God and the offerer.

The first new offering instituted is the cereal-offering. It consisted of flour mixed with oil,<sup>27</sup> and evidently accompanied a peace-offering.<sup>28</sup> Since it was not eaten by the offerer, it was evidently not part of the communion sacrifice. It probably signified the consecration of the offerer's produce to the God who had given it.

The second new offering instituted in Leviticus was the sin offering. If an Israelite sinned unconsciously, when he became conscious of his transgression, he was to bring a sin-offering. The offerer brought it to the door of the tabernacle, laid his hand on its head, and killed it. The priest sprinkled its blood either on the horns on the altar of incense or on the horns of the altar of burnt-offering. Its fat was burned, and the rest of the carcass was disposed of in a clean place

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<sup>26</sup>Leviticus 3:1-17 and 7:11-18.

<sup>27</sup>Leviticus 2:1-10.

<sup>28</sup>Leviticus 7:12-14.

outside the camp. "And the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven."<sup>29</sup> So the sin-offering was intended to expiate for unconscious sins.

The third new offering instituted in Leviticus was the guilt-offering. If an Israelite sinned either consciously or unconsciously in matters prescribed by the judgment or ceremonial rituals of the Law or if he had committed a conscious sin against the property of his neighbor, he was to offer a guilt-offering. In the latter case he was to restore what he had taken to the one he had wronged, adding a fifth part to it. This offering consisted of a ram of a certain value. The offerer brought the sacrifice, confessed the sin which he had committed, and the priest made atonement for his sin and he was forgiven.<sup>30</sup> So the guilt-offering was intended to expiate some unconscious sins and sins against the property of the neighbor. In general, it expiated those sins which did not require a more serious penalty under the stipulations of the Law.

In the sacrificial ritual prescribed in Leviticus there is a continuation of the two sacrifices instituted at the ratification of the Covenant, and the addition of other sacrifices by which specific sins could be atoned. The purpose of the sacrificial system was to continue the holiness of the individual who was sanctified at Mount Sinai, by continually forgiving his sins, which did not carry a penalty

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<sup>29</sup>Leviticus 4:1-35.

<sup>30</sup>Leviticus 5:1-6:7 and 7:1-7.

of death or excommunication. Through this system the gracious and merciful God offered forgiveness of sins, so that repentant sinners could maintain the Covenant unity with God that had been established when the Covenant was ratified.

In Leviticus 8-9 we find the historical account of the ordination of the priesthood. They were chosen by God to mediate the sacrificial system. The ritual of ordination concluded by God sending out fire from His presence to consume the first sacrifices offered by the new ordained priesthood.<sup>31</sup>

By this act, God placed His stamp of approval on the priesthood and the system of sacrifice which they mediated. Here He taught Israel this is the method of sin atonement that pleases Me. Here He gave them the assurance that this system of atonement, instituted and prescribed by Him, would be efficacious.

In Leviticus 16 God gave the ritual and purpose of the Day of Atonement. The ceremony of this day was the culminating event of the sacrificial system. The High priest first atoned for himself by offering a bull as a sin-offering, and sprinkling its blood on the mercy seat in the holy of holies. Then he killed the goat of sin-offering which was for the people, and sprinkled its blood upon the mercy seat. Thus he made "atonement for the holy place" which was defiled "because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel, and because of their transgressions, all their sins." Then he also sprinkled some of the blood of the bull and the goat on the altar.

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<sup>31</sup>Leviticus 9:24.

Thus he made "atonement for it . . . and cleansed and hallowed it from the uncleanness of the people of Israel."<sup>32</sup>

The description of these events convinces me that in the system of sacrifice God wanted to teach Israel the fact of forgiveness by transferral of sin. The sinner transferred his sin to his animal substitute by laying his hand on its head, and perhaps confessing his sin. The sin was transferred to the altar by the sprinkling of the animal's blood on it. Once a year, the altar that had become unclean by reason of the sins placed on it throughout the year was cleansed and the sins were transferred to the mercy seat. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews intimates they remained there until that one great Day of Atonement when the Son of God died "once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."<sup>33</sup>

The material of the ratification of the Covenant concludes with the description of significance of blood as it is stated in Leviticus 17:11. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls (lives); for it is the blood that makes atonement. . . . for the life." Here the obvious idea is that a man who sinned forfeited his life. By God's grace, he was allowed to substitute an animal's life as a symbol for his own. This life was given, when its blood was poured out. By the sacrificial death of the animal the sin was atoned and the sinner forgiven and permitted to retain his life.

