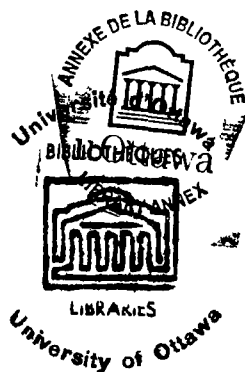


AN EXAMINATION OF COVENANT RITES  
TOWARD DEVELOPING AN INCREASED  
AWARENESS OF THE EUCHARIST

Ph. D.

*Degree granted  
October 6, 1969  
W. Beauchamp, Secretary*



WILLIAM M. LAWLOR

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CURRICULUM VITAE

William Michael Lawlor was born August 6, 1937, in Montreal, Canada. He received his elementary education at St. Willibrord's Academy, Verdun, Quebec, and his secondary education at Presentation Brothers Academy, Monte Bello, Quebec.

In 1957, he was granted a Bachelor of Commerce degree by Loyola College, Montreal. In 1960, he received a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Montreal and a teaching "A" Diploma from The St. Joseph Teachers College, Montreal. In 1965, he was awarded a Master of Arts degree in Religious Studies by the University of Ottawa.

He taught at St. Stephen's High School, Dorval, for four years before joining the Faculty of The St. Joseph Teachers College, Montreal, in September, 1963, where, at present, he lectures in Theology and Catechetics.

On April 4, 1964, he married Jeannine Agnes Bourassa. They have three children: Gregory, Adrienne and Krista.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author expresses profound prayerful gratitude to Father Henri Goudreault, omi., under whose guidance, and with whose unfailing supportiveness and ready availability, this thesis has been successfully completed; and to Father Maurice Giroux, omi., Chairman of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ottawa, for his direction and concern throughout the author's studies at the University of Ottawa.

Among the many others to whom the author owes thanks, he is especially grateful

to Dr. Thomas A. Francoeur for his many insights and for the inspiration of his person;

to Mr. Paul Gallagher, former Director of Studies, The St. Joseph Teachers College, Montreal, whose vision and encouragement enabled the author to complete the studies prerequisite to the writing of this thesis;

to Father Walter Bédard, O.F.M., for his detailed and insightful suggestions;

to Brother Xavier McInerney for many, many things.

The author is deeply grateful to Miss Alana Fallon for her typing of the thesis; to Miss Louise Orr for being so generous with her time and her technical assistance; and to Sisters Landry and Cameron for their concern and support.

Acknowledgement is also due to the staffs of the University of St. Paul Library, Ottawa, and the School of Divinity Library of McGill University, Montreal, and to Mr. H. Frankenburg, Librarian, The St. Joseph Teachers College, Montreal.

Finally, the author expresses profound loving gratitude to his wife, Jeannine, for her suggestions, editorial assistance, and most especially for her understanding and her loving kindness and supportiveness (hesed) throughout the preparation of this thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS

|             |                                                                                   |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AER.        | American Ecclesiastical Review                                                    |
| BA.         | The Biblical Archaeologist                                                        |
| BASOR.      | The Bulletin of the American<br>Schools of Oriental Research                      |
| BT.         | The Bible Today                                                                   |
| Bibl.       | Biblica                                                                           |
| CBQ.        | The Catholic Biblical Quarterly                                                   |
| DOB.        | Dictionary of the Bible (J. L.<br>McKenzie, author)                               |
| DBS.        | Dictionnaire de la Bible:<br>Supplément                                           |
| EB.         | Encyclopaedia Biblica                                                             |
| EDB.        | Encyclopedic Dictionary of the<br>Bible (A. van den Born and L.<br>Hartman, edd.) |
| ERE.        | Encyclopedia of Religion and<br>Ethics (J. Hastings, ed.)                         |
| ETL.        | Ephemerides Theologicae Iovan-<br>ienses                                          |
| HDB.        | Hastings Dictionary of the Bible<br>(5 vol. ed., 1902)                            |
| HDB. (rev.) | Hastings Dictionary of the Bible<br>(rev. 1 vol. ed., 1963)                       |
| IB.         | The Interpreter's Bible                                                           |
| ID.         | The Interpreter's Dictionary of<br>the Bible                                      |
| INT.        | Interpretation                                                                    |
| ITQ.        | Irish Theological Quarterly                                                       |
| JAOS.       | Journal of the American Oriental<br>Society                                       |

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|           |                                                                                                     |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| JB.       | The Jerusalem Bible (1 vol. English ed.: A. Jones, Editor, (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1966)) |
| JBL.      | Journal of Biblical Literature                                                                      |
| JSS.      | Journal of Semitic Studies                                                                          |
| JTS.      | Journal of Theological Studies                                                                      |
| LV.       | Lumière et Vie                                                                                      |
| Lum. Vit. | Lumen Vitae                                                                                         |
| MD.       | Maison Dieu                                                                                         |
| NRT.      | Nouvelle Revue Théologique                                                                          |
| OS.       | Oudtestamentische Studien                                                                           |
| PC.       | Peake's Commentary on the Bible (revised ed., 1963)                                                 |
| PP.       | Parole et Pain                                                                                      |
| RB.       | Revue biblique                                                                                      |
| RCA.      | Revue du clergé africain                                                                            |
| TD.       | Theology Digest                                                                                     |
| TDNT.     | Theological Dictionary of the New Testament                                                         |
| TS.       | Theological Studies                                                                                 |
| TWBB.     | A Theological Word Book of the Bible (A. Richardson, ed.)                                           |
| VB.       | Vocabulary of the Bible (J.J. von Allmen, ed.)                                                      |
| VTB.      | Vocabulaire de théologie biblique (X. Léon-Dufour, ed.)                                             |
| WOR.      | Worship                                                                                             |
| ZAW.      | Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft                                                  |

INTRODUCTION

The opening paragraphs of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the first document published by the Second Vatican Council, read as follows:

It is the goal of this most sacred Council to intensify the daily growth of Catholics in Christian living; to make more responsive to the requirements of our times those Church observances which are open to adaption; to nurture whatever can contribute to the unity of all who believe in Christ; and to strengthen those aspects of the Church which can help summon all mankind into her embrace. Hence the Council has special reasons for judging it a duty to provide for the renewal and fostering of the liturgy.

For it is through the liturgy, especially the divine Eucharistic Sacrifice, that "the work of our redemption is exercised." The liturgy is thus the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church. . . Day by day the liturgy builds up those within the Church into the Lord's holy temple, into a spiritual dwelling for God (cf. Eph. 2:21-22) -- an enterprise which will continue until Christ's full stature is achieved (cf. Eph. 4:13). At the same time the liturgy marvelously fortifies the faithful in their capacity to preach Christ. To outsiders the liturgy thereby reveals the Church as a sign raised above the nations (cf. Is. 11:12). Under this sign the scattered sons of God are being gathered into one (cf. Jn. 11:52)<sup>1</sup> until there is one fold and one shepherd. (cf. Jn 10:16)<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy, articles 1 and 2, pp. 137, 138. Unless otherwise specified, all quotations from the Documents of the Second Vatican Council are taken from: The Documents of Vatican II. Walter M. Abbott, General Editor, Joseph Gallagher, Translation Editor, New York: America Press, 1966. Page references are given to the paperback edition.

As the Council Fathers go on to point out, the liturgy will not have this profound impact upon man unless it is experienced in a meaningful and intelligible manner. The Constitution urges us to strive after ritual expression that engages us as whole persons. We do not come to the liturgy as dis-embodied thinking minds. We come as whole persons and we are meant to celebrate the liturgy in a fully human way.

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people" (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the restoration and the promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Hopefully, our participation will be such that we will become "thoroughly penetrated with the spirit and power of the liturgy."<sup>3</sup> We are to strive after a ritual expression that will allow the spirit and the power of the liturgy to penetrate our whole persons so that we may announce by our whole lives "the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church."<sup>4</sup> In accord with this desire, the Council further emphasizes the need to simplify and clarify the ritual expression of the Eucharist so that its full significance will come across to us and our total participation will be facilitated.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid. article 14, p. 144; cf. articles 11,19,48,59.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. article 14, p. 144.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. article 2, p. 137.

The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, can be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful can be more easily accomplished.

For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, while due care is taken to preserve their substance. Elements which, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated, or were added but with little advantage are now to be discarded. Where opportunity allows or necessity demands, other elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history are now to be restored to the earlier norm of the holy Fathers.<sup>5</sup>

The constant point of reference in this process of simplification and restoration of the Eucharistic rites should be the all-important biblical data on the Eucharist. Any attempt at a comprehensive study of the Eucharist would have to take into account the conciliar teachings, patristic and theological writings, and liturgical developments which have occurred since the time of the Bible. Nonetheless, the biblical data remains basic to all of these later developments. Conciliar texts, later writings and Eucharistic practices both imply and prolong the living tradition of the Church; a tradition which is rooted in the Christ of the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures. The full biblical testimony to the Eucharist remains the basis and the essence of any authentic enquiry into the significance of the Eucharist.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid, article 50, p. 155; cf. articles 48, 59.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Dogmatic Constitution On Divine Revelation, Chapter VI, especially article 24 and note 55, p. 127; also, T. Barrosse, "The Eucharist: Sacrifice and Meal? An Examination of the New Testament Data," Yearbook Of Liturgical Studies, 6(1965), p. 33; P. Hitz, "The Lord's Eucharistic Presence," Lum. Vit., 22(1967), pp. 304ff.

As will become clear in the course of this thesis, the biblical data on the Eucharist may be conveniently summarized under the formula: the Eucharist is the sacrificial meal of the New Covenant!<sup>7</sup> Essential, then, to a total awareness of the significance of the Eucharist is a biblical awareness of the significance of sacrificial covenant meals. In this thesis we shall simply present and comment upon the biblical concepts of covenant and covenant rites<sup>8</sup>--particularly, the covenant rites of shared blood and shared food.<sup>9</sup> Within this context, we shall attempt to articulate the significance of Christ's Eucharistic action at the sacrificial meal of the New Covenant, the Last Supper.<sup>10</sup> Finally, and consequent upon the findings of our research, we shall attempt to present some existential suggestions towards developing an increased awareness of the Eucharist.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup>It should be emphasized that this formula summarizes some aspects of the biblical data on the Eucharist. It is not presented as a summary of the mystery of the Eucharist. Our notion of the Eucharist rests squarely on our notion of Christ and as Paul Hitz has pointed out: "The mystery of Christ is so great and wonderful that it is never expressed and apprehended completely or fully by means of dogmatic and doctrinal formulas, nor is it apprehended through the unclouded consciousness of believers and theologians. Our minds are narrow and our hearts are limited. The danger of weakening the mystery, of unilateralism, is one that persists both in doctrinal formulation and in practice: a particular aspect is brought out more clearly, a particular dimension is reinstated; but at the same time, some other aspect is more or less neglected or disregarded in terms of direct awareness or in the explication of doctrine..." op. cit., p. 307. Our intention is not to minimize other aspects of the Eucharist. Our intention is to approach the mystery of the Eucharist from the aspect of the sacrificial covenant meal--as it is portrayed in Scripture.

<sup>8</sup>Chapter I.

<sup>9</sup>Chapters II and III.

<sup>10</sup>Chapter IV.

<sup>11</sup>Chapter V.

In a sense, we will be asking the questions: what did the Last Supper, precisely as the sacrificial meal of the New Covenant, mean to those who were gathered to celebrate it? What precisely did Christ wish to communicate to his disciples by means of this covenant meal which he shared with them? What meaning had this Meal for the disciples then? What meaning could and should it have for us now?

There is no need to labour the fact that there is a real urgency to the questions. Those of us actively involved with adolescents and young adults within the Church are repeatedly struck by their personal testimony to the effect that the Eucharist is for them an empty and meaningless ceremony. In the face of these honest statements there is no room for complacency on our part. There is room only for our own honest efforts to enter into the pain of their search for a more meaningful Eucharistic experience. This is not at all to suggest that our young people are "damned" if we cannot provide them with an immediately meaningful liturgical experience. Nor is it to suggest a reaction of panic on our part. Rather it is to suggest that we engage the above questions in a calm but urgent manner -- with all of the urgency of the real world and its need to become "of one heart in love."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy, article 10, p. 142.

## CHAPTER I

### The Covenant Concept In The Bible

#### A. Terminology

In the Old Testament the Hebrew term berit, a term which occurs 286 times, is usually rendered into English as "covenant". Because the etymology of berit is uncertain and because it appears in statements of such widely divergent character, any attempt to determine its authentic meaning must proceed with caution.<sup>1</sup>

Etymologically, the most generally accepted hypothesis derives berit from the root brh, "to bind", and relates it to the Akkadian bîrîtu, "fetter", bîrtu, "band". In this hypothesis, then, the primary sense of covenant is that of a binding agreement.<sup>2</sup>

Another hypothesis derives the term berit from the root brh with the meaning of "to cut".<sup>3</sup> The phrase "cut a covenant with, (or for)," karat berit, is by far the most

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. L.G. da Fonseca, "Diathêkê--Foedus an Testamentum?" Biblica, 8(1927), 31-50, 161-181, 290-319, 418-441; 9(1928), 26-40, 143-160; G. Quell, "The OT Term Berit," TDNT. II, 106, 109; G.E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," ID. I, 715; N. Schmidt, "Covenant," EB. I, 928, 929.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. G. Quell, op. cit., 108; G.E. Mendenhall, op. cit., 715; J. Barr, "Covenant," HDB. (rev.), 183; A.B. Davidson, "Covenant," HDB. I, 509, 510; N. Schmidt, op. cit., 928, 929; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. I trans. K. Sullivan and F. Buck (New York: Desclee Co., 1965) p.224; L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, 2d ed. rev.; trans. A.S. Todd (London: Lutterworth Press, 1957), pp. 61-2.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 224; 227, note 6; 238.

frequent in the Old Testament.<sup>4</sup> The verb karat has the meaning of "to cut off", or "to cut in two". In the expression karat berit, the noun berit does not denote the object which is "cut off" or "cut in two" but rather, something else is "cut" with the result that a covenant comes into being.<sup>5</sup> Most probably that something else, which is the direct object of the verb karat, is an animal whose cutting was an ancient and traditional rite at the conclusion of a covenant.<sup>6</sup>

A third hypothesis derives berit from the root brh,<sup>7</sup> "to eat", barah, "eat", thus giving berit the primary sense of a meal.<sup>8</sup> L. Koehler contends that the phrase karat berit

<sup>4</sup>It occurs 86 times. Cf. P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 227, note 6; G.E. Mendenhall, op. cit., page 715; G. Quell op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>5</sup>That the noun berit cannot denote the object which is cut in two or cut off emerges from the fact that sometimes other accusatives are substituted for it without any basic change in the expression taking place. Cf. G. Quell, op. cit., p. 108; P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 227, note 6, and p. 238.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Gn 15:10, 17; Jr 34:18f.; cf. also, G. Quell, op. cit., p. 108; A.B. Davidson, "Covenant," HDB. I, 509; E. Kautzsch, "Religion of Israel," HDB. V, 630; N. Schmidt, op. cit., 929; P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 227, note 6; and p. 238. In this sense, the term berit may be connected with the Akkadian root of bîrîtum, "space between", in prepositional phrases "between", with reference to the rite of dividing the animal, as in Gn 15:10, 17; and Jr 34:18f. On this possibility see: J. Baar, op. cit., p. 183; E.A. Speiser Genesis (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), p. 114.

<sup>7</sup>It is the meaning of the root brh which poses the real etymological problem. Cf. G. Quell, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. L. Koehler, "Problems in the Study of the Language of the Old Testament," JSS. 1(1956), pp. 4ff. D. J. McCarthy, "Covenant in the Old Testament: The Present State of Inquiry", CBQ. 27(1965), p. 218; A. Lods, Israel: from its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century, trans. S. H. Hooke (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1932), p. 202. P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 224.

has the meaning of "cut off food," in the sense of "enter into fellowship (with another)." The food is not any food but that which, when eaten by two persons at the same time, brings them into fellowship.<sup>9</sup>

The exact etymology of the term berit remains the subject of continued investigation. However, the uncertainty of its etymology does not preclude the possibility of determining the significance and range of meaning of the term berit.<sup>10</sup> In the ongoing attempt to establish definitively that significance and range of meaning it is instructive to note how the authors of the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, (LXX), translated berit.

In the LXX, in 270 of its 286 occurrences, berit is rendered by diathêkê, which ordinarily meant "last will and testament," a technical term in Greek jurisprudence but also found in literary and popular Greek.<sup>11</sup> Only once in

---

<sup>9</sup>"To be sure, the ultimate background of the phrase, which may be connected with magical ideas -- perhaps the transference of vital energies by a common meal -- is not reached. The attainment of this is denied us, however, by the lack of sure evidence." L. Koehler, JSS. 1(1956), p. 7; cf. p. 6; cf. also, L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, p.62.

<sup>10</sup>In the study of words it is not unusual for the significance and range of meaning of a word to be quite certain even though its etymology is uncertain. cf. L. Koehler, JSS. 1(1956), p. 6.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. G.E. Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 716; J. Behm, "The Greek Term Diathêkê," TDNT. II, 124. The Greek language did use diathêkê in other senses but only rarely does it have the meaning of covenant or contract. In a passage of the play, "The Birds," by Aristophanes, diathêkê is used in the sense of "pact" or "covenant": Peisthetaerus will lay down his weapons only on condition that the birds first enter into a covenant with him to do him no harm. The birds bind themselves under solemn oath and the stipulated terms are put into writing. (cf. 440, 445f). The Greek word used in this instance: diathêkê. The sense is clearly that of a covenant, a compact or treaty-pledge between two parties but binding only one of the parties according to the terms stipulated by the other. cf. Aristophanes, "The Birds," Volume 5 of The Great Books of the Western World, trans. B.B. Rogers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

the Septuagint is the literal and usual term for "contract," synthêkê, used as a translation of berit.<sup>12</sup> "Even when berît clearly designated a contract between two parties (for example, Gn 21:27,32; 1 Sm 23:18), the LXX translated it by diathêkê, not by synthêkê (pact)."<sup>13</sup> Possibly the LXX translators preferred the word diathêkê, with its usual sense of "last will and testament," or "voluntary disposition," to the word synthêkê, with its usual sense of "contract" or "pact," because they wanted to emphasize that in the berit which Yahweh initiates, He alone sets the conditions. As J. Behm comments:

The remarkable fact that diathêkê is not an unequivocal concept in the LXX, but hovers between the sense of "covenant" and "disposition," is not based solely on the fact that the Greek term embraces both possibilities; it is to be explained finally in terms of the complex content of the word berit which the translators were seeking to grasp. In their concern for a suitable rendering of the Hebrew word they must have felt that the originally legal term berit had come to convey stronger and specifically religious thoughts which went far beyond the idea of a contract between God and man and suggested the idea of a free declaration of the divine will to man's salvation...in Jer 31:31ff., to mention the instance which is most important from the New Testament standpoint, and which represents both the climax and the end of the Old Testament idea of covenant, the concept koinê diathêkê allows

---

1952), pp. 547ff.; cf. also, P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 245, note 51; G.E. Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 716; J. Behm, op. cit., p. 125; L.G. da Fonseca, op. cit., pp. 31-50.

<sup>12</sup>The rare use of the literal Greek word for "contract" or "treaty" or "pact," synthêkê, which is never used to translate berit except in 2 K 17:15, indicates that diathêkê was regarded as the equivalent in the LXX, although Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion later substituted what was to them the more literal synthêkê. cf. J. Behm, op. cit., p. 126; G.E. Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 716; P. van Imschoot and L. Hartman, "Testament," EDB., 2414, 2415.

<sup>13</sup>P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. I, p. 245; cf. J. Behm, op. cit., pp. 126, 127.

us to conceive of the religion of the age of salvation, to which the gaze of the prophet is directed, only as the free gift of God, as the declaration of His saving will, as the revelation of grace, in relation to which Israel can be only a recipient. "Disposition," "declaration of the divine will," "the divine will self-revealed in history and establishing religion," -- this is the religious concept of the diathêkê in the LXX, and it represents a significant development of the Hebrew term even while preserving its essential content.<sup>14</sup>

In the New Testament, diathêkê, which occurs 33 times, is the only term which has demonstrable connections with berit.<sup>15</sup> In both form and content the New Testament use of diathêkê follow that of the Old Testament. The main difference lies in the step from prophecy to fulfillment.<sup>16</sup>

The above report on covenant terminology, while clearly not exhaustive, serves to demonstrate the complex content of the Hebrew term berit and its usual Greek translation, diathêkê. It also reminds us that the idea of covenant in the Bible is not univocal; it admits of development and of different forms and these different forms imply different meanings.<sup>17</sup>

Even the most comprehensive study of the origin, use

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<sup>14</sup>J. Behm, op. cit., pp. 126,127; cf. p. 134; P. van Imschoot and L. Hartman, EDB. pp. 2414,2415; L.G.da Fonseca, op. cit., pp. 290ff.; B. Cooke, "Synoptic Presentation of the Eucharist as Covenant Sacrifice," TS. 21(1960), p. 31, note 93; L. Sabourin, Rédemption Sacrificielle: Une Enquête Exégétique (Montreal: Desclée de Brouwer, 1961), pp. 346,347; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. I, trans. J.A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), pp.65,66

<sup>15</sup>Cf. L.G. da Fonseca, op. cit., pp. 434ff.; P. Bonnard, "Covenant (N.T.)," VB. p. 67; J. Behm, op. cit., pp. 129ff.; G.E. Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 716. (Of the 33 occurrences, 9 are found in the writings of Paul, 17 in Hebrews, 4 in the Synoptic Gospels, 2 in Acts, and 1 in Revelation. Of the 33, 7 are citations from the Old Testament.)

<sup>16</sup>Cf. J. Behm, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. D. J. McCarthy, op. cit., pp. 219, 239.

and meaning of the terms berit and diathêkê would not be solely determinative in establishing the definition and significance of the covenant concept. Exploration of the significance and range of meaning of the covenant concept is not limited to the study of these terms. There are references to the covenant concept where these specific terms are not employed.<sup>18</sup> The presence or absence of these terms is not the decisive factor in establishing the significance and range of meaning of "covenant".<sup>19</sup> Comparative literary and theological analyses have enabled marked progress to be made beyond mere lexicography.<sup>20</sup> An examination of the covenant concept in these wider perspectives follows.

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<sup>18</sup>Cf. Ex 24:9-11; Is 41:8ff.; 51:2ff.; Am3:2; Mi 7:18ff.; etc.

<sup>19</sup>"Even when the term covenant is not present, the intention behind it may be expressed." F. Baumgartel as quoted by G. Quell, op. cit., p. 111, note 26; cf. W. Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 13, 14, 17, 18, 51ff.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. e.g., the writings of G.E. Mendenhall, whose studies of the literature of the ancient Near East, especially the suzerainty treaties of the Hittites, have helped to establish and clarify forms of the Old Testament covenants: "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law," BA. 17(1954) 26-46, and "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," BA. 17(1954), 50-76. W. Eichrodt has defined covenant in terms of its theological meaning and he presents the covenant concept as the central theme of the Old Testament. See his Theology of the Old Testament, op. cit. For an excellent survey of the various approaches to the study of the covenant concept in the Bible, see D.J. McCarthy's "Covenant In The Old Testament: The Present State of Inquiry," CBQ. 27(1965), 217-240.

## B. Origin, Nature and Development

### (1) Kinship (Oneness of Blood) By Birth

At the beginning of their history, the Israelites, like their ancestors before them, lived a nomadic or semi-nomadic existence. While they were not nomads in the strict sense of that term, they did live for a time as nomads.<sup>21</sup> Nomadism, this highly unusual form of life and culture which predates recorded history, was profoundly influential in shaping the pattern and code of behavior of early Israelite society.<sup>22</sup> In the nomadic way of life the repeated shifting

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<sup>21</sup>"Neither the Israelites nor their ancestors were ever true Bedouin, that is, camel-breeders. Their fathers kept sheep and goats and when we first meet them in history, the Patriarchs are already becoming a settled people. . . Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Israelites or their ancestors did live for a time in the desert as nomads or semi-nomads." R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions, trans. J. McHugh (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961), p. 4; cf. Idem, "The Hebrew Patriarchs and History", TD., 12(1964), 236; cf. also, J. Pedersen, Israel Its Life and Culture, I-II, trans. A. Moller (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), pp. 12, 30f.; A. Lods, op. cit., pp. 190-207; J. B. Segal, The Hebrew Passover: From the Earliest Times to A.D. 70, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 93.

<sup>22</sup>"...any study of Old Testament institutions must begin with an investigation into nomadism." R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 3; In particular, the customs and the organization of the Bedouin Arabs are, within limits, comparable. ibid., 3,4. This position is contested by G. E. Mendenhall: "The alleged parallels to Bedouin Arab tribes can no longer be the point of departure for understanding biblical traditions, particularly since nomadic groups of the second millenium B.C. did not have, and could hardly have had the independence of the Arab camel-nomads. The Amorites in all our historical sources are in contact with high civilizations and frequently in covenant relations with them. But Abraham is not a typical nomad, nor is Jacob. They are described in biblical traditions as Hebrews - i.e. outsiders who have no legal status, and as heads of roving bands who have covenant relationships with the city-states of Palestine." "Covenant Forms in Israelite Traditions", BA., 17(1954), 54; cf. also, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine", BA., 25 (1962), 66-87. In specific reference to Mendenhall's position D. J. McCarthy writes: "There is simply too much evidence

of habitat in order to maintain sustenance necessitated a unit of society compact enough to be mobile yet strong enough to ensure its own survival. This unit was the tribe, shebet or matteh.<sup>23</sup>

Tribal organization was the universal social form of nomadic peoples known to history.<sup>24</sup> An autonomous group of families who believed they had descended from a common ancestor, the tribe acknowledged no higher authority than their own and tribal unity rested on blood-relationship, either real or supposed. All members of the tribe considered themselves as "brothers".<sup>25</sup> The nomad believed he was of the same blood as the rest of the tribe and inter-tribal

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which makes the Hebrews, before their entrance into Palestine, something like nomads: the patriarchs are presented, for instance, as essentially semi-nomadic shepherds . . . the nomadic element must be retained as a major aspect of ancient Israelite history." "Covenant in the Old Testament: The Present State of Inquiry", CBO., 27(1965), 223-224; W.F. Albright contends that the patriarchs were not semi-nomadic shepherds but rather, "donkey caravaneers". cf., The Biblical Period From Abraham to Ezra (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), pp. 5-9; In refutation of Albright's position, see R. de Vaux, TD., 12(1964) 235, 236; See, also, G. Quell, "The OT Term Berit", TDNT. II, 114; A. Lods, op. cit., 190-207; H. Wheeler Robinson, The History of Israel, 2d ed. (London: Gerald Duckworth Ltd., 1964), pp. 11-13.

<sup>23</sup>R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 4ff.; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, pp. 29-46; J.L. McKenzie, "Tribe", DOB., 898, 899; C.U. Wolf, "Tribe", IDB. IV, 698-701; A.Lods, op. cit., p. 196.

<sup>24</sup>The earliest records of Semitic nomads indicate a tribal structure common to all. The Amorites and Arameans set a pattern early in biblical records. Edom (Gn 36:15f.), Midian (Nm 25:15), Ishmaelites (Gn 25:16) and the Arabians (Gn 25:1; Is 13:20) have tribal organizations similar to that of Israel. cf. C. U. Wolf, op. cit., p. 698; J. L. McKenzie, DOB., 898; F. B. Jevons, An Introduction to the History of Religion, 2d. ed. revised (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1902), p. 97.

<sup>25</sup>Abimilech, speaking to the entire clan of his mother's family, says, "Remember also that I am your bone and flesh." (Jg 9:2). All the members of David's clan are

relationships were also explained on the basis of unity of blood, kinship. Among the Arabs<sup>26</sup> kinship meant a participation in the common blood believed to flow in the veins of every member of the tribe; it was the bond which knit men of the same group together bringing with it common duties and responsibilities.<sup>27</sup> The unity of life experienced by those of the same kin was extremely profound:

A kin was a group of persons whose lives were so bound up together, in what must be called a physical unity, that they could be treated as parts of one common life. The members of one kindred looked on themselves as one living whole, a single animated mass of blood, flesh and bones, of which no member could be touched without all the members suffering. This point of view is expressed in the Semitic tongues in many familiar forms of speech. In a case of homicide Arabian tribesmen do not say, "The blood of M. or N.

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his "brothers" (1 S 20:29). Again, David tells the "elders" of Judah, "you are my brothers, you are my own flesh and blood." (2 S 19:13). cf. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 5, 6, 10; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, pp. 46, 58, 59, 267f.; W. Robertson Smith, Lectures On the Religion of the Semites: The Fundamental Institutions. 3rd edition with an introduction and additional notes by S.A. Cook, (London: A. & C. Black Limited, 1927), pp. 273, 274f.; J.L. McKenzie, DOB., 898; A. Lods, op. cit., p. 196; The Jerusalem Bible, Jg 9:2. note "c", --All references to The Jerusalem Bible, unless otherwise indicated, are to the one volume English edition: Alexander Jones, General Editor, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966).

<sup>26</sup>Texts about the Arabs in pre-Islamic times and ethnographical studies about contemporary Arab life are extremely valuable in the ongoing attempts to understand more clearly the primitive organization and customs of Israel; these nomadic Arabs, by race and by country, are very closely related to the early Israelites. We are justified, then, in using, with due reservation, the organization and customs of the Arabs for comparison purposes. Cf. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 3, 4; cf., also, notes 21 and 22 above.

<sup>27</sup>Cf., W. Robertson Smith, Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia, (London: C. J. Clay and Son, Cambridge University Press, 1885), p. 24.

has been spilt," naming the man; they say, "Our blood has been spilt." In Hebrew the phrase by which one claims kinship is "I am your bone and flesh." Both in Hebrew and in Arabic "flesh" is synonymous with kindred group.<sup>28</sup>

For both Arab and Israelite, kinship, this sense of oneness of blood, of flesh and bone, extended as far as the feeling of consanguinity existed and could be traced back to a common ancestor--often eponymous.<sup>29</sup> While this eponymous ancestor was not necessarily fictitious, tribal origins were undoubtedly more complex than this simple genealogical approach suggests. Other factors besides common descent contributed to the constitution of a tribe.<sup>30</sup> Smaller groups, because of geographical proximity, often joined together. Several insecure groups may have amalgamated in order to ensure their autonomy and their survival. Individuals could be incorporated into a tribe either by adoption into a family within the tribe or by simple approval of the tribal chief or elders. The newcomer became one of the tribe in name and in blood. "The Arabs say that he is 'genealogized' (root: nasaba). With a whole clan the fusion takes longer, but the result is the same, and the newcomers are finally considered as being of the same blood."<sup>31</sup>

Within the internal organization of the Israelite

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<sup>28</sup>W. Robertson Smith, Lectures, 273, 274; Cf., R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 11; J. Pedersen, Israel, I - II., p. 268; G. Pidoux, VB., p. 65; cf. C. van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation: A Study in Phenomenology, translated by J. E. Turner (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1938), 247-248; F. B. Jevons, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>29</sup>Cf., J. Pedersen, Israel, I - II., 58, 52ff; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 4, 5; W. R. Smith, Lectures, 273; F. D. Jevons, op. cit., 130.

<sup>30</sup>Cf., W. R. Smith, Kinship, 56, 57; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 4 - 7; J. Pedersen, Israel, I - II., p. 29ff.

<sup>31</sup>R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 6; (underscoring mine).

tribe,<sup>32</sup> the effective social unit was the clan, mishpahah. Each clan was ordinarily made up of several families whose heads, the "elders", ruled jointly. The clan usually lived in the same place and its families met for common religious feasts and sacrificial meals ( 1 S 20:6, 29). "The clan had common interests and duties, and its members were conscious of the blood-bond which united them: they called each other 'brothers' ( 1 S 20:29)."<sup>33</sup> Foremost among the duties of the clan was the basic obligation to defend a fellow-clansman or to avenge him. Thus the clan had the responsibility for blood-vengeance,<sup>34</sup> the most serious and

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<sup>32</sup>Although it formed a single unit, the Israelite tribe also had an internal organization with its basis in blood-relationship. Again, in organization, it was similar to that of the nomadic Arabs. "Among the nomadic Arabs, the limits and names of these sub-divisions (of the tribe) fluctuate somewhat. The basic unit is naturally the family ('ahel), a concept which has a fairly wide meaning. Several related families constitute a clan, or fraction of a tribe, called, according to the locality, either hamûleh or 'ashireh. The tribe itself is called a qabileh, but formerly it was called a batn or hayy, two words expressing that unity of blood on which the tribe is founded." R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 7 (underscoring mine); cf. W.R. Smith, Kinship, p. 35ff.

<sup>33</sup>R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 21; cf. p. 5; Note, again, that "unity of blood" as basis of a tribe's foundation. cf. A. Lods, 196, 197; W.R. Smith, Lectures, 273, 274.

<sup>34</sup>The fundamental obligation to protect the weak, the innocent and violated members of the clan, was institutionalized in the office of the "avenger", the go'el. The most solemn duty of the avenger was to enforce blood-vengeance. Blood-vengeance was the natural consequence of the strongest feeling of the nomad: unity of blood, kinship. It is blood-vengeance and its enforcement that affords the clearest illustration of what kinship really meant and how far it extended. When a man's life was taken, it was taken not only from him but equally from the group with whom it was believed that he held life in common. Cf. J. Pedersen, Israel, I - II, 268ff.; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 10, 11, 12, 21, 22; A. Lods, op. cit., pp. 195, 196; W. R. Smith, Kinship, pp. 22ff.; 56ff.; Lectures, pp. 32, 72, 272, 417, 420, 462; G. van der Leeuw, op. cit., pp. 247, 248; F. B. Jevons, pp. 54, 97, 122.

fundamental responsibility in the nomadic society of the desert where no court or police force existed and where an individual man alone was defenseless.

In point of fact, in nomadic society a man "alone" was a total anomaly. It is the suffering who speak of being alone. The psalmist's prayer of affliction; "I am like a vulture of the wilderness, like an owl of the waste places; I lie awake, I am like a lonely bird on the housetop," (102:6-7), and Hosea's lament over the misery of his people: "For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild ass wandering alone" (8:9) are similes from the animal world which express the abnormal, the unnatural.<sup>35</sup> As bird and wild ass belong to their flock and outside this are in suffering and abandonment, so too with human beings. The individual holds his life only in relation to his family, and life was not conceived as possible apart from one's family.<sup>36</sup>

The family, bêth'ab, the "house of one's father," was the basic and smallest social unit within the tribe. It formed the base from which the whole social structure grew. The family consisted of all those who were united by explicit common blood and common dwelling-place. Thus it comprised not only the father, his wife or wives and their unmarried children but also their married sons with their wives and children as well as the servants and any resident aliens. Such a large household, which appears for example in the patriarchal accounts of Genesis, was obviously desirable in the insecurity of nomadic times.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Cf. Jr 15:17. Unless otherwise indicated, all biblical references are quoted from the Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965).

<sup>36</sup>Cf. J. Pedersen, Israel, I - II, pp. 263, 267, 268, 285ff.; J. L. McKenzie, DOB. 273; F. B. Jevons, op. cit., pp. 54, 99.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 20; J. Pedersen, Israel, I - II, p. 274; J. L. McKenzie, DOB. 273; cf. also, Gn 7:1,7; 46:8-26; Jg 11:1-7.

With its basis in explicit kinship, the Israelite sense of family unity was remarkably profound. To be of the same "flesh and bone", the same "flesh and blood", signified much more than mere biological unity; it was the expression of a deeply rooted common character<sup>38</sup> and of "psychic community".<sup>39</sup> The family manifested a common will which issued in a common resolve and responsibility. Among the early Israelites the members of a family are "so firmly united that they are entirely penetrated by one will, that they are one."<sup>40</sup> While such "psychic community" may be said to extend as far as kinship was believed to exist, the most telling and intimate sense of kinship was found in the family unit.

...the family is a common life, an organism which grows and spreads in the shoots which it is constantly sending forth. The symbol of the plant or the tree naturally suggests itself, and the ancients themselves already made use of it. . . Just as the branch not only owes its existence to the trunk and the root, but constantly sucks its nourishment from it, in the same manner the individual holds his life only in connection with his

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<sup>38</sup>"For the Israelite it is a matter of course that common flesh makes common character. Therefore family, mishpāhā, is the designation of those who are of the same kind, have the same essential features, and it is the essential factor of the community." J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, p. 48.

<sup>39</sup>"Psychic community", as defined by Pedersen, "means, above all, a common will and so a common responsibility." Israel, I-II, p. 271. (Cf. the General Index of Israel, I-II, under the title, Community). In developing the concept of psychic community, Pedersen was attempting to convey the radical identity of wills, the radical oneness of life, characteristic of the Israelite family, and as we shall see, of those who entered into a covenant relationship. The expression "psychic community" is used throughout this thesis, precisely as it has been defined by Pedersen, in an attempt to convey the startling intimacy and intensity of the family and covenant relationships, as they were experienced by the Israelites. Cf. in this chapter, notes 42, 55, 67, below.

<sup>40</sup>J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, p. 265; cf. 271, 292.

family. It is that which is expressed by the sons bearing the name of the father.

That the son places himself outside the family and raises the standard of revolt against his father, is so utterly unnatural that no law can take account of it. It is more absurd than a kingdom divided against itself; it is a unity, a soul that is at war with itself. If the son sets himself against the father, then he is as a diseased member of a body, and the father who, by the acts of the son, is forced to remove him, is as a man who cuts his own flesh.

This is not only a symbol. The strong community between the members of the family has its physical presuppositions, resting upon the fact that their bodies are made of the same substance. They have the same flesh, bones and blood.<sup>41</sup>

While the man is the centre of the common will of the family, he forms a complete unity only in relation to the whole family. He never acts for himself alone but always for the whole of his family, his "father's house". "Whatever he has done, the house, the family has likewise done, for together they form an organism so closely knit that no single part thereof can be separated as something independent."<sup>42</sup>

The union of the family or the house is so firm, the harmony so deep, that neither of the two words, union or harmony is quite sufficient. Peace in the house is a common will and a common responsibility, not dependent on the various individuals. The peace of the family is not something which is first created by the goodwill of men: It is given with life, and its dissolution means the ruin of life. The house stands and falls as a whole. Whether a man says "I" or "my house" is really immaterial. The two terms cover each other entirely.<sup>43</sup>

Because it represented kinship in its most intimate

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 267; cf. 51, 54, 55; cf., W. R. Smith, Lectures, 40, 41; cf. C. van der Leeuw, op. cit., 247, 248; F. B. Jevons, op. cit., 330.

<sup>42</sup>J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 271.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 274, 275.

sense and because it represented the most intimate life-bond born of the sense of explicitly shared blood, the family was the very centre of early Israelite life and played an essential part in the thought and affairs of the Israelites throughout. The indistinguishable merging of the family into the wider entities of the clan and the tribe indicates the profound effect it had on the political life of the whole nation. To the Israelite, "family" conveyed the notions of deepest union, solidarity, security, harmony, order,--all vital to survival in nomadic or seminomadic times and indeed throughout the centuries of political insignificance that were to follow. Of course, tribal organization was conducive to the establishment and maintenance of firm family ties. The transition to settled life and the development of city life inevitably brought about changes that weakened the family solidarity known to patriarchal times. As the feeling of family solidarity grew weaker, the individual began to emerge from the family unit.

In what has been presented above, the three social units--the tribe, the clan, and the family,--may appear to have been sharply defined entities, with so many families making a clan and so many clans making a tribe. In point of fact, the line of distinction between the three units is quite fluid and the terms are often used quite freely.<sup>44</sup> However, this in no way detracts from the main point of this presentation which has been to emphasize the most important relationship among the seminomadic Israelites: kinship, unity of blood. The strongest feeling of the nomad was the feeling of blood-relationship!

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<sup>44</sup>"The hierarchy of the three terms, bêth'ab, mishpahah and shebet is clearly expressed in Jos 7:14-18, but one term may sometimes be used for another, as in Nb 4:18 and Jg 20:12 (Hebrew text)." R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 8; Cf., J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II., pp. 46-60; J. L. McKenzie, DOB., 898, 899.

## (2) Kinship (Oneness of Blood) By Covenant

Blood-relationship is the foundation and uniting factor in family, clan and tribal union.<sup>45</sup> While kinship becomes less pronounced and less binding as one moves away from its centre, the family, it is extremely difficult to determine degrees of kinship or its outer limit. There simply are no sharp lines of demarcation.<sup>46</sup> What is clear is that of the three groupings, each of whose basis is kinship, the tribe emerges as the truly autonomous unit. Because of its solidarity and size it possessed a kind of self-sufficiency which made it the most effective social form for survival in the desert.<sup>47</sup> This solidarity rested squarely on kinship, on unity of blood, a unity which could be natural or acquired. When not natural, that is, when not of "the same flesh and bone" by birth and actual blood ties, the unity could be acquired by covenant, berit.<sup>48</sup>

Kinship was not, then, solely an affair of birth and common descent but could be acquired by covenant. This belief in kinship by means of covenanting was as essential

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<sup>45</sup>Cf. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 5, 7, 10, 11; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II., pp. 50, 179, 267ff., 285; A. Lods, Israel, 198; J.L. McKenzie, DOB., 620, 498, 899; cf. also, W.R. Smith who writes: "The key to all divisions and aggregations of Arab groups lies in the action and reaction of two principles: that the only effective bond is a bond of blood, and that the purpose of society is to unite men for offence and defence." Kinship, p. 56; cf. F. B. Jevons, 96ff., 120, 54.

<sup>46</sup>Perhaps the surest measurement of the extent of blood-kinship is to be found in the workings of the law of blood-vengeance. cf. W.R. Smith, Kinship, 22ff.; cf., also, note 34 above.

<sup>47</sup>Cf. W. R. Smith, Kinship, p. 56.

<sup>48</sup>Cf. A. Lods, Israel, 197, 198; W. R. Smith, Lectures, 273; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 225; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II., pp. 278, 279ff., 283, 286, 288, 292, 298, 308-310; F. B. Jevons, op. cit., p. 97.

to tribal life as the belief in kinship by birth.<sup>49</sup> For those who lived in tribal relationships, social life depended on actual blood-relationship or on berit: community and peace. Solidarity, security, harmony, order, rights and duties,--all were guaranteed by the blood-relationship of those naturally and explicitly of "the same flesh and bone" (e.g., Gn 29:14; 37:27; Jg 9:2; 2 S 5:1, 19:13ff.) or came into being by berit among those who were not already explicitly bound by blood ties (e.g., Am 1:9; Ob 7; Ps 55:20,21). Hence, the profound significance that the covenant had in Israelite life, both secular and religious.<sup>50</sup>

#### a) "Secular" Covenants

Among the ancient Israelites, covenant, berit, designated primarily and essentially the mutual relation of solidarity which bound the covenant partners as well as the

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<sup>49</sup>Cf. W.R. Smith, Lectures, p. 273; A. Lods, Israel, pp. 197, 198; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, pp. 263-310; G. Pidoux, VB. 65, 66; F. B. Jevons, p. 97.

<sup>50</sup>The term "secular" is used in this thesis to describe covenants between men in which God is not portrayed as an actual partner to the covenant, although He may be and very frequently was, invoked as a witness to the covenant. The term "religious" is used to describe covenants in which God is seen to be an actual partner to the covenant and not just a witness to the covenant. This terminology is not completely reflective of the realities involved. However, this may be said of any other terms that may be employed. G. Quell has expressed a preference for the terms 'legal' (for covenants between men), and 'theological' (for covenants in which God is an actual partner). Cf. "The OT Term Berit," op. cit., pp. 109, 110. In addition to the secular and religious covenants in the Bible, there is a third group of covenants where the concept is used metaphorically or poetically to denote the relation between God or man to animals or things. Cf. Is 28:15,18 (Judah's covenant with death); Job 5:23 (with stones); 31:1 (with eyes); 40:28 (with Leviathan); Jr 33:20,25 (Yahweh has a covenant with 'day and night'); Ez 24:25; Ho 2:20 (Yahweh with beasts). Cf. G. Quell, op. cit., 109, note 23; P. van Imschoot, op. cit., 225; J. Pedersen, Israel, III - IV, 617ff.

rights and duties which flowed from this relation. Covenant meant community and peace.<sup>51</sup>

In this sense, the family represented the most natural and fundamental covenant relationship for it was in the family that one experienced the most basic and intimate union and solidarity along with concomitant rights and duties. To be born is to be born of a covenant relationship (cf. Mt 2: 10-16) and into a covenant relationship, that is, a relationship of community and peace. The life one received was not something individual or private but rather something mutual which of its very nature was to be shared with others, first and foremost with one's family and then with others beyond the family.<sup>52</sup>

The concept of covenant is seen most clearly in the state of fellowship posited among members of the same family as it was lived and observed by them. Within the family, the fact of blood-relationship is explicit and there is no need to acquire a unity of blood already explicitly possessed. There is no need to acquire artificially a fellowship naturally operative. However, where this natural relationship and fellowship was absent or obscure, an equivalent relationship could be established by means of a covenant which extended the natural.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Cf. P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 225; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, p. 285; G. Quell, pp. 111, 112ff.; D.J. McCarthy, CBO., 27(1965), p. 235; L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, pp. 60-63.

<sup>52</sup>Cf. J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, pp. 309, 378, 475. Cf. also, pp. 12-15 above.

<sup>53</sup>Cf. G. Quell, op. cit., p.114; Cf. A. Lods, Israel, 198; Cf. W.R. Smith, Lectures, 318; L. Johnston, A History of Israel, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1964), p. 23: "A comparison between Genesis 13:5-11 and 21:25-7 is instructive. In both cases the situation is the same: two groups, those of Abraham and Lot in the first case and Abraham and Abimelech in the second, have become so numerous that a dispute rises over water supplies; in both cases the parties come to an agreement; but in the case of Abraham and Abimelech a covenant is made,

The covenant concept then is an extension of the family concept. All covenants may be said to be extensions of the natural covenant of the family. As has been stated, it is of the essence of the family to be as one, to be entirely penetrated by a common will. The individual forms a complete unity only in relation to the whole family, only to the extent that he is entirely identified with its common will and common responsibility. One is born into wholeness, that is, into peace, sâlôm. "Peace" in the house means a common will and a common resolve, but it means more: total harmony, integrity, the full development of the persons. Such is the reality conveyed by the term sâlôm in its deepest sense. That reality is fully operative in the most intimate of peace relations, the family.<sup>54</sup> To the Israelite, "family" meant such an intimate peace, deepest union, solidarity, security, order, with all of the concomitant rights and duties. In the concept of family one recognizes the concept of covenant in its most profound and natural sense.

What is true for the family relationship is equally true for the relationship established by solemnly enacted covenants. It is of the essence of such covenants that those who enter into them, enter into a union so profound as to "form one whole ruled by a common will". Covenant means a common will and a common responsibility, "psychic

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while there is no such mention of an alliance between Abraham and Lot. The implication is that there was no need for a covenant between Abraham and Lot since they were kinsmen; but that the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech was looked on as constituting a bond equivalent to blood-relationship."

<sup>54</sup>Cf. J. Pedersen, Israel, I - II, 263ff.; 274ff.; 278; G. von Rad, "'Peace' in the Old Testament", TDNT., II. pp. 402-406. Cf. also, note 43 above.

community".<sup>55</sup> To enter into covenant is to enter into peace, sâlôm. A covenant inaugurates a relationship of peace. Peace is the natural and assured consequence of a covenant. In fact, the terms are so closely related that a "covenant of peace" is but a stronger expression for "covenant" (cf. Ez 34:25; 37:26; Is 54:10).<sup>56</sup> When the covenant is said to inaugurate and assure peace it means the wholeness, the totality, the full untrammelled development and harmony of the covenant partners, in a word, their "psychic community".<sup>57</sup> The covenant established a quasi-familial unity.<sup>58</sup>

The relationship established by a covenant was absolutely equivalent to the closest possible natural bond.<sup>59</sup> Permanent and inviolable, it was a relationship which did not admit of rupture or violation without the direst of consequences. One of the most remarkable illustrations of this truth is to be seen in the intensity of the covenant relationship between Jonathan and David (Cf. 1 S 18:1 - 20:43; 23:18; 2 S 1:23, 26:9.).

The highly sensitive Jonathan, eldest son of Saul, and the charismatic shepherd boy, David, truly became brothers as a result of their covenant (cf. 2 S 1:26). So intense was their covenant love that it had a tragic issue.

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<sup>55</sup>Cf. J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 279, 286, 290, 291, 292, 294. Cf. also, note 39 above.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 285; cf. P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 225; G. von Rad, op. cit., 402-406.

<sup>57</sup>Cf. P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 225; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 263ff.; 285; G. von Rad, op. cit., 403. Also, notes 39, 42, 55 above.

<sup>58</sup>Cf. D. J. McCarthy, CBQ., 27(1965), p. 235.

<sup>59</sup>Cf. R. A. F. MacKenzie, Faith and History in the OT (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 46; L. Johnston, 23, 50; G. Quell, 113, 114, 115; A. Lods, 197; J. Pedersen, Israel, I - II, 283, 284, 291, 292.

For when Saul became irreconcilably opposed to David, it caused Jonathan to choose between the obligations of blood-kinship with his father and covenant-kinship with David, both of which admitted no exception. Jonathan did all in his power not to rupture the covenant love bond with his father. However, his covenant love for David was so intimate that it not only equalled but surpassed the covenant love which claimed to be the deepest of all, that of the family.

Jonathan loved David as his own soul, that is he loved him as himself (cf. 1 S 18:1-4). To sever such a relationship was to undergo a kind of self-mutilation. On the other hand, to violate his relationship with his family meant to destroy his wholeness. Such was the conflict within Jonathan. Here, the depth and the binding-force of the heart that knows covenant love is shown in all its magnitude and grandeur for Jonathan chose, to his own destruction, the self-imposed obligations of his covenant love for David.

The love of David and Jonathan was truly profound, and David, with the sensitivity of the poet, captured something of that profundity in his moving tribute to his then dead covenant partner:

O Jonathan, in your death I am stricken,  
I am desolate for you, Jonathan my brother,  
Very dear to me you were,  
your love to me more wonderful  
than the love of a woman. (2 S 1:26, JB).

The record is clear. Their love was mutual in its intensity. They loved one another as their own souls. They went beyond the feelings of friendship and entered into a solemn covenant and by so doing they established a bond which defined and confirmed the nature of their fellowship: to be as one. They were permanently and inviolably united. It is incontestable that their covenant relationship was

absolutely equivalent to the closest possible natural bond.<sup>60</sup>

b) Hesed As The Object Of Secular Covenants

The Jonathan-David covenant also well illustrates the kind of conduct expected of covenant partners: hesed. This Hebrew word, hesed, is impossible to translate precisely or even adequately for it combines the notions of love, loyalty, unfailing supportiveness, and ready action. It implies an existing covenant bond. Hesed has been rendered as "loving kindness", "leal love", "devotion", and "covenant love".<sup>61</sup> Of these, "covenant love" is perhaps the best translation, for it makes one aware that this demanding conduct is born of a covenant bond.

David expected hesed of Jonathan on the basis of the

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<sup>60</sup> Because of its seemingly private nature, it may be objected that the Jonathan-David covenant is not typical of covenants as they appear in the Old Testament. While it may be true that this covenant is the only unequivocally mentioned covenant between individuals recorded in the Old Testament, one could not conclude automatically from this that such covenants were unusual in the normal course of social life. (Cf. G. Quell, op. cit., p. 112). Further, a counter-objection may be stated. The Jonathan-David covenant is not a private covenant if by the term private one means the exclusion of all others from the binding-power which is of the essence of covenant. Nor, is any covenant private in that sense. The Jonathan-David covenant had obvious and essential social ramifications (cf. e.g., 2 S 9:1-13). Given the Israelite sense of family solidarity, it could hardly be otherwise. Further still, the binding force of the obligations which flow from a covenant is usually given greater emphasis, especially by the accounts of the ritual procedure which conclude a covenant, than in the accounts of the covenant between Jonathan and David.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. H.H. Rowley, The Faith of Israel (London: SCM Press, 1956), p.62, note 2; p.66; p.70, note 1; J. Bright, The Kingdom of God: The Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), p. 28, note 18; p. 141, note 25; R. A. F. MacKenzie, Faith and History in the Old Testament (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 45; J. Gray, I & II Kings: A Commentary (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1964), p. 100; A. Lods, The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism trans S.H. Hooke.

covenant existing between them: "Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a sacred covenant with you" (1 S 20:8). Jonathan expected the same hesed from David in view of his future kingship: "If I am still alive, show me the loyal love of the Lord, that I may not die; and do not cut off your loyalty from my house for ever. When the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth, let not the name of Jonathan be cut off from the house of David. And may the Lord take vengeance on David's enemies. And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul." (1 S 20:14-17).

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of hesed. An awareness of its meaning is essential to a full understanding of the nature of covenant.

Wherever a berit governs relations between human beings, the kind of behavior which is expected in the normal way of those so associated is clearly recognized as hesed. David expects hesed of Jonathan on the grounds of the covenant existing between them, and Jonathan entreats the same attitude from David in view of his future kingship. It is the brotherly comradeship and loyalty which one party to a covenant must render to the other. Thus hesed constitutes 'the proper object of a berit, and may almost be described as its content. The possibility of the establishment and maintenance of a covenant rests on the presence of hesed.' Hence there are frequent instances of hesed and berit being used in zeugma.

. . . One particular type of conduct expected from fellowship as an immediate result of the conclusion

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(London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1937), p. 89; T.H. Robinson in The Psalmists (ed.), D. C. Simpson, pp. 36, 37; W. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, Hebrew Religion Its Origin and Development (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), p. 207; N. H. Snaith, "Loving Kindness," A Theological Word Book of the Bible, (ed.), A. Richardson (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1950), pp. 136, 137; E. Osty, in The Jerusalem Bible, Ho 2:21, note "r".

of the berit was the duty of loyal mutual service; without the rendering of hesed on both sides the maintenance of a covenant was in general unthinkable.<sup>62</sup>

Hesed may be seen, then, as a development of Israelite family love. A. Lods wrote of hesed that it was a very comprehensive concept, one meaning of which was "the natural feeling which prompts a man, apart from the constraint of law, to be kind and indulgent towards the members of his family or tribe."<sup>63</sup> The Israelite father-son relationship assumes hesed as the kind of conduct binding on its members (cf. Gn 47:29). Just as the covenant concept is an extension of the family concept, so too covenant love may be seen as an extension of Israelite family love.<sup>64</sup>

By covenant one could establish the equivalent relationship naturally characteristic of the Israelite family. As has been stated, this possibility of achieving deepest kinship by covenant was of incalculable importance throughout Israelite life.