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<sup>32</sup>Leviticus 16:1-21.

<sup>33</sup>Hebrews 9:1-26.

In the ratification of the Covenant God proclaimed Himself to be a gracious and merciful God, who shows His mercy by forgiving sins. By means of the blood of the Covenant He gave forgiveness of sins to Israel and brought these people into fellowship with Himself. A fellowship that was constantly signified by His dwelling in their midst. And a fellowship that was maintained by the sacrificial system through which God continued to forgive Israel's sins.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

The conquest of Canaan is referred to in the proclamations chosen in the following passages.

Joshua 24:8-13:

Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on the other side of the Jordan; they fought with you, and I gave them into your hand, and you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel; and he sent and invited Balaam the son of Peor to curse you, but I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he blessed you; so I delivered you out of his hand. And you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, and the men of Jericho fought against you, and also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I gave them into your hand. And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, the two kings of the Amorites; it was not by your sword or by your bow. I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you dwell therein; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards which you did not plant.

Jeremiah 11:5:

That I may perform the oath which I swore to your fathers to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as at this day.

Psalms 105:44:

And he gave them the lands of the nations; and they took possession of the fruit of the peoples' toil.

Nehemiah 9:22-25:

And thou didst give them kingdoms and peoples, and didst allot to them every corner; so they took possession of the land of Sihon king of Heshbon and the land of Og king of Bashan. Thou didst multiply their descendants as the star of heaven, and thou didst bring them into the land which thou hadst told their fathers to enter and possess. So the descendants went in and possessed the land, and thou didst subdue before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and didst give them into their hands, with their kings and the peoples of the land, that they might do with them as they would. And they captured fortified cities and a

rich land, and took possession of houses full of all good things, cisterns hewn out, vineyards, olive orchards and fruit trees in abundance; so they ate, and were filled and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.

The events of the Conquest are recorded in Numbers 10:11-14:38; 21; Joshua 1-12.

A little over a year after Israel left Egypt God commanded Moses to leave Sinai and lead the people toward the promised land.<sup>1</sup> When they came to Kadesh, they sent spies to investigate the land.<sup>2</sup> They returned and reported, "We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey. . . . Yet the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there."<sup>3</sup> Caleb, one of the spies, said, "Let us go up at once, and occupy it; for we are well able to overcome it."<sup>4</sup> But the other men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we."<sup>5</sup>

The people of Israel were dismayed at this report, and determined to choose new leaders and return to Egypt.<sup>6</sup> "Then the glory of the Lord appeared. . . . And the Lord said to Moses, ". . . . I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them."<sup>7</sup> Moses interceded for Israel, and asked God to forgive them. Then the Lord said, "I

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<sup>1</sup>Numbers 10:11-13.

<sup>2</sup>Numbers 13:1-20.

<sup>3</sup>Numbers 13:27-28.

<sup>4</sup>Numbers 13:30.

<sup>5</sup>Numbers 13:31.

<sup>6</sup>Numbers 14:1-10.

<sup>7</sup>Numbers 14:10-12.

have pardoned (forgiven), according to your word."<sup>8</sup> However, God decreed that the generation that rebelled would have to wander in the wilderness until they had died, then their children would be permitted to go up and take the land.<sup>9</sup>

The people remained in the wilderness of Sinai for approximately forty years, until the Kadesh rebels were dead, then they returned to Kadesh.<sup>10</sup> Instead of leading them directly into the land from the south, God led them to the East, south of the Dead Sea, into the territory east of the Jordan River. Here they conquered Sihon, king of the Amorites,<sup>11</sup> and Og, the king of Bashan.<sup>12</sup> This land was assigned to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and one-half of the tribe of Manasseh as their inheritance.<sup>13</sup> These victories were evidently intended to encourage the people for the conquest of Canaan.

At this point Moses died.<sup>14</sup> Joshua became the new leader of Israel.<sup>15</sup> Under the leadership of Joshua and by means of a miracle

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<sup>8</sup>Numbers 14:13-20.

<sup>9</sup>Numbers 14:21-38.

<sup>10</sup>Numbers 20:1.