In private life, the relationship between Jonathan and David has already demonstrated the importance of the covenant concept. There are other instructive examples: The covenant between Abner and David ( 2 S 3:6-39; cf. 1 K 2:5, 32) with its profound and lasting effects on David;

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<sup>62</sup>W. Eichrodt, The Theology of the Old Testament, I, 232, 233; cf. W. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, op. cit., 207; Dt 7:9, 12; 1 K 8:23; Ps 89:28; Is 54:10; 55:3; etc.

<sup>63</sup>A. Lods, The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism, p.89; cf. J. Pedersen: "The basis of all Israelitic ethos is the common feeling, love, and according to the nature of the compact it must, in its innermost essence, be a family feeling." Israel, I-II, p. 309; cf. also, W. Eichrodt, op. cit., p.235.

<sup>64</sup>In the above, hesed has been considered only as it was seen to be operative between human covenant partners. It was, of course, applied to the relationship between God and man. (Cf. "Hesed As The Object of Religious Covenants", pp. 31-33, below.)

the covenant of brotherhood between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre (1 K 5:15-26) which ran much deeper than a mere commercial agreement (cf. 1 K 9:11-14; Am 1:9).

In public life it is the covenant which assured the peace and good relations between Israel and neighboring tribes, for example between Abraham and Abimelech, the King of Gerar, (Gn 21:22-34; cf. Gn 26:26-33), between Jacob and the Aramean Laban (Gn 31:43-54), between Joshua and the Gibeonites (Jos 9:1-27; cf. 2 S 21:1-14). The covenant established relations with neighboring kingdoms and states, for example the covenant between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre (1 K 5:15-26; 9:11-14; cf. Am 1:9), the covenant between Asa, King of Judah, and Ben-hadad I, King of Damascus (1 K 5:16-20). The covenant defined and regulated relations between the conquerors and the conquered, for example the aborted covenant between the men of Jabesh-gilead and Nabash, King of Ammon (1 S 11:1ff.), the covenant between the kingdom of Judah and the Babylonians (Ez 17:1-21; cf. 2 K 24:10-20). The covenant united "all the tribes of Israel" to David showing him for the first time as the manifest King (2 S 5:1-3). The covenant between Jehoiada, the head of the Jerusalem priesthood, and the Royal Guard enabled Jehoash to be installed as King (2 K 11:1-20; cf. 2 Ch 23:1ff.).

Approached from the perspective of man's yearning for law and order, the all-importance of the covenant concept to the Israelite people has been well summarized by G. Quell:

This concept (of covenant) determines the sociological structure of Israel in small things as well as great, in private life as well as public, in religious as well as commercial. This significance was due to the influence and latent persistence of the nomadic or seminomadic organisation displayed by the sons of Israel on their first entry on the stage of history. Like the related Semites who had no sure territory of their own, the Israelites were first composed of tribes resting on the natural legal authority, and a legal authority superior to

the bond of blood developed out of an extension of brotherhood by various means. The epitome of this authority is the written covenant, and to establish a covenant is both to enter another bond of blood and also to take the partner into one's own, thus entering into legal fellowship with him. That the covenant seems to be the exclusive and generally recognized and valid order of public law in the period prior to the constitution of the state or nation may be explained by the fact that this legal form is determined by the most important social cement, i.e., that of blood relationship.

One might say that the idea of the covenant, or the natural covenant, is the state of fellowship posited among blood brothers and to be observed by them. To shed the blood of one's brother is to fall under a curse (Gn 4:11). Where the fact of blood relationship is indubitable and incontestable, the covenant is already present and there is no need of legal enforcement, since it is obvious that members of the same sept or clan are one bone and one flesh and are thus brothers (cf. 2 S 19:13). On the other hand, where this natural connexion is either obscure or completely absent, an analogous legal relationship can be established only by means of a fictional blood relationship. This fiction is the legal covenant which extends the natural.

The legal covenant, too, makes the participants brothers of one bone and one flesh, and thus creates the consequent legal situation. It is a totality which can be no more broken or altered than the blood relationship itself. This totality, or peace, is the ideal state of fellowship in every relationship; it is an actualisation in law of the thought of brotherhood. Mutually recognising and representing one another as brethren, the participants offer mutual guarantees in their situations and resultant claims. Their relationship as thus ordered is unalterable, permanent and inviolable, and thus makes supreme demands on the legal sense and responsibility of the participants. There is no firmer guarantee of legal security, peace or personal loyalty than the covenant. Regard for the institution is made a religious duty by means of the oath taken at its establishment. Those who enter into covenant know that Yahweh Himself keeps strict watch over the sworn fellowship and its order. Violation or depreciation of the accepted duty is recognised to be sin in the strictest possible sense of disregard for the will of Yahweh. To forget the covenant of brethren is to awaken the wrath of Yahweh ( Am 1:9 ).

The covenant thus implies the unconditional validity of law surrounded by sacral assurances. It means legitimate order<sup>65</sup> as opposed to caprice, uncertainty and aninosity.

The legal institution fashioned in the covenant was essential to the full harmonious development of the Israelites as a people. It was in the outworking of this concept that the semi-nomadic Israelites became tribes, the tribes became a coalition of tribes, and authority finally came to reside in the monarchy.<sup>66</sup>

### c) "Religious" Covenants

Given the all-importance and the widespread use of covenants, it is not at all surprising that Israelite belief transferred this fundamental experience of covenanting between men to be the formula of their relationship to their God, Yahweh.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> G. Quell, "The OT Term Berit," TDNT. II, pp. 114, 115; cf. J. L. McKenzie, DOB. p. 153.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. G. Quell, op. cit., p. 114; J. Pedersen, Israel I-II, pp. 31, 288; W. Eichrodt, op. cit., I, p. 39; G.E. Mendenhall, BA. 17(1954), 51; L. Johnston, op. cit., pp. 48ff.; G.W. Anderson, "The Religion of Israel," PC, p. 162.

<sup>67</sup> "This narrative (Gn 21:22-34) affords us a typical example of the all-importance of covenants in the lives of the Hebrews and why their relation to God would have inevitably received the form of a covenant. Agreements such as this between Abraham and Abimelech took place every day between men during these primitive times. A difference of opinion would necessitate a modus vivendi if peace were to be preserved. Or simply two households living side by side would require a prior arrangement for the sharing of common facilities such as a well. A covenant was the solution. Men have been living under covenants, on a great or small scale, since civilization began." B. Vawter, A Path Through Genesis (London: Sheed and Ward, 1957), p. 166; cf. G. E. Wright, The Old Testament Against Its Environment (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1950), pp. 54, 55; W. Eichrodt, op. cit., I, 37, 40, 232; W.R. Smith, Lectures, pp. 312ff.; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, pp. 263-310; III-IV, trans. A. I. Fausboll

Israel's introduction of the deity as a pledged and secured partner in a covenant relationship with man is not unique in Old Testament times.<sup>68</sup> However, the Yahweh-Israel covenant is unique in that it is always Yahweh who is seen to take the initiative in the establishment of the covenant relationship. It is always a divine intervention which occurs at a specific and propitious moment in the history of Israel. Israelite tradition knows several enactments of covenants between Yahweh and herself and several covenant renewals. In each of these, it is Yahweh who launches the initiative and in an act of pure grace and liberality establishes a covenant love bond.

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(London: Oxford University Press, 1926), pp. 611ff.; M. Burrows, "The Social Institutions of Israel," PC, p. 139; S. H. Hooke, "The Religious Institutions of Israel," PC, pp. 142, 143; W. Beyerlin, Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions. Trans. S. Rudman (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), pp. 33-34; L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, pp. 60ff.

It may well be that the covenants between Yahweh and the patriarchs are best understood in the light of semi-nomadic customs, presented above in the text, while the Sinaitic Covenant may be best understood in light of the form followed by standard international agreements of that time--a treaty between an overlord and his vassal prince. G. E. Mendenhall has demonstrated the striking similarities between the suzerainty treaties of the Hittite kingdom and the Sinaitic Covenant. BA, 17(1954), 50-76. cf. W. Eichrodt, "Covenant and Law," Interpretation, 20(1966), 302-321, where he writes: "It is clear that this manifest structural similarity between Hittite and Israelite covenant procedure is not just coincidental but can only be explained by a historical influence operating from the Hittite Empire." p. 308; R.A.F. MacKenzie, op. cit., pp. 46-53; L. Johnston, op. cit., pp. 44-51; G. Von Rad, Old Testament Theology. Vol. I: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions. Trans. D.M.C. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), pp. 132, 133; W. Beyerlin, op. cit., pp. 51-67, 145.

<sup>68</sup>Cf. P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 230, 231; G. Quell, op. cit., pp. 118, 119; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 234, 235.

<sup>69</sup>Cf. Gn 9:9; 15:9-18; 17:2; Ex 19:4-6; 24:5-8;

The covenant God of Israel, then, is an electing God and his election of Israel, expressed in his covenants initiated with her, is for a purpose. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." (Am 3:2). Election inexorably imposes moral obligations.

It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but it is because the Lord loves you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, and requites to their face those who hate him, by destroying them; he will not be slack with him who hates him, he will requite him to his face. You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command you this day. (Dt 7:7-11).<sup>70</sup>

By its distinctly gratuitous, moral and conditional character, the covenant between Yahweh and Israel differs

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Ex 34:10, 27; Is 55:3; Jr 31:31ff.; Am 3:2; 9:7; Ho 2:16-23; 11:1ff.; Ez 16:3-14; etc. In each covenant it is Yahweh who takes the initiative. Confirmation of this is found in the fact that he is always the subject of the verb used to indicate the concluding of a covenant. (Cf. R. Gleason, Yahweh (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 53; cf. also, H.H. Rowley, The Faith of Israel (London: SCM Press, 1956), 68; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 231, notes 22-24; 232; A. Gelin, Key Concepts of the Old Testament. Trans. G. Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 37ff.; L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, 61, 62.

<sup>70</sup>Cf. Am 5:14, 15; Ho 4:1, 2, 11f; 6:6-8; 8:1-3; Jr 11:1-8; Dt 7:12ff.; 10:12ff.; 11:26-28; 26:16-19; Ex 19:5. Cf. also, P. van Imschoot, 232; H. H. Rowley, Faith of Israel, 68-71; 128-130; L. Bouyer, The Meaning of Sacred Scripture, p. 57; L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, 67, 68.

profoundly from covenants believed to unite other peoples to their national gods. It is the divine election with its consequent imposition of moral obligation which made Israel's religious response the exact opposite of the "nature religions".<sup>71</sup> While the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel was unique it remains true that it was clearly and beautifully anthropomorphic. Israel's relationship with God, because it was seen as a covenant relationship, took over the ideas bound up with the human covenants they had experienced, even though these were modified by the exalted nature of the divine partner to the covenant.<sup>72</sup>

As has been seen, among the ancient Israelites, covenant signified primarily and essentially the mutual relation of solidarity which bound the covenant partners as well as the rights and duties which flowed from this relation. Covenant meant community and peace. It meant a relationship absolutely equivalent to the closest possible natural bond, that of the family. Therefore, it meant deepest union, deepest peace, sâlôm, wholeness, the full untrammelled harmony of the covenant partners; it meant, in a word, their "psychic community". Those who entered into covenant entered into a union so profound as to form one whole ruled by a common will. This common will and common responsibility of covenant partners was made manifest in the sharing and living of hesed. All this, modified by the exalted nature of the divine covenant partner, was transferred to be their relationship to God.

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<sup>71</sup>Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 36-46; R. Gleason, Yahweh, 53; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 232; L. Bouyer, The Meaning of Sacred Scripture (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958) p. 15ff.; W. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, Hebrew Origins, 140; W.R. Smith, Lectures, 318ff.; J. Bright, The Kingdom of God: The Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), p. 29.

<sup>72</sup>W. Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 232ff.

d) Hesed As The Object of Religious Covenants

The most apt expression of the relation between Yahweh and Israel is the covenant, berith. This denotes the psychic communion and the common purpose which united the people and its God. It is also expressed by saying that the peace of Yahweh reigns in Israel (shalom, Jer. 16,5); therefore the relation between them is characterised by love, the feeling of fellowship among kinsmen.<sup>73</sup>

This "psychic communion and common purpose" which united the people to their God was to be expressed in the conduct expected of covenant partners, hesed. However, the participation of a divine partner, Yahweh, uniquely transformed the concept of hesed as it had characterised secular covenants. The meaning of hesed to the Israelites underwent a gradual transformation as they lived the experience of a covenant love relationship with their God. Yahweh's unfailing fidelity to the covenant in the face of Israel's repeated infidelities made it increasingly clear that the hesed demonstrated by Yahweh was a "loving kindness", a "covenant love", entirely undeserved.<sup>74</sup> "It is obvious, time and again, from the context that if God is to maintain the covenant he must exercise mercy to an unexampled degree."<sup>75</sup> There simply is no human example of the kind of hesed demonstrated by Yahweh. The hesed of Yahweh completely transcends the hesed of secular covenanters and it approximates more the concept of mercy, favor and grace.

What began as a hesed granted as a matter of course in the berit has become, as a result of the thoroughgoing questioning of the old conception, a completely new concept of faithfulness and love.

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<sup>73</sup>J. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, p. 612; cf. 722, 723.

<sup>74</sup>Cf. N. H. Snaith, "Loving Kindness", TWBB., 137; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, 232-239, 247; A. Gelin, op. cit., 38ff.; J. Bright, op. cit., p. 28, note 18.

<sup>75</sup>N.H. Snaith, op. cit., p. 137.

The miraculous quality of this new love is seen to reside not only in the condescension of the exalted God, but also, much more inwardly, in the mystery of a divine will which seeks communion with man.<sup>76</sup>

It was the prophets who turned to the analogies of intimate marital love and father-son love to bring deeper insight to the hesed manifested by Yahweh. Under their influence the concept takes on the significance of the tender love and unending supportiveness of God for his people. "I will betroth you to myself for ever, betroth you with integrity and justice, with tenderness and love; I will betroth you to myself with faithfulness, and you will come to know Yahweh." (Ho 2:21). "When Israel was a child I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt. . . I myself taught Ephraim to walk, I took them in my arms; . . . I led them with reins of kindness, with leading-strings of love. I was like someone who lifts an infant close against his cheek; stooping down to him I gave him food." (Ho 11:1-4). "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he my darling child? For as often as I speak against him, I do remember him still. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the Lord." (Jr 31:20). ". . . for the mountains may depart, the hills be shaken, but my love for you will never leave you and my covenant of peace with you will never be shaken, says Yahweh who takes pity on you." (Is 54:10).<sup>77</sup>

This divine hesed calls for a corresponding hesed in man. The only adequate response to such intimate steadfast love is a like love in return. The hesed asked of man consists

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<sup>76</sup>W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 238, 239; cf. N. H. Snaith, Mercy and Sacrifice: A Study in the Book of Hosea (London: SCM Press, 1953), pp. 80ff.; H. Ringgren, Israelite Religion. Trans. David E. Green (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 130ff.

<sup>77</sup>JB. Translations. Cf. Is 63:7f; Jr 3:19; 31:3; Pss 25:6; 40:11; 136; Ex 4:22-23; cf. also, H. Ringgren, op. cit., 130ff.

"of self-giving, loving trust, abandonment, deep affection, 'piety', a love (in short) which is a joyful submission to the will of God and an active love of one's fellow man, Ho 4:2; 6:6."<sup>78</sup> As such, man's hesed was to be a love response to God but as well it was to be a reflection among men of God's love itself. It was not merely a response to the Spirit of God but also the reflection of that very Spirit itself; not merely an attitude adopted by one person to another but an essential quality of the soul which issued in a full appreciation of and a complete sensitivity to the other person.<sup>79</sup> Such is the covenant love asked of man, a covenant love epitomized and exemplified without parallel in Yahweh's covenant love for man. The prophet Micah put it simply:

--What is good has been explained to you, man;  
this is what Yahweh asks of you:  
only this, to act justly,  
to love tenderly  
and to walk humbly with your God. (Mi 6:8, JB).

### (3) The Old Covenant and The New

Hopefully, the above captures something of the profundity and the intimacy of the covenant relationship which Yahweh initiated with Israel. The belief, the growing awareness of this unique covenant love bond was absolutely fundamental to all of Israelite life. The covenant is the very heart of Israel's existence and the unifying principle of her history. As W. Lichrodt comments:

<sup>78</sup>E. Osty, The Jerusalem Bible, Ho 2:21, note "r"; cf. H.H. Rowley, op. cit., pp. 70ff.; 130ff.

<sup>79</sup>Cf. H.H. Rowley, op. cit., p. 130; T.H. Robinson, "The God of the Psalmists," in The Psalmists, (ed.) D.C. Simpson (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), pp. 36, 37; Idem, in W. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, Hebrew Religion, pp. 207, 208; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, pp. 239, 240, 356ff.

For the concept of the covenant enshrines Israel's most fundamental conviction, namely its sense of a unique relationship with God. The crucial point is. . .the fact that all the crucial statements of faith in the Old Testament rest on the assumption, explicit or not, that a free act of God in history raised Israel to the unique dignity of the people of God, in whom his nature and purpose were to be made manifest. The actual term 'covenant' is, therefore, so to speak, only the code-word for a much more far-reaching certainty, which formed the very deepest layer of the foundations of Israel's faith, and without which indeed Israel would not have been Israel at all. As epitomizing God's action in history 'covenant' is not a dogmatic concept with the help of which a 'corpus of doctrine' can be evolved, but the typical description of a living process, which began at a particular time and place, and which was designed to make manifest a divine reality quite unique in the whole history of religion.<sup>80</sup>

While the Old Testament tradition does not indicate with any certainty when the theological dimension of the covenant concept was first propounded and accepted,<sup>81</sup> the covenant relationship between God and man is placed very

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<sup>80</sup>W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 17, 18; cf. 13, 14, 36-39; cf. also, G.E. Wright, The Old Testament Against Its Environment, 55, 58ff.; Idem, God Who Acts (London: SCM Press, 1952), 50-58; R. A. F. MacKenzie, Faith and History in the Old Testament, 49, 52, 53; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 224-245; R. Gleason, Yahweh, 44ff.; L. Johnston, A History of Israel, 44-51; L. Koehler, Theology of the Old Testament, 3rd ed., 60ff. J. Bright, The Kingdom of God, 26-30; J.L. McKenzie, The Two-Edged Sword (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1956), p. 119.

<sup>81</sup>However, as W. Eichrodt has written: "The safest starting point for the critical examination of Israel's relationship with God is still the plain impression given by the OT itself that Moses, taking over a concept of long standing in secular life, based the worship of Yahweh on a covenant agreement." Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 37; cf. pp. 36-69; Idem, "Covenant and Law", INT. 20(1966), 302-321; G. Quell, op. cit., 119f.; G.E. Mendenhall, BA. 17(1954), 50, 51; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 237ff.; G.E. Wright, The Old Testament Against Its Environment, 60ff; J. Bright, Kingdom of God, p. 27, note 14.

early in human history. The entire history of mankind is represented as a progressive plan of salvation carried out by God through a series of covenants with man.<sup>82</sup>

The first of these covenants is the implied one between Yahweh and Adam (Gn 2:15-17).<sup>83</sup> From the beginning, the Yahwist instinctively portrayed Yahweh as a covenant-God, one who demanded a personal loyalty and adherence from his covenant partners. The willful violation of this covenant, recorded in Genesis 3:6, begins the history of man's infidelity as a covenant partner. Each of the succeeding covenants, initiated by God, represents his attempt to re-communicate, to re-establish union with man.

The covenant with Noah (Gn 6:18; 9:1-17), and, most explicitly, the covenant with Abraham (Gn 15:2,7-12,16,17; 17:9-14) both foreshadow and find their climax in the covenant of Sinai (Ex 19:1 - 34:28; Dt 5:1ff.). While the covenant with Abraham formed the original basis of their relationship with Yahweh, the covenant of Israel as a people was the covenant of Sinai.<sup>84</sup>

#### a) The Sinaitic Covenant

The frequently-occurring formula "You shall be my

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<sup>82</sup>p. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 242; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 50, 58.

<sup>83</sup>The stipulations of the Sinaitic covenant were mainly prohibitions stated in personal terms and the Yahwist, in Gn 2:15-17, presents the divine command in the same form: "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat." There is here a covenant relationship, albeit implicit. Cf. R.A.F. MacKenzie, op. cit., 62; cf. also, Introduction to the Pentateuch in The Jerusalem Bible, p.13. B. Vawter, op. cit., p. 97; J. Baillie, The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), pp. 129, 130.

<sup>84</sup>"...all sources regard the Sinai covenant as the fulfillment of the compact which God had made with Abraham...

people and I shall be your God," succinctly states the object and the purpose of the Sinaitic covenant.<sup>85</sup> The profound significance of the covenant may be seen from its terms, as established by Yahweh, whereby the Israelites are to become the "special possession" of Yahweh, his "holy nation", and a "holy people" sacred to him. As his "kingdom of priests", they are to enjoy access to their King, Yahweh. All this is to be theirs on condition that they "observe the covenant", that is, basically, the clauses as stipulated in the agreement in the form of laws: the decalogue. As the divine covenant partner, Yahweh commits himself to protect Israel, for he is "the faithful God who keeps the covenant and the grace towards his people." He promises them the land of Canaan and a numerous posterity.<sup>86</sup> Such are the terms of the covenant which united the tribes of Israel into

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The Priestly editor of Genesis and Exodus has a scheme of history based on the idea of covenant. As election narrowed, a covenant was seen as concluding each stage of the history. The first was the covenant with Noah...The second was the covenant with Abraham...Finally, according to P, the Mosaic covenant at Sinai was the climax of history. The Holy God had now condescended to 'tabernacle' in the people's midst." G.E. Wright, The Old Testament Against Its Environment, p. 62, note 33; cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 53.

<sup>85</sup> e.g. Ex 6:7; Lv 26:1,2; Dt 29:13; Ho 2:23; Jr 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; Ez 11:20; 14:11; etc.

<sup>86</sup> Yahweh's own possession: Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4; his holy nation: Ex 19:6; his holy people, sacred to him: Dt 7:6; 14:2,21; 26:19; 28:9; his kingdom of priests: Ex 19:6; Ho 4:6; Israel is to observe the covenant: Ex 19:5; 1 K 11:11; Ez 17:14; cf. Gn 2:15-17; 17:9, 10; i.e. the clauses as stipulated in the decalogue: Ex 20:1-17; Dt 5: 6-21; cf. Ex 24:7; Dt 9:9,10; On his part, Yahweh will protect Israel for he "keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him,": Dt 7:9; cf. Dt 7:12; 1 K 8:23; Dn 9:4; Neh 1:5; 9:32; Yahweh promises them the land of Canaan: cf. Gn 15:7; 17:8; Jr 32:22; a numerous posterity: Gn 15:5; 17:4, 5; and other material blessings: Dt 7:13ff.; 11:13ff.

a nation. The unifying force was clearly their relationship to Yahweh as achieved in covenant. All that has been said to be of the essence of covenanting is epitomized in the Sinaitic covenant.

Israelite tradition knows several renewals of the Sinaitic covenant<sup>87</sup> by which every generation became intimately involved in this unique covenant relationship with Yahweh. When the covenant was renewed, this all-decisive moment of the past was once more "made present", contemporized (cf. e.g., Dt 5:2,3; 29:10-15). Contemporaneity is at the heart of Israelite religion. Even today, every Jewish person is invited to be contemporaneous with Moses and to enter into the covenant with Yahweh which Moses mediated. The Passover Haggadah represents the Jew as saying, in explanation of the order of service, "all this I do because of what God did for me in bringing me forth from Egypt." He does not say, "what God did for my fathers,

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<sup>87</sup> According to Dt 28:69, Moses concludes the covenant with the people in the region of Moab. This is probably a retrojection of the covenant renewal ceremony to early times. (Cf. J. L. McKenzie, DOB, p. 155). The covenant ceremony at Shechem, Jos 24, in which Joshua recites the magnificent deeds whereby Yahweh delivered Israel and the people choose to serve only Yahweh, is described as a covenant renewal ceremony. Whether this is more than a covenant renewal and extends the Sinaitic covenant to include certain tribes who had not experienced the desert period and had not yet been incorporated into the Israelite amphictyony, and, whether, therefore, "Israel" began to exist as a tribal confederacy only with this ceremony at Shechem poses a historical problem well beyond the scope of this thesis. Cf. G.E. Wright, The Old Testament Against Its Environment, p.57, note 20; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 236; J. L. McKenzie, DOB, 404, 155, 798; L. Johnston, op. cit., pp. 66f; The Jerusalem Bible, Jos 24, note "a". Other covenant renewals include the ceremony upon the dedication of Solomon's temple: 1 K 8; the ceremony conducted by the high priest Jehoiada after the assassination of Athaliah: 2 K 11:17ff.; Josiah's renewal of the covenant on the basis of the book which had been found in the temple: 2 K 23:2ff.; the elaborate renewal ceremony conducted by Ezra: Neh 8:1-12ff.

or for my ancestors," but, "what God did for me."<sup>88</sup> God has brought him out of Egypt to Sinai to enter into covenant with Him. The Sinaitic covenant was the unifying principle of ancient Israelite religion; it remains the unifying principle of all Jewish religious history.

#### b) The Covenant Relationship Distorted

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to enter into an attempted complete analysis of the history of the covenant concept, which is indeed complicated. However, it is germane and important to emphasize that throughout the history of Israel, the covenant concept was always fundamental.<sup>89</sup> It is also important to note that throughout its development, the covenant concept was in constant danger of distortion. One source of this constant danger was the one-sided development of the cultic aspect of religion, as W. Eichrodt has pointed out:

As a result the social and moral aspects of the divine demands were allowed to recede from men's attention. The danger thus became acute that the cultus would be degraded to the level of an opus operatum and that it would be valued simply in proportion to the magnificence with which it was carried out. . . As far as the covenant was concerned this meant the externalization of man's relation to God, its transformation into a religion of 'Do ut des' in which the divine gift is bound to reciprocate human performance. This legalistic distortion of

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<sup>88</sup>Cf. The Haggadah. Trans. Cecil Roth (London: The Soncino Press, 1959), p. 36; cf. W. Herberg, "Beyond Time and Eternity", Christianity and Crisis, 9(1949), 42; B. W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957), p. 313; H. Ringgren, Israelite Religion, p. 184; L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, p. 65, 66; M. Buber, Moses (London: East and West Library, Phaidon Press Limited, 1946), p. 73; J. Pedersen, III-IV, 400, 401.

<sup>89</sup>Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 45-69.

the covenant relationship into a commercial arrangement between parties of equal status before the law rendered all intercourse with the deity lifeless and trained men in an irreverent calculation of divine obligations, which made any attitude of trustful surrender impossible. In this way the original values mediated by the covenant were falsified and the covenant concept itself became nothing more than a protective cover for irreligious self-seeking.<sup>90</sup>

The classical prophets inveighed against the dead externalism and the empty ritualism which had come to distort the covenant love relationship and which had rendered unnecessary the commitment of one's very person;<sup>91</sup> a commitment which was of the essence of the covenant love relationship. "In all of them (the classical prophets) the stress is on the personal note in the relationship to Yahweh; it is because they find this lacking that they insist with all the force and passion at their command on the ideas of honesty, of love, of surrender. Correspondingly they present Yahweh's acts as the operations of a fully personal loyalty and love, which courts the trust of the people with living warmth of feeling and looks for a response that is spontaneous and from the heart."<sup>92</sup>

This danger, of distorting a covenant love relationship which called for an intimate and unrestrained surrender of the whole man into an impersonal relationship of automatically performed ritual, was an ever-present one and ran contrary to the very purpose of the covenant. The ultimate purpose of the covenant as designed by Yahweh was not the ritually-precise performances of men, but rather,

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 47; cf. R.A.F. MacKenzie, op. cit., 52, 53.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Am 4:4f; 5:5f, 21ff.; 8:10, 14; Ho 4:8f; 4:14f; 5:1f; 7:14; 8:11ff.; 9:1ff.; Is 1:11ff.; 29:13; etc.

<sup>92</sup> W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 52; cf. H. H. Rowley, "Ritual and the Hebrew Prophets", JSS. 1 (1956), 338-360; cf. also, Ho 6:4ff.; 7:13f; 9:10; 11:1ff.; Is 1:2f; 5:1ff.; 7:9, 13; 9:12; 22:8, 11ff.; Jr 2:1ff.; 3:19ff; 5:1ff.; etc.; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 454ff.

the creation of a real communion between God and man. It was the meeting of two freedoms, the divine and the human, in a mysteriously profound love encounter. For this meeting to take place, God unfolded himself to man in community. This self-disclosure is pure gift and not dependent upon the right performances of man. Human performance was the means whereby man was able to enter into the enjoyment of the gift granted him.<sup>93</sup> The insight into the utterly personal and self-giving character of Yahweh's covenant relationship with Israel reaches its zenith in the prophetic utterances from the start of the seventh century onwards.

For Jeremiah, the images of real import, when God's relationship with Israel is at issue, are those of marriage, of the father-son love bond, and of the divine solicitous shepherd.<sup>94</sup> The constant recourse of the Israelites to a do ut des relationship with Yahweh and their constant failure to live the intimate and personally demanding covenant love asked by Yahweh, cannot but end in radical judgment (cf. Jr 7:23ff.; 11:3ff.).<sup>95</sup> Israel's determined attempt to cling to God on the basis of mutually binding legal obligation called for an equally radical solution.

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<sup>93</sup>Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 56ff., where the author elucidates the influence of the priestly stratum of the Pentateuch. According to the Priestly editor, Yahweh "establishes" the covenant with man: cf. Gn 6:18; 9:9,11,17; 17:7,19,21; Ex 6:4; Lv26:9, or "grants" or "gives" the covenant: Gn 9:12; 17:2; Nm 25:12. The implication of this phraseology, as distinct from the Yahwist's "cut a covenant", is that the covenant is the unmerited and gratuitous gift of God to man. Yahweh's covenant does not depend on man's right conduct for its origin or maintenance but rather on His unparalleled steadfast love, hesed. Cf. further, L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, 63, 64.

<sup>94</sup>Jr 13:27; 31:3f; 31:32; 3:19; 31:9,20; 13:17,20; 23:1,3; etc.

<sup>95</sup>Cf. Jr 14:21; 22:9; 8:7; 9:12ff.

c) The New Covenant Foretold

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jr 31:31-34).

In Jeremiah's thought, the old covenant was bankrupt and the new covenant rich beyond expectations. This "New" covenant will differ from the "Old" primarily by the interiority which will characterize it. It will bring about in the hearts of the people, both individually and collectively, an interior regeneration. The law will no longer be a charter to be consulted regarding external conduct but rather it will be an inspiration operative on the heart of man (cf. 31:33; 24:7; 32:39). With the support of the spirit of God who gives man a new heart (cf. Ez 36:26,7; Ps 51:10; Jr 4:4ff.), the new covenant will be an inner inspiration by which man can live covenant love to the full. As such man will be capable of a deeply personal and unreserved love response to Yahweh. This new covenant would be a divine favor bestowed on man making possible a personal knowledge of God's will and enabling its obedient service. It will make possible the total acceptance of the divine will in its gracious seeking of communion with man.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Cf. A. Gelin, in The Jerusalem Bible, Jr 31:31, note "q"; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, pp. 9

Ezekiel insists even more strongly on the interior regeneration necessary to live in a covenant relationship with Yahweh. His insistence is tempered by the hope that Yahweh would bring about an unparalleled work of forgiveness and love:

And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them; he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken. "I will make with them a covenant of peace. . . And they shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, says the Lord. And you are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord God. (43:23-25,30,31).

I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. (36:25-28).

Thus, while, in the eyes of the prophets, the interiorization of the religious response of Israel is absolutely essential, the prophetic interpretation of the covenant concept runs deeper still.

It is clear that the coming of this new epoch is connected with the mission of the Messias promised to David: through Him, by grace, they would be purified and given a divine gift, the spirit of God who would enable them to observe the Law.

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242-245; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 59; J. Alfrink, "Biblical Background to the Eucharist as a Sacrificial Meal", ITQ, 26(1959), pp. 292, 293; J. Gibley, "God's Covenant with Man", in The God of Israel, The God of Christians, edited by J. Gibley, Trans. K. Sullivan (New York: Desclee Company, 1961), p. 31.

In this way, the hope of this new covenant was connected with the appearance of a person, the Messiah who would, on God's<sup>97</sup> side, assure the realization of this union.

The prophetic insight into the covenant attains its most remarkable profundity in Deutero-Isaiah, who went beyond Jeremiah and Ezekiel in that he incorporated the idea of universalism with the fusion of the messianic element and the covenant concept.<sup>98</sup> For Deutero-Isaiah, the full manifestation of the covenant relationship with Yahweh will be humanly embodied in the person of the servant of Yahweh who has been given "as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness." (42:6,7). "It is to light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (49:6). The servant of Yahweh, as mediator of the new covenant, will bring the communion-creating self-disclosure of God to all mankind.<sup>99</sup> It is the spiritual welfare of all mankind that is at stake for the covenant with Israel is set within the universal redemptive plan of God.

God, who in his love carefully planned and prepared the salvation of all mankind, chose for himself, by a unique decision, a People whom he would entrust with his promises. By a covenant

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<sup>97</sup>J. Gibley, op. cit., p. 32; cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, pp. 61ff.; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, pp. 244ff.

<sup>98</sup>Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, P. 62.

<sup>99</sup>Cf. Is 42:1,4; 49:8-10; 55:3-5; 56:6,7; 59:21; 60:1-18; 61:8; 62:2-4; Mi 4:1-4; Zc 8:20-23; 14:9,16; etc.

with Abraham (cf. Gen 15, 18) and, through Moses, with the People of Israel (cf. Ex 24, 8), he revealed himself, in words and deeds, as the only true and living God to the People he had acquired. Thus, Israel was destined to discover by experience which were God's ways with men, to understand them more deeply and clearly day by day when God spoke through the prophets, and to spread their knowledge among the nations (cf. Ps. 21, 28-29; 95, 1-3; Is. 2, 1-4; Jer. 3, 17).<sup>100</sup>

#### d) Jesus As Mediator Of The New Covenant

This new and everlasting covenant, destined to embrace all mankind, will be inaugurated by the sacrifice of Christ who takes upon himself the task of universal redemption assigned by Deutero-Isaiah to the servant of Yahweh.<sup>101</sup>

It has pleased God, however, to make men holy and save them not merely as individuals, without mutual bond; rather has it pleased him to make of them a People that acknowledges him in truth and serves him in holiness. He therefore chose the people of Israel as this People. With it he set up a covenant. Step-by-step he taught this People, making known in its history both himself and the decree of his will and making it holy unto himself. All these things however, were done by way of preparation and as a figure of that new and perfect covenant, which was to be ratified in Christ, and of that fuller revelation which was to be given through the Word of God himself made flesh. . .

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<sup>100</sup> Dogmatic Constitution On Divine Revelation Of Vatican Council II, trans. G. H. Tavad (Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1966), article 14, p. 77. cf. Dogmatic Constitution On the Church, articles 9 and 13; also, G.E. Wright, God Who Acts (London: SCM Press, 1952), p. 74; R. A. F. MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Lk 4:21; Is 61:1,2; Ph 2:7; Mt 26:28; Lk 22:20; 1 Co 11:25; Heb 9:15ff.; 12:24; cf. also, J. Bright, The Kingdom of God, pp. 153, 154, 208-214; The Jerusalem Bible, Mt 26:28, note "h". N. Clark, An Approach To the Theology of the Sacraments (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1956), p. 68.

Christ instituted this new covenant, the new testament, that is to say, in his blood (cf. 1 Cor. 11,25), calling together a People made up of Jew and Gentile, making them one, not according to the flesh but in the Spirit. This was to be the new People of God. For those who believe in Christ, who are reborn not from a perishable seed but from an imperishable through the Word of the living God (cf. 1 Pet. 1,23), not from the flesh but from water and the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 3,5-6), are finally established as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people. . .you who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (1 Pet. 2,9-10).<sup>102</sup>

God has, in the Person of his Son, the Word made flesh, invited and enabled all men to enter into communion with himself. Jesus is, in himself, the fullness and the mediator of the new covenant.<sup>103</sup> Oneness with God is personally realized and extended in Christ who humanly embodies the communion-creating self-disclosure of God to man.

Something which has existed since the beginning,  
that we have heard,  
and we have seen with our own eyes;  
that we have watched  
and touched with our hands:  
the Word, who is life--  
this is our subject.  
That life was made visible:  
we saw it and are giving our testimony,  
telling you of eternal life  
which was with the Father and has been made visible to us.  
What we have seen and heard  
we are telling you  
so that you too may be in union with us

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<sup>102</sup>The Constitution On the Church of Vatican Council II, edited by E. H. Peters (Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1965), article 9, pp. 78, 79; cf. articles 1, 3; Dogmatic Constitution On Divine Revelation, article 4.

<sup>103</sup>Cf. Heb 7:22; 9:15ff.; 12:24. Also, "Jesus is the New Covenant," Chapter IV. A. of this thesis.

as we are in union  
with the Father  
and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 Jh 1:1-4).<sup>104</sup>

Jesus, as mediator of the new covenant, creates a union so profound between God and each Christian that it is a participation in the union naturally experienced by God the Father and His Son.<sup>105</sup> Jesus is the Son of God by nature and the Christian is the Son of God by covenant.<sup>106</sup> As has been seen, for the Israelite, a covenant established a relationship absolutely equivalent to the closest possible natural bond. Thus, the implications of entering into a covenant with God, through the mediation of Christ, are indeed profound.<sup>107</sup>

The fullest earthly experience and expression of the covenantal love relationship between God and man is found in the sacrificial covenant meal, the Eucharist. The Last Supper is the central feature of early Christian life in

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<sup>104</sup>Cf. JB. Translation, cf. Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, articles 2-6; Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, articles 2-3.

<sup>105</sup>Cf. Jn 14:20; 15:1ff.; 17:11, 20-26; Eph 1:4,5,10; 2:18; 3:8-12; Col 1:15ff.; 2 Pt 1:4; 1 Jn 4:4-6; 5:19; etc.

<sup>106</sup>Cf. Chapter IV. A. pp. 189-192.

<sup>107</sup>The union achieved by means of the covenant mediated by Christ is indeed profound beyond expectation. This union is the idea most central to the mysticism of the Apostle John. He speaks of a union so intense that the Christian is said to live in God and God in him (1 Jn 2:5,6, 24,27; 3:6,24; 4:12,13,15,16). The Christian, whose life is from God and who is a child of God (1 Jn 4:4-6; 5:19), is to reflect this life among his fellowmen. He is to show in his life the quasi-familial unity he has acquired by entering into covenant with God. That is, he is to live a life of light, of virtue, and of love, for God is light (1 Jn 1:5), virtue (1 Jn 2:29), and love (1 Jn 4:8,16). Whoever enters into the covenantal love relationship with God, which has been made possible by Christ, must demonstrate the hesed which is of the essence of this covenant. This is to respond to God's covenant love by living covenant love among one's fellowmen. (1 Jn 4:7-21).

which the community was bound together with Christ in a covenant relationship.<sup>108</sup> Christ's words of institution at the Last Supper indicate "that the Eucharist was regarded as the formal act which established a lasting relationship between the community and Christ, in analogy to the Mosaic covenant, but combining with it a number of motifs from Old Testament sources, including the sacrificial animal, the suffering servant (Isa. 53:11-12; Matt. 26:28), and the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34."<sup>109</sup> The Eucharistic action of Christ continues, fulfills and immeasurably transcends the action of Moses on Sinai.<sup>110</sup> With the eucharistic words there is witnessed the realization of a new covenant in which the Law would be written in the hearts of the human covenant partners, thus surpassing the old even as the vivifying spirit surpasses the letter that kills.<sup>111</sup> The simple stipulations of the decalogue are summed up and perfected in the yet simpler Law of Christ: the Law of love which is the very nature of the fellowship between God and man.<sup>112</sup> God's covenant love and man's covenant love in

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<sup>108</sup>Cf. G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant", ID. I., p. 723.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., p. 722; Cf. M. H. Shepherd, "The Last Supper", ID. III., 74, 75.

<sup>110</sup>Cf. B. Cooke, TS., 21(1960), pp. 34ff.

<sup>111</sup>Cf. A.G. Martimort, The Signs of the New Covenant (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1963), p. 193; J. Lécuyer, Le Sacrifice de la Nouvelle Alliance (Le Puy: Editions Xavier Mappus, 1962), pp. 181ff.; cf. also, Ez 36: 25-28; Jr 31:31-34; 2 Cor 3:6-13.

<sup>112</sup>The true Law of the New Covenant is incarnate in the mediator of the New Covenant, Christ. "For the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (Jn 1:17). Cf. G.E. Mendenhall, "Covenant", ID., I, 722, 723; J. Giblet, op. cit., 34, 38.

return are epitomized and experienced to the fullest in the relationship actualized in the sacrificial covenant meal of the Eucharist.<sup>113</sup>

#### e) The New Covenant Consummated

However, the consummation of the new covenant goes beyond man's earthly experience and vision.

God's supreme work of redemption for Israel, his self-disclosure to the community in a covenant, is something that will only unveil its ultimate meaning in a community relationship beyond any earthly horizon, in an order where the depth of personal life, the strength of the national life and the breadth of the life of the whole human race are each and all renewed by the divine presence and so fulfil the purpose of their creation. This means, however, that in the berit man is brought into close contact with the workings of God; and this takes from him all earthly security and places the goal of his existence in a future that is guaranteed by the divine promise alone.<sup>114</sup>

The inspired author of the Book of Revelation beautifully and poetically conveyed the consummation of the new covenant in these terms that borrow pointedly from the Old Testament:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying

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<sup>113</sup>The Eucharist as the unique covenantal love relationship between God and man will be treated in depth in Chapter IV of this thesis.

<sup>114</sup>W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 63; cf. N. Clark, op. cit., pp. 95, 96.

nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away. . . He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. (21:1-4,7).<sup>115</sup>

From what has been presented above on the origin, nature and development of the covenant concept in the Bible, it is clear that it was a concept of fundamental importance in the Judaeo-Christian tradition--an importance, difficult to exaggerate. In the secular and religious history of Israel, Old and New, the covenant concept is profoundly influential. It touched the hearts, the innermost feelings, and effected the lives of the Israelites in all things.

It comes naturally to men to give symbolic expression to their deep emotions and thoughts, and to convey this expression by rites. It is not at all surprising then that the practice of covenanting included, as essential, the performance of prescribed rites.

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<sup>115</sup>Cf. Rev 1:6; 5:10; J1 4:17,21; Zp 3:15-17; Zc 2:14 ff.; Is 12:6. God's presence, the shekinah, is essential to the covenant and will be total at the end of the world.

### C. Rites

Covenants were ordinarily concluded by the performance of certain rites. These symbolic actions were the natural means whereby the parties to the covenant gave expression to the reality experienced in the making of a covenant. The conclusion of a covenant was, by virtue of the natural symbolism employed, a religious act.<sup>116</sup>

The concrete expression of the thoughts and feelings evoked in the making of a covenant was a completely normal occurrence for the man of the ancient world.<sup>117</sup> For the ancient Israelite, as for ancient man in general, the material and the spiritual aspects of human life had not as yet been theoretically separated. Man, as a "psychosomatic being",<sup>118</sup> as an "animated body",<sup>119</sup> naturally gave a

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<sup>116</sup>Cf. L. Bouyer, Rite and Man: Natural Sacredness and Christian Liturgy. Trans. J. Costelloe (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), pp. 57, 63; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 227; J. Gibley, op. cit., pp. 24, 25; H. Ringgren, op. cit.; p. 24.

<sup>117</sup>Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, pp. 99, 100, 145.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>119</sup>H. W. Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament (London: Oxford University Press, paperback edition, 1962), p. 70. Idem, "Hebrew Psychology," in The People and the Book, ed. A. S. Peake (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 362.

material (outward) expression to his spiritual (inward) thoughts and emotions as these were affected in the process of covenanting.<sup>120</sup>

As we have observed, covenant designated primarily and essentially the mutual relation of solidarity which bound the covenant partners as well as the rights and duties which flowed from this relation. Covenant meant both community and peace. In the belief of the ancient Israelites several of the rites customarily enacted at the conclusion of a covenant not only symbolized the desired union and peace but actually produced this union and peace.<sup>121</sup>

That the enactment of certain rites could be the very means of producing peaceful union between the covenant partners was believed especially of those rites which involved the sharing of blood or the sharing of food.<sup>122</sup> This belief followed particularly, although not exclusively, from the vital significance which blood and food had for the primitive nomad. More generally, it followed from the binding power attributed to gift-giving among the ancients. For primitive man, to give and to accept a gift signified the establishment of an indissoluble life-bond.

With many primitive peoples, refusal to bestow or receive a gift amounts to a declaration of war: it means that community is declined; for the gift is powerful; it has binding force: it has

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<sup>120</sup>Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, pp. 98ff.; 145; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, pp. 99ff.; 170, 171; J.A.T. Robinson, The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1952), p. 14; H. Ringgren, op. cit. pp. 121f; 319.

<sup>121</sup>Cf. P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 227; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 99; H. Ringgren, op. cit., p. 184; W.R. Smith, Lectures, pp. 312ff.; 665ff.

<sup>122</sup>This will be substantiated in detail in Chapters II and III.

mana. Gifts therefore can destroy the recipient; but they can also assist him, and in any event they forge an indissoluble bond. . . To offer somebody something, then, is to offer someone a part of one-self; similarly, to accept a thing from another person is to receive some portion of his spiritual being, of his soul; and under these circumstances<sup>123</sup> the reciprocal nature of giving is quite obvious.

For the ancients, the exchange of gifts was a binding force and never arbitrarily undertaken. The gift was never merely a material object detached from the person of the giver and the receiver. Rather, gift-giving was always a matter of intercourse between persons in their "psychic entirety."<sup>124</sup> One placed oneself in relation to and participated in another person by means of a gift which was not simply a 'material object' but rather, a part of one's own person.<sup>125</sup>

As J. Pederson has remarked, for the ancient Israelite "all property is penetrated by the blessing of its owner;

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<sup>123</sup> G. van der Leeuw, Religion In Essence and Manifestation, pp. 351, 352; "Mauss refers, together with other writers, to Emerson's fine essay, Gifts, with respect to this 'primitive' view of giving: 'The only gift is a portion of thyself. Thou must bleed for me. Therefore the poet brings his poem; the shepherd, his lamb; the farmer, corn; the miner, a gem'. . . The gift, to be true, must be the flowing of the giver unto me, correspondent to my flowing unto him.' In fact, giving demands a gift, not however in the sense of any commercial rationalism, but because the gift allows a stream to flow, which from the moment of giving runs uninterruptedly from donor to recipient and from receiver to giver: 'the recipient is in the power of the giver.' As a rule, certainly, the receiver of the present appears to gain and the donor to lose, but secretly the gift demands a gift in return. Whoever receives gifts unites himself to the one who bestows them: the accepted gift can bind." p. 351; cf. P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 228; J. Pedersen, I-II, 201; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 451, 452.

<sup>124</sup> J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 296, 201f; 236, 296ff.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. G. van der Leeuw, 350; J. Pedersen, I-II, 201; W. Eichrodt, 155.

therefore any gift is a psychic gift, never anything dead, material. He who gives a gift gives something of himself, to the increase of the strength of the other man."<sup>126</sup> In the mind of the Israelite, the power of the gift lies in its inherent blessing; "it is the secret of the gift that it is a palpable form of blessing," and, "if one gives blessing, then one creates peace and covenant."<sup>127</sup>

From what has been presented above, it can be readily appreciated why covenant rites often took the form of gift-giving. Where psychic community was desired, the 'gift', with its profound significance of self-gift and its indissolubly-binding power, was a most meaningful and natural symbol.

The gifts themselves could vary in value and import from the giving of one's clothing and armour (1 S 18:1-4),<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup>J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, p. 201.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., p. 303; cf., 304; Among the ancient Israelites, "blessing" was conceived as the vital power of the soul, without which no living being could exist. Ultimately derived from the deity, it was a communication of life which brought peace within oneself and among one's fellowmen. Blessing meant primarily the inner strength of the soul and the well-being, the prosperity, which this inner strength carries with it. The ancient Israelites believed that "blessing" was a concrete power which could be acquired by gift (cf. e.g., Gn 33:11; 1 S 25:27). However, the force of the blessing was always regarded as a manifestation of and ultimately derived from the power of the deity (cf. Gn 12:3); cf. also, J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, pp. 182-212; H. Ringgren, 208, 209; P. van Imschoot and B. Vawter, EDB., 253, 254; J.L. McKenzie, DOB., 98, 99; G. von Rad, Genesis: A Commentary. 2d edition revised, trans. John H. Marks (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1963), 155, 156.

<sup>128</sup>Jonathan's gift of his clothing and armour to David is more than the generous gesture of a prince to a shepherd boy who has neither clothing for Court nor armour for battle. "It is a recognition of the alter ego in the covenant of friendship, and clothing especially is so much a part of the person who wears it that the giving of it to another person is the equivalent to giving away one's own self." H. W. Hertzberg, I & II Samuel: A Commentary.

or, lambs, sheep and cattle (Gn 21:22-34),<sup>129</sup> to the simple giving of one's hand (Ez 17:18; cf. 2 K 10:15), or a kiss (1 S 10:1). However, when the gift was one's own blood or one's own food, the commitment of self was most explicit and profound, and the union of souls produced, most intimate and binding.<sup>130</sup>

Very frequently, concluding covenant rites were accompanied by verbal oaths, often of an imprecatory nature. (cf. Gn 26:31; Jos 9:15; 1 S 20:8, 17; 23:18).<sup>131</sup> The utterance of an oath was always a sacral act and, therefore, usually pronounced in a sacred place.<sup>132</sup> By means of oaths, the covenant partners called upon the deity or deities to attest to the truth of their words and to confirm the promises made in the covenant. The deity was invoked as witness to the covenant.<sup>133</sup> For the Israelite, the covenant

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trans. J.S. Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1964), p. 155; cf. J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, p. 279; The Jerusalem Bible, 1 S 24, note "d".

<sup>129</sup> Abraham agrees to covenant with Abimelech and demonstrates his willingness by giving a gift of sheep and cattle to Abimelech (v.27). In the acceptance of the seven lambs, Abimelech concedes Abraham's claim to ownership of the well (vv. 28-30). "What occurs here is an ancient custom: the acceptance of a gift apparently included recognition of the just claim of the giver." G. von Rad, Genesis, 231.

<sup>130</sup> This will be elaborated in Chapters II and III.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. J.L. McKenzie, The Two-Edged Sword, pp. 114, 115; J. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, 449ff.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. J. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, 449, 450.

<sup>133</sup> It was customary for each of the covenanting parties to invoke his own god(s) as witness(es) to the covenant and its terms (cf. Gn 31:50,53; cf. also, The Jerusalem Bible, Gn 31:53, note "o"). e.g. Gn 31:53 clearly records the invocation of two gods, the God of Abraham and the god of Nahor. They are to be the witnesses to the covenant. (cf. Gn 21:22-24,31; 1 S 20:3,8,12,14-17,42; 23:18).

was made "under Yahweh's eyes";<sup>134</sup> He was 'between' the covenant partners.<sup>135</sup> To go back on the covenant as solemnly sworn to by Yahweh was to bring the wrath of Yahweh upon the violator.<sup>136</sup>

According to G. E. Mendenhall, the oath, either as a verbal formula or as a symbolic action, was the constitutive element which made the covenant binding. In his thought, a good working definition of ancient covenants would be "oaths and stipulations."<sup>137</sup> The covenant was a solemn promise made binding by an oath. However, this oath could be either a verbal formula or a symbolic action.

There seems little reason to doubt that the oath was frequently a symbolic action, which took many forms in antiquity: it was that act or verbal statement which distinguished a most solemn, binding promise from any casual or even rash promise made on the spur of the moment. Frequently in antiquity this involved the slaughter of an animal. Almost any action recognized by both parties to a covenant as such might serve to make a promise one which could not, on pain of catastrophe, be violated. The Old Testament alone gives a surprising number of such forms, from the purely verbal oaths of 1 Sam. 3:17;

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<sup>134</sup>Cf. H. W. Hertzberg, I & II Samuel, 154, 155.

<sup>135</sup>J. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, p. 449.

<sup>136</sup>"The agreement was concluded not only before human witnesses, who are mortal and corruptible, but also before the gods; and the parties bound themselves by terrible imprecations, ritually enacted, to stand by the agreement. These curses took on the same reality as the words of the agreement, and followed it like avenging furies, waiting to fall upon the unfaithful party. In a society which writes little, the spoken word has a dignity and solemnity which it loses in civilization; . . . In such communities, veracity and fidelity are of the essence of society. So the covenant was the most solemn form of the spoken word, the most binding of obligations, sacred because the gods themselves witnessed it." J. L. McKenzie, The Two-Edged Sword, p. 115.

<sup>137</sup>G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant", ID. I, p. 714.

25:34 to the symbolic actions of Gen. 15; Jer. 34; the covenant meals of Gen. 26:30 (where the oath-taking is distinguished from the feast, however); 31:54; the "covenant of salt" (Num. 18:19); and the ritual of Exod. 24:5-8, which is preceded by the words: "All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do."<sup>138</sup>

Finally, very frequently, covenant rites included the planting of a tree or the piling of stones (cf. Gn 21:33; 31:45-54; Ex 24:4; Jos 24:26,27). These served as the earthly witness to the established covenant and corresponded to the **witness** of the deity or the deities. More durable than something written, they endured to attest to the covenant and to the unfailing witness of the god or gods to the covenant.<sup>139</sup>

In general, then, these were the rites performed when a covenant was concluded. Quite traditional and common to most secular covenants in ancient times, these rites were transferred to be the rites of the covenant relationship established by Yahweh with the Israelites. Because of the nature of the divine partner to the covenant, the rites themselves would take on unique meaning.<sup>140</sup>

In particular, in accordance with the aim of this thesis, an examination of the significance of the covenantal rites of shared blood and shared food as they appear in the Old Testament and as they are uniquely fused and transformed in the sacrificial covenant meal of the New Testament, the Eucharist, follows.