<sup>11</sup>Numbers 21:21-26.

<sup>12</sup>Numbers 21:31-35.

<sup>13</sup>Numbers 32.

<sup>14</sup>Deuteronomy 34.

<sup>15</sup>Deuteronomy 31:23.

wrought by God, Israel crossed the Jordan River when it was at flood stage.<sup>16</sup> Following God's plan, they overcame and destroyed the city of Jericho.<sup>17</sup> The conquest was halted briefly by the sin of Achan, but continued successfully, after he had been killed, with the conquest of Ai.<sup>18</sup> When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what had happened to Jericho and Ai, they saved themselves by tricking Israel to make a covenant with them.<sup>19</sup> When the kings of Southern Canaan heard of the defection of the Gibeonites, they formed an alliance and came up to destroy their city. Joshua came to the aid of the Gibeonites, and in a severe battle, in which God assisted Israel by throwing "down great stones from heaven" and increasing the length of the day, he overcame the kings of the Southern Alliance.<sup>20</sup> Then Israel conquered Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir, and destroyed their inhabitants.

Joshua 10:40-43:

So Joshua defeated the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded. And Joshua defeated them from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, as far as Gibeon. And Joshua took all these kings and their land at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Joshua 3-4.

<sup>17</sup>Joshua 6.

<sup>18</sup>Joshua 7-8.

<sup>19</sup>Joshua 9:3-27.

<sup>20</sup>Joshua 10:1-15.

<sup>21</sup>Joshua 10:40-43.

Then the kings of Northern Canaan formed an alliance against Israel.<sup>22</sup> God promised Joshua the victory over them. Joshua attacked them, and the Lord delivered them into his hand.<sup>23</sup> Thereafter Joshua conquered the city of Hazor, and all of the cities of the kings of Northern Canaan who formed an alliance against Israel.<sup>24</sup>

Joshua 11:16-23:

So Joshua took all that land, the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland from Mount Halak, that rises toward Seir, as far as Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. And he took all their kings, and smote them, and put them to death. Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the people of Israel, except the Givites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; they took all in battle. For it was the Lord's doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be utterly destroyed, and should receive no mercy but be exterminated, as the Lord commanded Moses. And Joshua came at that time, and wiped out the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, did some remain. So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.<sup>25</sup>

The account of the conquest is summed up in Joshua 12 by means of a list of all the kings that Israel defeated. The fact that the conquest was not entirely completed is pointed out in Joshua 13:1-6. But at this point Joshua was commanded to "divide the land for an inheritance

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<sup>22</sup>Joshua 11:1-5.

<sup>23</sup>Joshua 11:6-9.

<sup>24</sup>Joshua 11:10-15.

<sup>25</sup>Joshua 11:16-23.

to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh!"<sup>26</sup> We read that Joshua complied with their request in chapters 14-19.

Joshua summed up the events of the conquest and pointed out the work that yet remained to be done in a farewell speech to the elders of Israel. He gave God the full credit for the conquest, and stated that God would continue to drive out the people before Israel until they possessed the entire land that God had promised them.<sup>27</sup>

This address concludes with the words:

Joshua 23:14-16:

And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God promised concerning you; all have come to pass for you, not one of them has failed. But just as all the good things which the Lord your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you, if you transgress the Covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land which he has given to you."<sup>28</sup>

Here Joshua points out that God had kept His Covenant promises by empowering Israel to take the land. He instructs them that God will continue to keep His promises as long as Israel remains faithful to the Covenant.

In the conquest of Canaan God taught Israel that He was ready to use His power for her in order to fulfill His promises to her. In the future, every Israelite could trust this same God to do the same thing for him as long as he remained true to the Covenant.

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<sup>26</sup>Joshua 13:7.

<sup>27</sup>Joshua 23:1-13.

<sup>28</sup>Joshua 23:14-16.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS INVESTIGATION FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

We have found and discussed the essential elements of the Covenant between God and Israel. We have demonstrated that these elements are discussed in the proclamation of the Covenant by Joshua, a former prophet; by a Psalmist from the time of the United Kingdom; by Jeremiah, a latter prophet; and by Ezra after the Exile. In the numerous references indicated with each essential element of the Covenant, we have shown that that element is referred to many times throughout the Old Testament. Certainly this demonstrates that the Covenant with Israel is a constantly recurring theme in all the Old Testament Books.