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<sup>138</sup>Ibid. p. 720; cf. J. L. McKenzie, op. cit., pp. 114, 115.

<sup>139</sup>Cf. W.O.E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, op. cit., pp. 6f., 18f., 22, 23ff., 36, 43; H. Ringgren, op. cit., p. 24; G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 308; J. Gribet, op. cit., pp. 24, 25; W.R. Smith, Lectures, pp. 203ff.; H.C. Trumbull, The Blood Covenant (Philadelphia: J.D. Wattles, 1893), pp. 53, 266, 268, 269.

<sup>140</sup>This will be elaborated upon in the chapters that follow.

## CHAPTER II

### The Significance Of Covenant Blood

#### In The Old Testament

##### A. The Significance of Blood in the Old Testament

The ancient Israelite, manifesting a universally prevalent primitive conviction,<sup>1</sup> believed the blood of any creature to be its vital principle: "the life of all flesh is its blood" (Lv 17:14; cf. Gn 9:4). Blood was not simply a constitutive element of the creature, it was the principal element. Not only did "the life(soul) of the flesh" reside "in the blood" (Lv 17:11), but the blood and the life (soul) were one and the same; they were identical: "the blood is the life" (Dt 12:23). Because it was essentially identified with life<sup>2</sup> and because all life

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. S.C. Gayford, Sacrifice and Priesthood: Jewish and Christian (London: Methuen and Company, Ltd., 1924), pp. 67,68; D.J. 'McCarthy, "The Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice," JBL. 88(1969), 166-176; H.W. Robinson, "Blood," ERE. II, pp. 714-719; W.R. Smith, Lectures on the Religion of the Semites: The Fundamental Institutions. 3rd ed. with an Introduction and additional notes by S.A. Cook (London: A. & C. Black Limited, 1927), pp. 312ff.; H.C. Trumbull, The Blood Covenant (Philadelphia: J.D. Wattles, 1893)--the whole of Trumbull's book demonstrates the universality of this primitive conviction; R.K. Yerkes, Sacrifice In Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), the whole of Chapter V.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. S.C. Gayford, op. cit., pp. 67ff.; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 230; M. J. Lagrange, Etudes sur les Religions Sémitiques (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1903), pp. 231, 243, 253ff.; J. Lecuyer, Le Sacrifice de la Nouvelle Alliance (Le Puy: Editions Xavier Mappus, 1962), pp. 16, 17; S. Lyonnet, "La soteriologie paulinienne," Introduction à la Bible, II,

emanates from God who exercises exclusive dominion over it, blood was seen to be a divine reality;<sup>3</sup> it possessed a sacred character.

As a prime consequence of this sacred character of blood, the Israelite was forbidden to shed the lifeblood of his fellow man. God had made man in His image and He alone had power over man's life. Those who attempted to usurp the prerogative of God, by unjustifiably shedding human blood, were held accountable before Him. "I will demand an account of your life-blood. . . I will demand an account of every man's life from his fellow man. He who sheds

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ed. A. Robert et A. Feuillet (Tournai: Desclée et cie., 1959), pp. 870-872; A. Médebielle, L'Expiation dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament, I (Rome: Institut Biblique Pontifical, 1924), p. 21; D. J. McCarthy, JBL. 88(1969), 166-176; W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, Hebrew Religion, pp. 98, 99; J. Pedersen, Israel, I - II, pp. 172, 268; III - IV, pp. 315, 335; H. Ringgren, op. cit., p. 122; L. Sabourin, Rédemption Sacrificielle: Une Enquête Exégétique (Montreal: Desclée de Brouwer, 1961), pp. 178-180; W. R. Smith, Lectures, pp. 40, 312ff.; C. Spicq, L'Épître aux Hébreux, II (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1953), p. 272; J. E. Steinmueller, "Sacrificial Blood in the Bible," Bibl. 40(1959), 556, 557; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 416, 419, 449; R. K. Yerkes, op. cit., pp. 42, 44.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. L. Bouyer, Rite and Man: Natural Sacredness and Christian Liturgy, trans. J. Costelloe (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), pp. 86, 88; S. C. Gayford, op. cit., p. 70; P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 227; J. Lécuyer, op. cit., pp. 16, 17; S. Lyonnet, op. cit., p. 872; D. J. McCarthy, JBL. 88(1969), 166ff.; L. Sabourin, op. cit., pp. 178, 179; J. Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 170; C. Spicq, op. cit., p. 272; C. Spicq et P. Grelot, "Sang," VTB. p. 994; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 416, 419.

man's blood, shall have his blood shed by man, for in the image of God man was made" (Gn 9:5,6).<sup>4</sup> No one, regardless of position, was held exempt.<sup>5</sup>

Significantly, when blood is shed, it is the "blood" of the victim that "cries out" for vengeance against the murderer:

Yahweh asked Cain, 'Where is your brother Abel?' 'I do not know' he replied. 'Am I my brother's guardian?' 'What have you done?' Yahweh asked. 'Listen to the sound of your brother's blood, crying out to me from the ground. Now be accursed and driven from the ground that has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood at your hands.' (Gn 4:9-11, JB.).<sup>6</sup>

In this instance, as elsewhere, blood is pre-eminently life and even when it has been shed, it remains perilous and potent and does not lose its life-force, its vitality. To the ancient Israelite, shed blood did not mean death, rather it meant life that "has passed through the experience of death, but has not itself been killed by that experience: it still lives."<sup>7</sup> It continues to bear intelligent relations

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<sup>4</sup>JB translation. cf. Gn 4:10ff.; 2 S 16:7ff.; 21:1; Ps 26:9; 55:23; 139:19; Is 26:21; Ez 24:7ff; 35:6.

<sup>5</sup>E.g., It was because he had "shed so much blood" that David was not permitted to build the temple to Yahweh. cf. 1 Ch 22:8; 2 S 16:7ff.; 21:1-14; 1 K 2:5-10,31.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Gn 37:26, and note "g" in The Jerusalem Bible; 1 S 26:20; Jb 16:18ff.; Is 26:21; Ez 24:6,7; 2 Mc 8:3.

<sup>7</sup>S.C. Gayford, op. cit., p. 69; Opposed to the school of thought which holds that blood is life (cf. note 2, above) is L. Morris who contends that blood signifies death rather than life. cf. "The Biblical Use of the Term Blood," JTS. (ns). 3(1952), pp. 216, 227. Morris' position is refuted by L. Dewar, "The Biblical Use of the Term Blood," JTS. (ns). 4(1953), 204-208. As Dewar points out, it is significant that when quoting authorities Morris makes no reference to Gayford's Sacrifice and Priesthood, "which is the fullest expression" of the position opposed by Morris. (204). It is also significant that Morris makes no reference to the rite

to its author, "crying out" for redress. For those who have been unjustly slain, the "cry" of their life-blood will not go unheeded. Yahweh himself initiates blood vengeance (cf. Jg 9:23ff.; 1 K 2:32,33), or delegates the task to the "avenger of blood," the go'el (cf. Nm 35:15).<sup>8</sup>

As a second consequence of the sacred character of blood, the Israelite was forbidden to partake of the blood of animals: "you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood." (Gn 9:4; cf. Dt 12:16). This command was given to Noah after the "flood of waters" had subsided when Yahweh would begin anew, as it were, by the revivifying of the world through the vestige of life--of blood--preserved in the ark. Man would now be allowed the use of animals as food but the consumption of the flesh of any animal from which the blood had not been drained was forbidden: for the life of all flesh is in its blood (cf. Gn 9:3,4; Lv 19:26).

While this prohibition against the partaking of the blood of animals may have been originally influenced by hygienic considerations,<sup>9</sup> there is no doubt that for the Israelite it was a religiously orientated injunction, and that it followed upon the belief in blood as a divine

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of circumcision, although it clearly has a close bearing on the meaning of blood in primitive thought. Finally, as Dewar demonstrates, the position taken by Morris reflects a false antithesis between death and life in the theology of sacrifice. (cf. 206-208).

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Gn 4:15; 9:6; Dt 19:12; 2 S 14:11. Later on the responsibility of blood vengeance would be refined and eventually transferred to the state authority (cf. Rm 13:4).

<sup>9</sup>This command forms the basis for the prohibition of blood found in the Jewish dietary or Kosher laws. cf. K. Kohler and J. Greenstone, "Dietary Laws," The Jewish Encyclopedia. IV. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1925), 596-600.

reality. (cf. Lv 1:5ff.; 17:1-7, 11-14).<sup>10</sup> Rigidly adhered to, it applied to Gentiles as well as Israelites (cf. Gn 9:4; Lv 17:12ff.), and it persisted into early Christian times, facilitating a communauté de table between Jewish and Gentile converts to Christianity (cf. Acts 15:19-29; 21:18-25).<sup>11</sup>

So important was the law forbidding the consumption of blood by men that in conjunction with the interdiction against the shedding of human blood it was referred back to the time when order was restored after the chaos of the deluge, the time when God made his covenant with Noah (Gen. 9,3f), whereas Israelite law in general is assigned to the wilderness period and Moses. Blood had become a thing apart,<sup>12</sup> the law concerning it came before all other laws.

A third and all-important consequence of the sacred character of blood is its essential role in the cultic practices of the Israelites.

<sup>10</sup>"L'unique raison qui interdit à l'homme l'usage du sang est la nêfêš (la vie) qui y est contenue: c'est une propriété divine inaliénable...Le créateur, le Dieu de la vie, se réserve cette nêfêš." L. Moraldi as quoted in J. Lécuyer, op. cit., pp. 16, 17; cf. C. Spicq et P. Grelot, VTB, p. 995; L. Sabourin, op. cit., p. 178; S.C. Gayford, op. cit., pp. 69, 70, 108; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 135; M. Noth, Leviticus: A Commentary, trans. J.E. Anderson (London: SCM Press, 1965), p.132; A. Lelièvre, "Blood," VB., 39.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. J. Bonsirven, Le Judaïsme Palestinien au temps de Jésus-Christ. II (Paris: G. Beauchesne et Fils, 1934), p. 180; C. Spicq et P. Grelot, 995; A. Lelièvre, "Blood," VB.39.

<sup>12</sup>J. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, p.341; cf. L. Dewar, JTS. (ns). 4(1953), 205,206; "Prior to D, This (drinking of blood) was a recognized practice. Thus in the early J narrative which contains the Balaam oracles we read: Behold the people riseth up as a lioness, And as a lion doth he lift himself up: He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, And drink of the blood of the slain. (Nm 23:24). It was believed that by thus drinking of the blood of the slain their powers could be appropriated. The rabbis may have read back the prohibition against eating the flesh with the blood into the Noachian covenant, but this is a patent fiction." cf. W.R. Smith, Lectures, 313ff; 322n; 338,343,368,379.

In sacrificial rites, blood was used in numerous ways. Its elaborate use was more specifically codified by the Israelites than by any other people.<sup>13</sup> According to prescription, the blood of the sacrificial animal was applied<sup>14</sup> before the sanctuary (Lv 4:6; Nm 19:4), around the altar (Ex 29:16), on the altar (Ex 24:6; 29:16),<sup>15</sup> at the base of the altar (Lv 4:7), on the side of the altar (Lv 5:9), on the "horns" of the altar (Ex 29:12; 30:10),<sup>16</sup> and, on the "mercy-seat" (Lv 16:14-18).<sup>17</sup>

The manipulation of blood is the common symbolic element in all Old Testament sacrifices and because it is common, it very probably signifies the essential note of the sacrificial symbolism.<sup>18</sup> The manipulation of the victim's blood "is the one universal and indispensable

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<sup>13</sup>Cf. R.K. Yerkes, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>14</sup>The term "applied" is here used to cover a number of different terms -- "poured," "dashed," "smeared," "sprinkled," "put," "touched," -- whose technical difference is often important. cf. S.C. Gayford, op. cit., pp. 72ff; 89ff

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Lv 1:5ff.; 3:2,8,13; Nm 18:17; 2 K 16:13; Ez 43:18; etc.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Lv 4:7,18,25,30,34; Ez 43:20; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 414; S.C. Gayford, op. cit., pp. 75, 76.

<sup>17</sup>These prescriptions bring out the important connection between the manipulation of blood and the altar in sacrificial rites. The altar was the symbol of God's presence, an instrument of mediation between God and man. (cf. Gn 12:7; 26:24,25; Ex 29:36,37; 30:10; Lv 8:15; 16:18-19; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 413, 414, 452). Blood represented life and was symbolically offered to God who was represented by the altar. cf. J. L. McKenzie, DOB., 99. L. Sabourin, op. cit., 178.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. J.L. McKenzie, DOB. 755; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 452, 453; G. B. Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 353; W.R. Smith, Lectures, 201, 202.

constituent of sacrifice."<sup>19</sup> The blood ritual is the precise symbolic act of oblation whereby the life of the animal is given to the deity. In symbol, the "blood" was the sacrificer's own life and the offering of the blood on the altar signified the offering of the sacrificer's own life to the deity.<sup>20</sup>

The slaughtering of the sacrificial animal is a preliminary act which, taken by itself, is not essential and not a ritually symbolic act. "The essence of sacrifice does not lie in immolation. Immolation is only a preparation for the sacrifice, like the laying-on of hands."<sup>21</sup> This is not to imply that immolation is of no real importance in sacrificial rites. As S. C. Gayford has noted:

It has been the fashion sometimes to run the opposite extreme of treating the killing of the victim as a mere incident of no great intrinsic importance. This is a great mistake. "Apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission." The offering of the blood still within the body of the victim would represent a life unsundered; to offer some only of the blood drawn from its body would typify the surrender of but a part of the life. The entire surrender of the whole life is essential before it can be given over to God, and therefore nothing less than the death of the victim is required, though but a little of its blood was needed to "put" on the Horns of the Altar.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> G.F. Moore as quoted by H.W. Robinson, "Hebrew Sacrifice And Prophetic Symbolism," JTS. 43(1942-43), p. 129; Cf. G.F. Moore "Sacrifice," EB. IV, p. 4217; W.R. Smith, Lectures, 201, 202; F.B. Jevons, op. cit., 132f.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. S.C. Gayford, op. cit., pp. 71; 108ff.

<sup>21</sup> R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 452; Cf. L. Dewar, JTS. 4(1953), p. 206; S. Lyonnet, op. cit., 869, 872; C. Stuhlmuehler, Commentary on the Book of Leviticus (New York: Paulist Press, 1960), pp. 8, 9; H.W. Robinson, JTS. 43(1942-43), p. 131; C. Spicq, op. cit., II. p. 272; W.R. Smith, Lectures, pp. 313ff.

<sup>22</sup> S.C. Gayford, Sacrifice and Priesthood, p. 116; cf. S. Lyonnet, op. cit., 872.

From this viewpoint the holocaust sacrifice (e.g. Jg 6:26,28; 13:15-20),<sup>23</sup> could be considered the perfect sacrifice. The characteristic feature of the holocaust sacrifice, found in every instance, is that all is burnt upon the altar. By these whole offerings, the entire surrender of man's life to God is symbolized; all is given, nothing is retained.<sup>24</sup> However, this whole-gift dimension of sacrifice does not exhaust the fullness of the meaning of sacrifice.

Along with, and equally fundamental to, the whole-gift dimension of sacrifice is the desire-for-union dimension.<sup>25</sup> Desire for union with the deity, very much at the heart of Israelite religion, found its particular and explicit expression in the communion-sacrifices frequently referred to in the ancient texts (e.g. Jos 22:26f.; 1 S 1:21; 2:13,19).<sup>26</sup> The communion-sacrifice was "a joyful sacrifice

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<sup>23</sup>Cf. 1 S 6:14; 7:9; 10:8; 13:9f.; 2 S 6:17f.; 1 K 3:4; 9:25; 18:38; Lv 1ff.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. R. de Vaux, pp. 426, 427, 452, 453.

<sup>25</sup>Throughout the history of sacrifice the two ideas of gift and communion are present. It is a disputed question as to which idea is the more primitive. (cf. S.C. Gayford, op. cit., p. 13, note 1; H.W. Robinson, JTS. 43(42-43), p. 129; J.L. McKenzie, DOB. 754,755). While the gift idea was often more prominent in Israelite history, the communion idea was always present if not as prominent. If one is able to isolate an element in the history of sacrifice which may be said to be the basic element, it is probably the gift. The purpose of the gift, however, is to establish, to maintain, or to re-establish communion with the deity. This communion with the deity can be envisioned under various aspects and the symbolism of the various kinds of sacrifices gives expression to these differences. In this way, it may be said that the desire-for-union aspect of sacrifice underlies the whole-gift aspect.. cf. A. Edersheim, The Temple: Its Ministry and Services (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1875), p. 82; L. Sabourin, op. cit., pp. 166ff.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. 2 S 15:12; 1K 8:62; 12:27; 2K 5:17; 10:24; etc.; in the prophets (Is 1:11; 19:21; Jr 7:22; Os3:4; 4:19; etc.); in the ancient laws collected in the Pentateuch (Ex 23:18;34:15,25), etc.

in which the two ideas of gift and communion were both included; the offering was made by man, and it achieved its effect in maintaining friendship with God. Hence it was regarded as the most complete kind of sacrifice, and at the beginning of Israel's history, it was the most frequent kind offered."<sup>27</sup> In the Old Testament, while modalities differ according to the particular circumstances, communion-sacrifices are covenant-sacrifices: sacrifices offered in the making of a covenant (cf. Gn 15:17; 31:46; Ex 24:4-8).<sup>28</sup>

Leaving aside the complex and detailed ritual of the many sacrificial prescriptions in the Old Testament,<sup>29</sup> it is particularly instructive to examine the role of blood in expiatory sacrificial rites. In every sacrifice man deprived himself of something useful in order to present it to the deity and since the intention of all sacrifices was the establishment of good relations between the deity and man, every sacrifice had an expiatory or atoning dimension.<sup>30</sup> However, there were sacrifices specifically offered for the purpose of expiation or atonement (Lv 4:1-5:13; 5:14-6:7),<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 453; cf. 427.

<sup>28</sup>Cf. L. Sabourin, op. cit., p. 169; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 453; D. McCarthy, CBQ, 27(1965), 230, 231; The Jerusalem Bible, Lv 3, note "a"; A. Lelièvre, VB, p. 95.

<sup>29</sup>The history and the significance of Israelite sacrifice and the complex ritual of the many sacrificial prescriptions are well beyond the scope of this thesis. The reader is referred to the following: R.K. Yerkes, op. cit.; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 415-456; J. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, 299-375; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 141-172; S.C. Gayford, op. cit.; G.B. Gray, Sacrifice in The Old Testament; W.R. Smith, Lectures, pp. 213ff.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. J.E. Steinmueller, Bibl. 40(1959), p. 562; R. de Vaux, 453; J. Heuschen, "Atonement," EDB, 169; J. Pedersen, Israel III-IV, p. 359; W.O.E. Oosterley & T.H. Robinson, op. cit., 298.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. Lv 6:24-30; 7:1-7; Ex 29:11-14; Nm 5:5-8; 15:22-29; 1 S 3:4; 26:19; 2 S 24:15; Ez 40:39; 42:13; 44:29; 46:20; Ho 4:8; Mi 6:7.

and blood figured more importantly and prominently in these sacrifices than in any other kind.<sup>32</sup> Blood is given to man by God precisely to make atonement.<sup>33</sup> "This blood I myself have given you to perform the rite of atonement for your lives at the altar; for it is blood that atones for a life. i.e., by reason of the life that is in it." (Lv 17: 11).<sup>34</sup> S. Lyonnet has elucidated the significance of blood in the sacrifices of atonement or expiation:

For the Bible, expiation consists in effacing sin wherever it is found, that is to say, in the people of Israel and then in man as such. Since sin is not conceived as a mere soiling which it is in man's power to remove, but is identified with the rebellion of Israel and man against God, and what theologians would later call the aversio a Deo, expiation "effaces" sin precisely by giving back to Israel the "presence" of God in the midst of His people, by once more reuniting man to God.

This is further confirmed by the meaning the Bible attributed to blood in the sacrifices of expiation with which it is indissolubly united according to the rabbinical axiom: there is no expiation without the shedding of blood (cf. Heb 9,22 which speaks of "remission").

Indeed, in contrast with other religions of the Ancient Near East in which the immolation of the victim generally held the central place, in Israel the rite of shedding the blood certainly constituted

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<sup>32</sup>Cf. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 419; C. Spicq et P. Grelot, VTB. 995; J. Heuschen, EDB. 168-171.

<sup>33</sup>"The English word 'atonement' means literally the setting 'at one' of two or more persons who were at odds with each other. Etymologically, therefore, atonement is synonymous with concord, reconciliation. But since reconciliation is generally between one who has been offended and one who has given the offense, atonement receives its ordinary meaning of satisfactory reparation for an offense." J. Heuschen, EDB. 167. This at-one-ment is brought about by the God-given means of blood. cf. M. Noth, Leviticus: A Commentary, p. 132.

<sup>34</sup>Cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Lv 17:11, note "f". Also S. Lyonnet, op. cit., 872; L. Sabourin, op. cit., 178-180.

the central rite. . . In the ritual of the great Day of Atonement (Lv 16) the sevenfold sprinkling of blood on the mercy-seat, a privilege strictly reserved to Aaron, then to the high priest alone, certainly constituted the central rite. . . According to Lv 16: 15-19, the purpose of this sprinkling with blood was to "purify the sanctuary (exilasetai to hagion: expiat sanctuarium, Vulg.) of the impurities of the children of Israel, their transgressions and all their sins."

Now the Bible tells us that the Hebrews attributed this purificatory and consecratory function to blood "by virtue of the life that is in it," still more<sup>35</sup> literally, "in as much as it is life" (Lv 17:11).

Blood does not expiate because it represents death, as a penalty paid on behalf of the offender, but rather, because it is life liberated and given over, returned to God. Man is able to use blood for expiation precisely because blood is life and, therefore, eminently suited to consecrate creatures to God, that is, to purify them.<sup>36</sup> Blood is the essential element in atonement as it is the very means of re-establishing union with God. The rite of expiation was not efficacious because of any magical or intrinsic power of the blood.<sup>37</sup> Rather, blood was the seat of life, a sacred and therefore a most fitting means, in fact, a God-chosen means, (Lv 17:11), for sanctifying and purifying that which had been defiled and desecrated by sin.<sup>38</sup> The shedding of blood

<sup>35</sup>S. Lyonnet, op. cit., pp. 869, 871, 872. cf. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 419; S.C. Gayford, p. 70; W.R. Smith Lectures, pp. 320, 356, 427; L. Sabourin, op. cit., pp. 178-180.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. S. Lyonnet, op. cit., p. 872; A. Lelièvre, op. cit., p. 40; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 419; L. Sabourin, op. cit., pp. 178-180.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. Note 63 below.

<sup>38</sup>Cf. J. Heuschen, op. cit., pp. 169, 170; L. Bouyer, Rite and Man, pp. 87, 88; L. Sabourin, "Le rôle que remplit le sang dans les sacrifices expiatoires ne se comprend bien que dans la perspective d'une conception propre à l'Ancien Testament et soulignée en particulier par les textes de la tradition sacerdotale: le comportement religieux et moral du peuple est en relation intime avec la terre qu'il habite

expressed the desire for reunion with God from whom the sinner had been excommunicated by sin.<sup>39</sup> "In all the older forms of Semitic ritual the notions of communion and atonement are bound up together, atonement being simply an act of communion designed to wipe out all memory of previous estrangement."<sup>40</sup> Primarily, then, the desire was to re-establish union, at-one-ment with the deity. The ritual use of shed blood was the fullest symbolic expression of that desire.<sup>41</sup>

et le temple où Dieu réside. Deux conséquences en découlent: d'une part, les péchés du peuple contaminent et profanent la terre et le temple; d'autre part, l'expiation ou la purification de l'autel et du temple produisent le même effet sur la terre et le peuple. . .

"Le rôle du sang serait donc le suivant: on répand le sang sur les objets contaminés et ils sont purifiés au contact de l'élément divin, la vie, qui vivifie ce qui était mort ou mourant par le péché. La communion avec Dieu est rétablie par la présence du principe vital divin. Par le moyen de la purification de l'autel, du temple, grâce au sang, tout le peuple pouvait retrouver sa pureté rituelle, et, selon ses dispositions intérieures, sa pureté morale. Grâce au rite du grand jour des expiations (Lv 16), les enfants d'Israël auront de nouveau accès à la société de Dieu, car sa "gloire", c'est-à-dire sa présence visible, que le péché éloigne (cf. Ez 10, 18-22; 11, 22-25), ne peut revenir qu'en un temple purifié (Ez 43, 1-5)." Rédemption Sacrificielle, pp. 178, 179.

<sup>39</sup>"Dans le sacrifice d'expiation, l'effusion ou l'aspersion du sang, que précédait nécessairement l'immolation, exprimait d'une autre façon le même désir d'union à Dieu, plus exactement de réunion avec le Dieu dont le péché avait séparé l'offrant." S. Lyonnet, op. cit., 874; cf. W. H. Robinson, JTS. 43(42-43), 134, 135; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 453; L. Sabourin, op. cit., 178-180.

<sup>40</sup>W.R. Smith, Lectures, p. 320; cf. p. 356, 427, 651ff.

<sup>41</sup>Primarily, then, the blood ritual in expiatory sacrifices is a positive one. It expresses the desire for oneness with the deity. The emphasis is on the re-establishment of oneness of life, not on the negative 'wiping away' of sin conceived as a 'stain'. "In the most primitive form of the sacrificial idea the blood of the sacrifice is not employed to wash away an impurity, but to convey to the worshipper a particle of holy life." W.R. Smith, Lectures, 427.

In the sacrifice which inaugurated the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, the role of blood is once again paramount and its use particularly instructive. There are a considerable number of hypotheses current as to the exact and full significance of the blood ritual of the Original Passover<sup>42</sup> and any attempt to elucidate this significance must proceed by way of a contextual study of the detailed prescriptions as they are found in the Old Testament.<sup>43</sup>

Then Moses called all the elders of Israel, and said to them, "Select lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood which is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to slay the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you. You shall observe this rite as an ordinance for you and for your sons forever. And when you come to the land which the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he slew the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" (Ex 12:21-27; cf. 1-14)

A spray of hyssop<sup>44</sup> was dipped into the blood which had been allowed to fall into a basin.<sup>45</sup> With this hyssop

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<sup>42</sup>Cf. J.B. Segal, op. cit., pp. 105, 106, 157-165; G.B. Gray, op. cit., pp. 350-366; W.O.E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, op. cit., p. 99 note 1.

<sup>43</sup>J.B. Segal has completed such a study. cf. op. cit., esp. pp. 105, 106, 157-165. I am indebted to him, in large part, for what follows on the positive vital significance of the Original Passover blood ritual.

<sup>44</sup>The hyssop was an aspergillum. On its significance see J.B. Segal, op. cit., pp. 158, 159.

<sup>45</sup>In Ex 12:22, the Hebrew word rendered into English

the blood was touched<sup>46</sup> to the lintel and the two doorposts of the houses of the Israelites. However, it is not the houses themselves, as structures, toward which the action is directed, but rather, the people within each household.<sup>47</sup>

In the Israelite cult, blood may be smeared either upon the altar of the Temple buildings, or upon the priest or officiant. At the Exodus Pesah the lintel and doorposts of the dwelling-places can scarcely be identified with altars or Temple precincts; they must be identified with its occupants. The entrance represents all the inmates. We recall the regulations of Deuteronomy, (6:6-9; 11:18-20), that the divine commandments should be affixed to the posts (mezuzoth) of the house and the gates of the city. Those who are within are all members of a single group, and the sign on the entrance is the sign of the group.<sup>48</sup>

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as basin is saph. cf. Zc 12:2; Jg 19:27; 1 K 14:17; 2 K 12:9, 13; 22:14; etc. Saph may also be rendered as threshold, as in the LXX and the Vulgate. cf. H.C. Trumbull, The Threshold Covenant (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), pp. 206-209; A.M. Honeyman, "Basin, Goblet," JTS. 37(1936), pp. 56f.; J.B. Segal, op. cit., p. 53, note 1; p. 158, note 1; J.C. Rylaardsdam, ID. III, p. 666. Segal contends that it is preferable, in this context, to translate saph as "basin", since "it is probable that a receptacle is meant, whether it was the threshold or a vessel." p. 158, note 1. Trumbull contends that the rendition of saph as threshold is contextually more meaningful. cf. Trumbull, The Threshold Covenant, pp. 206-209, and note 57 below.

<sup>46</sup>Ex 12:22 -- "touch"; Ex 12:7 -- "put". cf. Lv 4:7; 8:15, 23; etc. On the technical difference of these ritually-important gestures whereby blood is applied, see J.B. Segal, op. cit., pp. 159ff.

<sup>47</sup>Exactly as in the case where priests are smeared with blood at their consecration (Ex 29:20f; Lv 8:23-30); also, the relation between God and his priests was based on a covenant (Dt 33:9; Ml 2:4ff.). cf. J.B. Segal, op. cit., 161; W.R. Smith, Lectures, pp. 337, 338, 344: "...the application of the living blood to the worshipper is retained in certain special cases--at the consecration of priests and the purification of the leper--where it is proper to express in the strongest way the establishment of a special bond between the god and his servant, or the restitution of one who has been cut off from religious fellowship with the deity and the community of his worshipers."

<sup>48</sup>J.B. Segal, op. cit., p. 161. For the identification

The blood rites on the night of the Original Passover proclaimed the unity of the members of each house.<sup>49</sup> Clearly, the application of the blood to the houses had certain prophylactic properties against evil. However, this apotropaic aspect of the blood ritual is only one aspect and a negative one, albeit a prominent one. More significantly still, the blood ritual was "instinct with vital positive significance."<sup>50</sup>

H. C. Trumbull contended that the blood ritual had the qualities of a blood covenant<sup>51</sup> and he was the first to offer the intriguing and plausible hypothesis that the Original Passover was in fact a threshold covenant.<sup>52</sup>

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of the dwelling-place with its inmates, cf. Ex 21:5,6, where the slave who wishes to remain bound to the members of the household in which he is a slave, has his ear affixed "to the door or the doorpost." cf. also, S. Lyonnet, op. cit., 870: "In the rite of the first Pasch, the blood of the lamb, which the Apocalypse mentions twice (7:14 and 12:11) and which Paul implicitly evokes (1 Cor 5:7), certainly did not have, in the mind of the biblical narrator, the function of appeasing Yahweh but of indicating to the avenging angel the houses of those who belonged to the people, the first-born son of Yahweh, like the sign of the Tau with which, in Ez 9:4,6, the "man dressed in white" marked the foreheads of the faithful Israelites. In the Apocalypse (7:3,4), the 144,000 servants of God thus marked are said to 'wear on their foreheads the name of the Lamb and of His Father (14:1).' This was therefore a rite of consecration, separating Israel from the pagan world, constituting it a people apart."

<sup>49</sup>Cf. J.B. Segal, op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 106. (underscoring mine).

<sup>51</sup>Cf. H.C. Trumbull, The Blood Covenant: Primitive Rite and Its Bearings On Scripture (Philadelphia: J.D. Wattles, 1893); cf. J.B. Segal, pp. 105, 106; the author's M.A. Thesis, "The Biblical Concept of Blood Covenanting," University of Ottawa, 1965. (Manuscript).

<sup>52</sup>Cf. H.C. Trumbull, The Threshold Covenant, pp. 203-222, 311, 312; cf. J.B. Segal, pp. 105, 106; J.C. Rylaarsdam, op. cit., p. 666; J.G. Frazer, Folklore in the Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion Legend and Law (abridged ed.) (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1923), 313-322.

In enjoining the Israelites to sacrifice the passover lamb with its concomitant blood ritual, Yahweh utilized a rite with which the people were already familiar while giving it a new and deeper signification.<sup>53</sup>

Long before that day (of the Paschal deliverance), a covenant welcome was given to a guest who was to become as one of the family, or to a bride or bridegroom in marriage, by the outpouring of blood on the threshold of the door, and by staining the doorway itself with the blood of the covenant. And now Jehovah announced that he was to visit Egypt on a designated night, and that those who would welcome him should prepare a threshold covenant, or a pass-over sacrifice, as a proof of that welcome; for where no such welcome was made ready for him by<sup>54</sup> a family, he must count the household as his enemy.

According to Trumbull, in the Passover Legend, Yahweh did not pass over the houses of the Israelites, but rather, he passed over the blood of the sacrificial victim on the threshold of each house thus entering into covenant with its occupants. Yahweh did not merely spare his people when he visited judgement upon the Egyptians. "He covenanted anew with them by passing over, or crossing over, the blood-stained threshold into their homes, while his messenger of death went into the houses of the Lord's enemies and claimed the first-born as belonging to Jehovah."<sup>55</sup>

It seems clear that the Egyptian passover rite was a rite of threshold covenanting, as ordered of God and as understood by the Israelites. Its sacrifice

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<sup>53</sup>Cf. H.C. Trumbull, The Threshold Covenant, p. 203. Certainly, the people were familiar with the rite enacted (cf. M. Buber, Moses, p. 72; also, G.B. Gray, op. cit., 356f.; also, S.I. Curtiss, Primitive Semitic Religion Today: A Record of Researches, Discoveries and Studies in Syria, Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1902), 226ff.

<sup>54</sup>H.C. Trumbull, The Threshold Covenant, 203, 204; cf. J.C. Rylaardsdam, op. cit., 666; J.G. Frazer, Folklore in the Old Testament, 213-222.

<sup>55</sup>H.C. Trumbull, The Threshold Covenant, p. 209.

was on the threshold of the homes of the Hebrews on the threshold of a new year (Ex 12:1,2; Lv 23:5; 9:1, 2), and on the threshold of a new nationality. Then Israel began anew in all things. Moreover, it was recognized as the rite of marriage between Jehovah and Israel; as the very Threshold Covenant<sup>56</sup> had its origin in the rite of primitive marriage.

According to Trumbull, the prophet Jeremiah recognized the Original Passover night as the occasion when Yahweh took the Virgin Israel to Himself in covenant union:

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord." (Jr 31:31, 32; Ez 16:6-14).<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 212. On the origin of the Threshold Covenant see pp. 193-202. On the Passover as a New Year Festival, see J.B. Segal, op. cit., 114-188.

<sup>57</sup>RSV translation. In Jr 31:32, Yahweh is described as acting as husband (ba'al) toward Israel. J. Coppens, following E. Konig, has translated the end of verse 32 as: "Car ils ont violé mon alliance et, moi, j'ai dû sévir contre eux en époux." CBQ. 25(1963), p. 14, note 8. D.J. McCarthy has confirmed Coppens' rendition. cf. CBQ. 27(1965), 235. Thus Jeremiah refers to and carries on the image of the husband-wife relationship between Yahweh and Israel which is a contractual relationship. And, in this Chapter (31) of Jeremiah, there is always the question of covenant. (cf. McCarthy, op. cit. 235).

The question is, as Coppens has formulated it, "On s'est parfois demandé à quelle première alliance l'hagio-graphie fait allusion. S'agirait-il par exemple d'un pacte conclu au moment même du départ de l'Égypte? Ou importe-t-il d'identifier sans plus la première alliance avec celle du Sinai?" Coppens goes on to answer: "La réponse ne nous paraît pas douteuse. Rien ne nous invite à ne pas songer au pacte sinaitique." CBQ. 25(1965), 15. However, Trumbull's hypothesis certainly gives us cause to consider the possibility that reference is, in fact, to "un pacte conclu au moment même du départ de l'Égypte." Trumbull contends that the identity of the Original Passover sacrifice with the primitive Threshold Covenant is so generally unrecognized largely because of the usual English translation of saph as "basin" rather than as "threshold". This is a point well taken. cf.

While Trumbull's hypothesis should be viewed with caution, it is plausible<sup>58</sup> and it does give a possible deeper insight into the positive significance of the Passover blood ritual. It underscores the significance of the blood ritual as a consecratory and unifying agent and not just an apotropaic agent.<sup>59</sup>

For Martin Buber, also, the Passover sacrifice has covenantal significance. He sees the blood ritual enacted by the diverse families on the night of the Original Passover as "a preliminary form of the blood covenant which the people as such was to conclude with Yahweh on Sinai."<sup>60</sup> The families devoted themselves "in blood" to Yahweh,<sup>61</sup> and, what they did on the evening prior to their memorable deliverance "in the form of diversity" would be completed at Sinai "in the form of unity."<sup>62</sup>

From what has been presented above, it seems clear that the use of blood, incorporated into the Mosaic Law, was an essential element in the sacrificial rites of the Israelites. As their history developed, there is evidenced an evolution from the magical to the mysterial

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note 45 above. cf. also, H.C. Trumbull, The Threshold Covenant, pp. 206-214.

<sup>58</sup>Cf. J.B. Segal, p. 106; J.C. Rylaardsdam, p. 666; S.C. Gayford, p. 40.

<sup>59</sup>The apotropaic function is very clear from the biblical account and context. cf. G.B. Gray, op. cit., 352-366. However, the apotropaic and communion functions of the blood ritual are not, of necessity, mutually exclusive. cf. S.C. Gayford, p. 40; M. Buber, Moses (London: East and West Library, Phaidon Press Limited, 1946), pp. 69-73; J.B. Segal, op. cit., pp. 155ff.; H.C. Trumbull, The Threshold Covenant, 203ff.; W.R. Smith, Lectures, 337, 338, 651ff.

<sup>60</sup>M. Buber, Moses, p. 71.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 70; cf. S.C. Gayford, p. 40.

<sup>62</sup>M. Buber, op. cit., p. 71.

efficaciousness of blood.<sup>63</sup> This progressively deepening positive significance of blood, as life and as an instrument of communion, will become clearer from an examination of the role of blood in covenantal rites.

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<sup>63</sup>By way of contrast: The ceremony of blood as practiced today by the Arabs remains merely magical. In performing the blood ritual, as similar to the Passover rite, they still believe that they are warding off the demons of plague from the house or the flock. cf. J. Henninger, "Les Fêtes de printemps chez les Arabes et leurs implications historiques," Revista do Museu Paulista, N.S. IV(1950), 389-432. In the Mosaic Law, there is already a realization that the rite is not to be magically, i.e. of itself, efficacious but rather is to be subordinated to Yahweh (Ex 12:27). cf. M. Buber, p. 124; H.C. Trumbull, The Threshold Covenant, p. 203; G.F. Moore remarks: "Many of the practices that have been noted above (uses of sacrificial blood) manifestly originated in an animistic nature religion, in which alone they have meaning. In the national religion of Israel they become part of the worship of Yahwè or of the custom of the people under his sanction. This connection logically involves a change of apprehension: the rites are not efficacious by the inherent potency of the blood or the virtue of the operation, but as the means which God has appointed." "Sacrifice," EB. IV, 4218, 4219.

## B. The Significance of "Covenant Blood" In The Old Testament

### (1) In Secular Covenants

As has been seen, several of the rites which comprised the conclusion of a covenant symbolized and, in the belief of the ancients, even produced the peaceful union desired by the partners to the covenant. That the enactment of rites could actually effect union was especially believed of those covenant rites in which blood was shared.

In Israelite belief, "blood" and "life" are identified: "the blood is the life" (Dt 12:23). It follows quite naturally, then, that "blood" should be an essential element in the practice of covenanting which has as its very purpose the establishment of a common life.

Among the Israelites, a group such as a family or a clan believed to possess a common will and a common responsibility, was equally believed to possess a common life and a common blood.<sup>64</sup> Hence, the attempt to establish a relationship absolutely equivalent to that of the family or clan, by means of a covenant, was symbolized by a rite in which blood was shared.<sup>65</sup> Through the enactment of a rite in which blood was shared, the covenanting parties believed they effected a shared life, a common life.

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<sup>64</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp. 12-15; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, p. 172; B. Cooke, op. cit., pp. 26, 27.

<sup>65</sup>Cf. B. Cooke, op. cit., p. 27; A. Médebielle, op. cit., pp. 22-27; W.R. Smith, Kinship, 48ff.; 148, 149.

They became, as it were, one blood, one life. Union of lives, common life, was symbolized and achieved by means of covenanting in blood.<sup>66</sup> Examples of blood-covenanting have been observed universally throughout recorded history.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup>The belief that by sharing the blood of another, one could absorb the other's life into his own is a belief which finds varied expression among primitive peoples. It is at the basis of the widely-known practice of drinking the fresh blood of an enemy, or, the eating of his heart, which as the "blood-centre," was thought to be his life-source. On the varied expressions of this belief, cf. W.R. Smith, Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, pp. 313ff.; 338, 339, 342, 343, 368, 369; F.B. Jevons, Introduction to the History of Religion, pp. 103, 104, 291ff.; J.G. Frazer, The Golden Bough; A Study in Magic and Religion (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1963), pp. 93ff., 228, 535; H.C. Trumbull, The Blood Covenant: see the author's topical index, under the title "Blood," p. 376.

<sup>67</sup>By far, the classic and most comprehensive study of the varied rites of blood-covenanting is H.C. Trumbull's The Blood Covenant: A Primitive Rite And Its Bearings On Scripture (Philadelphia: J.D. Wattles, 1893). In it the author compiled an astonishing collection of instances, ancient and modern, from all over the world, illustrating the practice and significance of the concept of blood-covenanting. (cf. R.K. Yerkes, op. cit., p. 44, p. 220, note 4; W.R. Smith, op. cit., p. 314, note 2; H.W. Robinson, "Blood," ERE. II p. 716b; the Appendix to the author's M.A. Thesis: "The Biblical Concept of Blood Covenanting," University of Ottawa, 1965).

For examples of the rite of blood-covenanting as practiced among the Semitic Arabs, cf. W.R. Smith, Kinship, pp. 47ff.; idem, Lectures, 314ff.; 479ff.; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 227. -- For examples of the rite as recorded in the Classics: Herodotus, III, 8; IV, 70; Aeschylus, The Seven Against Thebes, 42ff.; Tacitus, The Annals. XII, 47; each of the foregoing can be found in The Great Books of the Western World Series. R.M. Hutchins, ed. in chief, volumes 6, 5, and 15, respectively. For examples among the ancient Egyptians, see H.C. Trumbull, op. cit., pp. 77-85; 99-105; also, notes 70, 71, 73, which follow. For traces of the rite in Africa, Europe, China, Burmah, North and South America, see H.C. Trumbull, op. cit., the topical index, under the title 'Blood Covenant', p. 377. All of Trumbull's references were authenticated at the time of, and as part of the research of my M.A. Thesis. The Appendix to the Thesis contains the detailed publication facts which are lacking in Trumbull's footnotes.

In the simplest form of this rite, two men become brothers by opening their veins and sucking one another's blood. Thenceforth their lives are not two but one. This form of covenant is still known in the Lebanon and in some parts of Arabia. In ancient Arabic literature there are many references to the blood covenant, but instead of human blood that of a victim slain at the sanctuary is employed. The ritual in this case is that all who share in the compact must dip their hands into the gore, which at the same time is applied to the sacred stone that symbolises the deity, or is poured forth at its base. The dipping of the hands into the dish implies communion in an act of eating, and so the members of the bond are called "blood-lickers."<sup>68</sup>

Certainly, the exchange, the sharing of human blood in covenants is a practice of extreme antiquity. This may be observed from the writings of the Greek historian, Herodotus (c. 484 - c. 425 B.C.), who recorded an explicit description of the oriental rite of blood-covenanting as observed among the Scythians:

Oaths among the Scyths are accompanied with the following ceremonies: a large earthen bowl is filled with wine, and the parties to the oath, wounding themselves slightly with a knife or an awl, drop some of their blood into the wine; then they plunge into the mixture a scymitar, some arrows, a battle-axe, and a javelin, all the while repeating prayers; lastly the two contracting parties drink each a draught from the bowl,<sup>69</sup> as do also the chief men among their followers.

Again, writing of the custom as employed in his time by the Arabs on the borders of Egypt:

The Arabs keep such pledges more religiously than almost any other people. They plight faith with the forms following. When two men would swear a

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<sup>68</sup>W.R. Smith, Lectures, pp. 314, 315; cf. 479ff.; 691f.; cf. also, P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 227; For instances of the rite as still practiced in the Lebanon, see H.C. Trumbull, op. cit., pp. 5-12; as still practiced in Arabia, see C.M. Doughty, Travels in Arabia Deserta, II, 41.

<sup>69</sup>The History of Herodotus, IV, 70.

friendship, they stand on each side of a third; he with a sharp stone makes a cut on the inside of the hand of each near the middle finger, and taking a piece from their dress, dips it in the blood of each, and moistens therewith seven stones lying in the midst, calling the while on Bacchus and Urania. After this, the man who makes the pledge commends the stranger (or the citizen, if citizen he be) to all his friends, and they<sup>70</sup> deem themselves bound to stand to the engagement.

Thus the rite of blood-covenanting, still traditionally practiced in the Orient, was recognized as an established custom among oriental peoples some twenty-five centuries ago. Its origin must certainly have been prior to that time; there is evidence to suggest that its origin was long prior to that time.

As far back as the ancient writings of the Egyptians there is evidence of the existence of blood-covenanting.

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<sup>70</sup>The History of Herodotus III, 8; "The rite described by Herodotus has for its object the admission of an individual stranger to fellowship with an Arab clansman and his kin; the compact is primarily between two individuals, but the obligation contracted by the single clansman is binding on all his "friends," i.e., on the other members of the kin. The reason why it is so binding is that he who has drunk a clansman's blood is no longer a stranger but a brother, and included in the mystic circle of those who have a share in the life-blood that is common to all the clan." W.R. Smith, Lectures, p. 315. cf. also, F.B. Jevons, who writes of the practice of blood-covenanting among the Southern Slavs: "Among the Southern Slavs to this day blood-fauds are common, and may be terminated by the parties to the feud becoming blood brothers. This is effected by a representative of one bratstva sucking blood from the vein of the right wrist of a representative of the other bratstva, whereby all the members of the one clan become blood-brothers to all the members of the other. Mohammedan women do not veil themselves in the presence of such blood-brothers, even if Christians, any more than they would before their other blood relations. This... faithfully preserves the primitive view that the blood-brotherhood thus established is not a relationship personal to the two parties alone, but extends to the whole of each clan: my brother is, or becomes, the brother of all my brethren; the blood which flows in the veins of either party to the blood-covenant flows in the veins of all his kin." op. cit., pp. 98,99; cf. also, Aeschylus, The Seven Against Thebes. 42ff.; On the significance of the rite as described by Aeschylus, see R. K. Yerkes, op. cit., pp. 44,45.

Even at that time, the custom appears to have been to imbibe of the blood taken from another's arm. This exchange, this inter-transference of blood, was supposed to produce an inter-commingling of lives. "So far was this symbolic thought carried, that the ancient Egyptians spoke of the departed spirit as having entered into the nature, and, indeed, into the very being, of the gods, by the rite of tasting blood from the divine arm."<sup>71</sup> In the Egyptian "Book of the Dead,"<sup>72</sup> there are several references to this rite of blood-covenanting.<sup>73</sup> Some of these date to the Eleventh Dynasty<sup>74</sup> thus carrying the rite back to a period prior to the time of Abraham.<sup>75</sup>

It is not germane to examine anthropologically the rite of blood-covenanting from its origins to modern times.

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<sup>71</sup>H.C. Trumbull, The Blood Covenant, 77, 78; cf. 79-85.

<sup>72</sup>The Egyptian "Book of the Dead," essentially mythological, is a series of ancient written reflections on the state of the soul after death. The most ancient and possibly the most important of the sacred books of the Egyptians, it is regarded by them as an inspired book. cf. P. Le Page Renouf, The Origin And Growth Of Religion As Illustrated By The Religion Of Ancient Egypt (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1879), pp. 180ff.; 208; C.C.J. Bunsen, Egypt's Place In Universal History, V, trans. C. H. Cottrell (London: Longman and Company, 1867), pp. 125-133. H.C. Trumbull, op. cit., 77-85.

<sup>73</sup>Cf. C.C.J. Bunsen, Egypt's Place In Universal History V, 174; H.C. Trumbull, op. cit., 77-85, especially p. 79 note e.

<sup>74</sup>Cf. C.C.J. Bunsen, op. cit., p. 127; H.C. Trumbull, op. cit., p. 79. The Eleventh Dynasty is dated c.2160-2000 B.C. cf. J. H. Breasted, A History of Egypt From The Earliest Times To The Persian Conquest ( Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 500.

<sup>75</sup>Abraham probably belonged to one of the groups of semi-nomadic Amorrites who, between 2000 and 1700 B.C., moved out of the Syrian (north-Arabic) desert into Syria and Chanaan. His arrival in Chanaan (Gn 12), is dated at approximately

This has been done elsewhere.<sup>76</sup> However, it is germane to remark that such a detailed study discloses the belief -- basic to all blood-covenants -- that blood is the life of a living being; not merely that blood is essential to life, but, in a peculiar sense, it is life. It actually vivifies by its presence and by its passing from one organism to another it conveys and imparts life. The intercommingling of the blood of the two organisms is, therefore, equivalent to the intercommingling of the lives, of the personalities, of the natures, thus brought together so that there is, in a sense, one life in the two bodies, a common life between the two covenant partners. They become as it were a single soul. They become one.

Commenting upon the blood rites as used among the Arabs and other peoples in covenanting, P. van Imschoot has written:

It is possible that similar rites may have been customary among the Hebrews (cf. Ex 24:3-8; 29:20,21), who preserved the expression "the blood of the covenant" (Ex 24:8; Za 9:11) and considered blood as "the soul," that is to say, the vital principle of animal and man (Lv 17:14; Dt 12:23); and it is precisely for this reason that those who mix their blood or dip their hands into the same blood are meant to become one soul.<sup>77</sup>

Indeed, it is possible that similar rites may have been customary among the Hebrews. However, in granting this, there is the danger that one may then look to the practice and belief of primitive peoples in general as the norm of the practice and belief of the Israelites; and, as determinative of those beliefs and practices. The comparative method of study can be misused, and Israelite religion

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1850 B.C. cf. L. Hartman and J. Valvekens, "Abraham," EDB. p. 12; The Jerusalem Bible (Supplements) "Chronological Table," p. 455.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. H. C. Trumbull, op. cit., and the author's M. A. Thesis. op. cit.

<sup>77</sup>P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 227.

can be seen as influenced by other religious practices but as having no real bearing on these practices. As R. de Vaux has aptly put it:

Historians of comparative religion are tempted to misuse the comparative method, and to bring forward, as an explanation of Israelite sacrifice, the practice or ideas of peoples with different religious concepts; in particular, they look for analogies between Israelite ritual and the customs of the so-called 'primitive' peoples, for among these primitive peoples, they claim, we find the fundamental significance of ritual. Theologians, on the other hand, tend to use the sacrifice of the New Testament (and subsequent Christian doctrinal interpretations of it) in order to explain the true meaning of Old Testament sacrifice. It is true that one must take into consideration the world in which Israel lived, and also inquire how the sacrifices of the Old Law are prolonged and fulfilled in the sacrifice of the New Covenant, but surely the first task is to examine the notion of sacrifice as presented in the Old Testament itself.<sup>78</sup>

The author is in agreement with the above, and, accordingly, the first task of this Chapter is to examine the significance of covenantal blood rites as they are presented in the Old Testament. An examination of the Old Testament evidence itself must be the focal point of our study.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Ancient Israel, p. 447; cf. S. Lyonnet, op. cit., pp. 869, 970; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 141.

<sup>79</sup>This has been and will continue to be the approach throughout this thesis. The biblical evidence is the primary research material. Of course, a thorough biblical examination must admit of human as well as divine influences from its very outset; otherwise, it would not be authentic. The Israelites expressed their innate religious sense by means of symbols which had much in common with the symbolic actions of their contemporaries (cf. J. Coleran, "Origins of Old Testament Sacrifice," CBQ. 2(1940), p. 139). It is obviously important to examine the evidence presented by the world in which Israel lived, but the first task is, to paraphrase Père de Vaux, to examine the significance of covenant and covenant rites as they are presented in the Old Testament records.

It is upon an investigation of the Old Testament evidence that one is immediately struck by the fact that, with the exception of Gn 15:9-17, 17:10-14, and Ex 24:3-8,<sup>80</sup> there is no mention of any blood rite in the numerous covenants recorded. Further, each of the covenants where blood rites are mentioned is a religious covenant.<sup>81</sup> In secular covenants,<sup>82</sup> there is no mention of blood rites at all.

In light of what has been stated concerning the antiquity, the persistence and the universality of the practice of blood-covenanting, this is a remarkable fact. It has to be remarked upon in the context of what has been previously stated about the Israelite sense of the sacred character of blood and its exclusive reservation to God alone.<sup>83</sup> There is no mention of blood rites in secular covenants, not because the Old Testament authors knew nothing of such rites but, on the contrary, because they knew well the significance of these blood rites. This awareness, coupled with their profound respect for blood as a divine reality, caused them to admit of the use of such

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<sup>80</sup>Gn 15:9-17; cf. Jr 34:18-19; -- Gn 17:10-14; cf. Ex 4:25-26; -- Ex 24:3-8; cf. Zc 9:11.

<sup>81</sup>The term "religious" is used to describe those biblical covenants in which God is portrayed as an actual covenant partner, and not just as a witness to the covenant. cf. Chapter I, note 50, page 17.

<sup>82</sup>The term "secular" is used to describe those covenants between men in which God is not portrayed as an actual covenant partner, although he may be, and very often is, a witness to the covenant. cf. Chapter I, note 50 page 17.

<sup>83</sup>Cf. Chapter II.A. on "blood" as a divine reality and on the consequences which follow upon this belief. cf. also, D. J. McCarthy, JBL. 88(1969), p. 176: "As far as we know, the reservation of blood to God because it was life and so divine is specifically Israelite."

rites only in a covenant in which Yahweh was seen to take the initiative and to act as a full covenant partner, i.e. in religious covenants. It is to an examination of these covenants that we now turn.

## (2) In Religious Covenants

### a) God's Covenant with Abraham<sup>84</sup>

#### (i) The Divine Promise and Pledge

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves." (Gn 12:1-3).<sup>85</sup>

From the outset and throughout, Abraham's life is enveloped by the loving initiative and concern of God.

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<sup>84</sup>The covenant between God and Abraham is recorded in two distinct accounts: Gn 15:1-21 and 17:1-14. The first account (15:1-21) is the earlier version of the two. It appears to be a composite account of Yahwist (Y) and Elohist (E) sources. However, a definitive source analysis seems impossible (cf. G. von Rad, Genesis, 177, 178; J. Skinner, Genesis, 276, 277; E.A. Speiser, Genesis, 114, 115). The second and variant account (17:1-14) is the later version and belongs to the Priestly (P) source. There is a striking difference in the two presentations of essentially the same material. This will be clear from the analysis of each in the text. Each account will be examined, for in each the shedding of blood is an essential element.

<sup>85</sup>"God's promise to Abraham in vs. 1-3 extends through the patriarchal stories like a red line, for it is renewed for every patriarch (cf. chs. 13, 14-16; 15.5,7, 18; 18.10; 22.17; 26.24; 28.3f., 13-15; 32.12; 35.9-12; 48.16); but never again does the Yahwist let it be pronounced in such full discharge as here." G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 160, 161. cf. B. W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 23, 24.

Yahweh's promises to Abraham foretell a marvelous future for him and for "all the families of the earth" to whom he will mediate blessing. The constantly recurring phrase which characterizes the relationship between God and Abraham is Yahweh's "I will give." God will give to Abraham blessing: land (Gn 12:7; 13:15ff.; 15:18; 17:8), and posterity (Gn 12:2; 16:10, 22:17).<sup>86</sup> Yet, to Abraham, the circumstances of his life appeared to contradict these promises and any hope of their fulfillment for he was a nomad and his wife, Sarah, was beyond childbearing age. Indeed, "there is a strange contrast between the superlative promise at the beginning and Abraham's outwardly uneventful road into the south (literally, "wasteland"), because this road appears to lead the recipient of promise into a twilight that begins to limn with difficult problems."<sup>87</sup>

Still, "Abram went, as the Lord had told him" (12:4). He severed completely all of his natural ties with country, clan and immediate family, but the "difficult problems" caused him deep concern. This concern was met by the reassurances of a God who dramatically confirmed his promises by inviolably binding himself to Abraham in a solemnly-enacted covenant. (cf. Gn 15:1-21).<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>"The substance of Yahweh's blessing in the Old Testament is predominantly a material increase in life, especially in the sense of physical fruitfulness (cf. Gen. 1.22). The promise of innumerable descendants is a primary ingredient in the promise to the patriarchs (Gen. 13.16; 15.5; 17.5f.; 18.18; 22.17; 26.4,24; 28.14; 35.11)." G. von Rad, Genesis, 155. cf. Chapter I, p. 53, note 127.

<sup>87</sup>G. von Rad, Genesis, 161.

<sup>88</sup>The narrative (15:1-21) consists of two inter-related parts: vs. 1-6, concerned with the promise of a son and heir, and vs. 7-21, concerned with the promise of the land and the actual description of the covenant making. On the composite nature of Gn 15:1-21 see note 84 above.

The precise record of this covenant (15:7-18), is preceded by God directly addressing<sup>89</sup> Abraham and reassuring him that he will be rewarded greatly and that God, Himself, will act as Abraham's "shield".<sup>90</sup> To Abraham's questioning response -- a reaction of wonder and skepticism based on the seemingly overwhelming obstacle of his childlessness (vs. 2, 3) -- Yahweh provides an illustrative reply: "Look toward heaven, and number the stars. . . So shall your descendants be" (v. 5). But this reply provided not so much a clarification as it did an intensification of the paradox confronting Abraham. Yet, Abraham "believed the Lord," and the Lord "reckoned it to him as righteousness." (v. 6).

Abraham's belief was a consent to Yahweh's promises which, by all human accountability, could never be realized. Abraham's belief was an act of radical abandonment and complete trust in Yahweh, and it is this belief, this "fixing oneself on Yahweh"<sup>91</sup> that was judged to be as righteousness in him.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>This direct address would normally have been an alarming experience for the patriarch and would have caused him to react in fear (cf. Gn 21:17; 26:24; 46:2,3; etc.). However, in this instance, Abraham is explicitly told not to react in fear before the Lord (cf. v. 1).

<sup>90</sup>The metaphor of God as "shield" (v. 1) is derived from the language of cult (cf. Ps 3:3; 28:7; 33:20). In the patriarchal promises which occur so frequently, this expression appears only here, in verse 1 of Gn 15. However, the term "shield" is not used here in the sense of a divine quid pro quo, "for in the course of the narrative Abraham's testing comes first, on the heels of the promise which is uttered in superlatives but defies at first any concrete realization." G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 178.

<sup>91</sup>"Belief (faith) is 'fixing oneself on Yahweh' and refers as a rule to God's future saving act. Belief is an act of trust, a consent to God's plans in history." G. von Rad, Genesis, p.180. cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Gn 15:6, note "c".

<sup>92</sup>This is precisely the interpretation Paul gives: "In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the

Righteousness is not an ideal, absolute norm which is above men, but rather a term of relationship. Thus, a man is called righteous who conducts himself properly with reference to an existing communal relationship, who, therefore does justice to the claims which this communal relationship makes on him. This communal relationship can be human. But the passages where righteousness refers, as it does here (Gn 15:6), to the covenant relationship established by God are more important. God is righteous so long as he abides by this covenant (that is then God's iustitia salu-tifera). Man is righteous so long as he affirms the regulations of this communal relationship established by God, i.e., the covenant and the commandments. . . . God has indicated his plan for history, namely, to make of Abraham a great people; Abraham "has firmly assented" to that, i.e., he took it seriously and adjusted to it. In so doing he adopted, according to God's judgment, the only correct relationship to God.

A new narrative context, beginning with verse 7, places what has gone before in sharper and wider perspective:

And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a she-goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." And he brought him all these, cut them in two, and laid each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram; and lo, a dread and great darkness fell upon him. Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know of a surety that your descendants will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be slaves there,

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father of many nations; as he had been told, 'So shall your descendants be.' He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was 'reckoned to him as righteousness.'" (Rom 4:18-22).

<sup>93</sup> G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 180.

and they will be oppressed for four hundred years; but I will bring judgment on the nation which they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth **generation**; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates. . . (Gn 15:7-18; cf. Jr 34:17-19).

Thus, God's promise will involve the long, laborious and frustrating foundation of a nation in a promised land which will extend from Egypt to Mesopotamia. To emphasize the unparalleled importance of these promises and to confirm them beyond question or doubt, Yahweh enters into a solemn covenant with Abraham; "a covenant between the Creator of the universe and the ancestor of a nation ordained in advance to be a tool for shaping the history of the world. Small wonder, therefore, that the description touches on magic and carries with it a feeling of awe and mystery which, thanks to the genius of the narrator, can still grip the reader after all the intervening centuries."<sup>94</sup>

The narrative of Yahweh's covenant with Abraham, (vs. 7-18), is one of the oldest in patriarchal tradition<sup>95</sup> and there is conclusive evidence to show that the type of ritual described therein was well known among ancient peoples.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>94</sup>E. A. Speiser, Genesis, p. 115.

<sup>95</sup>Cf. G.E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," ID. I, 717, 718; G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 184, 185.

<sup>96</sup>Cf. J. Skinner, Genesis, 283; G. von Rad, Genesis, 181; E.A. Speiser, Genesis, 112; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 229, 230; S.H. Hooke, "The Religious Institutions of Israel," PC. 142, 143; idem., "Genesis," PC. 190; J.G. Frazer, Folk-Lore In The Old Testament, 153ff.; W.F. Albright, Archaeology and The Religion of Israel

The preparations (vs. 9,10), for the making of the covenant conform to later Levitical prescription in that the animals chosen were those allowed to be used in sacrifice their specified age was a matter of ritual maturity (1 S 1:24), and the birds were not to be divided (Lv 1:17). The "coming down of the birds of prey" (v. 11), may be understood as an evil omen, as was its familiar significance to the ancients,<sup>97</sup> or, perhaps as evil powers intent upon the frustration of the successful conclusion of the covenant.<sup>98</sup> At any rate, "Abram drove them away" and, under conditions favorable for a theophany, (v.12),<sup>99</sup> the covenant is made.

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(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953) 3rd edition, p. 113; W. Bouwmeester, The Bible On The Covenant. trans. I. Van Ladesteyn (De Pere, Wisconsin: St. Norbert Abbey Press, 1966), 11; B. W. Anderson, Understanding The Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957), 23, 54; J. A. Fitzmyer, "The Aramaic Inscriptions Of Sefire I And II," JAOS. 81(1961), 178, 179, 201; J. Bright, Jeremiah. Introduction, translation and notes. (Number 21 in the Anchor Bible Series). (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965), 222.

<sup>97</sup>Cf. Virgil, Aeneid, III, 218ff. (Vol. 13, Great Books of the Western World, p. 153). J. Skinner, Genesis, p. 281; G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 182.

<sup>98</sup>"It is possible that the mysterious incident, (the coming down of the birds of prey), points to hindrances that stand in the way of the realization of the promise." G. von Rad, Genesis, 182.

<sup>99</sup>"As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram; and lo, a dread and great darkness fell upon him." v. 12; cf. Gn 2:21. This "deep sleep," tardēmā, was the condition most favorable for the reception of visions. (Jb 4:13; 33:15). cf. J. Skinner, Genesis, pp. 68, 281; G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 182; S. H. Hooke, "Genesis," PC. 191; L. A. Snijders, "Genesis XV. The Covenant With Abraham," OS. 12(1958), 275-277.

Yahweh passes between the severed pieces of the victims in the form of a "smoking fire pot and a flaming torch," (v. 17),<sup>100</sup> thus dramatically binding himself to the fulfillment of the terms of the covenant.

Symbolically, the act of passing between the bleeding halves of the victims expressed the willingness to undergo a like fate to that of the victims if one violated his covenant word. That this is the primary meaning of the symbolic act is substantiated from Jr 34:17-19, where it is recorded that the inhabitants of Jerusalem had violated their covenant to free their Hebrew slaves and the word of the Lord came upon them with the consequent curse:

Therefore, thus says the Lord: You have not obeyed me by proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and to his neighbour; behold I proclaim to you liberty to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine, says the Lord. I will make you a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. And the men who transgressed my covenant and did not keep the terms of the covenant which they made before me, I will make like the calf which they cut in two and passed between its parts -- the princes of Judah, the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf. (Jr 34:17-19).

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<sup>100</sup>After repeating his solemn oath, (vs. 13-16), Yahweh is represented as passing between the pieces of the victims in the form of fire and smoke. The two together are symbolic of the Divine Presence, similar to the "pillar of cloud," and "pillar of fire" of the Exodus and Sinaitic narratives (Ex 3:2; 13:21,22; 19:9,18; etc.). Cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Ex 13:22, note "f"; 24:16, note "f". It is instructive to note that fire as symbolic of divinity, accompanies both the Sinaitic Covenant (Ex 19:18) and the New Covenant of the Church on the first Christian Pentecost (Ac 2:3). cf. J. Skinner, Genesis, 283; G. von Rad, Genesis, 183; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 230; B. Vawter, A Path Through Genesis (London: Sheed and Ward, 1957), 138, 139. There are also parallels to these symbols in Akkadian texts. cf. E. A. Speiser, Genesis, pp. 113, 114.

Thus the rite symbolized the treatment a man who violated the covenant could expect. It would be the same treatment the animals received: a violent death! The covenanting parties who passed between the dismembered animal sections left themselves open, by extension, to the same fate as the sacrificial animals if they should fail to keep the covenant.

There is an instructive Aramaic parallel from the eighth century B.C., which offers confirmation as to this retributive meaning of the rite. Among the inscriptions of Sefîre I and II<sup>101</sup> there is recorded a covenant between Bir-Ga'yah, King of KTK, and Matî'el, the son of Attarsamak, King of Arpad. Line 40, Face A, of the Stele, records one of the curses if Matî'el proves unfaithful to the covenant: "(just as) this calf is cut in two, so may Matî'el be cut in two and may his nobles be cut in two. . ." <sup>102</sup> J. Fitzmyer comments: "The cutting up of a calf in a rite of covenant-making resembles the scene found in Gn 15:10-18 where the calf is cut in two and the contracting parties pass between the bloody parts of the victim, symbolizing their readiness to suffer the same fate if they violate the pact."<sup>103</sup>

A further instance where the retributive intention of the rite comes across very clearly is found in an Assyrian inscription, c. 750 B.C., which records the solemn oath of fealty taken by Mati'-ilu, prince of Bit-Agusi, to Assurnirari, the grand-duke of Assyria. A ceremony is performed on the occasion of taking the oath and part of the inscription reads as follows:

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<sup>101</sup>Sefîre is a small village approximately fifteen miles southeast of Aleppo in Syria. The Stele discovered there is dated by authorities towards the middle of the Eighth Century B.C. cf. J. Fitzmyer, JAOS. 81(1961), 178, 179.

<sup>102</sup>J. Fitzmyer, JAOS. 81(1961), 185.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 201.

This he-goat has not been brought up from its flock for sacrifice, neither to the brave warlike (goddess Ishtar), nor to the peaceful (goddess Ishtar), neither for sickness nor for slaughter, but it has been brought up that Mati'-ilu may swear fealty by it to Assurnirari, king of Assyria. If Mati'-ilu sins against his oath, just as this he-goat has been brought up from his flock, so that he returns not to his flock and sets himself up no more at the head of his flock, so shall Mati'-ilu be brought up from his land with his sons, his daughters, and the people of his land, and he shall not return to his land, neither set himself at the head of his land. This head is not the head of the he-goat, it is the head of Mati'-ilu, it is the head of his children, of his nobles, of the people of his land. If Mati'-ilu breaks this oath, as the head of this he-goat is cut off, so shall the head of Mati'-ilu be cut off. This right foot is not the right foot of the he-goat, it is the right hand of Mati'-ilu, the right hand of his sons, of his nobles, of the people of his land. If Mati'-ilu (breaks this covenant), just as the right foot (of this he-goat) is torn off (so shall the right hand of Mati'-ilu, the right hand of) his sons (of his nobles, and of the people of his land), be torn off.<sup>104</sup>

Thus, from Jr 34:18,19, and from these other well-documented historical sources, the retributive meaning of the ritual symbolism appears quite certain. That in Gn 15:7-18, Yahweh alone, and not Abraham, passes between the bleeding halves of the victims indicates that He alone contracts obligation. Yahweh inviolably binds himself to Abraham who is completely passive. There is thus expressed symbolically "the gift of quite a real guarantee."<sup>105</sup> This guaranteed promise that Yahweh has made to Abraham is due entirely to Yahweh's free will. It is an act of pure graciousness and the fact that Yahweh alone passes between

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<sup>104</sup>As recorded in J.G. Frazer, Folk-Lore In The Old Testament, pp. 159, 160; cf. W. Bouwmeester, op. cit., pp. 11-13; J. Skinner, Genesis, p. 283; J. Fitzmyer, JAOS, 81(1961), p. 201; R. de Vaux, op. cit., p. 434.

<sup>105</sup>G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 183; cf. J. Skinner, Genesis, p. 283.

the pieces of the victims clearly symbolizes this unearned initiative of Yahweh.<sup>106</sup> The assurance asked for by Abraham is received when Yahweh confirms his promises in the most solemn and binding fashion: He concludes a covenant with Abraham; more graphically, He "cuts a covenant"<sup>107</sup> with

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<sup>106</sup>Cf. B. Vawter, A Path Through Genesis, p. 139; The Jerusalem Bible, Gn 15:17, note "f".

<sup>107</sup>To reiterate briefly and to particularize what has been stated more fully and generally (cf. Chapter I, p. 2, notes 5 and 6) the word "covenant," berit, is not logically the direct object of the verb "to cut," karat, (cf. Gn 15:18; Ex 24:8). Rather, it expresses that which follows upon the "cutting in two" of the animals (cf. Gn 15:9; Jr 34:19), namely, the mutual relationship which comes into being between the covenanters.

This expression, "to cut a covenant," is comparable to the Babylonian expression, "to kill (slay) an ass," which in the documents of Mari\* signifies "to conclude a pact." (cf. W.F. Albright, Archaeology And The Religion Of Israel, p. 113; also, P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 227, note 4). J.M. Grintz, "The Treaty of Joshua With the Gibeonites," JAOS. 86(1966), p. 123.

In commenting upon Gn 15:18, E.A. Speiser writes: "The Hebrew verb in question (krt) means "to cut." The noun, Heb. berit, lacks an established etymology. M. Noth has suggested recently (Gesammelte Studien, pp. 146ff.) that this term may go back to Akk. birīt "between," which appears in the Mari description of a covenant as "the slaying of an ass between X and Y." Thus an Akk. preposition descriptive of the mutual character of the agreement would have become in Hebrew a technical term for the compact itself, the "co-" in "covenant," so to speak. For partial confirmation we need look no farther than vs. 10, (Gn15), which employs different words to describe the process, but they mean much the same thing, namely, "he slit/cut (them) in the middle." And alongside Mari "to kill an ass," Heb. "to cut between" would not seem too far-fetched as a technical term for so significant and serious an institution." Genesis, p. 114.

\*Mari: In 1935-36, about 20,000 tablets, dating from the latter half of the eighteenth century B.C., were discovered at Mari, near the border between modern Syria and Iraq. Many of these documents represent diplomatic correspondence between the king of Mari and officials in neighbouring Amorite states, some of them with Hammurabi himself. Since Mari was conquered by Hammurabi, c.1700 B.C., these tablets illumine the cultural backgrounds of the early patriarchs. cf. B.W. Anderson, Understanding The Old Testament, p. 19.

Abraham. The radical seriousness and the absolute commitment of Yahweh as a covenant partner are vividly symbolized by the dramatic and powerful blood-ritual which is the expressive accompaniment of the covenant He initiates with Abraham.

Whether or not the retributive theory exhausts the total significance of the covenant blood-ritual described in Gn 15:7-18, remains an open question.<sup>108</sup> W.R. Smith has offered the hypothesis that there is a strong purificatory

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<sup>108</sup>In fact, the retributive or imprecatory theory itself is not accepted by all authorities. M. Buber, for example, rejects it (cf. Das Kommando, I, 112ff.). P. van Imschoot in commenting upon Buber's rejection writes: "This interpretation (imprecatory or retributive) is rejected by M. Buber (op. cit., pp. 112ff.), who relates the rite of Gn 15 to the sacrifice called fedu' among the Arabs; this sacrifice which implies the passage of those who offer it between the pieces of the victim, is offered on the occasion of epidemics or other calamities in order to turn away misfortune (cf. A. Jaussen, Coutumes des Arabes au pays de Moab, Paris, 1908, pp. 261ff.). The context by no means indicates that Abraham was menaced by disaster; on the contrary, the text mentions the benevolence of Yahweh and promises of happiness and of grandeur, which form the object of the covenant concluded with the patriarch. This interpretation (imprecatory) we propose is that of Valetton (ZAW, XII, p. 226), of Kraetzschmar (Die Bundesvorstellung im A.T. in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung, Marburg, 1896), . . . and of the majority of recent commentators of Genesis." Theology of the Old Testament, I, p. 229, note 14.

Others have suggested that the passing between the pieces of the victims may have the significance of a rite de passage symbolizing the emergence into a new state. Yahweh, then, in passing between the pieces, entered into a new relationship with Abraham. (cf. S.H. Hooke, "Genesis," PC, p. 191; also, the additional note of S.A. Cook in W. R. Smith's Lectures, p. 691, 692); L.A. Snijders contends: "What is told in Gen. XV is, that Jhwh's statements are repeated in a different situation namely with and among the slaughtered animals i.e. in death, in an infinite reality. Jhwh passing between the pieces, does not mean that He will be killed when the promise is not fulfilled. At the moment He speaks, He is in the world of death. He reveals Himself from that other reality of absolute life. His statement is . . . loaded with unfathomable power and raised to absolute validity." op. cit., pp. 273, 274.

element in the ritual which better explains the passing-between feature of the ceremony. Smith supposed that ordinarily the divided victim was eaten by the covenanting parties "and when it ceased to be eaten, the parties stood between the pieces as a symbol that they were taken within the mystical life of the victim."<sup>109</sup> To confirm this view, he indicated non-biblical instances where the same kind of rite was employed and the idea of retribution or imprecation seemed inapplicable. These instances were better understood as modes of ceremonial protection or purification.<sup>110</sup>

J. G. Frazer supports this hypothesis:

The purificatory, or better, perhaps, the protective, interpretation of such rites is strongly confirmed by the practice of the Arabs of Moab, who still observe similar ceremonies in times of public calamity, such as drought or epidemic, and explain them as intended to deliver the people from the evil which afflicts or threatens them. If, for example, the tribe is suffering from the ravages of cholera, the sheikh will stand up in the middle of the camp and cry out, "Redeem yourselves, O people, redeem yourselves!" Thereupon every family takes a sheep, sacrifices it, and, having divided it in two, hangs the pieces under the tent or on two door posts in front of the door. All the members of the family then pass between the two pieces of the victim. . . . Often they pass several times between the bleeding fragments of the sheep, because these are thought to possess the virtue of driving away the evil or jinn who would injure the tribe. . . . Here certainly there is no idea of retribution: neither symbolically nor magically is the death of the sheep supposed to entail the death of the people who pass between the joints of mutton; on the contrary, it is believed to save their lives by protecting them against the evil, which, in one way or another threatens their existence.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>W.R. Smith, Lectures On The Religion Of The Semites, p. 481.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 481; cf. J.G. Frazer, Folk-Lore In The Old Testament, pp. 161ff.

<sup>111</sup>J.G. Frazer, Folk-Lore In The Old Testament, 162, 163. He goes on to say: ". . . in any attempt to explain the

After presenting other examples, Frazer goes on to state:

In all these cases the passage between the severed pieces of the animal is clearly protective, not retributive, in intention: the flesh and blood of the victim are thought somehow or other to present an obstacle to the powers of evil, and so to prevent them from pursuing and injuring the person who has passed through the narrow way. All such ceremonies therefore may be called purificatory in the wide sense of the word, since they purify<sup>112</sup> or deliver the sufferer from malignant influences.

According to this hypothesis, then, the protective or purificatory virtue of the rite derived from the belief of the people in the unifying power of common blood; "the persons who stood or passed between the pieces of the victim were thought to be thereby united with the animal and with each other by the bond of a common blood. . .such a covenant is only a variant of the widespread custom known as the blood covenant, in which the covenanters artificially create a tie of consanguinity between themselves by actually mixing a little of their own blood. . .the only material difference between the two forms of covenant is, that the blood of the animal is substituted in the one for the human blood of the covenanters themselves in the other."<sup>113</sup>

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ancient Hebrew rite, much weight must be given to the analogy of the modern Arab ceremony; for the two customs are identical in form, and the peoples who practise or have practised them are both members of the Semitic family...since the land of Moab, where the Arabs still observe the ancient custom, formed part of the land of Israel, where Abraham of old sojourned and covenanted with God in like manner. The inference seems almost inevitable, that the ancient Hebrew and the modern Arab rite are both derived from a common Semitic original, the purificatory or protective intention of which is still clearly borne in mind by the Arabs of Moab." p.164. While this may be granted and accords with the interpretation of Buber cited above, note 108, P. van Imschoot's criticism still applies. cf. note 108 above. Certainly, in the actual biblical context, the retributive theory is more applicable.

<sup>112</sup>J.G. Frazer, Folk-Lore In The Old Testament, p.163.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., p. 164.

On the basis of this hypothesis, as formulated by W. R. Smith and extended by J. G. Frazer, the blood-ritual of the Covenant of Abraham, in Gn 15:7-18, is composed of two distinct but correlated elements. Of these two elements, the first is the cutting of the victim in two and it is to be explained by the retributive theory. The second element is the passing between the pieces by the covenanters and it is to be explained by the purificatory or "sacramental" theory. "The two theories are complementary and together furnish a complete explanation of the rite."<sup>114</sup>

However, based on the Old Testament evidence and the ancient historical sources cited above (pp. 90-96), it is very clear that the primary meaning of the rite as found in Gn 15:7-18 and Jr 34:18,19, is retributive or imprecatory. The "Smith-Frazer" hypothesis<sup>115</sup> is drawn mainly from extra-biblical, more recent sources.<sup>116</sup> It is not as well substantiated as the retributive theory. However, it does offer a possible further confirmation of the unifying significance of the blood of the covenant initiated by Yahweh with Abraham, as recorded in Gn 15:7-18.

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>115</sup>In support of this hypothesis, see also: J. Skinner, Genesis, p. 283.

<sup>116</sup>Although the point made by Frazer (note 111 above) is well made. In the immediate biblical contexts of Gn 15:7-18 and Jr 34:18,19, and these are the only occasions in the Bible where the rite is mentioned, it remains clear that the retributive or imprecatory explanation is the more certain and better-substantiated one.

A. Tedebielle held that the rite of Gn 15 mystically symbolized union. Later, Jeremiah would insist on the retributive, threatening sense of the rite. "...Yahwéh scellait sa promesse par l'acte solennel de l'union (Gen 15. 18). Plus tard, Jérémie insistera sur le sens comminatoire que le rite du partage, jadis mystique symbole d'union, prenait de plus en plus aux yeux du peuple (34, 18-20)." L'Expiation Dans L'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament, I. p. 29.

(ii) Circumcision As The Sign Of The Covenant

The second and later tradition of God's covenant with Abraham is recorded in the seventeenth Chapter of Genesis:

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised; every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house, or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he that is born in your house and he that is bought with your money, shall be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant. (Gn 17:1-14)

In this account, which belongs to the Priestly literature,<sup>117</sup> Abraham's call is essentially parallel to the Yahwistic account recorded in Gn 15:7-18.<sup>118</sup>

But what a difference in the presentation of essentially the same material! The Yahwist set God's call in the midst of Abraham's human situation, which became psychologically clear in Abraham's answer and in the delineation of his fear. The priestly document, on the other hand, reduces Abraham's call to the purely theological, i.e., it speaks in vs. 1-14 of God only. Not a single word is said about Abraham, only the gesture of reverence in v. 3. The actual call and promise in the Yahwist's representation required only a single verse (ch. 15.7). Here, on the other hand, we read a long ponderous, and detailed speech by God in which the theological substance of the covenant with Abraham is defined, not without repetitions and variants. The making of the covenant, therefore, consists for this document

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<sup>117</sup>The 'priestly' view of Israel's history, usually designated by the letter P, in style and theological perspective best suits the exilic and post-exilic Israelite community. That would place its date of literary composition after 597 B.C. However, the date of literary composition does not necessarily provide an index as to the age of the material contained therein, and P does preserve many ancient traditions. The priestly tradition, then, is not the product of any one generation, but rather, the end result of many generations of temple usage. An atmosphere of worship pervades the whole of the work of the Priestly literature and P was intended for the covenant community of Israel as a worshipping body. cf. B.W. Anderson, Understanding The Old Testament, pp. 381-384.

<sup>118</sup>The date of the literary composition of the Yahwistic (J) source is approximately 950 B.C. However, as noted above (117), one cannot automatically conclude from the date of the literary composition to the age of the material contained therein. All the traditions -- Yahwistic (J), c. 950 B.C.; Elohist (E), c. 750 B.C.; Deuteronomistic (D), c. after 700 B.C.; and Priestly (P), after 597 B.C. -- are parallel developments from early Israelite history. Each was put into written form after a long period of oral tradition. Each bears the stamp of the peculiar development of the communities that preserved it. (cf. above, e.g. the Priestly tradition). cf. B.W. Anderson, Understanding The Old Testament, pp. 381-384; 156, note 3; 225-227; 305ff.

only in God's address, which is severe and solemn, almost in a vacuum. How dramatically the Yahwist told of God's coming! Here "the Lord appeared" in v. 1 and the "God went up" in v. 22 are completely ungraphic.<sup>119</sup>

Indeed, the Yahwist had portrayed God's concluding of the covenant with Abraham in dramatic and graphic terms. In typically human fashion, God had "cut a covenant" with Abraham. He had subjected himself to the customary human ritual in inviolably binding himself to Abraham in covenant. In the priestly account no such anthropomorphic form is presented. In fact, the priestly editor avoided the verb "to cut," which was so frequently employed to convey the conclusion of the covenant ceremony. Instead, God is said "to make," (v. 2), or "to establish," (v. 7), his covenant with Abraham. The completion lies only in the word directed to Abraham, a word whose actual substance is the gratuitous promise of a great posterity (vs. 2-8).

God "establishes" the covenant which Abraham is "to keep" (vs. 9,10). Unlike the Yahwistic portrayal, in the priestly view the covenant is not simply a divine pledge to which no obligation on man's part adheres. God's binding of himself to man necessitates a like response from man. The priestly editor is very much concerned with the obligation which falls to Abraham as a consequence of the divine self-revelation. An attitude is demanded of Abraham which will reflect God's gracious concern and initiative. In consequence of the new covenant-relationship, Abraham must "walk before" God, and "be blameless." (v. 1). That is, Abraham is "to be entirely faithful" to his God; he is "to be whole with his God." (cf. Dt 18:13).<sup>120</sup> It is his "whole

<sup>119</sup>G. von Rad, Genesis, 192,193; cf. E.A. Speiser, Genesis, 126.

<sup>120</sup>The Jerusalem Bible translation of Dt 18:13--"You must be entirely faithful with Yahweh your God."; cf. G. von Rad's translation of the same verse--"Be whole with your God." Genesis, pp. 193, 194; cf. also, J. Skinner, Genesis,

life which is henceforth to be lived in the presence of this revealed God."<sup>121</sup> His life is to be dominated by an ever-present sense of God and his response is to be nothing short of total and unqualified self-surrender. Abraham's will is to be one with the divine will in the sense that his will is to be identified with the will of God. However, true to the primitive belief in the substance of covenanting, the stronger will predominates.<sup>122</sup> In this covenant, it is God's will which must predominate, which must give direction to the relationship and be determinative.

This total life-response, as demanded by the very nature of the covenant relationship, was to be explicitly rendered and symbolically expressed in the rite of circumcision: "And God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.'" (vs. 9,10).

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pp. 291, 297, 298; The Jerusalem Bible, Gn 17:1, note "c"; For further biblical references see: 2K 20:3; Is 38:3; Ps 18:23,25.

<sup>121</sup>G. von Rad, Genesis, 193; cf. J. Skinner, op. cit., 291.

<sup>122</sup>On the common will which characterizes the covenant relationship see Chapter I. pp. 13 ff. of this thesis. Further, as J. Pedersen has illustrated, in an authentic covenant, two souls enter into a union and form one whole. In this relationship they are ruled by a common will, this being the substance of the covenant. However, in this unity of the fellowship of souls, it is the stronger soul which determines the direction of the common soul. In the covenant relationship, "one becomes 'whole with' the other (shālēm, Gen 34:21; 1 Kings 8,61; 11,4; 15,3.14). The more intimate the union, the more they communicate to each other of their being, and then it becomes the stronger who imparts his character to the fellowship. For the stronger it is a question of making covenants in order to carry through one's aims; for the weaker to make a covenant with the strong in order to enjoy his strength." Israel, I-II, p. 286; cf. pp. 263-296, especially pp. 279, 280, 286ff.

The origin and original significance of circumcision are quite obscure.<sup>123</sup> A complex reality, for the ancients it basically signified membership in a community.<sup>124</sup> Practiced by many peoples,<sup>125</sup> it most usually was connected with formal entry into the adult community or with marriage.<sup>126</sup> According to R. de Vaux,

The custom must have originally had the same purpose in Israel: the story of the Shechemites expressly connects it with marriage (Gn 34); the obscure episode of Ex 4:24-26 seems to refer to marriage also, for the pretence of circumcising Moses makes him a 'bride-groom of blood'. We may add that the Hebrew words for bridegroom, son-in-law and father-in-law are all derived from the same<sup>127</sup> root, hatan, which means in Arabic 'to circumcise'.

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<sup>123</sup>Cf. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 46-48; cf. W.O. E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, Hebrew Religion, p. 101.

<sup>124</sup>C. Wiéner, "Circoncision," VTB. 134.

<sup>125</sup>Circumcision was widely practiced among primitive peoples. It was practiced by the Egyptians and by most of the ancient Semites. cf. J.P. Hyatt, ID. I, 629; J.L. McKenzie, DOB. 136; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 46, 47; W. Eichrodt, Theology Of The Old Testament, I, p. 138.

<sup>126</sup>Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology Of The Old Testament, I, 138; C. Wiéner, op. cit., 64; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 47; A. Lods, Israel, 198.

<sup>127</sup>R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 47, 48; cf. W. Eichrodt who writes: "This puberty rite (circumcision)...is found all over the world as an act whereby the young husband is consecrated and the fertility of the marriage guaranteed...The analagous descriptions and practices regulating the stage at which the produce of the fruit tree may first be enjoyed are decisive on this point. The tree must remain three years 'uncut' or 'uncircumcised', i.e., ungathered; in the fourth year the fruit is brought to Yahweh as a thank-offering--the tree being as it were circumcised; in the fifth year the fruit can be enjoyed (Lev. 19.23f.). Just as the fruitfulness of the field must be bought from the divine owner, so a man at his wedding so to speak presents an offering to the Lord of human fruitfulness in the form of circumcision, the blood of which has atoning power." Theology Of The Old Testament, I, p. 138; cf. also, A. Lods, Israel, p. 198, F. Michaeli, VB, 56.

Whether it was originally an initiation into adult manhood, a rite de passage, or whether it initiated a man into matrimony, thus making him an époux de sang, as such, circumcision would not have been a distinctive feature of Israelite life. It would not have distinguished the Israelites from the Semitic population whom they displaced or mingled with in Palestine. In fact, the Israelites seem to have adopted the custom precisely when they settled in Canaan (cf. Gn 17; Js 5:2-9).<sup>128</sup>

What made circumcision a distinctive feature of Israelite life was the peculiar religious importance it gradually assumed for the Israelites.<sup>129</sup> It is in the Priestly literature especially, that this practice of

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<sup>128</sup> Among the peoples with whom Israel had direct contact in Palestine, only the Philistines were uncircumcised. This, in itself, was sufficient to distinguish them from the Canaanites. The fact that the Philistines did not observe the rite of circumcision accounts for the fact that the term 'uncircumcised', with the sense of heathen, is especially attributed to them (cf. Jg 14:3; 15:18; I S 14:6; 17:26; 31:4). cf. F. Michaeli, VB. 56; A. Lods, Israel, 199; W. Eichrodt, Theology Of The Old Testament, I, 138, note 4.

<sup>129</sup> The original significance of circumcision as an initiation rite to marriage must have died out when the operation was performed soon after birth. "Above all, religion gave the rite a more lofty significance. It was a sign of incorporation into the group, into the community of Israel (cf. Gn 34:14-16; Ex 12:47-48)...The religious importance of circumcision, however, gained ground only gradually. The laws of the Pentateuch make only passing references to it, in connection with the Passover (Ex 12:44,48), with the purification of women after childbirth (Lv 12:3) and as a term of comparison with the first fruits of trees (Lv 19:23). It was only during the Exile that circumcision became the distinctive mark of a man who belonged to Israel and to Yahweh. The explanation is not hard to find: the exiles lived among peoples who did not practise it, while, at the same time, apparently, the custom was being progressively abandoned among the nations surrounding Palestine." R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 48; cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Gn 17:10, note "e"; A. Lods, Israel, 200, 201; W. Eichrodt, Theology Of The Old Testament, I, 138, 139.

originally only limited importance became in time "a symbol of the purified people of God and summed up in itself all the fundamental convictions of Israel's election."<sup>130</sup> This all-importance of circumcision as a symbol is derived ultimately from the fact that, according to the Priestly tradition, its institution is ordered as the physical sign of the covenant between God and Abraham: "You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you." (v. 11). To signify the covenant and its full acceptance, to signify the complete appropriation of the covenant-God's will, Abraham shall be circumcised as shall all those who would be members of the covenant community. (cf. vs. 12-14; 23-27).<sup>131</sup> "In the truest possible way, then, it (circumcision) was a sign of the covenant made with Him who had plotted Abraham's course and would continue to protect his heirs according to His promise. Circumcision became the sign of the true Jew and of those who had been brought into the house of Israel to share its privileges."<sup>132</sup>

Israelite circumcision, then, was a covenant rite<sup>133</sup> and the blood shed was covenant blood.<sup>134</sup> The symbolic act of circumcision, as presented in Chapter 17, was not to be understood as a substitute for the ritual symbolism of Chapter 15, but rather, as a confirmation of that symbolism.<sup>135</sup> Now, however, the emphasis has shifted to man's response, one of positive life-commitment to God.

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<sup>130</sup>W. Eichrodt, Theology Of The Old Testament, I, 139; cf. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 48.

<sup>131</sup>Cf. G. von Rad, Genesis, 196.

<sup>132</sup>B. Vawter, op. cit., 144.

<sup>133</sup>Cf. F. Michaeli, op. cit., 56.

<sup>134</sup>Cf. C. Wiéner, op. cit., 64.

<sup>135</sup>Cf. S.H. Hooke, "Genesis," PC. 191.

According to the Priestly tradition, the covenant is ratified, from man's side, by Abraham giving of his own blood at the very source of paternity. By so doing, he consecrated himself and his promised power of generation to God;<sup>136</sup> he pledged his life and the lives of all of his descendants to God.<sup>137</sup> When Abraham gave of his blood, in the covenantal rite of circumcision, he symbolically gave his life to God and was united to his God as in a blood-covenant. It is the blood that seals the intimate covenantal-friendship; it is the blood that cements the union.<sup>138</sup> As M. J. Lagrange remarks:

Every time blood is shed, one may ask whether it is shed in order to exercise its own proper virtue, in the sense of magic, or in expiation, or whether it is shed in order to bring about union with someone by the exchange of blood and of lives. Here (in circumcision), it would seem to be union that is involved in that the rite is one of initiation: life will be transmitted by an organ which is united to God by the shedding of blood.<sup>139</sup>

Circumcised, Abraham bore in his flesh the sign that he had entered into covenant with his God. More precisely, circumcision was the sign of the covenant he had entered into in faith. It was to attest to his faithful life-response to God's call. It was Abraham's faith that was reckoned as righteousness in him (Gn 15:6) and without this faith, circumcision would have been a sterile symbol.

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<sup>136</sup>Cf. J.L. McKenzie, DOB, 137. It may be detected from such passages as Abraham's oath (Gn 24:2) that the male organ was regarded as sacred, and even, in some sense, a symbol of the deity, the ultimate source of life.

<sup>137</sup>"The divine promise was a perpetual covenant; therefore it had to have a sign that would endure after Abraham. This sign was found in the rite of circumcision." B. Vawter, op. cit., 144.

<sup>138</sup>Cf. A. Médebielle, op. cit., 25, 26.

<sup>139</sup>M.J. Lagrange, op. cit., 241; cf. H.W. Robinson, "Blood," ERE. II, 715.

We say that faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it reckoned to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. He received circumcision as a sign or seal of the righteousness which he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them, and likewise the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but also follow the example of the faith which our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. (Rm 4:9-12; cf. Ga 3:6-9).<sup>140</sup>

For Israel, circumcision became the sign of the true member of the covenant community.<sup>141</sup> However, as Jeremiah so unequivocally expressed it, circumcision which stopped at "the flesh only," (9:25), was a false and totally ineffective sign. To be an authentic sign of membership in the covenant community of Yahweh, circumcision of the flesh must, in fact, signify "circumcision of the heart," (4:4), that is a heart totally surrendered to God and filled with inner devotion.<sup>142</sup> An Israelite, formally circumcised into the covenant of Abraham, was truly an heir of Abraham and a loyal covenant partner to God only to the extent that his circumcision signified the same kind of faith which Abraham had manifested in God and His promise. (cf. Rm 4:12).

The evidence of Abraham's fidelity and trust as a covenant partner is astonishing in its depth and tenacity. The story of the testing by God of Abraham (Gn 22) represents the climactic point in the life of Abraham as recounted in Genesis. Isaac was the very child of promise through whom God's word was to be realized; yet, Abraham was asked to

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<sup>140</sup>Cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Rm 4:3, note "c"; 4:5, note "d"; 4:13, note "f".

<sup>141</sup>Cf. J. Skinner, Genesis, 296, 297; F. Michaeli, op. cit., 56; D.R. Jones, HDB. (rev.), 163.

<sup>142</sup>Cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Jr 4:4, note "e"; cf. also, Jr 9:24-25; Dt 10:12-22; 30:6; Lv 19:23; 26:41; Rm 2:25-29; 1 Co 7:19; Ga 5:2-6; 6:15; Ph 3:3; Col 2:11; 3:11.

relinquish the child and, therefore, the promise. His reaction in the face of this trial is remarkable and demonstrates his unfailing loyalty as a covenant partner. As X. Léon-Dufour has put it:

This was a terrible trial. . . If He (God) demands the son of promise it is not to kill Abraham's hope, it is to stretch it beyond the limits which it had already set itself, it is to reveal in the believer, the pilgrim of the absolute. Abraham had renounced his own ways of reasoning and his belief in appearances. He had learned to trust God's promise. Now he must renounce the promise itself after it had been realized before his eyes. For the promise of God is not the God of promises.

If Abraham could make this act of confidence, it was because he had detached himself from all that is not God. Not that he does not love his country or Isaac ("he whom thou lovest" said God), but he prefers God to all else. The final motive of his perfect faith is God Himself who, meeting him, inspired in him respect which is the veiled expression of a creature's love for his Creator. Such is perfect faith. It made Abraham, "the father of many nations" (Rom. 4:17).<sup>143</sup>

Abraham "kept" the covenant. He demonstrated the attitude demanded of him by the terms of the covenant. He was "entirely faithful" to his God. His life-response was total and unreserved. He identified his will with the will of God and allowed himself to be led by the divine will. In a word, he manifested true hesed for, as we have seen, the hesed asked of man by the covenant-God consists of self-giving, loving trust, abandonment. . . a love which is a joyful submission to the will of God.<sup>144</sup>

Abraham was justly the chosen "friend of God," (Jm 2: 23; cf. Is 41:8), the one whom God would "love for ever"

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<sup>143</sup>X. Léon-Dufour, "To Believe in God," The God of Israel, The God of Christians, pp. 117, 118.

<sup>144</sup>Chapter I, pp. 32, 33, note 78.

(2 Ch 20:7).<sup>145</sup> He had been gratuitously called by God to this intimate friendship and he had responded unreservedly. He had lived all the vulnerabilities of this demanding love-relationship with God and he had believed and trusted to the end. This remarkable call and response found its most authentic and meaningful expression in the deepest symbolism known to Old Testament man: a covenant in blood. The common will, the common responsibility, the common union that was the consequence of the covenant between God and Abraham found its most explicit expression in the blood-rites of Genesis 15 and 17.

b) God's Covenant with Israel As a People: Sinai

It is with the call of Abraham that the covenant of Sinai<sup>146</sup> begins to take shape. The prior covenants with

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<sup>145</sup> 2 Ch 20:7 (Jerusalem Bible). R.A.F. MacKenzie comments: ". . . This god (of Abraham) has a plan, a program, involving this man and his whole race. Yet it is not a mere proclamation or prediction. The man's cooperation and response are required. That is, the god is a person and he treats Abraham as a person. The latter is not merely a client, a customer, or a suppliant. Much less is he merely a servant or a slave. The Koran as well as the Old Testament gives Abraham an expressive title, Khalil Allah, "the friend of God"; and that is what is implied here (in Genesis). Abraham's dignity is recognized, his self-determination respected, by his being taken into a species of partnership. He is invited to cooperate with the plan of this god." Faith and History in the Old Testament, p. 33. This application of the term "friend" to any human being, in his relations to God, is really quite unique in the biblical record. (cf. H.C. Trumbull, The Blood Covenant, 215ff.). It appears to be applied to Abraham particularly because of the covenant of intimate friendship he entered into, in faith, with God; and, because of the covenant rite of circumcision he underwent.

<sup>146</sup> Hebrew, Sînâî: its meaning and etymology are uncertain. In the Old Testament, it is the name given to a mountain and a desert which provide the scene of the theophany to Israel and the revelations of Moses, the enactment of the covenant, and in the events in the Exodus from

Adam (Gn 2:15-17), Noah (Gn 6:18; 9:1-17), and most explicitly, with Abraham (Gn 15:7-18; 17:1-14) culminate in the Sinaitic covenant enacted between God and Israel as a people.<sup>147</sup> All the sources regard the Sinaitic covenant as the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.<sup>148</sup> In fact, as Israelite history evolved, "the covenant with Abraham and the covenant at Sinai appeared as two interrelated events which, when regarded as prologue and fulfillment, gave the history of Israel its distinctive stamp of one guided by God."<sup>149</sup>

Yahweh, demonstrating once again that He is Master of his own preferences, chooses Israel to be his "special possession" (Ex 19:5); not solely for herself, but rather, that she might be a mediator of blessing unto all nations (cf. Is 42:1,4; 49:8-10). The promises to Abraham had not meant the exclusion of others, but rather, were meant to be all-inclusive (Gn 12:3). These promises were not nullified by the election of Israel nor the universality of the call diminished. The Sinaitic covenant is a divine educational operation which is universal in scope.<sup>150</sup> The spiritual welfare of all mankind is at issue "for the election of

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Ex 19:1-Nm 10:11. Most occurrences of the name appear in the P source, occasionally in the J source. In the E and D sources, the name of the mountain of revelation is Horeb. While it is no longer possible to ascertain with certainty the traditional location of Sinai, it is traditionally placed in the peninsula of Sinai, which lies between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba.

<sup>147</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp. 35ff.

<sup>148</sup>Cf. G.E. Wright, The Old Testament Against Its Environment, p. 62, note 33.

<sup>149</sup>W. Eichrodt, Theology Of The Old Testament, I, p.53.

<sup>150</sup>Cf. A. Gelin, The Religion of Israel. trans. J.R. Foster (London: Burns and Oates, 1959), p. 23; also, F. Moriarty, Introducing the Old Testament (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1960), p. 34.

Israel is set within the universal redemptive purpose of God."<sup>151</sup>

(i) The "Blood of the Covenant"

The unparalleled covenant enacted at Sinai (cf. Ex 19:1-34:28; Dt 5:1ff.), with Moses as intermediary, is the unifying principle of Israelite history and the charter of her universal vocation.<sup>152</sup> Fittingly, as the motivating force in her life and as the very heart of her existence, this unique covenant is concluded in equally solemn ritual, the record of which is found in Exodus 24:1-11.

And he said to Moses, "Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship afar off. Moses alone shall come near to the Lord; but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him." (1-2)

Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do." And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young people of the men of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words." (3-8)

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<sup>151</sup>G. E. Wright, God Who Acts (London: SCM Press, 1952), p. 74.

<sup>152</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp. 35ff. R.A.F. MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 49; B.W. Anderson, "The Religion of Israel," PC, p. 162.

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. (9-11)<sup>153</sup>

While brief, the ritual is complex and the ratification of the covenant takes place in two stages. In verses 3-8, the people unanimously accept the covenant and it is ratified in blood.<sup>154</sup> In verses 9-11, it is ratified by

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<sup>153</sup>"The theophany on Sinai ends with the solemn making of a covenant between God and the people, which is described in 24.1-11. In this section two different literary strata may easily be distinguished. In vv. 1f. and 9-11 the covenant is made on the mountain, in vv. 3-8 on the other hand at the foot of the mountain. Verses 1f. contain the introduction to the passage 9-11; these passages which obviously belong together, are separated by the narrative vv. 3-8. We are thus given in this chapter two versions of the account of the making of the covenant which, while dealing with the same subject, are widely different in their individual details." M. Noth, Exodus: A Commentary. Trans. J.S. Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1962), p. 194. "They should be seen as two rival, variant traditions of approximately the same age." W. Beyerlin, Origins And History Of The Oldest Sinaitic Traditions, p. 38. It is clear that there are combined here (1-11), two distinct traditions--Yahwist (1,2, 9-11), and Elohist (3-8),--concerning the ratification of the covenant. cf. J. Muilenburg, "The Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations," VT. 9(1959), 347-365; M. Haelvoet, "La Théophanie du Sinai, Analyse Littéraire des Récits D'Ex XIV-XXIV," ETL. 29 (1953), 374-397; W. Beyerlin, op. cit., pp. 14-18; 36ff.; D.M.G. Stalker, "Exodus," PC., p. 233; The Jerusalem Bible, Ex 24: note "a"; J. Lécuyer, op. cit., p. 17, note 20; L. Sabourin, op. cit., p. 349.

<sup>154</sup>Cf. J. Considine and J. de Fraine, "Blood," EDB. p. 257; P. van Imschoot and B. Vawter, "Covenant," EDB. p. 434; W. Eichrodt, Theology Of The Old Testament, I, pp. 156-157; A. Gelin, The Key Concepts of the Old Testament, p. 37; A. Lelièvre, "Blood," VB. p. 39; C. Spicq, op. cit., pp. 274, 275; L. Sabourin, op. cit., p. 347; M. Noth, Exodus, p. 198; W. Beyerlin, op. cit., p. 38; M. Buber, op. cit., pp. 114, 115; B. Gray, op. cit., 199, 200; The Jerusalem Bible, Ex 24: note "a"; Ex 24:8, note "c".

Moses and the elders partaking of a meal in the presence of God.<sup>155</sup> At present, our concern is the Elohist tradition (vs. 3-8), and the ratification of the covenant in blood. According to this account, Moses, in response to the request of the people that he should act as their spokesman (Ex 20: 19), came and told the people "all the words of the Lord", that is, he communicated to them the requirements and obligations -- the covenantal terms -- laid down by God. He then receives from the people a preliminary promise of obedience to these words: "All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do." Moses commits the "words" to writing. He builds an altar and, twelve stones round about the altar to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. Then follows the blood rite essential for the conclusion of the covenant.

The blood of the sacrificial victims, that is, their life, is thrown against the altar, which represents God, and upon the people who are their own representatives.<sup>156</sup> From what has already been said of the significance of blood to the Israelites and the significance of shared blood in covenantal rites, the meaning of the ritual (vs. 3-8), is very apparent.

The blood is the life (lev. xvii. 11,14), the vital essence. Two parties, at present independent one of another, are to be united in a single whole, and, to secure the desired union, a third party is introduced. Its life is taken from it and made available for the other two. Both come under it, both are included in it, the same vital essence now covers and embraces the two. They are thus no longer independent entities, they are one, finding their unity with each

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<sup>155</sup>The significance of ratification of the Sinaitic covenant by a common meal will be treated in detail in Chapter III, pp. 172-179.

<sup>156</sup>According to Hb 9:19,20, the Book of the Covenant was also sprinkled with blood. This would be in accord with the custom common among the primitives of blood-staining the record of the covenant. However, as S. Lyonnet has pointed out, in a sense, the material object matters little; what really matters is the signification. Both altar and Book

other in their unity with that third party whose blood now covers them both. Till this point is reached, however near they might have been brought one to another, they are merely contiguous; now they are continuous, and form parts of a single indivisible whole. We might almost say that now Yahweh is Himself included in the term Israel; henceforward it will connote not merely a human community, but one of which He is a member.<sup>157</sup>

The entry of God into a sacral fellowship or "sacral communion" with the Israelites "was symbolized by the sprinkling of the blood of the victim. . . on the altar. Even older seems to be the practice, mentioned on only one occasion, that of the covenant sacrifice on Sinai, of sprinkling not only the altar but also the offerers with the blood, and by means of this 'blood of the covenant' bringing the sacramental relationship into being."<sup>158</sup>

By sharing one and the same blood -- that of the sacrificial victim -- the covenanting parties effected a shared life, a common life. They became as it were, one

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signify --that is-- are consecrated to God. cf. S. Lyonnet, op. cit., p. 871, note 1.

<sup>157</sup>W.O.E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, op. cit., pp. 139, 140; cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology Of The Old Testament, I, pp. 156, 157; A. Médebielle, op. cit., pp. 22-30.

<sup>158</sup>W. Eichrodt, Theology Of The Old Testament, I, pp. 156, 157. cf. "That this and no other must have been the purpose of sprinkling the people is confirmed by the ancient Arabian practices which accompanied the making of covenants between human parties, in which the partners dipped their hands in a bowl filled with the blood of an animal." *ibid.*, p. 157, note 2; cf. W.R. Smith, Lectures, pp. 314-322, 344; W. Beyerlin remarks: "It goes without saying that the twofold sprinkling of blood referred to in Exod. xxiv. 6,8 did not just come into being on the occasion of the Sinaitic covenant. Seeing that the pre-Islamic Arabs also sought to bind themselves to God by means of corresponding blood rites, it is probable that the Sinai tradition at this point is modelled on a ritual which originated in the nomadic past of the Yahwistic community." Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions, p. 38; cf. pp. 76ff. above.

blood and, therefore, one life. In a word, "psychic community" was produced between Yahweh and Israel. As P. van Imschoot has succinctly stated it:

The blood, which is the soul (lv 17:14), is splashed on the altar, which represents Yahweh, and is sprinkled on the people, that is to say, over the two contracting parties: by the contact with one and the same "soul," they become "one only soul." For this reason the blood is called "the blood of the covenant," that is to say, the blood which produces the psychic community of the two parties.<sup>159</sup>

Essentially, then, by means of the blood, there is established the bond of a common life between Yahweh and Israel. It is a bond of blood! The Old Testament alludes to this bond of blood when it presents God and Israel in a father-son relationship.<sup>160</sup> The Lord told Moses: "And you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, Israel is my first-born son, and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me"; if you refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay

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<sup>159</sup>The following authors all support the meaning of the rite as stated by P. van Imschoot: L. Sabourin, op. cit., p. 345, note 3; J. Lécuyer, op. cit., pp. 17, 42ff.; S. Lyonnet, op. cit., pp. 870, 871; A.G. Martimort, The Signs of the New Covenant (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1963), p. 192, note 38; A. Lelièvre, VB. p. 39; A. Médebielle, op. cit., pp. 23ff.; B. Cooke, TS. 21(1960), p. 27; M. Noth, Exodus, p. 198; W. Beyerlin, op. cit., p. 38; C. Bourgin, "Le Christ-Prêtre et la purification des péchés selon l'Épître aux Hébreux," LV. 36(1958), p. 77; A. Tarby, "Le sang de la nouvelle et éternelle Alliance," PP. 23(1967), p. 425.