It may be impossible to demonstrate that the various Old Testament Books are nothing more than an expansion of this Old Covenant Kerygma, as Dr. Hunter claims for the New Testament. But I believe that it is possible to show that this Old Covenant Kerygma is found in and is the central idea of most of the Books of the Old Testament. In this discussion we shall follow the Jewish arrangement of the Books of the Old Covenant.

In the first four Books of the Torah we find a description of the Covenant with Israel. The Book of Genesis tells us how God prepared to make the Covenant with Israel. The Books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers describe this Covenant. Because of the rebellion at Kadesh, the conquest of Canaan was postponed,<sup>1</sup> but as we have shown it is an essential element. Had the rebellion of Israel not occurred it would

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<sup>1</sup>Numbers 14.

have been more closely connected with the other elements of the Covenant. The Book of Deuteronomy claims to be an interpretation of the Covenant given by Moses to the second generation of Israelites.<sup>2</sup> As such it is the first kerygmatic proclamation of the Old Covenant, and it is the most extended one. Anyone who reads Deuteronomy in its position in the Scriptures and without preconceived notions concerning its origin must agree that it is an interpretation of the Covenant between God and Israel. Certainly it is nothing more than an expansion of the Old Covenant kerygma.

In the four Books of the Former Prophets we have the History of this Covenant as it developed in the following centuries. The Book of Joshua records the fulfillment of the final element of the Covenant. At the end of the Book we find the second proclamation of the Old Covenant. In his farewell address, which is much like Moses' farewell address only shorter, Joshua restates the Covenant probably for the benefit of the third generation of Covenant people.<sup>3</sup>

In the sense that Joshua concludes the Covenant revelation it should be joined with the Torah. It is part of God's original revelation to the Covenant people. In its last two chapters its similarity to Deuteronomy is evident. Both are prophetic proclamations of the essential elements of the Covenant urging Covenant faith. In this sense we believe it permissible and even advisable to speak of a Hexateuch.

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<sup>2</sup>Deuteronomy 1:1-5.

<sup>3</sup>Joshua 23-24.

The other three Books of the "Former Prophets" were written by men who had one eye on the First Commandment and the other on Leviticus twenty-six. The First Commandment said, "You must be my people and I must be your only God." Leviticus twenty-six promised; if you remain true to the Covenant relation, I will bless you, if you break it I will punish you. Judges, depicts the punishment that Jahwe visited on apostate Israel. Samuel depicts the blessing bestowed on Israel, when she returned to the Lord. Kings traces the apostacy of Israel, beginning with Solomon's idolatry, to its final punishment - the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. The thesis of the prophets' who wrote these books is summed up in II Kings 17, after the fall of Samaria.

This was so, because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land Egypt. . . . They did wicked things, provoking the Lord to anger, and they served idols, of which the Lord had said to them, "You shall not do this." "Yet the Lord warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, 'Turn from your evil ways and keep my Commandments. . . .' But they would not listen. . . . They despised. . . . his Covenant that he made with their fathers, and the warnings which he gave them. . . . they sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. Therefore the Lord removed them out of his sight."<sup>4</sup>

Here also we have the purpose of the "Latter Prophets" before the Exile described. They were sent to warn Israel against apostacy and to proclaim God's invitation, "Return to your God." They are with few exceptions Covenant preachers. The sin they condemn is idolatry. The punishment they threaten is destruction. The one way out is "Return to the Lord." Their promises is "return will result in blessing,"

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<sup>4</sup>II Kings 17:7-18.

Their text is Exodus 20:3 and Leviticus twenty-six. They were called to proclaim the message of those two chapters to Israel.<sup>5</sup> Even the exceptions proclaim in a message already contained in the Covenant revelation.

Obadiah's message is as old as God's revelation to Rebekah "Two nations are in your womb; . . . the elder shall serve this younger."<sup>6</sup> Whatever the purpose of the Book of Jonah might be, it reveals the gracious and merciful God of Exodus 34.<sup>7</sup> Nahum is a vivid example of God's word to Abraham, "Him who curses you I will curse."<sup>8</sup>

The post-exilic prophets did not have to face the problem of open idolatry, but they did condemn the people for failing to give total allegiance to God. And their message is still the same. Disobedience to the Covenant will result in punishment. Covenant obedience will result in blessing.<sup>9</sup>

The "Sacred Writings" are not as intimately connected with the Torah as are the prophetic writings. However the essential elements of the Covenant are constantly mirrored in them. The Psalms that would not fit under the "Gattungen" of the essential elements of the Covenant are few. The lessons God taught in the Formation of the Covenant are the central messages of the Psalms. Israel is God's People; God delivers from all enemies; God directs His people by His Law; God and He

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<sup>6</sup>Genesis 25:23.