<sup>160</sup>On the father-son relationship between God and the people of Israel, see: D.J. McCarthy, "Israel, My First-Born Son," The Way, (July, 1965), 183-191; idem, CBQ. 27(1965), 230, 231; W. Marchel, Abba, Père! La prière du Christ et des Chrétiens (Roma: E Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1963), pp. 39ff.; H. Goudreault, La liberté des enfants de Dieu chez saint Paul (Ottawa: l'Université Saint Paul, 1969), pp. 115 ff.; A. Lelièvre, "Blood," VB. p. 39; cf. Dt 1:31; 32:19, 20; Is 1:2; Jr 3:19, 31:9; Ho 11:1; Ws 18:13; Ex 4:22, 23. This relationship, in the context of the New Covenant, will be developed further in Chapter IV, pp. 189-192.

your first-born son'" (Ex 4:22-23). The Book of Wisdom would later confirm this relationship in stating of the Egyptians "when their first-born were destroyed, they acknowledged thy people to be God's son" (Ws 18:13). Or again, in Hosea, one reads: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (11:1). God, manifesting his gracious initiative, chose Israel to be his son and, accordingly, he communicated to Israel a share in his own life. This is the unique import of the blood-ritual conducted by Moses in Yahweh's name. The bond of blood ritually enacted at Sinai reveals that the life-bond between Israel and its God is absolutely equivalent in strength and intimacy to the bond of flesh and blood which, by nature, exists between a father and his son.<sup>161</sup>

Thus, the "blood of the covenant" is truly the "blood which ratifies the covenant."<sup>162</sup> It seals the desired union of life between the people and their God. A union which meant for them a share in the very life of their God, as a son shares in his father's life; a union equivalent to the closest possible natural bond. No symbol, other than shared blood, could so vitally signify so profound a longing for sacral communion!<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup>"Le sens du rite d'aspersion (dans la scène du Sinai) semble donc être de manifester que le lien vital que rattache Israël à son Dieu n'est pas moins fort que le lien de la filiation de chair et de sang." J. Lécuyer, op. cit., p. 17; cf. p. 16; A. Lelièvre, VB, p. 39; A. Médebielle, op. cit., pp. 29, 30.

<sup>162</sup>Cf. D.M.G. Stalker, "Exodus," PC, p. 233.

<sup>163</sup>Of course, "the power of the sacral communion mediated by the sacrifice rests...on God's declaration that he is prepared to enter into a special relationship with his people and to give them a share in his own life." W. Eichrodt, Theology Of The Old Testament, I. p.157; also, it should be remembered that the blood-ritual was not seen to be of such import and of such efficaciousness because of any inherent magical power, but rather, because blood was a divine inalienable property, the seat of life, chosen by

There is no doubt that blood, as life, is the essential element in the ritual recorded in Ex 24:3-8. Immolation is but the preliminary rite and as such can be performed by the young men (v.5), whereas the all-important sacrificial rite -- the splashing of the blood on the altar and on the people -- is reserved to Moses alone.<sup>164</sup> It is this common blood, as life, which brings about the longed-for union of the covenant partners. "Just as human blood flowing from right arm to left unites both members in one living organism, this impressive ritual of blood symbolized a flow of life between God and His people."<sup>165</sup>

When Yahweh entered into a blood covenant with Israel, in order to establish communion with his people, he made use of a custom well-known to the Semites. However, the Sinaitic covenant was no ordinary blood covenant. In fact, it was unique in character.<sup>166</sup>

It may . . . be adduced that the sprinkling of the blood on the altar and on the people in the covenant sacrifice as related in Ex. 24.6,8 falls in the class of mystery rites for renewing the life of the community, such as are known from many primitive usages; and the covenant meal on the mount of God described in Ex. 24.9-11 lends further weight to such considerations. But a comparison with primitive 'covenant rituals', in which the object is the mediation of mysterious 'power', only serves to bring out more clearly the distinctive character of the Israelite covenant concept.

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God to mediate life between God and man. Cf. J. Lécuyer, op. cit., p. 17; and pp. 74 and 75, note 63 above.

<sup>164</sup>Cf. M. Buber, Moses, p. 114, R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 356.

<sup>165</sup>C. Stuhlmueeller, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>166</sup>"What Moses does by this rite, which, though reminiscent of the Semitic custom of Blood Covenant, is nevertheless unique in character." M. Buber, Moses, p. 115; cf. B. Gray who comments: "The occasion here described (Ex 24:4-8) is unique: and so, in some respects, is the ritual." op. cit., p. 200; cf. W.O.E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, op. cit., pp. 139, 140.

To begin with it is an invariable mark of these rites that they have to be continually repeated, since their effect lasts only for a time. The Israelite covenant sacrifice cannot be repeated, but creates the covenant relationship for all time at its first performance. Secondly, the primitive rituals are effective simply by virtue of being correctly carried out; they are automatic. They lack the moral basis and orientation, which are of the essence of the Israelite covenant ritual. Finally. . .the primitive rituals are not directed at the establishment of a personal communion between God and man. They are fulfilled in the totally impersonal transference of 'power', thus creating no relationship between person and person, but regarding the divinity primarily as a substance marvellously endowed with such power and fullness of life. In the making of the Israelite covenant that which defines the newly established relationship is the idea of lordship, with its utterly personal character; and while this does not exclude the ideas of participation in life and power, yet it admits them only in the form of a gift accorded by sovereign authority.<sup>167</sup>

Clearly, the covenant relationship as expressed in the Sinaitic ritual is one which Yahweh has entered into gratuitously. "He existed long before the nation, he is by nature independent of their existence and can abandon them whenever they refuse to be conformed to his will."<sup>168</sup> The relationship between God and Israel was not "natural," it was dependent upon a covenant and this covenant had a definite beginning and could also have a definite ending should Israel fail to keep the terms of the covenant.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup>W. Eichrodt, Theology Of The Old Testament, I, pp. 43, 44. cf. p. 43, note 2.

<sup>168</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>169</sup>"Thus from the outset the religion of Israel was marked by a unique feature whose importance it is impossible to exaggerate. The principle of one tribe, one tribal god, may have been fairly well accepted among ancient Semitic communities. But elsewhere the god is a natural member of the people to whom he belongs, and is inconceivable apart from it. If through the disappearance of his tribe or from some other cause he loses his people, he ceases to rank as a god, and descends to the level of that intermediate class to

While the ritual of the blood covenant at Sinai, in the belief of the Israelites, symbolized and effected union with God, it in no sense was an automatic guarantee of that union or its permanency.

(ii) Incomplete Symbolism and Inadequate Efficacy

At Sinai, there was in the blood covenant ritual a notable incompleteness in the symbolism; an incompleteness which was one indication of the inadequate efficacy of the ritual itself and a portent of things to come.

In the most ancient blood-covenant rites, the covenant partners drank of the blood of one another which then became common to them.<sup>170</sup> In the course of time, due perhaps to a growing repugnance to drink blood,<sup>171</sup> the mode of sharing blood was modified. The covenant partners, still expressing the same desire for common life, intertransfused or intermingled a few drops of their own blood.<sup>172</sup> A further

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whom the Arab theologian gives the name of Jinn--a wild god, a masterless and isolated spirit, retaining some of his powers, but practically none of his prestige. As long as his people exists, his position is secure, but he is as dependent on the human members of his clan as they are upon him; in the nature of the case each is indispensable to the other.

The early Israelite may have thought of Yahweh much as the Moabite thought of Chemosh, but the relationship rested on a different basis. Chemosh always had been a Moabite and never could be anything else; Yahweh had existed as a God independently of Israel, and, if need be, could so exist again, or could, on the other hand, extend His interests and His influences to others than the original Israel." W.O.E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. p. 78, notes 68, 69 above; H.C. Trumbull, The Blood Covenant, pp. 251ff.; 345ff.; A. Médebielle, op. cit., pp. 25, 26; W.R. Smith, Lectures, pp. 314ff., 479, 480.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. A. Médebielle, op. cit., p. 26; S.C. Gayford, op. cit., p. 69; F.B. Jevons, op. cit., p. 296.

<sup>172</sup> Chapter II, pp. 78, 79; A. Médebielle, op. cit., p. 26.

modification of secular blood-covenant rites took place when the blood of animal victims was substituted for human blood; a refinement most probably due to the slowly evolving sensitivity to the awe-inspiring sacred character of blood.<sup>173</sup>

Significantly, however, even in religious covenant rites, when animal blood was first substituted for human blood, "drinking the blood was of the essence of the rite."<sup>174</sup>

In the most primitive times we know that the "blood" of the victim was drunk by the worshippers. It was later that the sacredness of the "blood," as the life, led to its being forbidden as human food, and its touch was substituted as man's share in the covenant ceremony by which God and His people were made one."<sup>175</sup>

Originally, then, in secular and in religious covenants among the ancients in general, the ideal practice was to drink the blood, human or substitute. "Since for the nomads of the desert all social rapport flows out of community of blood, no covenant is stable without a certain exchange of blood. The ideal would be to drink the blood, one of the other."<sup>176</sup>

However, among the Israelites, due to the sacred character of blood, its consumption was absolutely

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<sup>173</sup>Cf. F. B. Jevons, op. cit., p. 296; S. C. Gayford, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>174</sup>F. B. Jevons, op. cit., p. 296; H. C. Trumbull, The Blood Covenant, pp. 251ff.

<sup>175</sup>S. C. Gayford, op. cit., pp. 39, 40; cf. p. 69.

<sup>176</sup>M. J. Lagrange, Etudes sur les Religions Sémitiques, p. 259; cf. A. Médebielle: "Seul le sang cimente l'union. L'idéal, entre deux contractants, eût été de boire le sang l'un de l'autre." op. cit., p. 25; also, F. B. Jevons, op. cit., p. 296.

forbidden.<sup>177</sup> The Sinaitic blood-covenant ritual is an instance where the "touch" of blood was a substitute for the original and authentic ideal of "drinking" the blood. Consequently it was an impoverished, a diminished ritual and symbolically it was weaker.

Further, and more fundamentally, even should the symbolism have been complete, that is, even had the Israelites consumed the blood, it would still have been substitute blood, representing man not God, and would not have achieved the desired participation in the divinity.<sup>178</sup> Substitute blood was impotent; it lacked the necessary efficacy to attain union with God.

This inadequate efficacy is manifested on the earthly level, where the offering of blood by the Israelite could not gain him entrance into the Holy of Holies, the symbolic dwelling place of the Lord. The high priest only, and then but once a year, on the Day of Atonement -- carrying substitute blood as a safeguard -- was able to enter the inner Sanctuary. (Lv 16; Heb 9:7-10).

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<sup>177</sup>Cf. pp. 60, 61 above. In addition to the sacred character of blood as the basis of the prohibition against the consuming of blood, and related to this, one may ask whether this Israelite reaction was also motivated by the religiously-orientated practices of their idolatrous neighbours. (cf. Zc 9:6). "The outspoken repugnance to the consumption of blood (Gen. 9:4; I Sam. 14:32ff.; Lev. 19:26) is not simply to be explained by horror at the idea of absorbing an alien kind of life, for the latter is to be found elsewhere side by side with acceptance of the practice of consuming the blood; rather it is connected with the rejection of heathen customs which made the drinking of blood a part of the cult of certain animals or as a means of inducing ecstatic prophecy or of orgiastic communion with the deity." W. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 135; cf. W.R. Smith, Lectures, op. cit., pp. 338ff.

<sup>178</sup>Cf. M.J. Lagrange, op. cit., p. 260.

This office of the high priest contained a lesson of the Holy Spirit, the author of the rites and the Scriptures which record them. The lesson is this: since God's people, represented by the priests, were never allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, it must be concluded that God's heavenly dwelling was closed to them as well as his earthly residence. Neither the daily rites, as is clear from the fact that they were daily, nor the solemn ceremonies of the annual atonement really cleansed them so that they might be admitted to communion with God. He continued to dwell in light inaccessible to them, in the heavenly light symbolized by the gold of the inner tent; they remained in the darkness outside, the darkness of the cosmos.<sup>179</sup>

As has been shown, in the Old Testament, the blood as the life of the victim was the essential mediator in man's attempt to establish or re-establish union with God.<sup>180</sup> But, the use of substitute blood, "the blood of bulls and goats," proved to be impotent in this attempt! (cf. Is 1:11; Heb 10:4). Man's separation from God could not be bridged by the blood of substitute animal victims. "As the value of the victim goes so goes the value of the contract or covenant. In the old covenant, they could only shed the blood of animals,"<sup>181</sup> and this was insufficient to re-unite man and God.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup>J.F. McConnell, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (New Testament Reading Guide, 11) (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1960), pp. 41, 42; cf. Heb 9:25.

<sup>180</sup>Cf. pp. 62ff. above; J. F. McConnell, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>181</sup>C. Spicq, L'Épître aux Hébreux, II, p. 283.

<sup>182</sup>The inherent limitations of the sacrifice of animals are clearly commented upon by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. They are, essentially, that, in the first place, the sacrifice was involuntary, and, in the second, the victim was not a true equivalent. These limitations will be removed in the sacrifice of Christ. cf. Heb. 9-11; esp., 9:13,14; cf. also, L. Dewar, JTS. 4(1953), p. 208; C. Spicq, op. cit., p. 278.

In addition to the fact that the blood of animal sacrificial victims was incapable of securing spiritual union between God and man, there was a further inherent and essential limitation in these offerings: namely, the insincerity of those doing the offering! The offering of blood without the underlying offering of one's life was an empty and futile gesture, an irreligious gesture.<sup>183</sup> Without the corresponding intelligent dispositions, the rites were meaningless symbols operating on the level of magic rather than mystery.<sup>184</sup> Worse still, these sterile ritual performances offered a bogus guarantee of God's presence and protective love. Divorced from a genuine openness to God's will, divorced from a moral life lived in accordance with His will, they effectively nullified any authentic union or re-union taking place. They presented man with the possibility of living a religious response of mere externalism devoid of any genuine substance. They made it possible for man to busy himself around an altar while ignoring his fellow-man in his need. Such spurious ritualism, if unchecked, would fundamentally frustrate the very purpose of the covenant-God seeking communion with man: the living of hesed.<sup>185</sup> But this ritualism would not go

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<sup>183</sup> It is essential that the external action should express the authentic inner feelings of man; if not, we do not have a 'religious' act at all. cf. R. de Vaux, op. cit., p. 451; F.F. Bruce, "Hebrews," PC. p. 1015; C. Spicq, op. cit., 278; A.G. Martimort, op. cit. pp. 187, 188.

<sup>184</sup> The blood rituals of the neighbours of the Israelites clearly fall into this category. They were judged to be effective simply by virtue of their being carried out correctly; they were "automatic". They lacked the moral basis and orientation which were supposed to be of the essence of the Israelite covenant ritual. cf. pp. 116, 117, note 167 above.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Chapter I, pp. 22, 23, 24, 31, 32, 33.

unchecked! Through the prophets, the Lord would castigate the substitution of an empty ritualism for a life of covenant love:

"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?  
says the Lord;  
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams  
and the fat of fed beasts;  
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,  
or of lambs, or of he-goats.  
When you spread forth your hands,  
I will hide my eyes from you;  
even though you make many prayers,  
I will not listen;  
your hands are full of blood.

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;  
remove the evil of your doings  
from before my eyes;  
cease to do evil,  
learn to do good;  
seek justice,  
correct oppression;  
defend the fatherless,  
plead for the widow. (Is 1:11, 15, 16, 17).<sup>186</sup>

Thus, and this is supported by all that we have seen, blood-covenanting called, by its very nature, for the living of hesed. Man's hesed was to be a love response to God but as well it was to be a reflection among men of God's love itself. This called for the total and unreserved

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<sup>186</sup>"The prophets often attack religious hypocrisy, the conviction that all is well, provided external forms like fasting and sacrifice are observed, though the most elementary principles of social justice and neighbourly love are neglected, 1 S 15:22; Is 1:10-16; 29:13-14; 58:1-8; Ho 6:6; Mi 6:5-8; Jr 6:20; Jl 2:13; Zc 7:4-6; cf. Ps 40:6-8; 50:5-15; 51:16-17. The Psalmists lay emphasis on the inner dispositions that must lie behind acceptable sacrifice: obedience, gratitude, contrition; the Books of Chronicles, too, insist on the part played in sacrificial worship by the liturgical chant as an expression of inward sentiments; these authors also protest against a religion of mere form. The N.T. will formulate the distinction definitively: Lk 11:41-42; Mt 7:21; Jn 4:21-24." E. Osty, The Jerusalem Bible, Am 5: note "r"; cf. H. Ringgren, 177, 178.

commitment of the covenant partners. "The covenant lays claim to the whole man and calls him to a surrender with no reservations."<sup>187</sup>

The Sinaitic covenant was to be characterized by such complete commitment. Yahweh first committed himself to be the divine benefactor of the Israelites, bestowing upon them rich blessings and constant support. Reminding the Israelites of what he had done in the past, of the preliminary blood covenant he had entered into with them,<sup>188</sup> Yahweh chooses them to be his own people. He freely wills to bind himself to them.

Israel, aware of her unique privilege, freely and joyfully agrees to the covenant. The Israelites agree to observe all of the covenantal obligations which flow naturally from their new relationship to Yahweh. As the covenant is one of love, God's love for man, the only adequate response on Israel's part is a return of love -- a love which issues in obedience and self-gift (cf. Dt 10: 12ff.), a response of love that knows no reservations:

The obligation which the people of Israel, the people of the Old Testament Covenant, takes upon itself is clearly and very plainly formulated in these words: "All the Lord has spoken we will do." (Ex 24:3). These words contain everything touching on man's relation to God. They harbour faith in this God, hopeful trust in this God and love towards this God. They entail the total surrender of the person to this God, readiness of the will to do everything this Godhead may demand.<sup>189</sup>

Such is the obligation that the Israelites took upon

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<sup>187</sup>W. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>188</sup>Cf. pp. 69ff. above.

<sup>189</sup>J. Alfrink, "Biblical Background to the Eucharist as a Sacrificial Meal," ITQ. 26(1959), p. 293; cf. the trust called for by the very nature of the Hittite suzerainty treaties: G.E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms In Israelite Tradition," BA. 3(1954), p. 56.

themselves when they entered into blood covenant with God. When they entered into "psychic community" with God, they opted for a radical identity of wills in which Yahweh's would predominate.

Unfortunately, despite the formal symbolic solemnity of the ratification in blood, and despite the ubiquitous presence and loving-supportiveness of Yahweh, the Israelites quickly lapsed into idolatry thus directly violating and rupturing the covenantal relationship (Ex 32:1ff.). Their initial enthusiasm did not carry them far, and the pages of the Old Testament are filled with their numerous apostasies (e.g. Nm 11; 14; 16).<sup>190</sup> The Israelites did not fulfill the terms of the covenant; they lacked confidence and trust in their God (Ex 14; Dt 1:33; Nm 20:2-12), and they were found wanting in the exchange of loving kindness that was to be the characteristic of the covenantal relationship. "Stiff-necked," (Ex 32:9), as they were, they did not mend their arrogant ways for any prolonged period.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>190</sup>Cf. Nm 20:11,12; 25:3; Dt 1:21-26; 31:1-6; Ps 78; etc.

<sup>191</sup>Cf. Dt 31:16,29; Ps 78:10-40; Ps 81:12; Ps 95:10; Jr 7:23-28; etc. cf. R.A.F. MacKenzie: "It is interesting to observe the parallel between Abraham's experience and Israel's. . .He (God) establishes a special relationship between Abraham and Himself. . .a special relationship is likewise set up in the covenant which makes Israel uniquely his people. . .There is, however, one important difference in these two relationships. . .it lies in the different natures and reactions of the human partners concerned. Abraham. . .is shown as entirely responsive and loyal to the divine call. . .Not so with Israel as a people. . .The Israelites did not glorify themselves, as they could glorify the patriarchs. Inescapably, they had a sense of guilt as regards their defective response to God's message and demands; and they felt their moral inadequacy, their infidelity, had existed from the very beginning." Faith and History in the Old Testament, pp. 40, 41, 42.

The Old Testament is the story of the constant infidelity of the one covenant partner, Israel, and the unfailing fidelity and unending love of the other covenant partner, Yahweh. In spite of having witnessed the catastrophe consequent upon Israel's infidelity, and confident of Yahweh's everlasting covenant love, Jeremiah foretold a new covenant that would totally excel and surpass that of Sinai (cf. 31:31-34). To be true to this new covenant, the Israelites would have to prove more loyal partners than in the past, for without a perfectly loyal covenant partner, the result would be a perpetuation of preceding infidelities. Israel's hope finds fulfillment in the person of the God-man, Jesus Christ. In Christ all things will be recapitulated and in him the new covenant will be fulfilled.

The new covenant is truly superior to the old.<sup>192</sup> Fittingly, this utterly unique blood-covenant between God and man will be expressed in a symbolically perfect and infinitely efficacious ritual: namely the Eucharist as a sacrificial covenant meal.

It is the blood of Christ, shared at the Last Supper and shed on the Cross, which ratifies the new and everlasting covenant.<sup>193</sup> As used here, "blood" is no mere "pregnant symbolic term," which gives graphic expression to Christ's "death."<sup>194</sup> Rather, it symbolizes the voluntary

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<sup>192</sup>Cf. pp. 41ff. above.

<sup>193</sup>Cf. Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:19-20; 1 Co 11:23-25; Heb 10:29; 12:24; 13:20; cf. also, P. Benoit, "The Holy Eucharist--I," Scripture, 8(1956), 103, 104; M.E. Boismard, "L'Euchariste selon St. Paul," LV, 31(1957), 96; C. Spicq, op. cit., 271, note 2, 275, 276; B. Cooke, op. cit., p. 5, note 12, p. 29. This will be elaborated upon in Chapter IV.

<sup>194</sup>E.g., L. Morris, "The Biblical Use of the Term Blood," JTS (n.s.), 3(1952), pp. 216, 227; F.J. Taylor, "Blood," TWEB, p. 34.

self-gift of the Son of God, and, as such, it is the essential element in the establishment of the new covenant.<sup>195</sup> It is Christ's own blood that realizes the new covenant. For this is precisely what is "new" in the relationship: "this cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Lk 22:20; 1 Co 11:25).<sup>196</sup> The contents of the cup, that is, "my blood," establishes the covenant, brings it into being.<sup>197</sup> Just as the old covenant was established by means of blood -- the blood of substitute victims -- so too, the new covenant is brought into being by means of blood, Christ's own blood.<sup>198</sup>

Infinitely efficacious, the blood of Christ, shed for all mankind, "is so potent as to present and unite to God all of a purified and sanctified humanity."<sup>199</sup> In the establishment of union between God and man, the blood covenant of Christ is decisive and is perfectly symbolized and realized in the Eucharist.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>195</sup>Cf. C. Spicq, op. cit., pp. 278, 283.

<sup>196</sup>According to M. E. Boismard, 1 Co 11:25 is definitely to be understood as "the wine contained in this cup is my blood which establishes and ratifies the new covenant." op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>197</sup>Cf. E.A. La Verdier, "The Eucharistic Covenant: Bond of Christian Unity," Emmanuel, 49(1963), pp. 305; 306, note 10.

<sup>198</sup>It is in corresponding measure that the new covenant surpasses the old; that is, as the blood of Christ surpasses the blood of calves (Heb 9:13-20). cf. Heb 9:11-20; 10:1-18; J. Alfrink, op. cit., p. 294; P. Benoit, op. cit., pp. 103, 104. C. Spicq, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>199</sup>C. Spicq, op. cit., p. 283.

<sup>200</sup>This will be developed in detail in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IIIThe Significance of Covenant MealsIn The Old TestamentA. The Significance of the Meal in the Old Testament

For the Israelites, as for Semitic peoples generally, the meal<sup>1</sup> had a profound significance: it was a means of establishing and expressing fellowship and union between man and man and between man and God.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In the Old Testament, there is no one specific Hebrew word for "meal." To express the idea of having a meal the expressions "to eat," or "to eat bread," or "to eat and drink" are employed. (Gn 24:54; 37:25; 43:32; Ex 2:20; Jg 19:4; Jr 41:1; 52:33; Zc 7:6; etc.). cf. note 10 below.

<sup>2</sup>W.R. Smith, Kinship And Marriage in Early Arabia, pp. 149, 150; Idem, Lectures On The Religion Of The Semites, pp. 265, 269ff., 276, 280, 313, 597; S.C. Gayford, op. cit., pp. 14, 19, 20, 38, 39; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 305, 306; III-IV, 334ff.; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 228; H.C. Trumbull, The Blood Covenant, pp. 264, 268, 269, 274, 350ff.; R.K. Yerkes, op. cit., pp. 20-26; 92-95; H. Ringgren, Israelite Religion, pp. 155, 171; W. O. E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, op. cit., pp. 162, 163; A. Lods, Israel, pp. 202, 278, 279; F.B. Jevons, op. cit., p. 330; G.B. Gray, Sacrifice In The Old Testament, pp. 21, 32, 33; G. van der Leeuw, op. cit., pp. 350ff., 362, 363; L. Bouyer, op. cit., pp. 78-94; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 141-144; 154-158; R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 448-453; L. Sabourin, op. cit., pp. 168ff.; A. Médebielle, op. cit., pp. 27f.; H.-J. Kraus, Worship In Israel: A Cultic History of the Old Testament, trans. G. Buswell (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), pp. 118f.; A. Jaubert, La Notion D'Alliance Dans Le Judaïsme: Aux Abords de l'Ere Chrétienne (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963), pp. 206, 207; A. Lelièvre, "Eating and Drinking (Meal)," VB, 94; J.F. Ross, "Food," ID. II, 306, 307; Idem., "Meals," ID. III, 315; M.J. Lagrange, op. cit.,

(1) Secular Meals: Between 'an and 'an

In the Old Testament, the sharing of one's food with another goes far beyond a benevolent gesture<sup>3</sup> and signifies far more than the necessary sustenance and preservation of human life.<sup>4</sup> The sharing of food (eating with someone, taking a meal together) may be both the establishment and the expression, the source and the sign of a shared life, a common life (Gn 26:26-33; 31:43-54).<sup>5</sup> "The consumption of

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pp.260,261; L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, pp.182, 183; J. Galot, "Le Repas Eucharistique Et L'Ancient Testament," RCA. 3(1959), 213-237.

<sup>3</sup>Which it is: Pr 22:9; Is 58:7; Ez 18:7,16; Tb 4:16.

<sup>4</sup>Which it does: Gn 24:54; Jg 19:4; Zc 7:6; etc.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Jos 9:1-27; 2 S 3:6-39; cf. note 2 above; in more universal and more primitive perspective, R.K. Yerkes writes:

"The common meal, probably a by-product of the prolongation of human infancy, has always been an agent in maintaining the unity of the group. It is for anthropologists to determine its origin and history; it had become a fixed institution before the development of religious rites. The members of a family, sharing the same life, shared likewise in the invigoration and preservation of that life.

"Primitive man did not distinguish nicely between life and the atoms and molecules which support it. To him the life of that which had been eaten passed into the eater, together with all the desirable qualities which that other thing had possessed. The fleetness of the deer, the endurance of the camel, the might and fertilizing power of the bull could now be his. A way was opened for man to compensate his finiteness and to become more than mere man.

"Early in human history, after the appearance of articulate speech and infant reason, members of a family or a clan or of a tribe exhibited one more distinctively human characteristic by meeting together to share the power or the courage or the fleetness or the endurance or the wisdom of what they were eating. The common sharing of the same power served to bind them more closely together. Not only were they kinsmen by blood; they had become kinsmen by sharing the power which was greater than they because it would compensate their finiteness." op. cit., p. 21. cf.

W. Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 154, 155.

the same food creates a vital unity between those who consume it."<sup>6</sup> By the act of eating together une communauté d'existence<sup>7</sup> comes into being; an identity of life is created which is so intimate as to be regarded as the equivalent to that experienced in blood-kinship.

Feeding together ("commensality") on the same flesh was held to constitute a real kinship where blood-kinship did not exist. To share the same food establishes a unity of life between two men. . . The common meal in social life not only cemented an alliance of friendship, but even constituted a sort of kinship as valid as blood-kinship. The same life-giving food entered into the lives of those who shared it and united them by a kind of vital identity.<sup>8</sup>

Those who partake of the same food together, by that very fact, enter into a profound relationship of peace, sâlôm.<sup>9</sup> The deliberate offering of one's food, one's "bread,"<sup>10</sup> to another is synonymous with the offering of

<sup>6</sup>P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 228.

<sup>7</sup>P.-M. Galopin, "Repas," VTB. 901.

<sup>8</sup>S.C. Gayford, op. cit., pp. 20, 38; cf. W.R. Smith, Kinship, pp. 149, 150; Idem, Lectures, p. 274; J.F. Ross, "Food," ID. II, 306; cf. also, note 5 above.

<sup>9</sup>Chapter I, pp. 14, 19, 20, 30, 31.

<sup>10</sup>The Hebrew word for "bread," lehem, originally signified "food," in general (cf. Arabic, lahm--meat), and was employed accordingly. (Lv 3:11,16; 21:6,8; Nm 28:24; Ps 147:9). This usage of "bread," lehem, to signify "food," generally, may be attributable to the fact that from earliest times bread was the principal item of food among the Israelites. Thus, lehem could be used for "bread," and for "food," in general. (cf. "to eat bread and drink water," which could mean eating and drinking as a whole: 1 K 13:8,9, 16-19; Si 29:21). Since bread was the principal food it was often regarded as the meal itself.

"To break bread" is an expression quite peculiar to the Israelites. After pronouncing the blessing before a meal, the head of the family "broke" the bread (Is 58:7; Jr 16:7; Lm 4:4), and distributed the pieces to those eating with him. "Since bread was the principal food, the

peace to that person. Accepting to eat of the offered food is the acceptance and the proclamation of peace (Gn 14:18; Jg 8:5,6,15; Jos 9:1-27).<sup>11</sup>

To eat regularly with someone is to form, and to confirm an intimate relationship with him. One ate only with one's friends (Gn 43:32; Si 9:16). The betrayal of such a relationship, one in which food has been shared together, is a treacherous and fundamentally dishonest act. It is a desolating experience: "Even my bosom friend, in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me." (Ps 41:9).<sup>12</sup> In the Old Testament, it is hard to

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expression 'to break bread with someone' came to mean 'to share a common meal with him'." L. Bushinski and A. van den Born. "Breaking of Bread," EDB. 276.

In the Old Testament, "bread" was regarded as the symbol, par excellence, of God's gifts to man, enabling man to live. To be without "bread," is to be in total distress and to lack everything (2 K 25:3; Jb 15:23; Ps 37:25; 2 S 3:29; Am 4:6). Because bread was the gift of God to man and because it was essential to man's well-being, it constantly reminded man of his creaturehood, his dependence on God (Dt 8:10-18).

Naturally enough, "bread" -- so vital and deeply symbolic -- was often used metaphorically. e.g., enemies as "bread for us" (Nm 14:9); "bread of deceit" (Pr 4:17; 20:17); "bread of ashes," or "tears," or "adversity" (Ps 42:3; Ps 80:4,5; 102:9,10; Is 30:20); "the staff of bread" (Ps 105:16; Ez 4:16; 5:16; 14:13; Lv 26:26).

Bibliography on the above: K. O'Sullivan and A. van den Born, EDB. 274,275; J.L. McKenzie, DOB. 105; J.F. Ross, ID. I, 462,463; J.R. Willis, DCG. II, 150-152; A. Kennedy, EB. I, 604,605; J. Behm, TDNT. I, 477; A. Maillot, VB, 41, 42; D. Sesboué, VTB. 725-727; The Jerusalem Bible, Ps 105:16, note "c"; Mt 26:26, note "f".

<sup>11</sup>Cf. J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 305; III-IV, 334; P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 228; A. Maillot, op. cit., p. 42; "The Covenant between the Gibeonites and Joshua," Chapter III, pp. 153-156.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Jn 13:18, 26ff.; Mt 26:23ff.; W. Bouwmeester, The Bible On The Covenant, p. 16; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 305; The Jerusalem Bible, Ps 41:9, note "f".

imagine a more serious violation of trust for the meal in common commits one to a bond of loyalty equal in intensity to the family bond.<sup>13</sup> In fact, admission to the meal implied admission to the family.<sup>14</sup> J. Pedersen comments:

The meal is the daily nourishment of the community among those related. Food gives life and strengthens the soul; the common strengthening makes common life. To eat with enemies would be inconceivable. He who is to maintain a special strength within himself, must not weaken it by eating with others (1 Kings 13). The common meal presupposes psychic community and strengthens it still further . . . The common meal and the peace cannot be separated.<sup>15</sup>

The extent to which shared food and peace are inseparable may be well illustrated within the context of the Arab law of hospitality:

Among the Arabs every stranger whom one meets in the desert is a natural enemy, and has no protection against violence except his own strong hand or the fear that his tribe will avenge him if his blood is spilt. But if I have eaten the smallest morsel of food with a man, I have nothing further to fear from him; "there is salt between us," and he is bound not only to do me no harm, but to help and defend me as if I were his brother. So far was this principle carried by the old Arabs, that Zaid al-Khail, a famous warrior in the days of Mohammed, refused to slay a vagabond who carried off his camels, because the thief had surreptitiously drunk from his father's milk bowl before committing the theft. It does not

<sup>13</sup> D.J. McCarthy, "Three Covenants in Genesis," CBQ. 26(1964), 185; J.F. Ross, "Food," ID. II, 306; A. Lelièvre, "Eating and Drinking (Meal)," VB. 94.

<sup>14</sup> "This custom of forming a union by taking bread together is widespread; doubtless it is based on the idea that it is the family group which eats together so that admission to the meal implies admission to the family." D.J. McCarthy, CBQ. 26(1964), 185. Among the Arabs, "men would not eat together unless they were united by kinship or by a covenant that had the same effect as natural kinship." W.R. Smith, Lectures, p. 276.

<sup>15</sup> J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 305; cf. P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 228.

indeed follow as a matter of course that because I have eaten once with a man I am permanently his friend, for the bond of union is conceived in a very realistic way, and strictly speaking lasts no longer than the food may be supposed to remain in my system. But the temporary bond is confirmed by repetition, and readily passes into a permanent tie confirmed by an oath. "There was a sworn alliance between the Lihyān and the Nostaliq, they were wont to eat and drink together."<sup>16</sup>

By eating and drinking together, fellowship and union is "declared and sealed."<sup>17</sup> The Arabian evidence is particularly instructive in that it demonstrates unequivocally the binding power that shared food, of its nature was believed to possess. In and of itself, the act of eating together, which signified the establishment of peaceful union, bound the participants accordingly.<sup>18</sup>

It would appear that this belief was equally operative among the ancient Israelites. In Joshua 9:1-27, the covenant between the Gibeonites and the Israelites is established by the act of eating of the Gibeonite food. Even though the Gibeonites were acting fraudulently and even though the Israelites had not consulted Yahweh, the very act of eating the food offered by the Gibeonites sufficed to establish an indissolubly binding relationship of peace.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> W.R. Smith, Lectures, pp. 269, 270, 271; cf. Idem, Kinship, pp. 149, 150; A. Médebielle, op. cit., p. 27; A. Lods: "The man who has...partaken of his (an Arab's) food, even though he were his personal enemy, is regarded by the Arab, and treated by all the members of his clan, as a "brother." ...By the act of partaking of food belonging to a member of the clan, the stranger has absorbed some of the life of the group, he has become a part of it." Israel, p. 202

<sup>17</sup> W. R. Smith, Lectures, p. 271.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. F.M. Abel, La "Bible de Jerusalem," Jos. 9:14, note "a"; W.R. Smith, Lectures, p. 271; "The Covenant between the Gibeonites and Joshua," pp. 153-156 below.

In summary, it may be stated that the fellowship experienced in the eating of food together is "the closest fellowship known to the Oriental world."<sup>20</sup> In this, the Israelites clearly reflected their historical environment. They, along with their neighbours, lived this attitude. Those who ate together were vitally united and proclaimed by the very act of eating together that they were intimately bound to one another.<sup>21</sup> The common meal signified the establishment or the existence of the closest possible fellowship: a relationship of "psychic community."<sup>22</sup>

## (2) Sacred Meals: Between Man and God

In Israelite history, practically every activity in secular life had its counterpart in the religious life of the people. This is particularly evidenced when that activity was a common meal. Given the vital and deep symbolism that the meal had for the Israelites in their human relations, it is not at all surprising that the meal should figure prominently in their relationship with God.

The communion established or confirmed by means of shared food on the strictly secular level is also attempted on the religious level, that is, between the Israelites and their God. Through the medium of a common meal, the Israelites attempted to achieve une communauté d'existence with God.<sup>23</sup> The common meal thus took on a "sacred" character. The meal became a "sacred" meal.

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<sup>20</sup>W. Grundmann, "Sin in the New Testament," TDNT. I, 303.

<sup>21</sup>H.-J. Kraus, op. cit., pp. 118ff.

<sup>22</sup>On "psychic community," see: Chapter I, p. 13, note 39.

<sup>23</sup>"Plusieurs fois par jour, l'homme vient à table prendre son repas, dans l'intimité familiale ou pour un

Because of the various meanings and applications of the term "sacred," it is impossible to define incontestably a sacred meal. F. Bammel, in a detailed study which attempts to enumerate and classify all the sacred meals known to man, defines a sacred meal as "any partaking of food, any eating and drinking which is in some way or other related to the holy, and which receives from this relation a sacred sense and value."<sup>24</sup> As J. van der Ploeg has pointed out, this definition is really quite vague.<sup>25</sup> He goes on to state:

banquet officiel; on y mange le pain de la disette -- ou on s'y livre à l'orgie. Ce partage de la table crée entre les convives une communauté d'existence. Mais le repas peut avoir aussi un caractère sacré, dans les religions païennes comme dans la Bible. On peut s'asseoir à la table des idoles et s'unir aux démons, ou s'agenouiller à la table du Seigneur. A travers ce signe, c'est avec Dieu ou avec les puissances d'en bas que l'homme réalise la communauté d'existence à laquelle il aspire." P.-M. Galopin, "Repas," VTb. 901; cf. note 2 above.

<sup>24</sup>F. Bammel, Das heilige Mahl im Glauben der Völker: Eine religionsphänomenologische Untersuchung (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1950), p. 15. The German reads as follows: "hl. Mahl ist jeglicher Speisegenuß, jede Nahrungsaufnahme, jedes Essen und trinken..., das irgendwie in Beziehung steht zum 'Heiligen' und aus dieser Beziehung seinen sakralen Sinn und Wert empfängt." The English translation is by J. van der Ploeg, in "The Meals of the Essenes," JSS. 2(1957), 164.

Bammel's phenomenological study of sacred meals may be the first of its kind. No bibliography is given. The literature on sacred meals is scarce and scattered; nowhere, other than in Bammel's study, are sacred meals treated comprehensively. cf. S. Angus, The Mystery Religions And Christianity: A Study In The Religious Background Of Early Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925) pp. 127-133.

<sup>25</sup>Vague because of the translated words "any," and "some way or other." Vague, also, because of the complexity of the concept "holy" or "holiness," itself. On the "holy" as an a priori category of a very complex nature, see, R. Otto, The Idea Of The Holy: An Inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational. trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958). especially pp.137ff.cf. J.van der Ploeg, op.cit.p.165.

"Since the essential act of a meal is the eating of the food, a meal can only be called sacred when the food is sacred or when a sacred meaning is attached to it."<sup>26</sup> This is the sense of the term "sacred meal" as it is employed here. That is, a sacred meal is a meal in which the food is seen to be sacred or a sacred meaning is attached to it. As will become evident in the course of this Chapter, the Israelites in their sacred meals did not believe they were eating a sacred victim. However, as will also become clear, they did attach a sacred meaning to the act of eating in certain meals, notably, the meals of their communion sacrifices.<sup>27</sup>

Here, as elsewhere in their sacrificial practices, the Israelites reflected their historical environment. Communion-sacrificial meals were well known throughout the ancient Semitic world and beyond.<sup>28</sup> The Israelites were especially influenced by the Canaanite inhabitants.<sup>29</sup> As is apparent from the Old Testament record, the Israelites were in constant danger of violating their covenant with Yahweh and of prostituting themselves by entering into illicit union with pagan gods. The means of attempting this union were communion-sacrificial meals, sacred meals.

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<sup>26</sup>J. van der Ploeg. op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>27</sup>Because of the "sacred" character of blood, there is a sense in which every meal in which meat was served may be said to have had a sacred character for the Israelites (e.g., 1 S 14:31-35).

<sup>28</sup>Cf. H. Cazelles, La "Bible de Jérusalem", Lev 3: note "d", Nb 25: note "j"; R. de Vaux, op. cit., pp.424ff.

<sup>29</sup>On the connections between the Canaanite and Israelite sacrificial concept and practice, cf. H.-J. Kraus, op. cit., 113; J. Gray, "Cultic Affinities between Israel and Ras Shamra," ZAW. 62(1949/50), 207ff.; R. de Vaux, op. cit., pp. 438-441.

The Israelites were rebuked by Yahweh because they "yoked" (Nm 25:3)<sup>30</sup> themselves to an alien god, Baal of Peor, by partaking of a sacred meal in his honour and presence (cf. Nm 25:1-5). This was the typical sacred banquet of Semitic communion sacrifices.<sup>31</sup> Again, Yahweh rebukes his people when in violation of their covenant with him, they participated in the idolatrous and bogus sacred meals of the Canaanites (Ez 18:6,11,15; 22:9).<sup>32</sup> The Old Testament authors denounced the presence at and the participation of the Israelites in these meals precisely because these meals were believed to effect union with the pagan gods (sacral communion). The Old Testament authors also knew genuine, authentically-Yahwistic sacred meals: the meals which were an integral part of their communion sacrifices.

As has been seen, the communion sacrifice, zēbah shēlamîm,<sup>33</sup> was the most complete and the most frequent kind

<sup>30</sup>RSV: "So Israel yoked himself to Ba'al of Pe'or." La "Bible de Jérusalem": "Israel s'étant ainsi commis avec le Baal de Péor."

<sup>31</sup>The Jerusalem Bible, Nm 25:2, note "d"; P.-M. Galopin, *op. cit.*, p. 902.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Jg 9:27; The Jerusalem Bible, Jg 9:27, note "1"; Ez 18:6, note "b".

<sup>33</sup>"We are adopting the translation 'communion sacrifice' for want of a better rendering of what is called in Hebrew zēbah shēlamîm, or zēbah (without qualification) or simply shēlamîm (always in the plural except once, shelem, in Am 5:22). All these terms are equivalent to one another, as is proved by the way in which they are interchanged inside certain passages or in parallel passages, and by the fact that the motives and the rites of this sacrifice are always the same: zēbah shēlamîm is the official name in the Priestly rituals...and it is rarely found elsewhere. The renderings 'peace-offering' and 'welcome offering' are inspired by the Greek version, but the ritual and the practice of Israel present it rather as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God which brings about union with him." R. de Vaux, *op. cit.*, p. 417; cf. J. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, 335, note 1; 698.

of sacrifice offered at the beginning of Israel's history.<sup>34</sup> It was in their communion sacrifices that the Israelite desire for union with God found its most explicit expression.<sup>35</sup> The ritual and the practice of Israel present this sacrifice as one of thanksgiving to God which brings about union with him.<sup>36</sup> The principal ritual is described in Chapter 3 of Leviticus, where the characteristic feature lies in the fact that the victim is shared between God, the priest and the person offering the sacrifice, in a sacred meal.

The communion sacrifice (often called 'peace-offering') was widespread in the semitic world and beyond. It was a sacred banquet at which the worshipers ate one portion of the victim, the other--the blood and the fatty parts, as being the most vital--being made over to the deity. It seems to have been the most commonly celebrated sacrifice in ancient Israel and the central rite of her feasts. Since it was a meal 'shared' with God, it expressed better than any other sacrifice the union of God with his faithful.<sup>37</sup>

The most vital and valuable parts of the victim, the blood and the fat, are reserved to Yahweh alone (Lv 3:17),<sup>38</sup> the former is poured out, the latter is burned (1 S 2:15, 16). Then, and only then, the remaining parts are eaten by all those present at the sacrifice. "In all probability

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<sup>34</sup>Cf. Chapter II, p. 65, note 27.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Chapter II, pp. 64, 65.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. R. de Vaux, as quoted in note 33 above; H. Ringgren, op. cit., pp. 170, 171.

<sup>37</sup>The Jerusalem Bible, Lv 3, note "a"; cf. 1 S 9:13, note "h"; Ex 18:12, note "f"; 32:6, note "d"; Nm 25:2, note "d"; Dt 12:7, note "c"; 2 Ch 29:29ff., note "g"; 2 Ch 31, note "h"; Pr 17:1, note "a"; Ez 44, note "a"; D. Sesboué et J. Gible, "Communion," VTB. 147.

<sup>38</sup>The Jerusalem Bible, Lv 3:17, note "c"; Lv 7:24f. Like blood, the fat contained the "life," cf. J. B. Segal, op. cit., p. 167, note 1.

this meal was felt to be the purpose and culmination of the peace offering. We read that guests were invited to the meal (Zeph. 1:7; Deut. 12:18; 1 Sam. 9:12f.; 16:3ff.) in order to eat and drink before Yahweh (Deut. 12:18). At the sacrificial meal, the dominant mood was joy occasioned by the awareness that Yahweh, too, shared the meal."<sup>39</sup>

The idea and expectation that the meal eaten together will create communio is basic to this sacrifice (that of the peace offering). He who eats with another person becomes united with him and proclaims that they are closely bound together. The most valuable parts of the animal that has been killed, the portions of fat, are solemnly offered to God, and only when the fat has been completely burned up can the meal begin (1 Sam. ii.15), for now God himself shares the food. The communio therefore is twofold, the communion among themselves of those who eat together, and the communion of these same people with the deus praesens.<sup>40</sup>

Granted the above, a basic question arises: in what precise sense was the meal "sacred"? That is, precisely how was the meal the medium of sacral communion? How was this meal shared between God and the Israelites supposed to effect their union?

W. R. Smith contended that there was a "fragmentary survival of totem ideas"<sup>41</sup> among the earliest Semites and these ideas influenced their sacrificial practices.

<sup>39</sup>H. Ringgren, op. cit., p. 171; cf. p. 155.

<sup>40</sup>H.-J. Kraus, op. cit., p. 118; cf. A. Lelièvre, "Eating and Drinking (Meal)," VB, 95; M. Thurian, The Eucharistic Memorial. Part I - The Old Testament. trans. J. C. Davies (London: The Lutterworth Press, 1960), p. 41.

<sup>41</sup>W. R. Smith, Lectures, p. 444. Smith was the inspiration and the main proponent of the hypothesis which attempted to explain the origin of Israelite sacrifice in terms of totemism. cf. Kinship, pp. 186ff.; 218ff.; Lectures, pp. 124ff.; 213 ff.; 444 ff.; see also his index, under the title Totemism.

The presupposition of this theory is the existence of totemism, albeit in evolved forms, among the Semites.<sup>42</sup> Members of a tribe believed they were related by blood, by kinship, to a tribal god who was the ancestor of the entire tribe and who resided in the animal--the totem--consecrated to him. Since the life of the god circulated in the animal, by eating of it, communion, common life, was effected. When the god is angry, he can be appeased by an act of communion between his followers and himself. This act of communion takes place by the eating of a victim chosen from among the sacred non-human members of the clan: the totem animal.

With totemism as his basic postulate and contending that totemistic ideas, in refined form, were at the root of the sacrifices of the ancient Arabs, Smith went on to claim that "throughout the Semitic field, the fundamental idea of sacrifice is not that of sacred tribute, but of communion between the god and his worshippers by joint participation in the living flesh and blood of a sacred victim."<sup>43</sup> However, there is simply not enough evidence to

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<sup>42</sup>"By Totemism is meant a form of society in which the members of a clan or a tribe believe themselves to be united by kinship to some animal or plant, mainly the former, from which they are descended...the animal after which the members of a clan called themselves was regarded as sacred. But when an animal is believed to be the ancestor of a clan all the members of which are his offspring, and, in consequence, all the animals of the same kind as the ancestor are sacrosanct, it is a natural, one might almost say an inevitable, development that the ancestor becomes a god, and all the animals of his kind are thought of as his representatives." W.O.E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, op. cit., 48,51; The most comprehensive study of totemism remains that of J. G. Frazer, Totemism and Exogamy: a treatise on certain early forms of superstition and society (London: Macmillan Company, 1935); cf. Idem, Totemica: A Supplement to Totemism and Exogamy (London: Macmillan Company, 1937). The totemistic thesis underlies Frazer's monumental work, The Golden Bough: A Study in Religion and Magic, in 12 volumes, (London: Macmillan Company, 1907-1915).

<sup>43</sup>W.R. Smith, Lectures, p. 345, (underscoring mine).

substantiate Smith's basic tenet of totemism as the origin of Israelite sacrifice. Totemism remains an unproved postulate and is no longer a widely-accepted theory.<sup>44</sup> "The only evidence that the ancient Arabs practised totemism comes from the spurious story of St. Nilus, and it is impossible to discern any traces of totemism among the early Israelites."<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup>A number of authors have illustrated that the totemism of the Semites, even in refined forms, is an unproved postulate. (cf. M. J. Lagrange, op. cit., pp. 244ff. J. E. Coleran, "Origins Of Old Testament Sacrifice," CBO. 2(1940), 134, 135; L. Sabourin, op. cit., pp. 166-173; R. de Vaux, op. cit., pp. 436, 448; R. K. Yerkes, op. cit., pp. 21ff.; W. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 154, note 6.)

A summary of Smith's complex hypothesis and the criticisms of M. J. Lagrange and others may be had in R.A.S. Macalister, "Sacrifice (Semitic)," ERE. XI, 36-38; cf. L. Sabourin, op. cit., pp. 166ff.

<sup>45</sup>Smith had founded many of his assertions on the sacrifice of the Saracens as depicted in the story attributed to St. Nilus: cf. Lectures, pp. 166, 227, 281ff., 285ff., 338, 345, 361, 363ff., 559, 619. Writing of this story, R. de Vaux states: "One text, which is very often quoted as a description of an Arab sacrifice, must be definitely rejected, though it is frequently cited to prove or to confirm a particular theory about Semitic sacrifice. It is a story written by a monk of Sinai about 400 A.D., and published under the name of St. Nilus. It tells how St. Nilus' son was made prisoner by the Saracens, who decided to offer him as a sacrifice to the Morning Star, as was their practice when they captured handsome young men. Everything was prepared--the altar, the sword, the libation and the incense--but the barbarians woke up too late, for the planet (which had to be visible) was no longer to be seen, and so the young man was saved. The author adds that when the Arabs had no men to offer in sacrifice, they used to kill a camel instead; the man performing the sacrifice first stabbed it and tasted its blood, and then all the others fell upon the beast to tear off a piece of the flesh, which they ate raw; everything, including the intestines, the bones and the marrow, had to disappear before sun-rise. Almost everything in this fantastic story is false, and almost every detail is contradicted by other documents." op. cit., p. 436. cf. L. Sabourin, op. cit., p. 169. J.B. Segal, op. cit., p. 166, note 1. On the text ascribed to Nilus, see: Migne, Patrologia Graeca LXXIX, Col. 612.

As to the manner in which the Israelites experienced communion with God in their sacred meals, their sacrificial communion meals, R. de Vaux states:

The Israelites never thought that they could be physically united with God by eating a divine victim, . . . But there is another kind of union, which results from sharing the same possessions, from sharing a common life, and from the practice of hospitality. When Yahweh had accepted the victim and had received his part (upon the altar), the men who had offered the sacrifice then ate the rest in a religious meal, and so shared the sacrifice. St. Paul is referring to the sacrifices of Israel when he writes 'Are not they who eat the victims in communion with the altar,' (1 Co 10:18). Just as a contract between men was sealed by their taking a meal together (cf. Gn 26:28-30; 31:44-54), so the covenant between the worshipper and his God was established or strengthened by this sacrificial meal. Hence it is called the zabah sh'lamîm, the sacrifice of communion, the sacrifice of covenant.<sup>46</sup>

In concluding this section, and before turning to a detailed examination of specific covenantal meals in the Old Testament, it is important to underscore the essentiality of the sacred meal in man's quest for union with his God. This may best be done by having reference to the work of L. Bouyer: Rite And Man.<sup>47</sup> There, the author, following upon the studies of G. van der Leeuw,<sup>48</sup> and R.K. Yerkes,<sup>49</sup> contends that "a sacred meal, by itself and without the need of anything else, actually constitutes the richest hierophany there is."<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup>R. de Vaux, op. cit., p. 453; cf. notes 37, 38, 39, 40, above; also, J. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, 334ff.; A. Lelièvre "Eating and Drinking (Meal)," VB. 95.

<sup>47</sup>L. Bouyer, Rite And Man: Natural Sacredness And Christian Liturgy. trans. M.J. Costelloe (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963). especially, Chapter VI: "Sacrificial Rites and Their Ambivalence," pp. 78-94.

<sup>48</sup>G. van der Leeuw, op. cit., especially pp. 350-372.

<sup>49</sup>R.K. Yerkes, op. cit., especially pp. 20-26.

<sup>50</sup>L. Bouyer, op. cit., p. 84.

It is in the sacred meal that man sees the sacredness of life, of his own life, and as a result apprehends himself as being dependent upon one who is almighty and all good, or, to express it more accurately, upon the singular and superabundant fruitfulness of the divinity. To recognize the sacredness of a meal as being the highest form of human activity is to recognize man's total dependence, both for his creation and his continued existence, upon a God who is at the same time apprehended as the one who possesses the fullness of life.<sup>51</sup>

Bouyer contends further that the sacred meal constitutes the essence of sacrifice. Sacrifice is essentially a meeting with God in a sacred meal;<sup>52</sup> it is "every meal that has retained its primitive sacredness, a sacredness that is attached to a meal perhaps more than to any other human action."<sup>53</sup>

The primitive view of sacrifice. . . is the meeting par excellence of God and man. It is an act that is inseparably social and individual. Each man feels that he is personally engaged in what is basically a common celebration. It is at the same time a full realization of God's interest in mankind. All this comes from the fact that a common meal makes men appreciate their relation with the cosmos which provides the natural resources for their life.

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 84. cf. note 10, above.

<sup>52</sup>"To repeat, it (a sacrifice) is originally a meal in which man recognizes that in every meal he meets God. He meets Him there because it is God who provides him with food, who is present there with him, and who is at once his fellow sharer in the meal and his provisioner. Emphasis on the fact that in a sacrifice man in his turn nourishes God seems to be a later development. This element is apparently predominant, if not exclusively so, in the holocaust. But this predominance may be taken in two senses. The holocaust can express a man's conviction that he holds God at his mercy in some magical way since he feeds Him, or it can express a lofty religious concept in which man recognizes that all he has, or can enjoy, belongs ultimately to God alone." Ibid., 88, 89; cf. G. van der Leeuw, op. cit., pp. 350ff.

<sup>53</sup>L. Bouyer, op. cit., p. 82; cf. R. K. Yerkes, op. cit., pp. 20-26.

Eating in common is the human act par excellence, where society is built up as from within, while each man perfects himself by integrating himself with the universe. It is moreover the first and supreme act in which man apprehends himself in his living relationship with God. Man undoubtedly comes to the meal to secure this relationship, and, in a way, to secure everything, since he there receives nourishment for his life. But he also goes there to give, to give himself. In other words, he realizes, not in thought, but in a decisive act, that his life is not his own, that it depends upon God alone. And thus, at last, in sacrifice the life of man comes<sup>54</sup> or comes again, to participate in the life of God.

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<sup>54</sup>L. Bouyer, op. cit., p. 90.

## B. The Significance Of "Covenant Meals" In The Old Testament

From what has already been presented on the significance of meals in general, in the Old Testament, it will be readily appreciated why they would occupy such a prominent place in the practice of covenanting. To the Israelites the meal symbolized, in the most natural and remarkable way, the peaceful union, the common life which was the very purpose and definition of covenanting.

The Israelites, like the ancient Arabs, would not partake of food with those with whom they could not have community. An instructive illustration of this occurs when the "man of God," from Judah, refused to eat or drink anything with King Jeroboam I, because the latter had caused a schism in the worship of God. Very probably Yahweh had forbidden the prophet to eat with anyone of Jeroboam's kingdom because such an act would manifest peaceful union with those who had been cut off from Yahweh (1 K 13).<sup>55</sup> Certainly, for the Israelites, the common meal explicitly confirmed and proclaimed the peaceful union of those who shared the meal. It implied the acceptance of the other person or persons, in peace; it announced the existence of a harmonious relationship. At root, it implied the admission of the other or others to the group hosting the meal.

"This custom of forming a union by taking bread together is widespread; doubtless it is based on the idea that it is the family group which eats together so that admission to the meal implies admission to the family."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>W. Bouwmeester, op. cit., pp. 15, 16; J. Gray, I & II Kings: A Commentary (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1964), pp. 294-303; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 305.

<sup>56</sup>D.J. McCarthy, "Three Covenants in Genesis," CBQ. 26(1964), 185; cf. notes 13, 14, 15 above.

The food consumed by the parties in a common meal created among them a life-bond equal to the existing family bond. The stranger admitted to such a meal became, at least temporarily, one of the family or clan, and this bond could become permanent by the continued practice of eating together.<sup>57</sup>

Among the Arabs, "men would not eat together unless they were united by kinship or by a covenant that had the same effect as natural kinship."<sup>58</sup> Among the Israelites, "nothing was so well suited to unite souls and strengthen the covenant as a meal which gathered relatives and friends around the common food in a communal spirit. The meal of such a fellowship confirmed and strengthened the peace, the harmony on which all joint life was dependent."<sup>59</sup> In both cases, psychic community is presupposed by the participants in the meal and is strengthened by the meal taken in common.<sup>60</sup>

The deep covenantal significance and potential inherent in the common meal is quite apparent. As in the case of shared blood, the vital and unifying power of shared food made it almost inevitable that common meals would be a fundamental factor in the making of a covenant. Clearly, the common meal was a most natural and profound symbol of man's desire for communion; a desire which was at the very heart of the process of covenanting. By contrast to the rite of shared blood,<sup>61</sup> the rite of shared food, the common meal,

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<sup>57</sup>Cf. p. 132 and note 16 above.

<sup>58</sup>W.R. Smith, Lectures, p. 276.

<sup>59</sup>J. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV. 334; cf. Idem, Israel, I-II, 305ff.

<sup>60</sup>J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 305; P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 228.

<sup>61</sup>The rite of shared blood is not mentioned at all in secular covenants in the Old Testament because of the exclusive reservation of blood to Yahweh. cf. Chapter II,

is mentioned explicitly in four important secular covenants in the Old Testament (Gn 26:28-30; 31:46,54; Jos 9:14; 2 S 3:20). Each of these secular covenantal meals will now be examined contextually, for it is only in full context that their true significance can be ascertained and appreciated.

### (1) In Secular Covenants

#### a) The Covenant Between Abimelech and Isaac (Gn 26:26-31)

Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his advisor and Phicol the commander of his army. Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?" They said, "We see plainly that the Lord is with you; so we say, let there be an oath between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the Lord." So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. In the morning they rose early and took oath with one another; and Isaac set them on their way, and they departed from him in peace. (Gn 26:26-31; cf. 21:22-34).

The record of this covenant between Abimelech and Isaac is, in the history of saga, a variant to that covenant between Abimelech and Abraham, recorded in Gn 21:22-34.<sup>62</sup> In both versions, it is Abimelech, King of Gerar, who takes the initiative in proposing a covenant with the Israelite sojourner in the land of Gerar. Underlying the request to covenant are the events of Chapter 20,<sup>63</sup> and Abimelech's

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pp. 57, 58, 83, 84.

<sup>62</sup>G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 267; E.A. Speiser, Genesis, pp. 203, 204; B. Vawter, op. cit., pp. 190, 191; J. L. McKenzie, "Covenant," DOB. 153, 154.

<sup>63</sup>Cf. Gn 12:10-20. In chapter 20 of Genesis, especially verses 14-18, there is in effect, albeit implicit, the record of a covenant between Abimelech and Abraham. Note the presentation of gifts from Abimelech to Abraham and Abraham's return gift of intercessory and healing prayer on Abimelech's

desire to assure that he and his men will be the recipients of covenant loyalty, hesed, from the Israelite.<sup>64</sup> Abimelech still feels uncertain of the Israelite's covenant loyalty and it is this unreserved loyalty he requests (21:22,23; 26:28,29).<sup>65</sup> In order to have a guarantee of it, he initiates this covenant, the terms of which will ensure a stable and trustful relationship.

Because of the power of the Israelite's God and because of the Israelite's favorite status as "blessed of the Lord," (21:22; 26:28,29), Abimelech desires a covenant of peace (26:29,32). The proper object of the covenant is the mutual exchange of covenant love, of covenant loyalty, hesed, derived ultimately from the Israelite's God.<sup>66</sup> Abimelech demands an oath that the Israelite will do him no harm and that he will not deal falsely with him (21:23; 26:28,29).<sup>67</sup>

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behalf. It is this exchange which underlies Abimelech's appeal in 21:22ff.

<sup>64</sup>In Genesis 21: Abraham; in Genesis 26: Isaac.

<sup>65</sup>Abimelech's request is born of his fear that the Israelite will not manifest continued covenant love and loyalty, hesed. (cf. esp. 21:23). This relationship of trust and mutual kindness was implied in 20:14-18. At the minimum then, Abimelech's protest is a demand to render explicit what was implicit in 20:14-18, namely, the expression of a binding relationship of covenant love. Abimelech wants assurance that he will be included in the favorable relationship that the Israelite enjoys with his powerful God and not left outside this relationship. cf. G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 231, 267; R.A.F. MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>66</sup>Cf. note 65 above.

<sup>67</sup>In 21:23, "Abraham is asked not to treat Abimelech falsely. šqr as here used is not just "trick" in a general sense. It means precisely to break covenanted faith. (cf. Ps 44,18; Is 63,8. šqr is also the standard designation for the violation of the covenant in the 8th century B.C. Aramaic Treaty from Sefiré). Finally, hesed appears, and it represents a concept which is properly covenantal, as is well known." D.J. McCarthy, "Three Covenants in Genesis," CBQ. 26(1964), 188, and note 23 on p. 188.

Isaac agrees to covenant: "So he made them a feast and they ate and drank" (26:30). This Isaac did in direct response to the petition of Abimelech to enter into covenant. By Isaac's giving of the meal and by his partaking of it with Abimelech and his men, he explicitly covenants with them. The common meal establishes and proclaims the existence of hesed among the participants to the meal ( 21:23; 26:29 ).<sup>68</sup>

The following morning, oaths are exchanged (26:31). The covenant meal precedes the taking of the oath (26:30,31; cf. 31:46,52; Jos 9:14,15), and by itself is the effective means of establishing the covenant. The oath comes after the union has been formed. It serves to define and to strengthen further the covenantal union which has already been constituted in the common meal.<sup>69</sup>

b) The Covenant Between Laban and Jacob (Gn 31:43-54)

Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters, or to their children whom they have borne? Come now, let us make a covenant you and I; and let it be a witness between you and me." So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. And Jacob said to his kinsmen, "Gather stones," and they took stones, and made a heap; and they ate there by the heap. Laban called it Jegarshadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me today," Therefore he named it Galeed, and the pillar Mizpah, for he said, "The Lord watch between you and me, when we are absent one from the other. If you ill-treat my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us, remember, God is witness between you and me."

<sup>68</sup>In the version recorded in Chapter 21 of Genesis, the agreement to covenant is signified on Abraham's part by his gift of sheep and oxen to Abimelech (21:27).

<sup>69</sup>D. J. McCarthy, CBQ. 26(1964), 185; J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 305.

Then Laban said to Jacob, "See this heap and the pillar, which I have set between you and me. This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." So Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac, and Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and called his kinsmen to eat bread; and they ate bread and tarried all night on the mountain. (Gn 31:43-54).<sup>70</sup>

According to Laban, Jacob has broken trust with him, has defrauded him,<sup>71</sup> and only after much mutual accusation (31:26-42), does Laban invite Jacob to enter into covenant with him (31:43,44).<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>The narrative of this covenant between Laban and Jacob is based on an ancient aetiological tradition which once circulated by itself and was not connected from the beginning with the preceding and succeeding Jacob stories. In addition, it is evident from the various doublets in the text, (in v.45, a stone is erected as a sign of covenant, in v.46, a heap of stones; v.46 tells of a covenant meal, v.54, of another; there is a double significance ascribed to the covenant itself: in v.50, Jacob is obliged to the loyal treatment of Laban's daughters; in v.51, a boundary is established as a formal frontier between Laban and Jacob. i. e., between Aram and Israel, which is not to be transgressed for harmful purposes), that there are two reconstructions combined to form this narrative. cf. G. von Rad, Genesis, pp. 306, 307.

<sup>71</sup>Certainly, Jacob's mode of departure from the family confederacy was mistrustful (31:1-21), and he realized that his departure plans would have met with stiff resistance on Laban's part (31:31).

<sup>72</sup>The decision of Laban not to pursue his claims any further may be attributed, in part, to the warning he received from the God of Jacob's father: "On no account say anything whatever to Jacob." (31:24; cf. 31:29). This is, of course, the same God invoked by Jacob in his impassioned speech (31:42). Once more, the respect for the power of the covenant God is apparent. cf. note 65 above.

The covenant is to have in effect a twofold significance. First, it obligates Jacob to the loyal treatment of Laban's daughters, Jacob's wives. Second, it establishes a boundary which is not to be transgressed by either party for harmful purposes. "There can be no doubt," writes G. von Rad, "that the latter 'internationally legal' conception is much older than the one that views the proceeding only as a family matter." He goes on to state: "In this recension, however, the memory of the international significance has completely disappeared. The interpretation of the sign within the framework of Jacob's family history now dominates the idea of contract."<sup>73</sup> The concern of the covenant is presented, primarily, as the loyal treatment of Laban's daughters.

The anxiety and the demand of Laban are quite legitimate in the context of the existing polygamy of that time, carrying with it the possibility that one wife might be supplanted by another thus losing her conjugal rights. Given this, Jacob is invited to strike a somewhat one-sided covenant. However, he accepts (31:45ff.), and in so doing he appeases Laban. By the terms of the covenant Laban is assured that his daughters and grandchildren will be treated fairly.

In the account of the covenant, there are two references to a meal. In verse 46, the meal is given by Jacob in response to the request of Laban to enter into covenant (v.44). It precedes the oath taking (v.53).<sup>74</sup> In verse 54, the meal is offered by Jacob but this time it is explicitly a sacrificial meal.

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<sup>73</sup>G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 307; cf. J. L. McKenzie, "Laban," DOB. 490.

<sup>74</sup>Cf. Gn 26:30,31; Jos 9:14,15.

. . . Here (v.54), the meal is not a sharing of a familial repast through which one party admits the other to his family circle. It is not a rite which is the first, constitutive step in making a covenant. It is a sacrificial repast. Doubtless joining together at the same divine table implies unity among the participants, but this is not the first meaning. The rite aims directly at communion<sup>75</sup> with the divine and not at union within a family.

This would appear to be substantiated by the fact that the meal, in verse 54, follows upon the oath taking, in verse 53,<sup>76</sup> and is "a reinforcement of the covenant already defined and sworn."<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup>D.J. McCarthy, CBQ. 26(1964), 185.

<sup>76</sup>"So Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac," v.53; cf. v.42-RSV. Other translations render the divine title invoked by Jacob in the following ways: "the Awe of his father Isaac," (Chicago edition); "Jacob swore by him whom his father Isaac revered," (CCD. edition). In these cases, the sense conveyed is that of "the God whom Isaac fears, i.e., the God whom Isaac reveres timidly." G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 306.

However, R. de Vaux translates the divine title as "the Kinsman of Isaac," "le parent d'Isaac." cf. La "Bible de Jérusalem", Gn 31:53; cf. v.42. De Vaux comments: "Titre divin, qui ne revient qu'au v.53 et dont le sens est justifié par l'arabe et le palmyrénien. On traduisait jusqu'ici: "la Terreur d'Isaac". La "Bible de Jérusalem", Gn 31:42, note "j!" cf. also, B.W. Anderson, op. cit., p. 24.

In this author's opinion it is extremely appropriate that, in this context, Jacob should be said to invoke God under the title "Kinsman," for this title had peculiar covenantal significance. As we have seen, the word used to express covenant love and loyalty in Hebrew is hesed and it is also used to express the affection and loyalty of kinsmen. (J.L. McKenzie, "Covenant," DOB. 154; Idem, "Love," DOB. 520). Further, when Yahweh is appealed to as the go'el of Israel, the appeal is to Yahweh as the next of kin who has the duty of protecting his clan and its individual members. The kinship so invoked clearly does not rest on any physical relationship but rather upon the covenant relationship initiated by Yahweh with Israel. (J.L. McKenzie, "Avenger," DOB. 70; I. Johnston, op. cit., pp. 22-24).

<sup>77</sup>D.J. McCarthy, CBQ. 26(1964), 185. (Verse 53b and verse 54 are most probably Elohist, whereas v. 46 is Yahwistic. D.J. McCarthy, op. cit., 179, 185; G. von Rad, Genesis, p. 300.)

Thus, in verse 46, the meal has the same significance of Gn 26:30. That is, it is the effective means of constituting the covenant. It precedes the oath which defines and strengthens the covenantal union formed by the common meal. In verse 54, the meal is primarily aimed at effecting union with the deity. It follows upon the oath taking and serves to confirm the covenant already constituted by the oath.<sup>78</sup>

c) The Covenant Between the Gibeonites and Joshua (Jos9:3-20)

But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, they on their part acted with cunning,. . .they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; so now make a covenant with us," But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you live among us; then how can we make a covenant with you?" They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you? And where do you come from?" They said to him, "From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the Lord your God;. . .our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, "We are your servants; come now, make a covenant with us."' Here is our bread; it was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey, on the day we set forth to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and mouldy; these wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they are burst; and these garments and shoes of ours are worn out from the very long journey." So the men partook of their provisions, and did not ask direction from the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

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<sup>78</sup>The distinction between the covenant as based on ritual and the covenant as based on the pledged word (verbal oath) is developed by D.J. McCarthy, Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament. Analecta Biblica 21 (Rome, 1963), c. 13. cf. Idem, CBQ. 26(1964), 181, note 8.

At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them. And the people of Israel set out and reached their cities on the third day. . . But the people of Israel did not kill them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders. But all the leaders said to the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them. This we will do to them, and let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them." (Jos 9:3-20)

Following upon the destruction of the cities of Jericho (Jos 6), and of Ai (Jos 8), the men of Gibeon,<sup>79</sup> fearful that they too will be overrun by the Israelites attempt, by deception, to enter into a covenant with Joshua, a covenant of peace.<sup>80</sup> The Israelites are at first suspicious<sup>81</sup> but their suspicions are allayed by the

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<sup>79</sup>The exact etymology of the word Gibeon is uncertain. Joshua 9 represents the first biblical occurrence of the name. A city of the tribe of Benjamin, it is now identified with the town of el-Jib, six miles north-west of Jerusalem. cf. J.B. Pritchard, "Gibeon," ID. II, 391.

<sup>80</sup>The factual basis of this covenant is further substantiated by 2 S 21:2. Even if verse 2 is a gloss, the context clearly reflects a covenant violation by Saul. If such a covenant existed in Saul's time, there is no reason to assume it did not date back to the time of the Conquest. cf. J. Bright, "Joshua," IB. p. 597; H.W. Hertzberg, op. cit. pp. 381-383. J.M. Grintz has also shown the historical authenticity of this treaty against the background of the Hittite treaties. cf. "The Treaty of Joshua With The Gibeonites," JAOS. 86(1966), 113-126.

<sup>81</sup>If the Gibeonites were from close by then no covenant could be made with them for a 'ban', herem, had been laid upon the whole land. All living creatures were to be utterly destroyed. Israel was permitted to make peace only with those peoples who lived far away. cf. Dt 7:1,2; 20:15, 16; Ex. 23:32,33; 34:12-16. On the significance of the 'ban', herem, in Hebrew, see: The Jerusalem Bible, Joshua 6, note "c"; 1 S 15:9, note "b"; also, E. W. Anderson, op. cit., p. 128.

flattering and ingratiating Gibeonites and by their deceptive appearance. Joshua agrees to a covenant of peace and so binding is the agreement, that even upon the discovery of the deception, it cannot be revoked.<sup>82</sup>

It is in the taking of the Gibeonite provisions that the Israelites explicitly covenant with the Gibeonites. "By the very fact that they accepted to eat of the Gibeonite food, the leaders of Israel enter into covenant with them."<sup>83</sup> Even though the Gibeonites were acting dishonestly and even though the Israelites "did not ask direction from the Lord," (v.14),<sup>84</sup> the act of eating of the offered food bound the Israelites to the men of Gibeon in a peaceful union.

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<sup>82</sup>The violation of the covenant agreement by Saul was expiated in the reign of David. (2 S 21:1-14).

<sup>83</sup>F.M. Abel, La "Bible de Jérusalem," Jos 9:14, note "a": "Du fait qu'ils acceptaient de goûter aux provisions des Gabaonites, les notables d'Israel contractaient une alliance avec eux." (underscoring mine). cf. W.R. Smith, Lectures, p. 271; J. Bright, "Joshua," IB. p. 599; J. Gray, "Joshua, Judges and Ruth," The Century Bible (New Edition). ed. H.H. Rowley and H. Black (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1967), p. 102; J.H. Grintz, op. cit., 117,122; p. 133 above.

<sup>84</sup>"did not ask direction from the Lord: lit. 'asked not the mouth of Yahweh' (Isa 30.2). 'Mouth' here, however, may denote 'word', as in one of the recently discovered alphabetic texts from Ras Shamra. The reference is to the oracle by sacred lots. This suggests that the eating of the provisions was a covenant rite; cf. Gen 31.44 (sic), 54(E), in the case of Jacob and Laban; Gen. 26.26-31(J), Isaac and Abimelech; and Exod. 24.11, the communion meal which consummated the covenant (E. Auerbach, Moses, 1953, p.166). In popular narrative, however, it has become the means whereby the Israelites tested the truth of the statement of the Gibeonites and thereby, by the Gibeonite ruse, the means whereby relationships were established which forbade violence cf. the request of the captive Renauld de Châtillon for a drink in the tent of Salah-ed-Din after the Battle of Qurn Hattin (1187), which the Sultan was careful enough not to give personally. The statement 'they did not ask direction from the Lord' expresses the view of the pre-Deuteronomistic compiler that the transaction was a presumptuous modification of the principles of the holy war." J. Gray, op. cit., p. 102.

The oath taking, (v.15), follows upon the common meal. It defines and strengthens the union established by means of the common meal (cf. Gn 26:30,31; 31:46,52).<sup>85</sup> Because the covenant has been sworn to the Gibeonites "by the Lord, the God of Israel," (v.19), the Israelites cannot violate the relationship without the wrath of the Lord coming down upon them (cf. v.20). Yahweh has witnessed the covenant. It is irrevocably binding in His eyes. To go back on the covenant now -- a covenant in which the participants have shared food together and one in which Yahweh has been invoked as witness -- is to bring certain destruction upon the violators.<sup>86</sup> It was Saul's violation of this covenant which brought Yahweh's wrath, in the form of famine, upon the Israelites (2 S 21:1ff.).

The evidence is clear: by partaking of a common meal, the covenant is enacted; the oath-taking defines and confirms the covenantal union which is absolutely binding in character.

d) The Covenant Between Abner and David (2 S 3:12-21)

And Abner sent messengers to David at Hebron, saying, "To whom does the land belong? Make your covenant with me, and behold, my hand shall be with you to bring over all Israel to you." And he said, "Good; I will make a covenant with you; but one thing I require of you; that is, you shall not see my face, unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face." . . . And Abner conferred with the elders of Israel, saying, "For some time past you have been seeking David as king over you. Now then bring it about; for the Lord has promised David, saying, 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hand of all their enemies.'" Abner also spoke to Benjamin; and then Abner went to tell David at Hebron all that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin thought good to do.

<sup>85</sup>Cf. p. 149, note 69 and p. 153, note 78 above.

<sup>86</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp. 54, 55.

When Abner came with twenty men to David at Hebron, David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him. And Abner said to David, "I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may reign over all that your heart desires." So David sent Abner away; and he went in peace. (2S3:12-21).

After Saul's death, a few of his loyal supporters, led by his commander-in-chief, Abner, presented Saul's son, Ishbaal, as the rightful heir. David, who upon the death of Saul had returned home and been accepted by his own people of Judah as their leader, elected to ignore the claimant Ishbaal and the raids designed by Abner to provoke David into battle. Eventually Ishbaal alienated Abner (2 S 3:6-11), his sole support, and Abner then sent messengers to David asking him to enter into covenant.

David, with some politically astute stipulations, acceded to Abner's petition and entered into covenant with him. Following the taking of a covenant meal together (v.20) Abner departed "in peace," only to be slain by David's commander-in-chief, Joab (vs. 22-27). Upon learning of Joab's treacherous murder of Abner, David was publically and dramatically remorseful (vs. 28-39). While this remorsefulness may have been politically motivated to some extent, it was also the genuine expression of grief on David's learning of the dastardly murder of his covenant partner.<sup>87</sup> This remorse would be particularly acute because the murder had been committed by David's own commander-in-chief. It is simply too glib to write off David's reaction to Abner's death as nothing other than a politically necessary gesture. David was tormented by Abner's death until the hour of his own death (1 K 2:5,6).

The betrayal of Abner was a blatant violation of the covenant of peace which he had entered into with David. The whole account--the emphasis on the blood-vengeance motive of

<sup>87</sup>J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, 295, 296; H.W. Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 261.

Joab (vs. 27, 30), the relentless curse rendered by David on Joab and his family (vs. 28, 29), the public lamentation of David (vs. 31-34), the fasting from food (vs. 35, 36), the deliberate remark that "all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will to slay Abner" (v.37) --is an effort to demonstrate David's innocence in this betrayal (v.28). Even David's failure to enact full covenant-kinship vengeance on Joab is excused and the task is bequeathed to Solomon (1 K 2:5,6, 31-34).<sup>88</sup> Clearly, the author labored to clear David of any part in the murder for such an act was incompatible with his assent to the kingship. David had covenanted with Abner and sent him away "in peace."<sup>89</sup>

Even if David had plotted with Joab to kill Abner, his public remorsefulness and his tortured conscience underscore the gravity, both in the eyes of the people and in his own eyes, of the betrayal of a covenant partner. A gravity that would have been all the more marked because these covenant partners had shared food together. They had celebrated a covenant meal! The common meal prepared by David for Abner and his men (v.20) was certainly a covenant meal.<sup>90</sup> Immediately following it, Abner defines the terms of the covenant (v.21). While this definition is not presented in the form of a solemn oath, it is clearly a definite statement of Abner's covenantal obligation and it serves to confirm verbally the union which has been formed

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<sup>88</sup>The Jerusalem Bible, 2 S 3:39, note "h".

<sup>89</sup>"This has more significance here than a familiar Eastern greeting to one taking his departure, as the way in which the words are taken up afterwards by Joab and his informers shows." H.W. Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 260. cf. verses 22 and 23.

<sup>90</sup>J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, pp. 305, 306; P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 228; D.J. McCarthy, CBQ. 26(1964), p. 185, note 16.

and expressed in the common meal. The meal was a covenant meal and in the partaking of it, the partners effectively bound themselves to one another. Abner's statement defined and confirmed the terms of that covenantal union.<sup>91</sup>

e) Summary: "A Covenant of Salt"

On the basis of the texts examined it would appear that the common meal, by itself, was believed by the ancient Israelites to be an effective means of enacting a covenant. The meal preceded the verbal oath taking.<sup>92</sup> It established and ritually expressed the desired covenantal union. The oath was taken after the meal and served to define verbally and to strengthen further the covenantal union already ritually entered upon by means of the common meal.<sup>93</sup>

The phrase "a covenant of salt" further substantiates the contention that the covenant meal was believed to effect the union desired by the participants. This phrase, "a covenant of salt," which is exceptional in its occurrence--

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<sup>91</sup>The terms of the covenant: Abner would win for David the allegiance of the tribes subject to Ishbaal and restore Michal to David. Implicitly, David would give a post of command to Abner, either as a replacement for Joab or alongside him. Nothing is stated explicitly of a promise by David to Abner, similar to the promise made to Amasa later (19:14), namely, that he would become the commander-in-chief of David's army. "We must, however, assume that Abner was destined for the command of the Israelite army, and some envy on this account may have been a contributory factor in Joab's rash decision." H.W. Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 260.

<sup>92</sup>In G.E. Mendenhall's thinking, the meal, as a symbolic action, was an oath. The oath, as the constitutive element which made a covenant binding, could be a verbal or a symbolic action. cf. Chapter I, pp. 55, 56.

<sup>93</sup>The one exception is Gn 31:54. cf. pp. 152, 153, notes 76, 77, 78, above.

it occurs but three times in the Old Testament (Nm 18:19; 2 Ch 13:5; Lv 2:13) -- is also exceptional in its significance. It signifies an especially binding and intimate covenant.

In Nm 18:19, the Lord addresses Aaron: "All the holy offerings which the people of Israel present to the Lord I give to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due; it is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord for you and for your offspring with you." In 2 Ch 13:5 Abijah the king of Judah says to Jeroboam, the king of Israel, "Ought you not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel for ever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?" And, in Lv 2:13, the Lord, through Moses, enjoins the people of Israel to be faithful in their sacrificial offerings according to the prescribed ritual, "You shall season all your cereal offerings with salt; you shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be lacking from your cereal offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt."

While the word "covenant" occurs 286 times in the Old Testament, it is remarkable that the term "covenant of salt" occurs on three occasions only and then, in such exceptional contexts. The Lord's covenant with Aaron and his offspring in the priesthood, and with David and his offspring in the kingship, is a "covenant of salt," a perpetual and unbreakable covenant. God's people are to remember that in their offerings to Him, salt is a vital and essential element if they are to stay within the terms of this perpetual and unbreakable covenant.<sup>94</sup>

H. C. Trumbull has shown that for ancient man, beyond its purifying value, salt had a symbolic value.

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<sup>94</sup>Cf. H.C. Trumbull, The Covenant Of Salt: As Based On The Significance And Symbolism Of Salt In Primitive Thought (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), pp.17-20.

It symbolized life. Those who shared salt together entered into a life-sharing covenant.<sup>95</sup>

Salt is counted as the equivalent of blood and of life. . .in primitive thought. . .therefore, salt, like blood, has been deemed a nexus of a lasting covenant, as nothing can be which is not life or its equivalent. Only as two persons are sharers of a common life can they be supposed to have merged their separate identity in that dual union.

And so we find that, in the primitive world's thought, shared salt has preciousness and power because of what it represents and of what it symbolizes, as well as of what it is. Salt stands for and corresponds with, and it symbolizes, blood and life. As such it represents the supreme gift from the Supreme Giver. Because of this significance of salt, when made use of as the means of a lasting union, the Covenant of Salt, as a form or phase of the Blood Covenant, is a covenant fixed, permanent, and unchangeable, enduring forever.<sup>96</sup>

The sharing of salt usually accompanied the sharing of bread and a covenant of salt was generally enacted by the parties partaking of bread and salt together.

Moreover, because salt is a common ingredient in Oriental bread, the eating of bread with another in the East may include the sharing of salt with him; but in such a case it is the salt, and not the bread, which is the nexus of the perpetual covenant, in its distinction from the temporary compact of hospitality in the sharing of bread. The bread is the vehicle of the covenant-making salt. Indeed, they have it for a proverb among Arabs and Syrians, "My bread has no salt in it," as a mode of accounting for any act of treachery, or failure in fidelity toward one who was a partaker of the bread of hospitality.<sup>97</sup>

The significance of the Arabic phrase "there is salt between us," has already been indicated. Proverbially, it is the equivalent of stating: "I have eaten with him, he is

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., especially, pp. 37-80.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 142. cf. pp. 37-80.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

a brother. I can do him no harm. In fact, I must help him and defend him as a brother."<sup>98</sup>

However, there is no need to seek the authentic meaning of the phrase "a covenant of salt" outside the Old Testament itself. From the biblical texts cited (Nm 18:19, 2 Ch 13:5, Lv 2:13), and from other incidental references to salt (Ezr 4:14, 6:8-10, 7:22), it is clear that "a covenant of salt" signified an unbreakable and permanent covenant. To partake of the salt of another was to be intimately and intensely bound to that other.<sup>99</sup> This was ordinarily accomplished in the context of a meal. When one partook of the "bread" of another, one partook of his "salt" and accordingly bound himself in intimate and peaceful union to that other person.<sup>100</sup> As D. J. McCarthy comments:

... in Israel itself a "salt" covenant is especially binding to the extent that the phrase is equivalent to saying unbreakable covenant. The implications are that sharing a meal could by itself be an effective means of constituting a covenant. It seems less than likely that an auxiliary rite, a mere adjunct, would give its name to an especially lasting union. More, such a union must have been conceived of in terms of a family bond.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>98</sup>P. 133, note 16 above.

<sup>99</sup>J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II., p. 306; P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 228; D.J. McCarthy, CBQ, 26(1954), p. 185; H.C. Trumbull's commentary on the significance of salt in the biblical texts, Ezr 4:14, 6:8-10, 7:22, in The Covenant Of Salt, pp. 19, 20.

<sup>100</sup>Cf. J. Pedersen, Israel, I-II, p. 306; P. van Imschoot, op. cit., p. 228.

<sup>101</sup>D. J. McCarthy, op. cit., p. 185. cf. pp. 145, 146, and note 56, above; McCarthy's contention is that admission to the meal implied admission to the family. Hence, his statement that "such a union must have been conceived of in terms of a family bond."

The contextual examination of secular covenant meals in Gn 26:30, 31:46,54, Jos 9:14, and 2 S 3:20, along with the implications of the phrase "a covenant of salt," in Nm 18:19; 2 Ch 13:5; Lv 2:13, both elaborate and specify what was stated of secular common meals generally in the Old Testament.<sup>102</sup> In the Old Testament, the secular common meal was a means of confirming and strengthening "psychic community" where it already existed. Further, the common meal was a means of establishing "psychic community" where it did not already exist but where it was desired, i.e., in the making of a covenant. The common meal could be both the source and the sign, the establishment and the expression of a shared life, a common life. In the context of the making of a covenant, the common meal could be both the source and the sign, the establishment and the expression of the desired covenantal union, a union of lives. This union achieved by means of the covenant meal could equal in intimacy, intensity and permanency, the union which characterized the family relationship. In the mind of the Ancient Israelites, the meal was judged to be the effective means of producing that union!

## (2) In Religious Covenants

### a) The Passover Meal (Ex 12:1-14, 21-27)

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall be for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they shall take every man a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household; and if the household is too small for a lamb, then a man and his neighbour next to his house shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old; you shall take it from the sheep or from the goats; and you shall

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<sup>102</sup>pp. 128-134 above.

keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs in the evening. Then they shall take some of the blood, and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat them. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled with water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning, anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it; your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall fall upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. . . This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance for ever. . ." (Ex 12:1-14; cf. 12:21-27).

Among those who have attempted to articulate the full significance of the Original Passover ceremony, attention has already been directed to H. C. Trumbull who contended that the ritual had the qualities of a blood covenant and the Original Passover was, in effect, a Threshold Covenant. According to Trumbull, then, the meal which accompanied the Passover blood ritual, the Original Passover Meal, was a covenant meal. It confirmed the union between God and the Israelites; a union which had been established in blood.<sup>103</sup> Whether or not one accepts totally Trumbull's hypothesis, it is clear that the Original Passover Meal was a sacrificial communion meal which had covenantal significance.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup>Cf. Chapter II, pp. 71-74, notes 51-59; H.C. Trumbull, The Blood Covenant, p. 232.

<sup>104</sup>J.B. Segal, op. cit., pp. 102,103,106,165ff.; M. Buber, op. cit., pp. 69-73; J.H.R. Tillard, The Eucharist: Pasch of God's People. trans. Dennis L. Wienk (Staten Island,

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the many highly-nuanced theories on the origins and development of the Passover;<sup>105</sup> nor is it germane to enter into the detailed ritual prescriptions pertaining to the Passover Meal.<sup>106</sup> However, it is pertinent to note and underscore the fact that the Original Passover was a sacrifice and the meal was a sacrificial meal.

The Passover was perhaps the oldest type of sacrifice practiced by the Israelites<sup>107</sup> and it was an "altogether exceptional kind of sacrifice in which everything takes place away from any altar."<sup>108</sup> The Passover was exceptional in another respect as well:

There is a significant difference in procedure between the primitive Pesah and all other sacrifices in the Israelite calendar. With other sacrifices in which the flesh of the victim was eaten, a portion was set aside under the ordinance of the priest, and the rest was eaten by the celebrants. At the Pesah nothing was given to the priests, all was eaten by the celebrants. Indeed the priests themselves slew and ate their own Pesah victims. This difference between the Pesah and all other sacrifices is capable of ready explanation. The regulations of the Israelite Temple prescribe that the portions reserved for the officiating priest at an 'eaten' sacrifice were his due in return for manipulating the blood. (e.g., Lev. 7:32f., cf. 7:8,14). At the primitive Pesah the blood was handled

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New York: Alba House, 1967), pp. 212-215. B. Cooke, op. cit., p. 11; W. Moulton, "Passover," HDB. III. 690.

<sup>105</sup>For a presentation and summary of the theories on the origins and development of the Passover, see J. B. Segal, op. cit., pp. 1-113; H.-J. Kraus, op. cit., pp. 27ff., 45-55.

<sup>106</sup>On these see: J.B. Segal, op. cit., pp. 166ff.

<sup>107</sup>R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 441; L. Bouyer, Rite and Man, p. 85.

<sup>108</sup>R. de Vaux, op. cit., p. 429.

by the heads of families who slew the victims. . . and they and their families were therefore entitled to all the flesh.<sup>109</sup>

The Passover was essentially an eaten sacrifice and one of the most important features of the Original Passover was the consumption of the entire victim by the sacrificers and their households. Even though the victim was entirely consumed, the sacrificial meal was still sacred in character;<sup>110</sup> a sacred meaning was attached to the meal and it aimed at communion with God. "The blood rites on the Pesah night proclaimed the unity of each household; the eating of the victim's flesh by the members of the household together was a definite act of communion."<sup>111</sup>

Some scholars have claimed that the Passover victim was used "both as a substitute and as a symbol of the god." The "ritual eating of the flesh of the victim" enabled "the identification of the interested person with the god as a means of deliverance from the attack of a hostile power." This, then, would be the reason for the injunction that nothing of the Passover victim was to be left over (cf., Ex 12:10); "anything left over would at once render invalid the magical and apotropaic value of the identification by destroying its completeness."<sup>112</sup> This theory, which claims a divine essence for the Passover victim, is, on the basis of the evidence available, an unproved postulate.<sup>113</sup> The

<sup>109</sup>J. B. Segal, op. cit., p. 157.

<sup>110</sup>L. Bouyer, Rite and Man, p. 85.

<sup>111</sup>J. B. Segal, op. cit., p. 165 (underscoring mine).

<sup>112</sup>The three quotations are taken from S.H. Hooke, The Origins Of Early Semitic Ritual (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 49. For a summary of other similarly-orientated theories, cf. J.B. Segal, op. cit., pp. 78, 85ff., 102, 103.

<sup>113</sup>J.B. Segal, op. cit., p. 103. Also what has been said of the Totemism of the Semites is applicable here. See: pp. 139-141, notes 41-45 above.

Israelites did not believe that they were eating a divine victim when they celebrated the Passover Meal; however, they did believe that they were eating food "belonging to God,"<sup>114</sup> and that they were eating it "for him."

A short while before the Exodus, when Moses is quite certain of its impending fulfilment without knowing the exact hour, he orders that the holy meal should be eaten on the evening prior to the Departure; when he recognizes that what he is awaiting is immediately due, he gives the signals. . . The clans slaughter the preordained animals at the same time. Each family eats of its own, each in its own house, which nobody may leave (Ex. xii,22); but they all eat at the same time, a single meal unites them into a community. . . it is a sacramental meal. This should not be understood as meaning that the God partakes of it (none of the rites indicate this) nor that the divine substance dwells in the animal or is consumed with it. The essential thing to realize is that here a natural and customary human activity, that of eating, is elevated by the participation of the whole community to the level of an act of communion; and as such it is consecrated to the God. It is eaten "for him".<sup>115</sup>

Over the course of the Israelites' history, the Original Passover ceremony evolved considerably. However, the communal and covenantal aspects of the meal remained paramount throughout.

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<sup>114</sup>L. Bouyer, Rite and Man, p. 85.

<sup>115</sup>M. Buber, op. cit., pp. 70,71 (underscoring mine). "The religious value of the pesach is indicated by its auxiliary words. In one account which is probably pre-exilic is found a specific injunction to "preserve this act of worship," (Ex. 12:25), which is described as "a sacrifice to Yahweh." (Ex. 12:27). In another account of almost equal age there are three verses containing directions to "sacrifice the pesach" (Dt. 16:2,5,6). The killing of the pesach is mentioned three times (Ex. 12:21; 2 Ch. 30:15, 17; 35:1,6,11); eating the pesach is mentioned twice (Ex. 12:48. 2 Ch. 30:18). The common expression is "to perform the pesach" (Ex. 12:48. Nm.9:2,4,5,6,10,13,14. Dt. 16:1. Jos. 5:10. 2 Kg. 23:21,22,23. 2 Ch. 30:1,2,5; 35:16,18,19. Ezr. 6:19). At the beginning or at the end of a number of accounts is found a phrase describing the act as "Yahweh's pesach" or "a pesach for Yahweh" (Ex. 12:11,27,48. Lev. 23:5. Num. 28:

The Pesah underwent a vast transformation in Israel. The domestic blood rite was apparently less and less observed; despite the fact that it is, strikingly enough, still the practice of the Samaritans today, though in attenuated form. The domestic meal became a great sacrificial feast, a general tribal pilgrimage to the Jerusalem Temple; where the clans jointly, as once in Egypt, experienced the living reality of their communion. After the destruction of the Second Temple the Passover naturally became a domestic family feast again; and this it has remained until the present day. It may be said that the Jewish people who celebrate the Passover have again drawn close to the meal of the Egyptian Exodus, despite their dispersion. The Passover was and has remained a spring festival, first of the shepherds and then of the peasants; and it is still celebrated by those who have become entirely landless, who no longer have even a common wilderness to wander in. By celebrating the memory of their liberation they glorify the unfettering power whose activity in Nature manifests itself every year in the likeness of the spring. Yet since the night of the Exodus it has become a history feast, and indeed the history feast par excellence of the world; not a feast of pious remembrance, but of the ever-recurrent contemporaneousness of that which once befell. Every celebrating generation becomes united with the first generation and with all those who have followed. As in that night the families united into the living people, so in the Passover night the generations of the people unite together, year after year.<sup>116</sup>

We have already seen something of the "contemporaneity" which lies at the heart of the Israelite religion.<sup>117</sup> The Passover Meal is essential to that "contemporaneity". It is the instrument whereby the Israelites are able to transcend the context of time, of past-present-future limitations, and to join the Exodus generation. They are

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16. Dt. 16:1 2 Kg. 23:21. 2 Chr. 30:1-5.)" R.K. Yerkes, op. cit., p. 86. cf. p. 225.

<sup>116</sup>M. Buber, op. cit., pp. 72, 73. cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Exodus 12, note "a".

<sup>117</sup>Chapter I, pp. 37, 38 and especially note 88, p. 38.

at one with those of the Exodus.<sup>118</sup> The value for the Israelites of the Passover Meal as a "memorial", a Zikkaron,<sup>119</sup> is truly exceptional.

The Passover Meal was already considered as the sacrament in which the hope of the People was revitalized and nourished. In fact, through the rites of the eating of the lamb, of the unleavened bread, of bitter herbs, in the exalting climate of benediction and thanksgiving, in which this celebration was completed, the whole people of Israel relived the marvel of the past. This was not an empty memorial, in words or ritual; it was not a mere doctrinal reminder of an historical occurrence; it was not just a prayer of thanksgiving prompted by the memory of a great event. This was an actualization of the Passover, by means of which, hic et nunc, the People participated in the event, but in order to let themselves be impregnated with its power and dynamism.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>G. Woods, "The Eucharist: The New Passover Meal," BT. 5(1963), p. 314.

<sup>119</sup>"MEMORIAL. Thus we translate the Hebrew zikkaron which the Greek translates by anamnesis. The Memorial is a recalling, a remembrance, in all the aspects of the two terms. One either thinks about a reality of the past, or relives in his own spirit certain obligations or certain situations which demand that he assume a certain attitude, or remembers something in favor of someone or against someone, or recalls something to someone. Here we use the term in its liturgical sense. The liturgical memorial is an act of worship in which we recall an event of Salvation in the past but relive hic et nunc its grace in thanksgiving and blessing. It revives hope in the definitive completion of this Salvation at the very moment when we recall to God his Promise by beseeching him to execute it. The most typical case of this is the Passover Meal of the Old Covenant." J.M.R. Tillard, op. cit., p. 299. cf. pp. 212-215. On this theologically profound concept of zikkaron, see further: M. Thurian, The Eucharistic Memorial, I and II, trans. J.G. Davies (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960, 1961); H. Haag, "Pâque," DBS. VI. 1140-1141; P. Benoit, "Les récits de l'institution et leur portée," LV. 31(1957), 51-54.

<sup>120</sup>J.M.R. Tillard, op. cit., p. 212. "The instructions of the Mishna are very revealing on this point: 'Each one is held to consider himself from generation to generation as if he himself had gone out of Egypt' (that is, had been at once delivered from the slavery of Pharaoh and cast forward into

This memorial did not gravitate solely toward the past; rather it had a triple orientation: "in the paschal meal we find a triple anamnesis, a triple memorial: of a past deliverance regarded as typical, of a present deliverance through the sacramental action of the paschal meal and of a coming salvation in the day of the Messiah. And, as thanks are offered for the past which has become present by the "sacrament", God is asked to accomplish His salvation by sending the Messiah. The past deliverance becomes a pledge of that which is to come, which will be perfect and definitive."<sup>121</sup> The Passover Meal sought to actualize a past historical occurrence but it also sought to actualize the sense of imminent release from bondage which marked the Original Passover. It induced a sense of hope and expectancy in the future. At the same time that it actualized this original deliverance it induced hope in a future final deliverance.

We see that the Passover does not consider the participation of the faithful in the past event as a point of arrival of which he ought to be satisfied, but on the contrary as an opening toward the future: the fact of reliving, hic et nunc, the glorious past, the sign par excellence of the hesed

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the great adventure of the conquest of the Promised Land) 'For it is written: In that day (when you celebrate the going out of Egypt), tell this to your son: it is because the Lord has intervened for me when I went out of Egypt. Therefore, we owe him thanks, praise, blessing, glory, homage, veneration and adoration. He does for us and our Fathers all these marvels; he led us from slavery to liberty, from pain to joy, from affliction to jubilation, from darkness to the great light, from servitude to redemption. Let us sing before him: Alleluia' (Mishna, Pesachim 10,5)." Idem, p. 212.

<sup>121</sup>M. Thurian, The Eucharistic Memorial, I, p. 28. cf. J. Galot, "Le repas eucharistique et l'ancien testament," Revue du clergé africain, 3(1959), pp. 226, 227, 228; and Ps 118, which is sung at the closing of the Meal of the Passover.

we emet (mercy and fidelity) of the God of the Covenant, instills further the motif of hoping for the final deliverance at the so much awaited day of the glorious intervention of the Messiah.

At the very moment when the Passover night celebrates and actualizes the deliverance, it nourishes hope. . . But this strengthening of collective hope is accomplished by the eating of the meal, through it one could say, by the "sacramental" food which is destined to make the People commune with all the realism of the historical event.

In deepening its participation in the historical salvific event of the liberation of Israel, at the same time the faithful sees his certitude of the future accomplishment of the Promise deepened. The more he enters into the historical experience of the People (fruit of the faithfulness of the love of Yahweh), the more he feels he can lean on the Word of God without fear of deception. All that transpires under the cover of an unique act, the sacramental eating of the Passover meal.<sup>122</sup>

The Israelites' hope in a future final deliverance was grounded in the historical deliverance from the Egyptian "house of bondage" (Ex 20:2). More precisely, it was grounded in "a God merciful and gracious," and "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness," (Ex 34:6), who had marvellously liberated them and borne them "on eagles' wings" to Himself (Ex 19:4). He led them to the mountain of his self-manifestation, Sinai, where he dramatically entered into blood-covenant with them, thus providing the vehicle for real self-gift and community of life without which Israel's hope would have gone unrealized.

What had taken place in preliminary fashion on the Original Passover night found its climax at Sinai. What had been initiated by means of the Original Passover ceremony was concluded by means of the Sinaitic ritual: the unparalleled Covenant of God with His People. The most intimate fellowship, equivalent to that which exists

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<sup>122</sup>J.M.R. Tillard, op. cit., pp. 213,214,215.

naturally between a father and a son, was established by means of the Sinaitic blood covenant and was further strengthened and confirmed by the sharing of a common meal, a covenant meal.

b) The Sinaitic Meal (Ex 24:1,2,9-11)

And he said to Moses, "Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship afar off. Moses alone shall come near to the Lord; but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him."

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. (Ex 24:1,2,9-11).

According to this tradition,<sup>123</sup> Moses and the chief men of the people of Israel ascended the mountain<sup>124</sup> and there "beheld God, and ate and drank". The meal was partaken "before the Lord," i.e., in the presence of Yahweh (Dt 12:7; 14:23).<sup>125</sup> Clearly, this was a covenant meal.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>On the traditions which comprise the account of Ex 24:1-11, see Chapter II, p. 111, note 153.

<sup>124</sup>The mountain is, along with the Temple, one of the dwelling places of divinity (Is 25:6-10; Ez 28:14). The Deuteronomist lays great stress on the location where sacred meals are to be held. The reason for his insistence that sacred meals be held in the sanctuary is that they must be taken in the presence of Yahweh, i.e., "before the Lord" (Dt 12:7; 14:23; 15:20; 27:7). cf. J. Danielou, "Les repas de la Bible et leur signification," MD. 18(1948), p. 10.

<sup>125</sup>The meal was held "en présence de Yahvé" (La "Bible de Jérusalem", Dt 12:7; 14:23; 15:20; 27:7). cf. J. Galot, op. cit., 214, 215.

<sup>126</sup>M. Noth, Exodus: A Commentary, p. 196; W. Beyerlin, op. cit., pp. 33,34,150; J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, trans. N. Perrin (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1966), p. 235; H.-J. Kraus, op. cit., p. 120; W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, pp. 156, 157; M. Buber, op. cit.,

W. Beyerlin comments:

Undoubtedly there is something special about this meal: it is for this purpose clearly that the God of Israel orders the representatives of his people to ascend the mountain (v. 1a,9), and subsequently the meal takes place in God's presence (v. 10,11b). This can hardly mean anything but a covenant-meal here. Also in favor of this view is the fact that the tradition represented by vv. 9-11 has been placed immediately after the account of the covenant in Exod. xxiv. 3-8 when the various traditions were combined. Obviously those who transmitted this tradition regarded the making of the covenant and the sacrificial offering in xxiv. 3-8 as the self-evident and essential presupposition of the account in xxiv. 9-11. They were probably not mistaken. Everything points to Exod. xxiv. 11b involving a sacrificial meal in which the covenant between lōhe yiśrāēl and his people was realised and made effective. . . the God of Israel makes a covenant with his people, insofar as he lets Israel's representative eat and drink in his presence.<sup>127</sup>

pp. 111, 115, 118; S.C. Gayford, op. cit., p. 39; J. Galot, op. cit., pp. 214ff.; D.M.G. Stalker, "Exodus," PC. p. 233; J. Lécuyer, op. cit., pp. 17, 18; L. Sabourin, op. cit., p. 349; The Jerusalem Bible, Ex. 24: note "a".

<sup>127</sup>W. Beyerlin, op. cit., pp. 33, 34. The precise relationship between the blood and the meal rites in the conclusion of a covenant is difficult to formulate. S.C. Gayford has articulated, in the context of the Sinaitic covenant, what appears to have been the general primitive belief: "This sharing in a common life-blood inaugurated the Covenant relationship between God and His people at the first, and that relationship once established was afterwards continued in the common meal of the Peace Offering. While blood alone can create the vital union, its continuance is sufficiently secured by the sharing of common food." Sacrifice And Priesthood, p. 39; cf. pp. 19ff.; 37ff.; 164. H.W. Robinson: "In the peace-offering the initial presentation of the blood brings the circle of worshippers positively into communion with the diety, a communion reinforced by their common meal upon the victim." "Hebrew Sacrifice and Prophetic Symbolism," JTS. 43(42-43), p. 131; cf. p. 134. H.C. Trumbull, The Blood Covenant, pp. 350ff.; Idem, The Covenant of Salt, pp. 79, 80. J.G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, p. 202. P.-M. Galopin, "Repas," VTB. p. 902. Hence, in the thought of the above authors, the meal confirms and strengthens the relationship which has been established in blood. The evidence, universally and biblically, supports

To see God is an immense privilege and one which requires exceptional protection. Normally such a vision would mean death (Ex 33:20).<sup>128</sup> Here this astonishing favor is heightened and climaxed by a common meal. Yahweh allows Moses and the elders to attain to the most profound intimacy with Him. He allows them to partake of a meal in his presence, to partake of a meal with Him.

After having allowed Moses and the elders to come close to him, to the point of letting them see him, God gives them access to his table. He thereby brings them even more profoundly into his intimacy, for to eat and drink with someone is to enjoy the greatest familiarity with him. The meal is the definitive consecration of an intimacy which began in contemplation. One can understand, then, the insistence with which the Deuteronomist emphasized that sacred meals must be held, not in any place at all, but in the sanctuary, the place where Yahweh has decided to dwell. The meal must preserve its objective which is to enable men to enter into the divine presence, to enter into a relationship of intimacy initiated by God himself.<sup>129</sup> It is a question of eating and drinking "with God."

From the evidence provided by our examination of secular covenant meals, it seems certain that this tradition, whereby the Sinaitic covenant is concluded by a meal, is

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this contention. However, where there is no bloody offering, no sacrifice, in the making of a covenant (e.g., Joshua with the Gibeonites, cf. pp. 153-156, above), the meal alone establishes the covenantal relationship. In our examination of the secular covenant meals of the Old Testament (pp. 147-163, above), the meals both expressed and effected the desired covenantal union of the participants!

<sup>128</sup>cf. Gn 16:13; 32:30; Jg 6:22,23; Is 6:5; J. Galot, op. cit., p. 214; D. M. G Stalker, op. cit., 233; E. F. Siegman, "The Blood of the Covenant," AER. 136(1957), p. 171. The Jerusalem Bible, Ex 33:20, note "i".

<sup>129</sup>J. Galot, op. cit., pp. 214, 215.

rooted in the Israelite patriarchal period.<sup>130</sup> It is an instance of a custom current among men being transferred to their relationship with their God. We have already noted that Israel's relationship with God, because it was seen as a covenant relationship, took over the ideas integral to the human covenants they had experienced. The tradition of the covenant meal as recorded in Ex 24:11b is an explicit example of such a transfer. The shared meal as significant of intimate union with God is but an application of a human covenant custom well known to the Israelites.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup>We have observed the practice of sharing a meal in the concluding of a covenant among Israel's patriarchs, (pp. 147-153 above), as well as among the ancient Arabs (pp. 132, 133 above). We have seen similar testimony for the period of the Conquest (pp. 153ff.). "The Sinai tradition in Exod. xxiv. 11b obviously refers to this ancient, sacral rite of eating and drinking together, which is attested for the period of the patriarchs and the conquest and which was used to ratify the terms of treaties between human covenant partners. . . It is perhaps not accidental that Exod. xxiv. 11b describes the completion of this covenant-rite in the same words as Gen. xxvi. 30b: 'and they ate and drank'. On the other hand, there is an interesting parallelism in an Arabic poet: 'There was a sworn covenant between Lihyân and Mustalik: they used to eat and drink together'. This raises the consideration whether or not this 'eating and drinking' could be used simply as a technical term for making a covenant. In that case the words 'and they ate and drank' in Exod. xxiv. 11b (and Gen. xxvi. 30b) could be a formal expression which was immediately understood in ancient Israel from its connection with that rite. This would also explain the pithiness and brevity of the tradition in Exod. xxiv. 11b which sounds so mysterious. But, whatever the truth of this may be, there is no doubt that this old fragment of the Sinai tradition goes back to a sacral custom of covenant-making, which is attested several times in the period of the patriarchs and the conquest of Israel." W. Beyerlin. op. cit., p. 34; cf. p. 150; J. Galot, op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>131</sup>J. Galot, op. cit., p. 216; E. F. Siegman, op. cit., p. 171.