<sup>7</sup>Compare Exodus 34:6 and Jonah 4:2.

<sup>8</sup>Genesis 12:3.

<sup>9</sup>Haggai 2:15-19; Zech. 1:1-6; Mal. 3:6-12.

only forgives; God overcomes all obstacles for His people; are the constantly recurring themes in this hymn-book and prayer-book of Israel.

In the Wisdom Literature, including Ecclesiastes, the Spirit of the Law is applied to all areas of life, even to those not specifically treated in the Law of the Covenant. The Book of Proverbs sets forth the will of the Covenant God in all areas of life, and teaches that obedience to this Will will result in blessing, while disobedience will bring punishment. The Book of Job teaches that the righteous man is the man who renders Covenant Obedience without regard for the consequences. The Book of Ecclesiastes tells us that God's revelation, not human wisdom, is the basis for a God pleasing relationship with God. Their one theme is that the fear of the Lord, borne at Sinai, is the chief thing in Wisdom.<sup>10</sup>

In the "Rolls," except for Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon, the Covenant theme is not so readily apparent. Ecclesiastes we have discussed above. It still seems to us that that interpretation that interprets the Song of Solomon as a love song which describes the intimate relationship of the Covenant God and His Covenant people is the best interpretation that has been offered for this difficult Book.

In the post-exilic historical Books the Covenant theme is as apparent as it was in the pre-exilic histories. That faith in the Covenant God is vindicated is the message of the first half of Daniel.

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<sup>10</sup>Prov. 1:1-7; Job 38-42; Eccl. 12:12-14; Cf. the message of these chapters with Deut. 5:22-23.

In Daniel's prayer for Israel the Covenant theme of the earlier prophets is central.<sup>11</sup>

Ezra and Nehemiah were written to show us that the Covenant God did save a remnant of the Covenant people with whom He continued the Covenant. He brought them back from captivity as He had delivered their fathers before them. He settled them in their land as He had settled Israel in the days of Joshua. His Word was their Law. They, following the example of their fathers, made a sure Covenant with God.<sup>12</sup>

In my opinion, the Book of Chronicles, was written about the time of the return from Babylon. It contains the information the leaders of this time needed to re-establish Israel in Palestine. They had to determine the Abrahamic and Levitical descent of the return people and priests;<sup>13</sup> reinstitute the worship of Jahwe;<sup>14</sup> and institute the great lesson of prophetic history, apostacy brings destruction (II Chron. 9-36). The essentials of the Covenant constantly appear in this Book, irrespective of opinions of date and authorship.

This brief overview should suffice to demonstrate that a central theme of the Old Testament Books is the Covenant between God and Israel and to demonstrate that the essential elements of the Covenant appear again and again in these Books. It was the author's purpose to determine if this were true and to set forth evidence of this fact. On the basis

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<sup>11</sup>Daniel 9:3-19.

<sup>12</sup>Nehemiah 9:6-38.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. purpose of genealogical lists. I Chron. 1-9.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. the emphasis on temples and worship. I Chron. 20:29 and II Chron. 1-8.

of the evidence presented, we feel that the unifying factor of the Old Testament is the Covenant made between God and Israel at Mt. Sinai.

In the essential elements of this Covenant we have the revelation of God's saving purposes as He revealed them to the Church in the childhood period of its existence. It was a simple revelation; because each step had to be self-explanatory. It was a legalistic revelation; because it was intended to discipline the Church in the childhood period of its existence. It was a typical revelation; because its events and characters were intended to prefigure the greater events and characters of the New Covenant. It was a prophetic revelation; because its one purpose was to point toward the final revelation of God in Jesus Christ. This made the Old Covenant a transitory Covenant, which was fulfilled and replaced by the New Covenant. But this revelation is of vital interest to New Testament Christians for without it we cannot fully comprehend God's plan of Salvation as it was revealed in its final forms to the New Testament Church.

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