There is a further point. Not only did the Sinaitic covenant meal dramatically symbolize the union of Israel with her God, it also clearly signified the union of the Israelites among themselves.

When the purpose of the meal is the ratification of the covenant between the Jewish People and Yahweh, it expresses primarily a certain community of life and of goods between God and man; but must we conclude that it thereby ceases completely to express the communal solidarity of the men themselves? It seems not. For the meal is always taken in community; also, the meal of Moses and the seventy elders of Israel, while signifying primarily their union with God, implies as well their union with one another. In entering into the covenant with Yahweh, the representatives of the Jewish People more definitively consecrate the community constituted by their people. One notes that when the Deuteronomist lays down prescriptions for the meals to be held in the sanctuary, he has reference to this communal aspect, since the meals are to bring together the whole family or household. At the same time that it symbolizes a covenant bond with God, the sacred meal symbolizes the union and solidarity of all those who participate in it. What God unites to himself by means of these meals is a community.<sup>132</sup>

By means of this sacred meal shared on Sinai, the Israelites experienced intimate personal communion and profound community of life both with their God and with their fellow Israelites. "The two fellowships, that of the human participants among themselves and that of the human participants on the one hand with God on the other hand are concurrent."<sup>133</sup> Those who partake of the meal, by that very fact, "become a fellowship."<sup>134</sup> The meal is a covenant meal and the fellowship is clearly covenantal. By allowing this meal to be taken "in his presence", Yahweh confirms the existence of a covenantal union with the participants.

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<sup>132</sup>J. Galot, op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>133</sup>L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, p. 183.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

Yahweh is seen to share in the Sinaitic covenant meal thus acknowledging that He is in fellowship with the Israelites. In the taking of the meal together there is a reciprocal acknowledgement, expressed by the formula: "I will be your God, and you shall be my people."<sup>135</sup> Those who partake of the meal, accept to live a life of mutual trust, a life of hesed.<sup>136</sup>

The community of life mediated through the sacred covenant meal rests on the powerful and gracious initiative of Yahweh. It comes into being as pure gift from him.<sup>137</sup> Yahweh expressed his commitment to the Israelites when he allowed them, in the persons of their leaders, to partake of a covenant meal with Him! Thus he confirmed the existence of a profound relationship of covenant love and peace. However, this "declaration," this pure gift, inexorably summoned the Israelites to a life of "holiness" (Lv 19:2), and moral obligation, which they failed to live. Their covenant love response was distorted by their constant recourse to a dead externalism which rendered impossible the genuine gift of their hearts, of their lives.<sup>138</sup>

Yahweh's response to Israel's manifest failure to "keep" the covenant was to establish a new covenant, one which would enable the total acceptance of the divine will in its gracious seeking of communion with man. This divine favor would consist in an inner inspiration whereby man would be able to live unreservedly a life of covenant love. The Hope of this new covenant rested on the coming of a Messiah who would prove to be an utterly loyal covenant partner and thus assure the realization of a permanent covenant union.

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<sup>135</sup> Chapter I, p.36, note 35; L. Koehler, op.cit., p. 183.

<sup>136</sup> L. Koehler, op. cit., p. 183, note 148.

<sup>137</sup> W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, pp. 156-158.

<sup>138</sup> Chapter I, pp. 38ff.; II, pp. 122ff.

This Messiah is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who, in himself, is the fullness and the mediator of the new covenant. This new, everlasting covenant is established in his blood and, as such it continues, fulfills and immeasurably transcends the Old Covenant of Sinai.<sup>139</sup>

The Sinaitic covenant was an imperfect reality in that it was conditional. The covenantal union between God and his people could be violated; the covenant could be rendered void. The New Covenant, precisely because of Christ is one that would never be abrogated. The Eucharist is the covenant meal of this new reality and it shares in its perfection.<sup>140</sup> The Eucharist both expresses and effects the union of God and the Christian for in this sacrificial covenant meal the Christian partakes of the body and blood of Christ, the incarnate God. The sacrificial food of the Eucharist is not the flesh of a substitute and irrational animal, rather, it is the flesh and blood of Christ Jesus, the Son of God Himself. By His Eucharistic self-gift he purposely and perfectly draws all mankind to God in covenant love. At the Last Supper (Mt 26:26-28, Mk 14:22-25, Lk 22:19-20, 1 Co 11:23-25), Christ, with divine finesse, uniquely fused the two traditional rites which effected the conclusion of the Sinaitic covenant (Ex 24:1-11). Not only did he uniquely synthesize the blood and meal rites of Sinai, but, in presenting himself as the sacrificial food to be eaten, he really effected the remission of man's sins and overcame man's estrangement from God. In the gift of himself in this sacrificial covenant meal, the Eucharist, Christ gave to man

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<sup>139</sup>Chapter I, pp. 41-48.

<sup>140</sup>W. Lynch, "The Eucharist: A Covenant Meal," BT. 5(1963), 319-323; J. Alfrink, "Biblical Background to the Eucharist as a Sacrificial Meal," ITQ. 26(1959), 290-302; E.J. Kilmartin, The Eucharist in the Primitive Church (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 47, 48; J. Galot, *op. cit.*, pp. 216ff. This point will be developed in Chapter IV.

the fullest earthly experience of God's covenant love along with the ability to live this love unreservedly. Further, in the Eucharist of the Last Supper, Christ inchoatively realized the limitless joyful union of the consummated New Covenant.<sup>141</sup> The Eucharist of the Last Supper is the anticipation of the consummation of the New Covenant; it is the anticipated fulfillment of the Messianic Feast.

### c) The Messianic Feast

Given the all-importance of the meal as a religious expression of their desired union with Yahweh, it is not at all surprising that the concept of a sacred meal should come to be connected with Israelite Messianic expectations.

"With the development of the Messianic hope, there arose the idea of an eschatological banquet which would unite Israel around the Messiah."<sup>142</sup> There are many Old Testament references which attest to the prominence of this Messianic Feast in Israel's eschatological expectations.

According to the Book of Isaiah, God will bestow upon his people le bonheur messianique, le bonheur idéal in the form of an extraordinary banquet.<sup>143</sup>

On this mountain,  
Yahweh Sabaoth will prepare for all peoples  
a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines,  
of food rich and juicy, of fine strained wines.  
On this mountain he will remove  
the mourning veil covering all peoples,  
and the shroud enwrapping all nations,  
he will destroy death for ever.  
The Lord Yahweh will wipe away  
the tears from every cheek;

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<sup>141</sup>Chapter I, pp. 48, 49.

<sup>142</sup>E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>143</sup>J. Daniélou, op. cit., pp. 8-12; J. Galot, op. cit. pp. 228ff.

he will take away his people's shame  
everywhere on earth,  
for Yahweh has said so.  
That day, it will be said: See, this is our God  
in whom we hoped for salvation;  
Yahweh is the one in whom we hoped.  
We exult and we rejoice  
that he has saved us;  
for the hand of Yahweh  
rests on this mountain. (Is 25:6-10).<sup>144</sup>

The anticipated joy of the messianic age is here depicted as a lavish banquet offered to "all peoples" -- striking in the quality of its fare and held in the intimacy of the divine host, Yahweh.<sup>145</sup>

Deutero-Isaiah also utilizes the imagery of a meal to depict the covenantal blessings of the Messianic age:

Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty;  
though you have no money, come!  
Buy corn without money, and eat.  
and, at no cost, wine and milk.  
Why spend money on what is not bread,  
your wages on what fails to satisfy?  
Listen, listen to me and you will have good things  
to eat and rich food to enjoy.  
Pay attention, come to me;  
listen, and your soul will live.  
With you I will make an everlasting covenant  
out of the favours promised to David. (Is 55:1-3).

The absolutely gratuitous nature of the divine invitation and blessing is eloquently emphasized. The nourishment is offered to all. Participation is not dependent upon material wealth. The possession of money is in no way determinative! This invitation to come and partake of free food and drink is reminiscent of earlier biblical themes, e.g., the provision of manna and water in the desert period

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<sup>144</sup>JB. translation. cf. Rv 7:17; 21:4.

<sup>145</sup>Cf. J. Daniélou, op. cit., pp. 9, 10; J. Galot, op. cit., pp. 228, 229; The Jerusalem Bible, Is 25: notes "b" and "c", and note 124 above.

(Ex 16;17),<sup>146</sup> and Hosea's insistence that it is God alone who provides food and drink for Israel (2:8,9).<sup>147</sup> The meal is provided freely by Yahweh. The Israelite is simply asked to come to the meal and to be completely and delectably nourished.

Food and drink provided by the deity have a wonderful character; and the fact that they are provided attests that the relations between Yahweh and his people are harmonious. It is true, in the words of Deut viii 3, that man does not live by bread alone but by everything that proceeds from the mouth of Yahweh, and this includes his spirit and his revelation. But to accept the food of Yahweh as sufficient, and not to seek laboriously elsewhere for food which does not satisfy, is to commit oneself to faith in the saving power of Yahweh. From this food man will live truly and fully;. . .<sup>148</sup>

One can detect in this meal as described in Isaiah 55:1-3, the consummation of the new and eternal covenant. The meal is the consecration of the relationship of intimate friendship and loving kindness which exists between Yahweh and his people.<sup>149</sup>

The same theme of the Messianic Feast is also found in the Book of Proverbs:

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<sup>146</sup>On the manna as a type of the Eucharist and as a type of the divine blessings reserved for the Messianic age, see E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 12-16.

<sup>147</sup>J. L. McKenzie, Second Isaiah (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1968), p. 143.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>149</sup>"Ce repas (Is., LV, 1-3), est un accomplissement de l'alliance, alliance définitive et perpétuelle. Il consacre donc les relations d'amitié entre Dieu et son peuple." J. Galot, op. cit., p. 229. cf. idem, p. 229, note 37: "On peut encore citer l'allusion au repas eschatologique dans Is., LXV, 13: le repas est accordé aux serviteurs de Yahvé, mais refusé à ceux qui ont honoré des idoles et ont dressé une table pour eux."

Wisdom has built herself a house,  
 she has erected her seven pillars,  
 she has slaughtered her beasts, prepared her wine,  
 she has laid her table.  
 She has despatched her maidservants  
 and proclaimed from the city's heights:  
 'Who is ignorant? Let him step this way.'  
 To the fool she says,  
 'Come and eat my bread,  
 drink the wine I have prepared!  
 Leave your folly and you will live,  
 walk in the ways of perception.' (Pr 9:1-6).<sup>150</sup>

This celebrated Feast of Wisdom is clearly related to the Messianic Feast and it is the most ancient Old Testament text dedicated to the theme.<sup>151</sup> "The meal to which Wisdom invites the simple-minded or the ignorant represents metaphorically the education by which She wishes to transform their consciousness and to make them wise. She wishes to enlighten them so that they may have life. It is a question then of a meal which represents light and life."<sup>152</sup> This Feast of Wisdom is a variant description, in a sapiential context, of the Feast prepared by Yahweh on the holy mountain for all mankind. To eat and drink of the bread and wine offered by Wisdom is to participate personally in divine wisdom. "Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my produce. For the remembrance of me is sweeter than honey, and my inheritance sweeter than the honeycomb. Those who

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<sup>150</sup>JB. translation. "It is clear that this allegory (Proverbs 9:5) is related to the Messianic Feast because the vocabulary resembles the description of the Messianic Feast described in Isaiah 65:11-14 and the literary form is similar to Isaiah 55:1-3." E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., p. 8. cf. A. Robert, "Les attaches littéraires bibliques de Prov., I-IX," RB. 43(1943), pp. 374-379. Robert demonstrates the literary connections between Is 55:1-3 and Pr 9:1-6.

<sup>151</sup>E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 7, 8; J. Galot, op. cit., pp. 233ff.; J. Daniélou, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>152</sup>J. Galot, op. cit., p. 235; cf. E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 7, 8. A. Robert, op. cit., pp. 374-379.

eat me will hunger for more, and those who drink me will thirst for more." (Si 24:19-21). To eat and drink of the fare offered by Wisdom is to eat and drink of Wisdom Herself.<sup>153</sup>

The Psalms, too, proclaim the Messianic Feast. The Feast will be hosted by the shepherd and will be offered to the poor: "The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live for ever!" (Ps 22:26; cf. 23:5,6). And, the Song of Solomon appears to refer to the Messianic Feast<sup>154</sup> when it sings of the longed-for union between Yahweh and his people: "I come to my garden, my sister, my bride, I gather my myrrh with my spice, I eat my honeycomb with my honey, I drink my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends, and drink: drink deeply, O lovers!" (5:1). Here the Messianic Feast is represented as a feast of espousal to which the spouse invites his friends. "This image gives to the Messianic Feast the character of a covenant and indicates that it is the occasion for an encounter of the most intimate sort between Yahweh and the eschatological community."<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup>J. Galot, op. cit., p. 234; E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., p. 8. Note that the passage, Si 24:19-21, is dependent upon Pr 8,9.

<sup>154</sup>"If it is an allegory using the language of human love to sing of the ideal union between Yahweh and His people a union more hoped for than realized, it is likely that Song of Solomon 5:1 refers to the Messianic Feast. Just as the banquet mentioned in Isaiah 25:6, it takes place on the "mountain of incense" mentioned in Song of Solomon 4:6, namely, the site of the Temple. Moreover, this mountain is located in the garden, that is, Paradise, the place par excellence of the divine presence. The wine and milk mentioned in Song of Solomon 5:1 are associated with water and wheat referred to in Isaiah's invitation to the Messianic Feast (55:1-3). These foods, opposed as they are to deceptive satisfaction, have a metaphorical meaning. They designate the material and spiritual joy of the Messianic age promised to those who hear Yahweh." E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit. p. 7.

<sup>155</sup>E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 9, 10.

In Judaic literature at the time of Christ, the great blessings of the age to come take the form of a meal held not only in the presence of Yahweh but with the Messiah himself: "The Lord of Spirits will dwell with them and they will eat with this Son of Man; they will take their places at His Table forever and ever." (Enoch 62:14).<sup>156</sup>

Thus, in the image of the Messianic Feast, which transcends all of the sacred meals of the Old Testament, we have the most striking type of the Eucharist. The Eucharist of the Last Supper is the fullest earthly realization and the anticipated fulfillment of the Messianic Feast. Christ, divine Wisdom incarnated, by the gift of himself as food, effects perfect covenantal union between God and man. The consummation of this covenantal union goes beyond any earthly experience. But the sacrificial covenant meal of the Eucharist more fully and really anticipates that consummation than any other earthly reality. It inchoatively realizes that time when all mankind will be one in the Lord; when all will be gathered together for a meal in which each will be intimately united in the Lord: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." (Rv 3:20).

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<sup>156</sup>Cf. 4 Esdras 8:52; J. Bonsirven, op. cit., p. 519; J. Galot, op. cit., pp. 229, 230; E. J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 8, 10.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Eucharist: Sacrificial Meal of the New Covenant

#### A. Jesus Is The New Covenant

Within the profound prophetic insight of Deutero-Isaiah the new covenant was to be established in the person of the Servant of Yahweh, ebed Yahweh, who would be given "as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness" (Is 42:6,7; cf. 49:8).<sup>1</sup> In this context the Servant himself is the Covenant in person.<sup>2</sup> The Servant of Yahweh will, in his very person, effect the new covenant. That is, he will accomplish personally the communion-creating self-disclosure of God to mankind.<sup>3</sup>

This task of Servant of Yahweh, with its inherent and essential commitment to enact a definitive covenant between God and man, is consciously assumed and fulfilled by Christ.<sup>4</sup>

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp. 43, 44.

<sup>2</sup>O. Cullmann, The Christology Of The New Testament. (rev. ed.) trans. S.C. Guthrie and C.A.M. Hall (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Chapter I, p. 43, note 99.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Chapter I, p. 44, notes 101-103.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me to preach  
good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to  
the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."  
And he closed the book, and gave it back to the  
attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the  
synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to  
them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your  
hearing." (Lk 4:16-21).<sup>5</sup>

By his sacrificial life, suffering and death, Christ  
literally took upon himself "the form of a servant" (Ph 2:  
7).<sup>6</sup> When he says: "For the Son of Man also came not to be  
served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for  
many" (Mk 10:45),<sup>7</sup> he is, in fact, saying: "'The Son of Man  
came to fulfill the task of the ebed Yahweh.'"<sup>8</sup> As "the  
beloved Son," with whom the Father is "well pleased," (Mt  
3:16), Christ deliberately accepts the summons of the Father  
to be the suffering servant of God.<sup>9</sup> As the only Son of God,

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. Is 61:1,2; 42:1,6,7; 49:3,8,9; Mt 3:16ff.; Ac 3:  
13ff.; 8:32,33; The Jerusalem Bible, Is 42: note "a"; Mt 3:  
17, note "n".

<sup>6</sup>King James Version.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Mt 20:28; Lk 22:27; The Jerusalem Bible, Mt 20:  
28, note "g".

<sup>8</sup>O. Cullmann, op. cit., p. 65. "Here (Mk 10:45) we  
hear the central theme of the ebed Yahweh hymns, and this is  
a clear allusion to Isa. 53.5." Idem, p. 65. cf. E.J. Kil-  
martin, The Eucharist in the Primitive Church (Englewood  
Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1965), p. 54; V.  
Taylor, The Gospel According To St. Mark. (2nd ed.) (New York:  
St. Martin's Press, 1966), pp. 444-446, 546.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Mk 1:11; Jn 1:32,34; Is 42:1; The Jerusalem  
Bible, Mt 3:17, note "n"; O. Cullmann, op. cit., pp. 51-82,  
especially pp. 66, 67, 68, 79; E. J. Kilmartin, op. cit.,  
p. 54.

sent by the Father (Jn 3:16) and delivered up for us all (Rm 8:32), he personally establishes the new and everlasting covenant between his Father and his fellow men. Precisely as Son of God and Son of Man he realizes the new covenant.

In His own person, as God-man, He expresses the double movement involved in the establishment of the covenant. As the Son of God He initiated it. As the one sent from the Father He invites men to enter into the covenant with the Father, but He is also the called representative of men. As the head of the new mankind, mankind of the new covenant, His response to the invitation which He experiences within Himself completes the establishment of the new relationship between the Father and mankind. His response is, in effect, our salvation.<sup>10</sup>

As the incarnate Son and suffering servant of God, representative of all men, Christ is the unique mediator between God and men: "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was born at the proper time" (1 Tm 2:5,6).<sup>11</sup> The Son of God himself is, in his humanity, the unique mediator of a new and definitive covenant between God and man. (Heb 7:22; 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).

What is new about the new covenant, then, is the person of Christ. In his person there is definitively realized the mysterious union of two freedoms: the divine and the human. By his incarnation, life, death, resurrection and exaltation, Christ manifests the divine will in its seeking of communion with man and man's free total acceptance of that saving will. He is both God bestowing

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<sup>10</sup>E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., p. 64. cf. J. Giblet, op. cit., p. 34; B. Cooke, op. cit., pp. 32, 33.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. The Jerusalem Bible. Heb 8:6, note "b"; E. Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God, trans Paul Barrett (New York: Sheed and Ward Ltd., 1963), p. 16.

and man accepting.<sup>12</sup> "He is the New Covenant, the union of the divine and the human, . . . although he is established as the new covenant by his incarnation (by the "gratia unionis") he only achieves his full stature, he only becomes the 'Son of God in glory' by his definitive act of obedience, by his glorifying Cross (cf. Rom i,4: Acts ii,36)."<sup>13</sup> Christ is the new covenant by his Incarnation.

But this incarnation of God the Son is a reality which grows. It is not complete in a matter of a moment; for example, at Jesus' conception in Mary's womb or at his birth. The Incarnation is not merely a Christmas event. To be man is a process of becoming man; Jesus' manhood grew throughout his earthly life, finding its completion in the supreme moment of the Incarnation, his death, resurrection and exaltation. Only then is the Incarnation fulfilled to the very end. And so we must say that the incarnation in the Son itself redeems us. . . . By the fact that he became man, the Son of God is fundamentally already the Christ. But we must also realize that it was only upon his rising from the dead that, because of the love and obedience of his life, the Father established him absolutely as the Christ. We must look closely into this growth towards the fullness of redemption, for in it we are confronted with the mystery of Christ's life, which is this: The man Jesus, as "Servant of God", by his life of obedience and love on earth, even into death, earned for us that grace of salvation which he, in glory with the Father, can himself, as Lord and Christ, bestow upon us in abundance.<sup>14</sup>

It is in and by his definitive act of loving obedience as incarnate Son of God that Christ establishes the new and everlasting Covenant. "For I have come down from heaven,

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. G. Moran, Theology of Revelation (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), p. 63ff.; E. Schillebeeckx, op. cit., pp. 17ff.

<sup>13</sup>N. Lash, "The Eucharist: Sacrifice Or Meal?" The Clergy Review, 50(1965), 915,916. cf. J. Giblet, op. cit., pp. 34ff.; A. Tarby, "Le Sang de la nouvelle et éternelle Alliance," Parole et Pain, 23(1967), 428, 429.

<sup>14</sup>E. Schillebeeckx, op. cit., pp. 18, 19, 20.

not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (Jn 6:38). "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Mt 26:39; cf. v. 42).<sup>15</sup> By this complete identification of his will with that of the Father Christ accomplishes the Father's work (Jn 5:36; 9:4; 17:4). That is, he reconciles estranged man to God (Jn 3:17; Rm 5:10,11; 2 Co 5:18,19). He re-establishes all things in God. (Eph 1:10).<sup>16</sup>

Further, Christ makes it possible for us to join him in his filial union with the Father -- a union so real and intense that we are authentically able to call God "Abba! Father!"

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!" So through God you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son then an heir. (Gal 4:4-7).<sup>17</sup>

Christ is the Son of God by nature. The Christian is a son of God by covenant. By covenant the Christian is brought into a relationship equivalent to the closest possible natural relationship between the Father and his Son.<sup>18</sup> That which Christ possessed by nature and from all eternity is given to man by covenant when "the time had fully come."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Cf. note 35 below.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Eph 1:10, note "k"; Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, article 3, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Rm 8:15-17,29; Eph 1:5; The Jerusalem Bible, Rm 8:15, note "i"; 8:29, note "q"; Gal 4:5, note "d"; Eph 1:5, note "d".

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Chapter I, p. 46.

<sup>19</sup>Gal 4:4; cf. H. Goudreault, op. cit., p. 121, note 34; St. Thomas Aquinas: IIIa, q. 23, a. 2, ad 3,4. (English trans. Colman E. O'Neill, in Volume 50 of the Summa as published by Blackfriars in conjunction with McGraw-Hill, New York, 1965, pp. 163,164. cf. O'Neill's commentary, pp. 250ff.)

"His Sonship and ours are of the same order."<sup>20</sup> However, Christ's Sonship is the source and model of our sonship.<sup>21</sup>

By an utterly free and mysterious decree of His own wisdom and goodness, the eternal Father, created the whole world. His plan was to dignify men with a participation in His own divine life. He did not abandon men after they had fallen in Adam, but ceaselessly offered them helps to salvation, in anticipation of Christ the Redeemer, "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature" (Col 1:15). All the elect, before time began, the Father "foreknew and predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom 8:29).

The Son, therefore, came on mission from His Father. It was in Him, before the foundation of the world, that the Father chose us and predestined us to become adopted sons, for in Him it has pleased the Father to re-establish all things (cf. Eph. 1:4-5 and 10). To carry out the will of the Father, Christ inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth and revealed to us the mystery of the Father.<sup>22</sup> By his obedience He brought about redemption.<sup>22</sup>

Christ's sonship by nature is the source and model of our sonship by covenant. In this sonship lies our freedom.<sup>23</sup> As sons of God we are liberated from slavery to the law which generated only sin and fear of punishment.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>H. Goudreault, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 121; The Jerusalem Bible, Eph 1:5, note "d".

<sup>22</sup>Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, articles 2 and 3, pp. 15, 16; cf. Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, articles 2 and 4, pp. 112, 113.

<sup>23</sup>"Le fondement de notre liberté est la filiation." H. Goudreault, op. cit., p. 113. cf. Idem, pp. 113ff. Also, C. Spicq, Charity And Liberty in the New Testament, trans. F.V. Manning (New York: Alba House, 1965), pp. 94ff.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. K. H. Schelkle, The Epistle To The Romans: Theological Meditations, trans. B. Thompson (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), pp. 127, 128. H. Goudreault, op. cit., pp. 144ff.

We are liberated from slavery so as to live the new covenant precisely as it was foretold by Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jr 31: 31-34; Ez 36:25-28).<sup>25</sup> With the support of the Spirit of God who has given us a new heart (Ez 36:26) -- the heart of a son of God -- we are able to live the New Covenant as free loving sons.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order<sup>26</sup> that we may also be glorified with him. (Rm 8:14-17).

In the new covenant we are brought into quasi-familial union with God the Father.<sup>27</sup> Precisely, we are adopted sons of God. As his sons we share really his life, his freedom.<sup>28</sup> "It is because we are children of God that we are royally free, divinely free."<sup>29</sup> This freedom is a unique positive freedom. It is the freedom to love unconditionally, even as Christ loves (Jn 13:15,34). It is the freedom which is absolutely essential if we are to live the love of the new covenant to the full. As C. Spicq has remarked, "in this is the novelty of the new covenant: the importance given

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<sup>25</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp. 41-44.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Mt 17:26; Jn 8:35,36; Rm 8:19-23; Gal 4:4-7, 22-31; H. Goudreault, op. cit., p. 114, note 6.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp. 17-20.

<sup>28</sup>Eph 2:18; 2 Pt 1:4; C. Spicq, op. cit., p. 89. H. Goudreault, op. cit., p. 114: "Notre filiation étant à l'image de celle du Sauveur, nous faisons nôtres ses mystères et vivons en union avec lui. Notre liberté est une participation de la liberté même du Fils."

<sup>29</sup>C. Spicq, op. cit., p. 95. cf. note 23 above.

to liberty."<sup>30</sup> This liberty is precisely the freedom of the sons of God who, with Christ as source and model, are able to live the command of the new covenant<sup>31</sup> freely, lovingly, totally. "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:1,2).

Jesus is the norm and the source of every covenantal encounter with the Father. He is, in himself, the new covenant with God the Father! He realizes supremely the mutual solidarity, the oneness of wills, the "psychic communion" which is of the essence of covenanting.<sup>32</sup> Those who entered into covenant believed they entered into a union so profound as to form one whole ruled by a common will. However, within this union, the stronger or greater will determined the direction of this common soul.<sup>33</sup> By his Incarnation, his total life-response, Christ achieves a unique willful union of the divine and the human. He radically identifies his human will with the will of the Father and totally accepts to be ruled unreservedly by that greater will of his Father.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>C. Spicq, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>31</sup>"The Gospel of John, which preserves no historical narrative of the Last Supper, but which contains much interpretation of it, has a reference to a "new commandment" appropriate to a "new covenant" (John 13:34). The commandment of love thus corresponds to the very nature of the covenant itself. There is nothing new about this command except its place in the covenant relationship, as the stipulated obligation assumed by those who enter the covenant community... but this is no command; it is rather the very nature of the relationship between God and the community." G.E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," ID. I, pp. 722,723. cf. J. Galot, op.cit., pp. 224, 225.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp. 13-20, notes 39, 42, 55, 57.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. Chapter II, p. 101, note 122.

<sup>34</sup>cf. Mt 26:39,42; 6:9ff.; Jn 4:34; 5:30; 5:36; 6:38-40; 9:4; 10:17,18; 17:4; 19:30; Rm 5:19; Ph 2:8; Heb 10:5-10; H. Urs von Balthasar, A Theology of History (2nd ed.) (New

In the Old Testament the common will and common responsibility in which covenant partners were essentially united found expression in their sharing and living of hesed.<sup>35</sup> The hesed demonstrated by Yahweh, that is, his unfailing fidelity and steadfast love, far surpassed the hesed demonstrated by the Israelites. The unparalleled depth of Yahweh's hesed was eventually seen to reside in the unfathomable mystery of the divine will's undaunted pursuit of communion with man. This divine hesed just as constantly invited a corresponding hesed from man. Israel, collectively and individually, was asked to demonstrate Yahweh-like hesed. Israel was asked to live a life of self-gift, loving trust and loyalty, an abandonment to the supportive will of their God; all of this to manifest itself in an active love of their fellows. But there was "no faithfulness or kindness and no knowledge of God in the land." (Ho 4:2).<sup>36</sup>

Hesed, then, as it came to be grasped by Israel, was not only a response to the Spirit of God but also a reflection of that very Spirit itself; an essential quality of the soul which issued in a complete sensitivity and fidelity to the other person. The Old Testament knew no one who humanly exemplified the kind of hesed demonstrated and demanded by Yahweh. The New Testament does: Christ Jesus! The incarnate Son of God, in the fullness of his humanity, in his definitive act of obedience "unto death, even death on a cross," (Ph 2:8), embodied such hesed. Christ is the human embodiment of divine hesed and the perfect human response to this hesed. His covenant love issues forth in obedience unto

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York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p. 25ff.; St. Thomas Aquinas: IIIa, q. 18, a. 5,6. (English trans. as in note 19 above, pp. 77-85, 232ff.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Chapter I, pp. 30ff.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Ho 2:21, notes "r" and "s".

death. Christ's covenant love issues in a fidelity to the will of the Father as never before experienced in man.

The Son obeys the Father alone, not Moses and the Prophets, whose lord and master he is: "Before ever Abraham came to be, I am" (Jn. viii 58), and David calls him Lord (Mt. xxii 45). But his obedience to the Father is not only, as we said, "vertical," but "horizontal" and historical in form, in that, out of love for the Father and to glorify him, it fulfills every jot of the Law (Mt. v 18), so as to demonstrate its goodness and so as to enter, in obedience to God, into the human community as formed by the Law. The Son's fulfillment of the Law is obedience to the Father: the Law and the Prophets are, for him, integrated into the Father's guidance of him. What is new, what belongs strictly to Christ in this fulfillment of the Law, is the scope of it, the precision, the motivation: no man has ever yet fulfilled the Law like this, honored the Father like this: no man has ever been this just before. No one has ever before grasped the ultimate, mysterious intention of the Spirit in the letter to this degree.

The creative element which marks the leap from the Old to the New Testament is the love with which he obeys, a love which is so perfect that it breaks out of the old principle of servile obedience and makes the Law the servant of love. . . In fulfilling the Law he is not stepping back onto a more primitive level, as though he were unable to free himself from it (and full freedom were only to come through the "Kingdom of the Holy Spirit"): he is in full possession of himself, of his freedom and of his love for the Father, which is the one thing that he came into the world to make known and which he could not make known more beautifully than in perfectly honoring the Father by obediently entering into the fidelity of the Father to his own word.<sup>37</sup>

This covenant love, this unreserved fidelity to the Father's will, this hesed, carried Christ to his death and love's ultimate triumph. No matter what terrors death held for him (cf. Mt 26:39,42), he knew that it was in fact the way to final triumph: "and I, when I am lifted up from the

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<sup>37</sup> H. Urs von Balthasar, A Theology of History, pp. 54, 55, 56. cf. idem, Who Is A Christian? trans. J. Cumming (London: Burns & Oates, 1968), pp. 64-67.

earth, will draw all men to myself" (Jn 12:32).<sup>38</sup> All men are drawn in loving kindness, in a covenant love which in Christ knew no bounds. Christ loved man "to the end" (Jn 13:1);<sup>39</sup> not only to the "end" of his human life but "to the perfect fulfillment of love's ingenuity."<sup>40</sup>

Christ's utter love for man reveals God's unfathomable love for man and actually bestows it; "it is the redeeming mercy of God himself coming to meet us from a human heart . . . the human incarnation of the redeeming love of God: an advent of God's love in visible form."<sup>41</sup> Christ's utter love for God reveals and realizes man's love potential for God. In Christ is realized perfectly-requited covenant love. In Christ is the perfect encounter of divine-human fidelity.

As we have seen, fidelity was an essential attribute of Yahweh's love for Israel and it was the very attribute lacking in Israel's response.<sup>42</sup> "If God's love in the Old Testament can be summed up in a single idea, it is the idea of a love which overcomes refusal. It is a love of election

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<sup>38</sup>Cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Jn 12:32, notes "j", "k", "l". In commenting on Jn 12:32, R. Brown states: ". . . a background for this may be found in LXX of Jer xxxviii (Mt, xxxi) 3 where God says of Israel: "I have drawn you with kindness." Some deny that LXX gives the correct translation of the Hebrew of this verse, but see A. Feuillet, VT. 12 (1962), 122-24. . . Such a relation (of 12:32 to Jeremiah) would give a background of divine covenant love to the lifting up of Jesus and its effects." The Gospel According to John (i-xii). Introduction, translation and notes (No. 29 in the Anchor Bible Series) (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1966), pp. 271 and 468.

<sup>39</sup>Cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Jn 13:1, note "c".

<sup>40</sup>B. M. Ahearn, "The Charity of Christ," The Way, April(1964), p. 108.

<sup>41</sup>E. Schillebeeckx, op. cit., pp. 17, 14.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. Chapter II, pp. 122ff.

and a love of forgiveness, a love which creates and which restores. It is a love which is incorruptible."<sup>43</sup> Such is the love of Yahweh who unceasingly supported and pursued wayward Israel as His "first-born son,"<sup>44</sup> even to the extent of establishing a new covenant in the blood of His own Son.

The whole of the Old Testament revelation is simply the historical process arising out of God's fidelity and the often-repeated infidelity of the Jewish people. In the development of this situation, revelation was gradually perfected. God's ultimate purpose was to call a faithful people into life. Broadly speaking, there would be continual failure, until God himself raised up a man in whom was concentrated the entirety of mankind's vocation to faithfulness, and who would himself keep faith with the Covenant in the perfection of his fidelity. This man was Jesus. In him there was a visible realization of both sides of faith in the Covenant. In the dialogue between God and man, so often breaking down, there was found at last a perfect human respondent; in the same person there was achieved the perfection both of the divine invitation and of the human response in faith from the man who by his resurrection is the Christ. The covenant, sealed in his blood, found definitive success in his person.<sup>45</sup>

The full visible sign of this definitive new covenant is the Incarnate Son of God whose broken body and outpoured

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<sup>43</sup> J.L. McKenzie, "An Everlasting Love," The Way, April(1964), p. 98.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Chapter II, p. 114, note 160.

<sup>45</sup> L. Schillebeeckx, op. cit., pp. 12, 13; Matthew, or his source, in the account of Christ in the desert (4:1-11), had a deliberate parallel in mind between the historic Israel and the New Israel (personified in the "corporate personality" of the Messiah). The historical Israel wandered in the desert for forty years and was tested at Massa, Meriba, etc. and proved unfaithful to the Covenant. Christ was in the desert for forty days and nights and was tested by Satan and proved faithful to the Covenant. All 3 answers of Christ to Satan are taken from the Book of Deuteronomy, which gives the classical account of the Israelites testing and infidelity. cf. J. Dupont, Les tentations de Jésus au désert (Bruges: Desclé de Brouwer, 1968), especially pp. 13-23, 27-30, 40.

blood are given to and for all men that we may have abundant life (cf. Jn 10:10).<sup>46</sup> This communion-creating self-gift of Christ finds its fullest ritual expression in the Eucharist as a sacrificial covenant meal. God's covenant love and man's covenant love in return are epitomized and experienced to the fullest in the relationship actualized by Christ's Eucharistic self-gift. The new covenant is most fully expressed, ritually manifested and extended to all mankind in the Eucharist -- concretely realized and symbolized in the blood of Christ shed on the Cross and shared at the Last Supper. It is this blood of Christ<sup>47</sup> shed on the Cross and shared at the Last Supper which ritually establishes and ratifies the new and everlasting covenant.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>The Jerusalem Bible, Jn 10:10, note "e".

<sup>47</sup>In the New Testament the word "blood" is used with reference to the blood of Christ thirty-six times. These references take various forms. e.g., the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:19; 1 Jn 1:7), of Christ (1 Co 10:16; Eph 2:13), of Jesus Christ (1 Pt 1:2), of the Lord (1 Co 11:27), of the Lamb (Rv 7:14; 12:11). cf. Ac 20:28; Rm 3:24,25; 5:9; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:12,14; 12:24; 13:12,20; 1 Pt 1:19; Rv 1:5; 5:9; -- Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20; 1 Co 11:25; Jn 6:53-56.

<sup>48</sup>Cf. Chapter II, pp. 126-127; 1 Co 11:25; Lk 22:20; Mk 14:24; Mt 26:28; Heb 10:29; 12:24; 13:20; The Jerusalem Bible, Mt 26:28, note "h"; Heb 9 note "h"; M. E. Poismard, "L'Eucharistie selon saint Paul," LV. 31(1957), 95, 96. (English translation--"The Eucharist According to Saint Paul," in The Eucharist in the New Testament: A Symposium, trans. E.M. Stewart (Baltimore: Helicon, 1965), pp. 128,129. P. Benoit, "The Accounts of the Institution and What They Imply," in The Eucharist in the New Testament, pp. 78,79; A. Lelièvre, "Blood," VB. p. 40; A. Médebielle, op. cit., p. 23; C. Spicq, op. cit., 271, note 2, 275, 276; J.E. Steinmueller, op. cit., p. 564; E. F. Siegman, "The Blood of the Covenant," AER. 136(1957), 172; D. Barthélemy, "Du Sang A Boire," VS. 108(1963), pp. 355-357; E. A. LaVerdiere, "The Eucharistic Covenant: Bond of Christian Unity," Emmanuel, 49(1963), p. 305; A. Tarby, "Le Sang de la nouvelle et éternelle Alliance," PP. 23(1967), 428ff.

B. The Blood of the New Covenant: The Blood of Christ

(1) The Last Supper and Sinai

The accounts of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper read as follows:

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the (new) covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Mt 26:26-29).

And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the (new) covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." (Mk 14:22-25).

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (Lk 22:19-20).

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Co 11:23-25).

Numerous comparative studies have been made of these Eucharistic texts resulting in various highly-nuanced

conclusions.<sup>49</sup> There is one conclusion, however, that emerges clearly from any comparative study and it is this: it is impossible to reconstruct with absolute certitude the exact words, ipsissima verba, Christ used at the Last Supper.<sup>50</sup> At the same time there is no valid reason for rejecting as non-authentic any of the words of the Eucharistic texts.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, the four texts in their entirety will be utilized in this presentation. In light of the above, it is especially instructive to note "that that which is essential to establishing the central role of the idea of covenant--namely, that Jesus spoke of His blood as the blood of a covenant--is from a textual point of view indubitable."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Among the more recent and influential studies are the following (which include bibliographical references to earlier works): J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words Of Jesus. 3rd edition revised. trans. W. Perrin (London: SCM Press Ltd. 1966); A.J.B. Higgins, The Lord's Supper In The New Testament (London: SCM Press, 1952); R. Bultmann, Theology Of The New Testament. trans. K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951, 1955); H. Lietzmann, Mass And Lord's Supper: A Study In the History Of Liturgy. trans. D.H.G. Reeve (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1953, originally published, 1926); P. Benoit, op. cit. ; E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit.

<sup>50</sup>J. Jeremias, op. cit., pp. 7, 8, 190ff.; B. Cooke, op. cit., p. 19; N. Clark, An Approach To The Theology Of The Sacraments (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1956), p. 40.

<sup>51</sup>Cf. B. Cooke, op.cit., p.19; N. Clark, op.cit., pp. 40, 41.

<sup>52</sup>B. Cooke, op. cit., p. 19. In the second edition of his book, The Eucharistic Words Of Jesus. trans. A. Ehrhardt (London: Basil Blackwell Publ., 1955), pp. 132-135, J. Jeremias disputed the originality of the phrase "my blood of the covenant". However, in the 3rd edition revised of his work (note 49 above), he retracted "completely" his objection to this phrase and went on to conclude: "the phrase 'my blood of the covenant' gives no pretext for linguistic objections to its originality. As to its contents, the possibility that Jesus spoke of the covenant at the Last Supper cannot be disputed." p. 195, cf. 193-195. cf. also, E.F. Siegman, op. cit., p. 167, note 2; R.H. Fuller, The Mission and Achievement of Jesus (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1954), pp. 69-72; J. Coppens, "Eucharistie," DBS. 1178; O. Cullmann, "The

In this regard, the difference between the Paul/Luke formula and the Mark/Matthew formula<sup>53</sup> is but a superficial one. Where Paul and Luke have: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," whereas Mark and Matthew have: "This is my blood of the new covenant," the sense of the two formulas is substantially identical!<sup>54</sup> "These two equivalent forms set forth the blood of Christ crucified as the blood that is to be shed to establish the new covenant of God with the many who are to be His people."<sup>55</sup>

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Meaning of the Lord's Supper In Primitive Christianity," Essays on the Lord's Supper. (Ecumenical Studies in Worship, Vol. I) (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958), pp. 18, 19.

<sup>53</sup>The four accounts of the institution agree on essentials indicating that they are derived from the same basic source. The apparent differences of expression indicate later special influences. When comparing the four accounts, one is immediately struck by the similarities which exist between Matthew and Mark and between Luke and Paul. There is a growing agreement among scholars today that Mark presents a Palestinian version which has been expanded in Matthew. The relation between Luke and Paul remains the subject of dispute and ongoing research. "Whatever may be said of the mutual dependence of the accounts on one another and their immediate sources, however, it is evident that they are all linked with the actual celebration of the Lord's Supper in the Christian communities of the primitive Church. The Sitz im Leben of the accounts of institution is the primitive liturgy." E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., p. 29. Further, it would seem that Paul and Luke "preserve a greater exactness in the description of the Last Supper and manifest to a lesser degree the effects of liturgical influence than the corresponding Mark and Matthew versions." idem, p. 35. E.J. Kilmartin provides a summary of the available scholarly data on the sources, literary character, inter-relationships and comparative ages of the accounts of institution. op. cit., pp. 22-73. cf. N. Clark, op. cit., p. 37; J. Behm "The Greek Term Diathêkê," TDNT. II, pp. 136ff.

<sup>54</sup>Cf. J. Jeremias, (1966), op. cit., p. 169; J. Lécuyer, op. cit., p. 178. P. Benoit, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>55</sup>M. Thurian, The Eucharistic Memorial, II, p. 54. P. Benoit, op. cit., pp. 78, 79.

In saying that the cup is the new covenant in his blood or that this is his blood of the new covenant, Christ unequivocally alludes to the words of Moses who in ritually enacting the Sinaitic covenant exclaimed: "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you" (Ex 24:8; cf. Zc 9:11).<sup>56</sup>

We have observed, in full context, the significance of the Sinaitic blood covenant. By the symbolic sharing of one and the same blood -- that of the sacrificial victim -- the covenanting parties, Yahweh and Israel, signified and effected a shared life, a common life. They became one blood and, therefore, one life. The "blood of the covenant" was the blood which produced "psychic community" between Yahweh and the people Israel. By contact with one and the same "soul" the covenanting parties became a single "soul". Yahweh and Israel became, as it were, blood-relatives. Their achieved union was then so close as to be accurately described in terms of an intimate father-son relationship. We have seen that no symbol other than shared blood could so vitally and effectively signify such an intense union.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>La "Bible de Jérusalem" translation of Ex 24:8: "Ceci est le sang de l'alliance que Yahvé a conclue avec vous (moyennant tous ces clauses)". "There can be no doubt that the reference to the blood of the new covenant at the Last Supper was an allusion to the old covenant, sealed with the blood of sacrifices." M. Thurian, op. cit., p. 54; "The formulas of Matthew and Mark are an imitation of the formula of Exod. 24:8." A. Lelièvre, "Blood," VB. p. 40. cf. E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 61, 62; E. F. Siegman, op. cit., pp. 168, 169; J. E. Steinmueller, op. cit., p. 564; L. Sabourin, op. cit., p. 347; J. Giblest et P. Grelot, "Alliance" VTB. 26, 27; B. Vawter and P. van Imschoot, "Covenant," EDB. p. 438; B. Cooke, op. cit., p. 33; C. Vollert, "The Eucharist: Quests For Insights From Scripture," TS. 21(1960), pp. 417, 418; The Jerusalem Bible, Mt 26:28, note "h"; Ex 24:8, note "c".

<sup>57</sup>Chapter II in its entirety, especially pp. 112ff.

There is no doubt that Christ deliberately drew upon the powerful symbolism of the Sinaitic blood covenant when he announced that his blood was the blood of the new covenant, poured out for many.<sup>58</sup>

When Christ spoke of his blood as "my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many,"<sup>59</sup> the Apostles gathered for the Supper would have been reminded of the action of Moses pouring half of the animal blood on the altar and sprinkling the other half over the people.<sup>60</sup> Christ clearly referred to and continued the Sinaitic covenant enactment with all that it had signified. However, when Christ declared that the blood of this new covenant was to be his own blood he not only fulfilled but infinitely surpassed the Sinaitic action of Moses.

At Sinai, under the direction of Moses, the young men had "offered burnt offerings and sacrificial peace offerings" (Ex 24:5). Moses, himself, then threw half of the blood against the altar and half upon the people (Ex 24:8). At the Last Supper Christ makes it clear that the sacrificial victim of this new covenant will no longer be an irrational animal. Rather, he himself will be the willing victim whose outpoured blood will provide the "blood of the new covenant." The old covenant sacrifices were deficient.<sup>61</sup> The new covenant sacrifice will in no way be deficient. The new sacrifice that will replace the old

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<sup>58</sup>Mk 14:24; Mt 26:28; cf. note 56 above, and especially B. Cooke, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>59</sup>Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; cf. Lk 22:20.

<sup>60</sup>This is especially so when we consider the Paschal nature of the Supper. cf. Section C of this Chapter; P. Benoit op. cit., p. 78; B. Cooke, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>61</sup>Chapter I, pp. 38ff.; Chapter II, pp. 118ff.

will be Christ's own death.<sup>62</sup> By means of his outpoured blood, his sacrificial blood, Christ establishes the new covenant.<sup>63</sup>

By means of the gift of his sacrificial blood, i.e., his life, to the Father, Christ reconciles man to the Father. He gives his life to the Father as a sacrifice of expiation and reconciliation.<sup>64</sup> "The first lesson to be drawn from Christ's words, and one which the disciples could not misunderstand, was that he was going to die, giving his life for them."<sup>65</sup> He gives his life to the Father on behalf of mankind precisely as the suffering Servant of Yahweh whose mission is to enact the new covenant in his own blood.

While demanding an expiation, required by his justice as much as man's conscience, God remained so full of love that he himself provided the expiatory victim. This was the victim he had foretold in the Book of Isaias under the image of the 'Servant': 'a man of sorrows', innocent but 'struck by God and afflicted. . .wounded for our iniquities: he was bruised for our sins' (Is. 53:3-5). More than once in the course of his public life Jesus gave them to understand that he was this Servant (Luke 4:17-21; Matthew 11:4-6; 20:28; cf. Matthew 8:17; 12:18-21). And here, in this his last will, he suggests it clearly. Had God not said to his Servant: 'And I have given thee for a covenant of the people, for a

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<sup>62</sup>" . . .by adding: 'my' blood of the covenant, he gives us to understand that a new sacrifice was going to take the place of the old: his own death: and by this he would conclude a 'new' covenant, as Paul and Luke specify." P. Benoit, op. cit., p. 78; cf. B. Cooke, op. cit., pp. 33, 34; J. E. Steinmueller, op. cit., p. 564.

<sup>63</sup>1 Co 11:25; Lk 22:20; P. Benoit, op. cit., p. 78; V. Taylor, op. cit., p. 546; cf. note 85, below.

<sup>64</sup>Cf. Rm 5:9-11; 2 Co 5:18-20; Col 1:20; Eph 2:16; The Jerusalem Bible, Rm 5:9, note "g"; Col 1:20, notes "h", "i"; Eph 2:16, note "o"; P. Benoit, op. cit., pp. 77, 78.

<sup>65</sup>P. Benoit, op. cit., p. 76.

light of the Gentiles' (Is. 42:6), and had he not said of him: 'Therefore will I distribute to him very many. . .because he hath delivered (poured out) his soul unto death. . .and he hath borne the sins of many and hath prayed for the transgressors' (Is 53:12)? We can hear an echo of these prophecies on Jesus' lips: 'This is my blood, of the covenant, which is being shed on behalf of many'. He is the Servant, then, and his approaching death would complete the mission assigned to the Servant: to suffer for sinners (Matthew adds here: 'unto the forgiveness of sins'), for the mass of sinners, pagans as well as Jews, in short for all men.<sup>66</sup>

When Christ speaks of his "blood poured out for many" he has direct reference to his atoning death on the Cross.<sup>67</sup> He accepts this death freely (Jn 10:17,18), for the ransom of many (Mk 10:45), and presents it to the Father as an atoning sacrifice (cf. Is 53:10). It is precisely in this way that he becomes the mediator of the new covenant.<sup>68</sup> In saying these words over the "cup" -- this ancient symbol of suffering and tragic fate<sup>69</sup> -- Christ discloses that "his

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<sup>66</sup>P. Benoit, op.cit., pp. 79, 80. "The word which we translate as 'many' stresses the sense of a great number and does not exclude anyone: and the Servant's mission was universal. . . (Is. 49:6). Jesus certainly makes this fullness of salvation his own and it is the whole of mankind to the end of space and time that he includes in the 'many' for whom he was going to give his life as 'a ransom' (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45). idem, p. 80. cf. A. Tarby, op. cit., p. 430; J. Jeremias, (1966), op. cit., pp. 227-231.

<sup>67</sup>G.E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," ID. I, p. 722; J. Dupont, "This Is My Body. . . This Is My Blood," in The Eucharist Today: Essays on the Theology and Worship of the Real Presence, ed. R.A. Tartre (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1967), pp. 19, 20.

<sup>68</sup>Cf. J. Giblest et P. Grelot, "Alliance," VTB. p. 26.

<sup>69</sup>Jesus uses the "cup" as a symbol of suffering elsewhere in the New Testament: Mk 10:38; 14:36; Mt 20:22, 23; 26:39,42; Jn 18:11. cf. Rev 14:10; 16:19; Is 51:17; The Jerusalem Bible, Is 51:17, note "j"; Mk 10:38, note "d"; Mt 20:22, note "d".

suffering ("in my blood") establishes the new covenant associated with the Servant (Isa. 42:6; 49:8)."<sup>70</sup>

Christ is the suffering Servant of Yahweh who personally surrenders himself to God on behalf of man. Luke, in his account of the Last Supper, uses the important Synoptic text on Christ as Suffering Servant, (Mk 10:45)<sup>71</sup> in a singularly significant manner. Christ had said: "For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). Luke utilizes this text in his Last Supper account in this way: "For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table? But I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22:27). In this Lukan account the service rendered at table by Christ is the giving of himself as food.<sup>72</sup> Christ's act of giving is an act of the suffering Servant of Yahweh; it is the suffering Servant who gives. The Apostles thus receive a share in the Servant's gift of himself and, concomitantly, a share in his covenant mission.

When the Apostles partake of Christ's body and blood they, in effect, partake of his life. Precisely, they partake of his "given-for-you" body and his "poured-out-for-many" blood. That is, they partake of the Son of God's life, but the Son of God who is simultaneously the suffering Servant of Yahweh given up for us all. The Apostles receive a share in the life-giving covenant mission of the

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<sup>70</sup>E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>71</sup>Cf. notes 7 and 8 above; E. J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 48f.

<sup>72</sup>Cf. Jn 13:12-17, where, in the context of the Last Supper, the service Christ renders is the washing of the feet.

Suffering Servant of Yahweh.<sup>73</sup> When they drink the "cup" of the "new covenant in my blood," (1 Co 11:25), they drink the "cup" of Christ's sacrificial life-blood. This is the fundamental option they make when they accept to drink the "cup" Christ offers them at the Last Supper. Previously, Christ had asked them "Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." To which he replied, "You will drink my cup." (Mt 20:22,23).

The Apostles are invited then to accept totally the will of the Father as Christ had so accepted (Mt 26:39,42). They are asked to identify their wills with the will of the Father. The will of the Father is that Christ should not let the "cup" pass. That is, Christ is to suffer; he is to be obedient unto death, even death on the Cross (Ph 2:8). However, it is equally the Father's will that Christ, by this very definitive act of obedience, be exalted (Ph 2:9-11). The Cross is a Glorifying Cross! This too must be the way of the Apostles if they are to drink the "cup" of Christ. Christ had asked them the question "Are you able to drink the cup I am to drink?" precisely in response to their petition to sit with him in his kingdom (Mt 20:20-22). Before the kingdom, servanthood. This was the way of Christ and so it must be for the Apostles if they are to share his "cup". "You are those who have continued with me in my trials; as my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk 22:28-30).

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<sup>73</sup>"Lk 22:24-27, interpreting Christ's offering as the sacrifice of the Servant of Yahweh on behalf of His brethren, explicitly introduces the element of fraternal love into the law of the new covenant: that divine will whose acceptance constitutes the heart of Christ's sacrificial offering is the will that all men be saved; thus the covenant of the Last Supper has at once a cultic and a missionary orientation." B. Cooke, op.cit., p. 33. cf. E.J. Kilmartin, pp.48, 49. J. Bright, op.cit., pp. 210ff.; 230; J. Jeremias,

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To drink Christ's blood of the new covenant is to drink his sacrificial life-blood. To partake of Christ's blood is to partake of Christ in his entirety.<sup>74</sup> To eat and drink the body and blood of Christ is to eat and drink all of him. It is to opt for all of his life. He offers us nothing less! But all of him means: his suffering and his joy, his servanthood and kingship, his death and resurrection, his broken body and his risen body. Like his garment of whole cloth, Christ's life is all of a piece. We cannot opt for part of him without opting for all of him.

Christ is the new covenant. He is the new covenant enacted in blood -- his own blood. He is the new covenant consummated in glory. But this blood-covenant of Christ reaches its glorious consummation only by way of the Cross. Before this new covenant can be consummated it must first be "cut"; it must be established in blood. Before the blood can be drunk it must be poured out. But one does not pour out one's blood without pain, without suffering. The oneness of blood, the oneness of life, effected by Christ when he establishes the new covenant, is achieved only through suffering. Our union with God is achieved through the painful self-gift of Christ. Both this union and the painful self-gift are symbolized by his outpoured blood. To drink of Christ's blood of the new covenant and to share in his covenant mission is to drink of his life: the life of the Son of God who is the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. If we wish to enter into this new covenant mediated by Christ then we must be prepared to "suffer with him" in order that we "may also be glorified with him" (Rm 8:17).

As Suffering Servant Jesus gives us himself. By his

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(1966), op. cit. pp. 233-237.

<sup>74</sup>Cf. notes 111-113, below.

self-gift, unto death, Christ has the power to establish the new and eternal covenant between His Father and his fellow men.<sup>75</sup>

At the Last Supper, Jesus establishes the new<sup>76</sup> covenant<sup>77</sup> foretold by Jeremiah<sup>78</sup> in whose thought "the New Covenant is the final unfolding and supreme fulfillment of Sinai."<sup>79</sup> The old covenant has become obsolete (Heb 8:13);

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<sup>75</sup>Cf. P. Bonnard, op. cit., p. 69; also, pp. 186-189; 194-197, above.

<sup>76</sup>Paul (1 Co 11:25), and Luke (22:20) have the adjective "new" in their accounts of the institution. The Vulgate text inserts the adjective "novi" into Matthew 26:28 and Mark 14:24. cf. 2 Co 3:6; Heb 8:13; 9:15; Jr 31:31.

<sup>77</sup>In the New Testament the word "covenant", diatheke, occurs only thirty three times: Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 1:72 (cf. Lv 26:42; Ps 106:45); Lk 22:20; Rm 11:27 (cf. Is 59:20-21; 27:9; Jr 31:31-34); 9:4; Eph 2:12; Gal 3:15,17; 4:24; 1 Co 11:25; 2 Co 3:6,14; Heb 7:22; 8:6,7,8,9,10,13; 9:4,15-20; 10:29; 12:24; 13:20; Ac 3:25 (cf. Gn 22:18); Ac 7:8 (cf. Gn 17:10; 21:4); Rv 11:19. - The surprising infrequency of its occurrence may be a cautious Christian reaction to Judaism's tendency to equate "covenant" with Mosaic Law. It may also be a reaction to Roman distrust of covenant societies. Despite the paucity of references to "covenant" in the New Testament, the available evidence indicates that "the early Christians did regard themselves as a community bound together by covenant" and that "this covenant is a most free, creative reinterpretation of the older traditions." (G.E. Mendenhall, ID. I, p. 722). The main substantiation of this conclusion is found in the accounts of the Last Supper where the word diatheke occurs in a context of singular importance (J. Giblest et P. Grelot, op. cit., p. 26). That its appearance in these accounts is valid and authentic has been established. (cf. note 52 above). Christ uses diatheke with the full impact of the word it translates: berit, i.e., community and peace, mutual solidarity and hesed, psychic communion--all of these uniquely fused and transformed by Jesus who, himself, is the new covenant. In addition to note 52 above, cf. B. Cooke, op. cit., pp. 29ff.; E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 62ff.; G.E. Mendenhall, op. cit., pp. 716, 722, 723; J. Behm, TDNT. II, pp. 129ff.; P. Bonnard, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>78</sup>Jr 31:31-34; Cf. Chapter I, pp. 40, 41.

<sup>79</sup>"What is announced here by Jeremias is precisely what the Church has formulated in the words of Consecration:

it has been superseded by the new covenant: Christ! This does not mean the destruction of the old covenant. Rather, the new covenant "grows out of (the old) and is related to it as prophecy to fulfillment."<sup>80</sup> Christ at the Last Supper fulfilled the promise made by Yahweh through Jeremiah (31:31-34). In establishing this new covenant, in his blood, Jesus fulfills the Old Testament covenants and realizes for us a participation in the kingdom of God where all things will be made new. The new covenant and the kingdom of God are correlative:<sup>81</sup>

This return to true knowledge and love of God which these lines (Jr 31:31-34) promised is nothing other than the kingdom of God, that kingdom whose imminent coming was preached by Jesus, which he even declared to have arrived in his person and which he was now going to establish definitively. Since a covenant required blood, he would give his. Not indeed to appease a stern and angry God, but to give the proof of love by which the God of love wishes his fallen creation to be raised up. So

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a new (vv. 31-34) and everlasting (vv. 35,36) Covenant. In these typological phrases of the Old Testament "new" always means "renewed", "raised to a better and higher order", "brought to perfection". In the Old Testament "new" stands for what emerges from, what is the very bloom of "the old". Thus in this passage from Jeremias, the new Covenant is the final unfolding and the supreme fulfillment of the Old Covenant of Mount Sinai." J. Alfrink, "Biblical Background to the Eucharist as a Sacrificial Meal," ITQ. 26(1959) 292.

<sup>80</sup>A. Harrisville, "The Concept of Newness in the New Testament," JBL. 74(1955), p. 74. cf. E.F. Siegman, op. cit., p. 168; J. Alfrink, op. cit., p. 292; P. Bonnard, op. cit., p. 69; J. E. Steinmueller, op. cit., pp. 564, 565. J. Bright, op. cit., pp. 187-198.

<sup>81</sup>Cf. J. Bright, op. cit., pp. 187ff. V. Taylor, op. cit., p. 546; J. Behm, TDNT. II, 134; A. Tarby, op. cit., p. 422; N. Clark, op. cit., pp. 68, 69; J. Jeremias, (1966), op. cit., p. 226.

God sent him for this, to be the 'Servant' who would sacrifice himself on behalf of his brethren. All this, also is, to be understood from Jesus words (of institution).<sup>82</sup>

This new covenant established in the blood of Christ, Son of God and Suffering Servant of Yahweh, is then a covenant of a higher order than the old covenants. It is a truly unique, truly superior covenant!<sup>83</sup>

## (2) The Superiority of the Blood of the New Covenant

The covenants of the Old Testament were ritually established in the blood of irrational animals. The new covenant is ritually established in the blood of Christ. It is the very blood of Christ that realizes the new covenant. For this is precisely what is new in the relationship: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Co 11:25).<sup>84</sup> According to M. E. Boismard, this passage, 1 Co 11:25, is definitely to be understood as: "The wine contained in this cup is my blood which establishes and ratifies the new covenant."<sup>85</sup> The blood in the cup not only signifies the

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<sup>82</sup>P. Benoit, op. cit., p. 79; "Before all things, however, the kingdom is visible in the very person of Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, who came "to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45)." Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, article 5, p. 18

<sup>83</sup>"Le Christ inaugure une alliance nouvelle entre Dieu et les hommes. Non que l'ancienne institution religieuse soit remplacée par une seconde plus récente, mais de même type. Il s'agit, au contraire, d'une institution neuve, originale, et, pour tout dire, meilleure (Hébreux 7,22; 8,6)." C. Bourgin, "Le Christ-Prêtre et la purification des péchés selon l'Épître aux Hébreux," LV, n. 36, 7(1958), p. 69.

<sup>84</sup>Cf. Lk 22:20; Mk 14:24; Mt 26:28; notes 54,55, above.

<sup>85</sup>"Le vin contenu dans cette coupe est mon sang qui établit et ratifie la nouvelle alliance." M.E. Boismard, op. cit., p. 96; cf. pp. 94-96; L. Sabourin, op. cit., pp. 344-345; E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., p. 61.

new covenant but actually effects and imparts it.<sup>86</sup> The contents of the cup, that is, "my blood" brings the covenant into being. Just as the old covenant was brought into being by blood -- the blood of non-human victims -- so too, the new covenant is brought into being by blood -- the blood of the divine-human victim, Christ.<sup>87</sup> It is in corresponding measure that the new covenant surpasses the old covenants; that is, as the blood of Christ surpasses the blood of irrational animals (Heb 9:11-20).

(a) Infinite Efficacy of the Blood of Christ

In the Old Testament, the blood, that is, the life of the victim was the means of attempting covenantal union with God. This blood, precisely as life, was the essential mediator. However, the expiatory power of the blood of the substitute animal victims was insufficient to overcome the estrangement which existed between man and God. This estrangement resided in man's sinfulness and "it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Heb 10:4). In that succinct statement the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews clearly underscored the insufficiency of the sacrificial liturgies of the old covenant. They were inefficacious, impotent. The guilt of sins could not be removed by "the blood of bulls and goats" and, therefore, union could not be realized.

In the New Testament, the blood, that is, the life of the Victim was the means of attempting covenantal union with God. This blood, precisely as life, was the essential

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<sup>86</sup>J. Dupont, in The Eucharist Today, pp. 21, 22; C. Vollert, op. cit., pp. 420, 421.

<sup>87</sup>Heb 9:11-20; 10:1-18; The Jerusalem Bible, Heb 9, note "h"; 9:26, note "k"; E.A. La Verdière, op. cit., p. 305.

mediator. However, the expiatory power of the blood of the Son of God is infinitely potent and efficacious. The guilt of sins committed under the old covenant is removed and divine-human covenantal union is achieved.<sup>88</sup>

The contrast in the efficacy of the blood of the old covenant and that of the new covenant is presented by C. Spicq as follows:

It is by the soul or the life, which is in the blood, that expiation takes place. Thus, as the value of the victim goes, so goes the value of the contract or the covenant. In the old covenant, they could only shed the blood of animals, whereas Christ sheds his own blood, more exactly: he offers his life to God. That he obtains an "eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12) is due to the fact that he is the Son of God. It is the dignity of the person whose blood is shed which determines the value of his blood; . . . One could not apply more exactly the axiom of Leviticus on the identity of blood and of life, nor express more clearly the transcendent efficacy of the blood of Christ by comparison to the sacrifices of the old law and the spiritual character of the Savior's immolation as opposed to the ritualism of Leviticus. One comes to understand then the whole force of the general line of reasoning of the Epistle (to the Hebrews): the unique sacrifice of the new covenant is better than all of the sacrifices of the old. This sacrifice, in effect, is the work of the incarnated Son of God, priest and victim. The shedding of his blood, the offering of his life is so potent as to present and unite to God all of a purified and sanctified humanity. The blood of Jesus Christ is the decisive factor of the teleiôsis (perfection, fulfillment) of the new religion.<sup>89</sup>

In addition to the intrinsic impotency and inefficaciousness of the offerings, there was a further essential limitation in the old covenant sacrifices: namely, the insincerity of many of those offering the sacrifices. The

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<sup>88</sup>On the atoning and unifying significance of the blood of the new covenant, see: A. Tarby, op. cit., pp.422-439.

<sup>89</sup>C. Spicq, L'Épître aux Hébreux, II, p. 283; cf. Heb 9:12-15; The Jerusalem Bible, Heb 9:26, note "k".

offering of blood was acceptable to Yahweh only to the extent that it reflected a genuine openness to His will. What God desires is that which the offerings signify: a profound desire for at-onc-ment through the offering of oneself, the gift of one's life, the attempt to live covenant love, hesed, to the full; in other words, an internal ratification of that which is externally signified. If God is to find an offering of blood acceptable, it must be absolutely genuine and authentic both as to the offering itself and as to the intention of the offerer.<sup>90</sup> The fulfillment of sacrifice is the total surrender of the self to God, even unto death. This is especially true in covenant-sacrifice for the covenant lays claim to the whole man and calls him to a surrender without qualifications. This fulfillment is realized in the self-gift of Christ. The absolute authenticity and the unreserved gift of self demanded by the very nature of covenant-sacrifice is found in Christ who is the perfect victim and priest of the new covenant.<sup>91</sup>

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews hears Jesus as saying: "Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired, but a body thou hast prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God,' as it is written of me in the roll of the book" (Heb 10:5-7; cf. Ps 40:6-8).<sup>92</sup> The overwhelming deficiency of the old covenant sacrifices was that they had become divorced from the faithful covenant

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<sup>90</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp. 38ff.; Chapter II, pp. 122ff.

<sup>91</sup>Cf. L. Dewar, op. cit., p. 207; A.G. Martimort, The Signs of the New Covenant (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1963), pp.188, 189; C. Bourgin, op. cit., pp. 67-90; B. Cooke, op. cit., pp. 1-44.

<sup>92</sup>The whole passage (Heb 10:5-10) announces "the abrogation of the old order and the introduction of the new, based on Jesus' wholehearted devotion to his Father's will." F.F. Bruce, "Hebrews," PC. 1016.

love and obedience they were to reflect. The sacrificial ritual was to enable the full human expression of the spontaneous heartfelt dedication of one's will to God. In the old covenant this purpose had been frustrated and empty ritualism had been substituted for true covenant love. The new covenant would not admit of mere external observance; it would admit only of an interior regeneration and an unqualified acceptance of God's will. In the sacrificial offering of Christ there would be realized the supreme act of covenant love and obedience. For his offering would in no sense be a token offering, rather, it would be manifestly expressive of his unreserved acceptance of the Father's will. It would be the freely rendered offering of himself.<sup>93</sup> "This my Father loves in me, that I am laying down my life, to take it up again afterwards. Nobody can rob me of it; I lay it down of my own accord. I am free to lay it down, free to take it up again; that is the charge which my Father had given me" (Jn 10:17,18).<sup>94</sup> Calvary represents a voluntary and complete acceptance of the Father's will. It is the definitive act of obedience whereby he will "redeem us from all iniquity" and make of us "a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds" (Tt 2:14).<sup>95</sup>

Christ's utterly free, deliberate and total sacrificial self-gift infinitely transcends the old covenant sacrifices:

To the incessant and sterile repetition of the innumerable victims of the old covenant is opposed the unique and sovereignly efficacious immolation of

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<sup>93</sup>"Pour Paul comme pour les Juifs, le sacrifice est donc bien une offrande à Dieu, une "oblation"; mais ce qu'offre le Christ, ce n'est point quelque chose, fût-ce son sang ou ce qu'il signifie, à savoir son acte d'obéissance et d'amour; il s'offre lui-même: son offrande, son "sacrifice" est identiquement son "retour à Dieu". S. Lyonnet, op. cit., p. 876.

<sup>94</sup>Cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Jn 10:18, note "j"; Jn 3:35, note "r".

<sup>95</sup>Cf. Jr 31:34; S. Lyonnet, op. cit., p. 877.

the new covenant. The effusion of the blood of Calvary realizes, and to perfection, in one stroke, that which all of the efforts of the former liturgy attempted, but in vain, to obtain. The difference is this: what is involved is not the blood of unconscious animals, but that of a person, not constrained, but free, not the blood of a sinner, but that of an innocent, the blood of the Son of God (Heb 9:13-14).<sup>96</sup>

The power of the blood of Christ is such that redeemed man is able to draw near to God: "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb 10:19-22). In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the high priest entering into the Holy of Holies with substitute blood is regarded as the prophetic figure of Christ entering "the greater and more perfect tent" with his own blood to effect our redemption and to set us free:

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb 9:11-14).

Through the blood of Christ, through the self-gift of the Son of God, our estrangement from God is overcome.

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<sup>96</sup> C. Spicq, L'Épître aux Hébreux, II, p. 278.

In Christ's blood we are redeemed (Eph 1:7). In his blood we are cleansed from our sins (1 Jn 1:7). Once "far off," we have been "brought near in the blood of Christ" (Eph 2:13). His blood has purified our consciences, "and set them free from lifeless observances, to serve the living God" (Heb 9:14).<sup>97</sup> Through his blood, the blood of the new covenant, the Son of God has enabled us to become sons of God and thus to be free. We have been freed from all of the shackles of mere external observances so as to be able to give totally of ourselves in true covenant love.

Christ, then, does not enter alone into the Holy of Holies. He brings us with him into the loving presence of his Father and he does so by means of "his own blood."<sup>98</sup> This is his "blood of the new covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins," and he gives us this infinitely efficacious blood to drink!

#### (b) The Symbolism Completed

In addition to the impotency of the substitute blood of the Sinaitic covenant and in addition to the insincerity of many who offered that blood, the very symbolism itself was incomplete. The Israelites were forbidden to drink blood. Yet, as has been established, in attempting union by means of blood-covenanting, the ideal is realized only when the covenanting parties drink of the life-giving oneness of blood.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Knox Version.

<sup>98</sup> Heb 9:12; 9:25; 10:19; J. E. Steinmueller, op. cit., pp. 565, 566; J. McConnell, op. cit., pp. 43-47; C. Spicq: "Autant l'accès de celui-ci était rare et difficile dans l'ancienne Alliance, et permis seulement au Pontife suprême, autant l'approche de Dieu devient libre, sans obstacle, et possible à tous, grâce au Précieux Sang!" op. cit., p. 281.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Chapter II, p. 78, notes 68,69; and pp. 118ff.

In all ways, the new covenant is the ideal blood covenant: the blood of this new covenant is of infinite value and potency; the sincerity of the offerer is unconditionally unreserved, even unto death; and, with divine finesse, the symbolism employed is perfected. The ideal is achieved. Christ gives his own blood as drink: "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins"(Mt 26: 27,28). . . "and they all drank of it" (Mk 14:23). Or again, as Paul puts it: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Co 11:25). The mention of the cup directly characterizes the blood of our Lord as drink. To drink of the Eucharistic cup is to communicate in the blood of Christ: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation (communion) in the blood of Christ?" (1 Co 10:16). To communicate in the blood of Christ is to effect that which is symbolized: union with Christ -- divine-human communion.<sup>100</sup>

In his unparalleled discourse on the Eucharist, John, in having reference to Christ's blood shared at the Last Supper,<sup>101</sup> alludes to the blood of the new covenant as

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<sup>100</sup>Aware of this symbolism and its significance, Paul enjoined his fellow Christians at Corinth not to participate in similarly-oriented pagan ceremonies: ". . . I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy?" ( 1 Co 10:20-22 ).

<sup>101</sup>R. Brown, op. cit., pp. 268-304, especially, pp. 284, 285; A. Feuillet, Johannine Studies, trans. T.E. Crane (Staten Island, New York: Alba House, 1965), pp. 53-128. (These pages on The Discourse On The Bread Of Life, are a translation of "Les thèmes bibliques maieurs du discours sur le pain de vie," NRT. 82(1960), 803-822, 918-1062); E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 124ff.

such.<sup>102</sup> By partaking of the blood of Christ, which is "real drink" (Jn 6:56), one becomes a beneficiary of the new covenant and participates in that Life which the Father shares with His Son: Divine Eternal Life.

So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. (Jn 6:53-58).

Here is communion through the most intimate of unions -- a personal blood covenant with the incarnate Son of God. To drink the blood of Christ, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, is to share the life identified with that blood, that is, the Life of God.<sup>103</sup> "Because blood is the source of life, whoever shall drink of this blood (of Christ) -- the only one that God has ordained men to drink -- will share the same Life as Christ, that is Life eternal. The

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<sup>102</sup> "Or c'est à ce sacrifice que le Christ se réfère explicitement la seule fois où dans les Synoptiques il parle de son sang, lors de l'institution eucharistique: "Ceci est le sang de la nouvelle alliance" (Mc.--Mt.) ou bien "cette coupe est la nouvelle alliance dans mon sang" (Lc.--1 Co., 11). En conséquence, il faut y rattacher aussi, au moins partiellement, toutes les allusions au sang eucharistique de Jésus, (Jn., 6; 1 Co., 10,16) et plus encore les passages où l'on affirme que le nouvel Israel est devenu peuple de Dieu par le sang du Christ (Ac., 20,28; Ap.,5,9)." S.Lyonnet op. cit., p. 871; cf. A. Feuillet, op. cit., p. 126; R. Brown, op. cit., p. 282.

<sup>103</sup> A. Lelièvre, "Blood," VB, pp. 40, 41; The Jerusalem Bible, Jn 6:57, note "p"; A. Feuillet, op. cit., p. 126: "The powerful formula, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him" (v. 57), profoundly resuming, as we have said, the covenant formula, opens the way to the most intimate union with Jesus and to the highest mystical aspirations, without compromising the necessary distinction between Christ and his disciples."

blood of Christ is the blood of a covenant not only new, but definitive and permanent, eternal (Heb 13:20), through the grace of which he has bound and consecrated a new people, the holy Church, which he has brought into communion with God."<sup>104</sup>

Thus, the imperfect symbolism of the old covenants gives way to the symbolically perfect New Covenant. The ideal is achieved. Christ gives us his own blood to drink.

Undoubtedly the Apostles would have been shocked by Christ's command to drink his blood. Nothing in their background would have prepared them for such a command.<sup>105</sup> On the contrary, they had been strictly forbidden to consume blood. Because it was essentially identified with life and because all life emanates from God who has exclusive dominion over it, blood was believed to be a divine reality. Consequently, the Israelites had been absolutely forbidden to arrogate to themselves that which belonged to God alone. Certainly, then, Christ's injunction to drink his blood would have astonished the Apostles. Not that they were unfamiliar with the symbolic use of "blood". They knew well the significance of Christ's words. The covenantal significance would have come across to them and they would have grasped that Christ was enacting a bond of intimate covenantal union with them.<sup>106</sup> They knew too the practice

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<sup>104</sup>C. Spicq, op. cit., p. 275. "By his blood, the covenant is sealed; the Savior reconciles and pacifies heaven and earth. Such is the "mystery of faith"...John affirmed that the body of Christ was the bread which descended from heaven. According to the Epistle to the Hebrews the blood of Christ enables man to ascend to heaven (Heb 10:19)." Idem, p. 275.

<sup>105</sup>Note the dismay and disbelief of some of the disciples at this "hard saying" of Christ's (Jn 6:52,60,66). Yet Christ does not soften his words. He makes it clear to the disciples that he is giving them his life, but, symbolically in the most authentic and astonishing manner possible.

<sup>106</sup>Cf. pp. 201, 202, above, especially note 60 on p. 202.

of drinking wine to establish a covenant relationship for this practice was widely known in the Hellenistic world.<sup>107</sup> However, the drinking of blood, even symbolically, was taboo to them. It was sacriligious to them and ran contrary to their tradition. Hence, the daring and the drama of Christ's words. Hence, the deliberate and profound impact he wished these words to have on them.

Christ tells the Apostles that they are to enter into this new covenant by drinking of the cup of his own blood. They are to drink of his blood for the very reason they had been forbidden to drink of blood prior to Christ: because it is life! Uniquely, to drink of Christ's life-blood is "to drink" of the Life of God. The only blood which God had not reserved to Himself alone is His own blood which He poured out for man to drink.<sup>108</sup>

By partaking of Christ's life-blood an utterly unique covenant comes into being. A new humanity comes into being. A new humanity realized in the blood of the incarnate Son of God. A new humanity that will know oneness of life with God; a oneness of life that is symbolized in the most authentic manner possible: a blood-covenant in which we drink of the blood of the God-man, Christ. How could Christ have communicated more dramatically and powerfully the fact that God was offering man His Own Life? How, other than through the universal and profound symbolism of a blood-covenant in which the blood is that of His Own Son. By the sharing of this 'one and the same blood' there is effected a shared life, a common life. By partaking of the blood of Christ we become one life with Him--the same Life that the Father and the Son share from all eternity. "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I

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<sup>107</sup>G.E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," ID. I, p. 722; E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>108</sup>Cf. D. Barthélemy, op. cit., pp. 356, 357.

in him" (Jn 6:57).<sup>109</sup> Through the new covenant Christ makes possible for us that which he prays for us: "that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us. . . The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me" (Jn 17:21-23). In the new covenant, Christ gives us nothing less than, and this must be underscored, himself.

What is given to us is the giver himself. This gift of the giver himself is quite inadequately rendered by the phenomenological "giving of oneself in the gift." "This is my body, this is my blood": this is not a giving of oneself in a gift, not even at a more profound level because the giver here is Christ, the personal revelation of the Father. No, what is given to us in the Eucharist is nothing other than Christ himself. What the sacramental forms of bread and wine signify, and at the same time make real, is not a gift that refers to Christ who gives himself in them, but Christ himself in living, personal presence. The signifying function of the sacrament (sacramentum est in genere signi) is here at its highest value. It is a making present of himself of the real, living Christ in a pure, meaningful presence which we are able to experience in faith.<sup>110</sup>

When Christ said: "This is my body," the word "body" stood as pars pro toto for his whole person, his whole bodily self. This manner of using the word "body" to represent "the whole self, somatically conceived" was not

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<sup>109</sup>Cf. note 103, above.

<sup>110</sup>E. Schillebeeckx, The Eucharist, trans. N. D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward, 1968), pp. 138, 139. On the significance of gift-giving, essential to the practice of covenanting, see Chapter I, pp. 51-54.

unfamiliar to the Jews.<sup>111</sup> Similarly, when Christ said: "This is my blood," the word "blood" stood as pars pro toto for his whole body-person, his whole bodily-self. Again, this usage was familiar to the Jews.<sup>112</sup> Thus, when Christ says: "This is my body. . . This is my blood," it is clear that he is, in fact, referring to himself. He is not referring to his body and his blood as anatomical components of himself, rather, he is referring to himself, the whole of himself, totus Christus.

If we are taking the primary biblical data as our point of departure. . . then it must be said from the start that according to precise exegesis "body" and "blood" signify the whole of our Lord. What body and blood mean is the bodily person of Jesus, the somatically conceived Self of Jesus, one who is a living being by the bond of his life's blood and who, as the Servant of God, establishes the bond of the New Covenant in his blood. It is he who is given. . . according to his (Christ's) actual explicit words, when rightly interpreted, according to their immediate sense, from the Aramaic,

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<sup>111</sup>"The actual semitic word used by Jesus, whether it was body or flesh, does not affect the interpretation of the meaning intended by Jesus. Whether Jesus used flesh or body, the word signified, not an anatomical ingredient of His humanity in contrast to soul or blood, but rather stood as pars pro toto for His whole "Ego" in its corporeal epiphany. Taken by itself, unrelated to the concept of blood which would be introduced only "after the meal," the Apostles would have understood, and Jesus would have intended, only one meaning for body-flesh: His whole person. It designates the concrete reality which is 'given for many.'" E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp.58,59. cf. K. Rahner, "On Visiting the Blessed Sacrament," in The Eucharist Today, pp. 196,197; J. Dupont, in The Eucharist Today, pp. 17, 18; A. Feuillet, op. cit., pp. 118-120.

<sup>112</sup>It is clear from our study that the identity of "blood" with "life" is not an abstract or anatomical definition or identity. As the bearer of life and essentially identified with it, blood is personalized and stands for the whole person dynamically and bodily conceived. Cf. Chapter II, pp. 1ff.

what he gives us is himself, so that in John 6:57 we have simply "I" for "flesh" and "blood". He thus truly gives the whole of himself as food.<sup>113</sup>

Here is a further vital dimension: Christ gives us himself as food! "Take and eat, this is my body; take and drink, this is my blood." Christ gives us himself to be eaten and to be drunk. He is our sustenance; we are to feed upon him. He makes himself available to us precisely that he may be our food. "The basic structure of the Sacrament (of the Eucharist) lies in its character as food, its availability for eating. . . 'Institutum est ut sumatur'" <sup>114</sup>

When he spoke of the bread of life (John 6.25-58) Jesus made known his intention of giving his whole concrete being, body and soul, as a new principle of life and as food. In this context, food signified the closeness and intimacy of personal union through faith and love: Jesus, acknowledged in love and accepted in the heart, as one person by another, is to be the power that nourishes and brings life to mankind. In personal communication with him, the believing Christian is to draw his entire life from him. Jesus refused to let any human considerations lessen this fearful demand. "After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him" (John 6.66). He went so far as to add to his demand by the act which was his final testament, the institution of the eucharist, and the commandment of the sacramental communion (Matt. 26.26-28; Mark 14.22-4; Luke 22. 19-20; 1 Cor 11. 23-6).<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>K. Rahner, op. cit., p. 196; cf. note 111, above. cf. P. Hitz, "The Lord's Eucharistic Presence," Lum.Vit. 22(1967), pp. 310, 311.

<sup>114</sup>K. Rahner, op. cit., p. 195; cf. pp. 195ff.; cf. The Council of Trent's Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, Chapter V. (Denzinger's Enchiridion symbolorum, number 878; English translation: The Church Teaches, ed. G. van Ackeren, St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., pp. 283, 284); P. Hitz, op. cit., p. 308.

<sup>115</sup>L. Boros, God Is With Us, trans. R.A. Wilson (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967), p. 1.

When Christ says: "take and eat, this is my body; Take and drink, this is my blood," he is, in fact, saying: Take all of me, take the whole of me as your life-giving food and drink. "For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. . .he who eats me will live because of me." (Jn 6:55, 57). In the new covenant, Christ presents himself to us as the Son of God, bodily present, who establishes a unique bond of covenant love in his blood, and who wills to give us himself through the consumption of this bread and wine which he designates as his body and blood. By the sharing of his body broken for us, and the drinking of his blood poured out for us, we share really and most intimately his very Life.

To be drunk, blood must be shed.<sup>116</sup> In Old Testament mentality, a covenant was not valid in law without sacrifice.<sup>117</sup> A covenant made "in blood" necessitated the immolation of victims whose blood was then referred to as "the blood of the covenant." This is what had transpired at Sinai. However, as we have seen, at the Cenacle, Christ qualified "the blood of the covenant" with "my" thus indicating that the new sacrifice which would replace the old would be his own death.<sup>118</sup> The death of Christ was

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<sup>116</sup>"The expression "drink blood", absolutely shocking to the mind of a Jew, should be set side by side with its use in 1 Chr. 11:19 where it suggests the idea of death: to be drunk, blood must first of all have been shed." A. Lelièvre, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>117</sup>Cf. J. Alfrink, op. cit., p. 294; E.F. Siegman, op. cit., p. 169.

<sup>118</sup>"Ainsi, le sang du Christ "ratifie" la nouvelle alliance comme le sang des taureaux avait "ratifié" l'ancienne alliance. Mais ne l'oublions pas, les taureaux avaient été immolés en sacrifice à Yahvé. On peut donc penser que Paul établit un parallélisme entre la mort sacrificielle des animaux, lors de la conclusion de l'ancienne alliance, et la mort sacrificielle du Christ, lors de la conclusion de la nouvelle alliance." M.E. Boismard, op.cit., p.101. (English translation: p.134); cf. J. Lécuyer, op. cit., p.178; C. Vollert, op. cit., pp.417,418; note 62 above.

essential for him to act as mediator of the new covenant (Heb 9:15ff.).<sup>119</sup> But Christ's blood poured out unto death does not suggest simply that he loses life, but rather, that he gives life and enables a unique community of life to take place between God and man.

Do not forget, then, that there was a time when you who were pagans. . . had no Christ and were excluded from membership of Israel, aliens with no part in the covenants with their Promise; you were immersed in this world without hope and without God. But now in Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far apart from us have been brought very close, by the blood of Christ. For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier that used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility caused by the rules and the decrees of the Law. This was to create one single New Man in himself out of the two of them and by restoring peace through the cross, to unite them both in a single Body and reconcile them with God. In his own person he killed the hostility. Later he came to bring the good news of peace, peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near at hand. Through him, both of us have in the one Spirit our way to come to the Father. (Eph 2:11-18).<sup>120</sup>

In the blood of the New Man, Christ, the unique covenant of peace is realized. Christ has personally given us peace and he has done so through the cross.<sup>121</sup> He has given us eternal life through his atoning death. This gift

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<sup>119</sup>Cf. The Jerusalem Bible, Heb 9, note "h".

<sup>120</sup>The Jerusalem Bible, Eph 2: notes "f" to "q".

<sup>121</sup>We have seen that a "covenant of peace" is but a stronger expression for "covenant". When the covenant is said to inaugurate and assure a peaceful relationship, it means the wholeness, the totality, the full unbridled development of the covenant partners. (cf. Chapter I, pp.19, 20). In establishing the new covenant in his blood, Christ gives us peace in this most profound sense. The road to the fullness of this peace lies through the Cross both for Christ and those who would be the people of his new covenant.

of life, this promise of the covenanting cup, is made good on Calvary where the divine covenanter poured out his life-giving blood in order that all men could be revitalized by its saving power.

The prophecy of Jeremiah is fulfilled by Christ at the Last Supper and on the Cross.<sup>122</sup> At the Last Supper, the blood of Christ is his blood outpoured. On the Cross, Christ actually poured out his life-blood. The covenant rite of the Last Supper gave the event of the next day its full meaning, but the rite itself would have had no meaning if the immolation of Christ had not already been present in the sign.<sup>123</sup> The Last Supper sacramentally realized the sacrifice of Calvary.

The wine of the Last Supper was not an empty sign, the mere symbol of a covenant to be effected later; it had then and there in itself the efficacy of the blood poured out as sacrifice. The blood that was in the cup not only signified the covenant but imparted it. The sacrifice of the following day already produced its effects through the sign that represented it at the Last Supper. Thanks to the prefigurative rite, the disciples really shared in the redemptive covenant.

If that is true of the prophetic rite of the Last Supper, it is still more so, we may say, of the repetition of the rite after the oblation of the sacrifice of Calvary. Paul says that every time the Christians celebrated the Eucharistic rite,

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<sup>122</sup>Cf. J. Lécuyer, op. cit., pp. 179-181; A.G. Martimort, op.cit., p. 193; B. Cooke, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>123</sup>"The Last Supper in its entirety is clearly, therefore, the celebration of the new covenant, established by Christ's effecting a sacramental identity between the Eucharist and His death on the Cross." A.G. Martimort, op. cit., p. 193. "By instituting the Eucharist, the sacrifice of the new covenant, Our Lord committed Himself, freely gave Himself up to His coming death, already sacramentally present and anticipated in His Eucharist." C. Bouman and M. Ryan, Key to the Missal (Notre Dame: Fides, 1960), p. 57; (cf. J. Dupont, in The Eucharist Today, pp. 20-23; E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 67ff. -- both of whom elaborate this truth in terms of "acted prophecy").

they proclaimed the Lord's death, but as an event of the past. From prophetic the rite had become memorial. It recalled the cross not as an empty sign or mere symbol; for when they drank from the cup, the Christians shared in the covenant God had made with man through the blood Christ had shed on the cross.<sup>124</sup>

We have explored the singular significance of Christ's blood of the new covenant which he shed on the Cross and shared at the Last Supper. We turn now to an examination of the Last Supper as the sacrificial meal of this new and eternal covenant.

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<sup>124</sup>J. Dupont, in The Eucharist Today, pp. 22, 23; cf. E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 67, 68; J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, (1966), pp. 230ff.

### C. The Sacrificial Meal of the New Covenant: The Last Supper

Given the utterly profound meaning and symbolism that common meals held for the Israelites, it is not at all surprising that Christ chose to structure his permanent self-gift in the form of such a meal. There is, of course, great difficulty in attempting to grasp and to convey adequately all that his choice signifies; a difficulty compounded by the infinitely mysterious nature of his Eucharistic self-gift in itself. Nevertheless, in light of the significance of common meals in the Old Testament and in light of the New Testament evidence, we are able to gain a number of insights into the profundity of Christ's Eucharistic action at the Last Supper.

Among the Israelites, common meals were judged to effect and express communion among men. Une communauté d'existence was created among those who ate together; an identity of life so intense as to be equivalent to that experienced in actual blood-kinship. Admission to the common meal implied admission to the family and resulted in an indissolubly binding relationship of peace, sâlôm, with all that implied. The fellowship experienced in the sharing of a meal together was the closest fellowship known to the Israelite world. That fellowship we have described, with J. Pedersen, as psychic communion.<sup>125</sup>

Operating from their own human experience of the common meal as an instrument of union, the Israelites attempted communion with their God precisely through the same medium of the common meal. Thus their meals took on a "sacred" character. Notably, the meals of their communion sacrifices were seen to be effective means of establishing or re-establishing union with Yahweh. The sacred meal

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<sup>125</sup>Cf. Chapter I, p. 13, note 39; and the many references throughout this thesis to "psychic community".

served, then, as the instrumental means of a twofold union: with their God and among themselves. The meal was of the essence of the communion sacrifice; it was in no sense merely marginal or auxiliary. By partaking of the meal, in common, the Israelites believed they shared in the very life of Yahweh.

The common meal symbolized, in the most striking and natural manner, the peaceful union, the common life that was the very purpose and definition of covenanting. In the context of covenanting, the common meal was both source and sign, establishment and expression of the desired covenantal union, a union of lives. This was true in the secular and in the religious sphere. Given the all-importance of the meal as an expression of their hoped-for covenantal union with Yahweh, it is readily understandable why the meal concept should have come to be so closely associated with Israel's Messianic expectations.<sup>126</sup>

In accomplishing his Messianic task, Jesus situates himself within this tradition and expectation of Israel. By the complete acceptance of the Father's will---as manifest in the total sacrificial gift of himself as food, symbolized and actualized by his gift of bread and wine at the Last Supper--Jesus establishes a new covenant relationship with the Father. To announce the arrival of this definitive relationship--correlatively, the arrival of the Kingdom of God--Jesus shares his meals with ordinary men and especially with known sinners and publicans: the apparent unrighteous and godless of his time. The full impact of his action in eating with these religious outcasts would not have been lost on his contemporaries. We have seen that for the Jew every table fellowship was a pledge and guarantee of peace, mutual trust and brotherhood. "Table fellowship is a fellowship of life. Table fellowship with Jesus is more.

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<sup>126</sup> On all of the above, see Chapter III.

This becomes especially evident in the case of that table fellowship which Jesus celebrated with sinners and outcasts. The oriental, to whom symbolic action means more than it does to us, would immediately understand the acceptance of the outcasts into table fellowship with Jesus as an offer of salvation to guilty sinners and as the assurance of forgiveness."<sup>127</sup> We can appreciate then the objection of the scribes and the Pharisees: "This man receives sinners and eats with them" (Lk 15:2).<sup>128</sup> The Pharisees believed that only the apparent "righteous" should enjoy table fellowship with the "righteous". They saw clearly that Christ by his act of eating with sinners was conferring on them value and worth in the eyes of God and to this they reacted bitterly.<sup>129</sup> Christ was admitting "sinners" into the intimacy of his new covenant relationship with the Father. The meal was a sign of their reconciliation.

The regular table fellowship with Jesus must have assumed an entirely new meaning for the disciples after Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi. From this time onward every meal with Jesus was for his followers a symbol, a pre-presentation, indeed an actual anticipation of the meal of the consummation. The request of the sons of Zebedee to be allowed to keep, at the meal of the salvation time, the places of honour which they had occupied on earth (cf. John 13.23) is clear evidence that the disciples were aware of this (Mark 10.35-37), and the continuation of the daily table fellowship after the death of Jesus as a sacred rite can be understood only on this basis. The self-humiliation of Jesus in ministering to his disciples like a slave (John 13. 1-17; Luke 22.27) can be seen in its true depth only

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<sup>127</sup>J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, (1966) p. 204; cf. P. Hitz: "In the person of Jesus this Kingdom is already at hand: to make it manifest, Jesus shares meals with ordinary men, even with sinners and publicans." op.cit., p. 310.

<sup>128</sup>Underscoring mine. cf. Mt 9:10-13, 11:19; Mk 2: 15-17; Lk 19:7.

<sup>129</sup>Cf. e.g., Lk 19:1-10.

when it is realized that this is the Messiah serving at the Messiah's meal. After Peter's confession (Mark 8.29 f. par.) the acceptance of outcasts and renegades into the table fellowship signifies more than it did before: in them is now represented the eternal and perfected community of the 'saints'. After Peter's confession every act of eating and drinking with the master is table fellowship of the redeemed community with the redeemer, a wedding feast, a pledge of a share in the meal of the consummation; so also the meal on Maundy Thursday.<sup>130</sup>

While the meal on Maundy Thursday is not to be viewed in isolation from the daily meals that Jesus took with his disciples, it is, nonetheless, the most outstanding of these meals. It is the Messianic meal par excellence. All the other meals find their culmination and climax in this Last Supper. It is in the Last Supper that Jesus fulfills the prophetic announcement of the Messianic Feast and dramatically serves his fellow men, as he had promised (Lk 12:37). He washes the feet of his disciples (Jn 13). More profoundly he serves them by the unconditional gift of his own person as food, symbolized and realized in the gift of bread and wine at this Last Supper.<sup>131</sup> Christ presents himself under the sign of a meal. The Eucharist is instituted as a meal and has the structure of a meal.<sup>132</sup> As a meal the Last Supper has profound paschal, covenantal and eschatological significance.

#### (1) Paschal Significance

It would appear that the Last Supper was a Passover Meal.<sup>133</sup> Even if it was not the actual Feast of the Pasch

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<sup>130</sup>J. Jeremias, op.cit., p. 205; cf. P. Hitz, op.cit., p. 310.

<sup>131</sup>Cf. P. Hitz, op.cit., p.310.

<sup>132</sup>Cf. note 114 above; P. Hitz, op.cit., pp. 308ff.

<sup>133</sup>It is beyond the scope of this thesis to enter, in

itself, the Last Supper is certainly presented by the Evangelists in a paschal context and as having paschal significance.<sup>134</sup>

To say that the Last Supper has paschal significance is to say several vital things. We have observed that the Original Passover was a sacrifice and the Original Passover Meal was a sacrificial communion meal.<sup>135</sup> It was a sacred and sacramental meal by which the Israelites attempted communion with their God. Also, it was a definite act of communion among themselves. It was a memorial meal which enabled the Israelites to continue to experience the living reality of that twofold communion. The exceptional connotation of "memorial," zikkaron, to the Israelites, especially as applied to the Passover Meal, has been well established. The Passover Meal commemorated the Israelites' historical deliverance from the bondage of Egypt but this commemoration was both celebration and actualization of this deliverance as well as a hopeful anticipation of their future final deliverance from all bondage. Transcendently, the

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detail, into the much disputed question of whether the Last Supper was actually a Passover meal. J. Jeremias (The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, (1966), pp.15-88), presents an exhaustive treatment of this question--an extensive bibliography is included. Jeremias concludes that the Last Supper was definitely a Passover meal. cf. J. Delorme, "The Last Supper and the Pasch in the New Testament," in The Eucharist In The New Testament, pp. 21-67; A.J.B. Higgins, op.cit., pp. 9-23; N. Clark, op. cit., pp. 36-48; E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 37-48; B. Cooke, op. cit., pp. 19ff.; J. Galot, op. cit., pp.225ff.; L. Bouyer, "La première Eucharistie dans la dernière Cène," MD. 18(1949), pp. 38ff.; T. Barrosse, op. cit., pp. 55ff.

<sup>134</sup>Mt 26:17-19; Mk 14:12-16; Lk 22:7-15; The Jerusalem Bible, Mt 26:17, note "d"; Lk 22:16, note "e"; also, the Works cited in note 133 above.

<sup>135</sup>On this and what follows concerning the significance of the Passover Meal in the Old Testament, see Chapter III, pp. 163-172.

"past" and the "future" were rendered "present" by the sacramental sharing of this sacrificial common meal. While the Original Passover ceremony underwent considerable evolution, these aspects mentioned above -- sacrificial, communal, memorial, -- remained essential throughout the history of the Old Testament. They are particularly significant in any attempt to articulate the meaning of Christ's last Supper with his disciples.

The Last Supper was a sacrificial meal. As we have seen, the essential meaning of sacrifice is an attempted union of the divine and the human. This attempted common union of God and of man occurs most profoundly in the sharing of a sacred meal. The sacred meal, in itself, is of the essence of sacrifice.<sup>136</sup> The Last Supper is not, then, simply a meal which follows upon Christ's sacrifice and which denotes communion in that sacrifice. The Last Supper is a sacrificial meal; the meal itself is sacrificial. "The meal itself is the sacrifice, which is why the eating of the food by at least one person present is necessary for the integrity of the sacrifice."<sup>137</sup> To share in the Last

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<sup>136</sup>Chapter III, pp. 134-144; cf. N. Lash, "The Eucharist: Sacrifice Or Meal?" The Clergy Review, 50(1965), pp. 912, 913.

<sup>137</sup>"The view that the Mass is a sacrifice followed by a meal arose as a result of the general failure by the people (over many centuries) to communicate at Mass. On the one hand, the impression was thereby given that only the priest offers the Mass (in any sense). On the other hand, communion lost its sacrificial character and was considered as a purely receptive activity ("receiving holy communion"), distinct from the action of offering sacrifice. The meal itself is the sacrifice, which is why the eating of the food by at least one person present is necessary for the integrity of the sacrifice (cf. Mediator Dei. CTS. para. 119, echoing Trent)." N. Lash, op. cit., p. 914.

Supper was sacramentally to share in the sacrifice of Calvary. The Last Supper sacramentally realized the sacrifice of Calvary and imparted its effects.<sup>138</sup> The Eucharist is truly "the sacrament of the Cross."<sup>139</sup>

In eating of the Eucharistic Meal we "eat" of Christ who is our passover sacrifice. "Christ, our passover, has been sacrificed" (1 Co 5:7).<sup>140</sup> By eating and drinking of the Eucharistic bread and wine we share sacramentally in Christ's sacrificial gift of himself. We share in his death and resurrection, that is, we share in his supremely sacrificial and transforming "Passover."

Christ's Passover is a sacrifice, the supreme and unique sacrifice, because this passover (death-resurrection) is Jesus' complete offering of himself to God the Father in the supreme service of mankind, the supreme and total act of divine Charity transforming Christ into the eternal glory of the Father through the Holy Spirit: it is Christ's paschal consecration through the Holy Spirit for the world's salvation. We should note all the realism of this sacrifice achieved through the death-glorification of his entire human being, and through the Holy Spirit. It is the unique sacrifice of the Cross (Jn 10,18; Eph. 5,2; Hebr. 10, 5-10). "And for their sake I consecrate (sanctify, sacrifice) myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth" (Jn 17,19; with the whole paschal-trinitarian context).<sup>141</sup>

The Eucharist is Christ's self-gift to God and to man. This gift of Christ's own person is a unique gift which definitively transforms our relationship to the Father. By his "Passover" Christ consecrates all of an estranged humanity to the Father and, by joining us to his paschal

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<sup>138</sup>Cf. pp. 226, 227, above.

<sup>139</sup>P. Hitz, op. cit., pp. 319, 320.

<sup>140</sup>JB translation. cf. Jn 1:29; 19:36; The Jerusalem Bible, Jn 1:29, note "w"; 1 Co 5:7, note "d".

<sup>141</sup>P. Hitz, op. cit., p. 321. cf. T. Barrosse, op. cit., p. 78.

sacrifice, he enables us to "passover" from sin and death to the very Life and Glory of the Father. Our transformation is paschal. We are not merely juridically or morally transformed; we are totally transformed into a new existence, into the very Life of God. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. . . For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness (goodness) of God" (2 Co 5:17,21). Christ's sacrificial paschal gift of himself definitively destroys sin and irrevocably establishes a new covenant love relationship between God and man. The sacred sacrificial meal of the Eucharist is the most potent and eloquent sign of our full participation in this unique Passover and its consequent oneness of life with God. Precisely that we might partake really and most profoundly in this once-for-all paschal sacrifice, Christ gave to his Last Supper the value of a "memorial," a zikkaron.

For the benefit of later Israelite generations Moses had enjoined that the Original Passover Meal be celebrated perpetually (Ex 12:4,14; Dt 16:1). Thus, by means of this annual Passover Meal, later generations would be able to transcend the context of time, of past-present-future time limitations, and be one with those of the Exodus generation. The Passover Meal was the essential instrumental means of this dynamic sharing in the original Exodus event. Christ, too, desired that all generations be able to share with him in his Exodus. He declared his Last Supper to be the means of this sharing: "Do this in remembrance (as a memorial) of me" (Lk 22:19).<sup>142</sup> This command of Christ carries the full impact of the meaning of the Hebrew, zikkaron. With G. Wood, we may paraphrase Christ's command this way:

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<sup>142</sup>Cf. 1 Co 11:24-26; on the authenticity of this command see E. J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 69ff.

"Perform this rite and by means of it rise above time, above whatever era you may be in, and be present at and share in my passion, my death, my resurrection beyond the dominion of evil, my ascension to power, freedom and peace."<sup>143</sup>

Just as the Israelites had celebrated the Passover Meal of the old covenant as the "memorial" which perpetually actualized for them the supportive redemptive activity of Yahweh on their behalf,<sup>144</sup> so, too, Christians celebrate the Eucharist, the Passover Meal of the new covenant, as the grateful<sup>145</sup> "memorial" which actualizes Christ's supportive redemptive activity on behalf of all mankind. As the memorial meal of the new covenant, the Eucharist actualizes--renders present here and now--a new and definitive covenantal relationship between God and man and enables us to share really in this relationship. That is, by sharing this Passover Meal of the new covenant we share really in the mysterious presence of Jesus; a presence which is ongoing,

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<sup>143</sup>G. Wood, "The Eucharist: The New Passover Meal," BT. 5(1963), p. 316.

<sup>144</sup>Cf. Chapter III, pp. 163-172.

<sup>145</sup>"The basic attitude will always be that of the Eucharist: thanksgiving, praise, gratitude. . .for that presence of the Lord and, in him, for the whole wonder of his Grace, of his Redemption, of his new Life. . .This "eucharist" (giving thanks, proclaiming the wonders of God in the risen Jesus...) has provided the sacrament with its accepted title since the 1st century. Throughout the centuries, and in all the liturgies (despite certain accretions which have concealed some of its features), it is always "by giving thanks" (eucharistein, eulogein) in the framework and in virtue of the "eucharist" (grateful remembrance) that this sacrament has been celebrated. . ."Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord" (Jn. 20,20). "And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts" (Acts, 2,46 with 42). The eucharistic anaphoras, ranging from that of Hippolytus to those of the eastern liturgies, equally witness to this fact; and so does the basic structure of the "Canon of the Mass": the Preface--the words of the Consecration--the Anamnesis--the Doxology." P. Hitz, op. cit., p. 313. cf. N. Lash, op. cit., pp. 908, 909.

real and personal. It is Christ himself whom we commemorate in the celebration of the meal. It is he whom we encounter when we gather round the Eucharistic table. As Paul Hitz comments:

Since Christ already came, died and rose again, once and for all (ephapax), a real commemoration meal takes place, a meal-in-remembrance of an already accomplished event, a memorial of that beloved Christ who died for us. But since Christ is not dead but living in the power of his Resurrection, which is constantly actual, this remembrance-meal becomes a mysterious presence. . .

Jesus fulfills his presence-gift for this community in and through the sign of the consecrated meal. His presence is actual and real. It is not merely effected in the commemoration which the faithful celebrate in worship, or in the symbolism of union between Christ and the faithful which this meal actualizes in the community, or in a spiritual presence of the Lord acknowledged in the faith of the community, or in the Lord's Word heard and proclaimed by the community.

All these "modes of presence" are realized in the sacrament, but they still do not mark the full paschal realism of the Eucharist.

In and through this sacrament, "the commemoration of the Lord by the Church" becomes supremely efficacious, "the Word is made flesh"; in and through this human-cosmic sign of the consecrated meal, the risen Jesus offers Himself personally, really, in his glorified humanity "in whom the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily," to the faithful who celebrate the Lord's meal -- and, by reason of this fact, they are united in their personal-real-corporeal-cosmic being with the glorified Christ and with one another, and they participate in the eternal Life of the Resurrection.

The specific and decisive role of this meal of bread and wine is therefore no longer solely one of nourishment for our human-earthly life (although the latter reality is abiding), but its role is to be the efficacious sign of the real-personal Presence-gift of Jesus risen for his Church, and of the real-personal communion of the faithful with Christ and with one another in view of the risen Life.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>146</sup>P. Hitz, op. cit., pp. 314, 315, 316, 317.

In the Eucharist we encounter Christ really and personally. Through his paschal "Presence-gift," Christ unites us to himself and to the Father and, in him, to one another. This paschal communion is accomplished for us in the sharing of the Eucharistic Meal. We celebrate Christ's paschal presence and our paschal salvation when we celebrate the Eucharist in which "the victory and triumph of his (Christ's) death are again made present."<sup>147</sup> In the Eucharist we celebrate Christ's and our common passover from death to eternal life and we celebrate this passover now. In the Eucharist we celebrate Christ who is our passover and whose passover sacrifice has enabled us "to live forever" in the oneness of divine-human life.<sup>148</sup>

## (2) Covenantal Significance

From what has been presented above, it is clear that the Last Supper is presented as the fulfillment of the Old Pasch.<sup>149</sup> To say this is equivalently to say that the Last Supper has profound covenantal significance for the Original Passover was inextricably related to the Sinaitic covenant<sup>150</sup> and the annual Passover celebration "was itself a continuation, a commemoration that was also a renewal, of the pact of Sinai; in a sense it subsumed all time under the dominant

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<sup>147</sup> Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, article 6, p. 140, note 10.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Jn 6; 17.

<sup>149</sup> So also, E.J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 37-48, 71-73; B. Cooke, op. cit., pp. 21, 33-35; P. Hitz, op. cit., pp. 313-340; J. Galot, op. cit., pp. 225-228; cf. notes 133, 134 above.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Chapter II, pp. 69ff., especially pp. 73-75. B. Cooke, op. cit., pp. 33-35; E. J. Kilmartin, op. cit., pp. 47, 48.

event of the covenant."<sup>151</sup> We have seen that all the accounts of the Last Supper testify to that covenantal significance.<sup>152</sup> Throughout this Chapter we have been exploring that covenantal significance under different aspects.<sup>153</sup> There is no sharp line between these different aspects. They are all aspects of the one mysterious reality. It is not, then, a question of isolating these different aspects for the sake of isolating them, indeed it is not a question of isolating them at all; rather, it is a question of an attempt to comprehend them in their unity and in the whole movement of the history of salvation. These aspects are presented as focal points not as isolated realities. In focusing our attention on these different aspects our hope is that we will deepen our appreciation of the whole mysterious reality of the Lord's Supper, of the Eucharist. Given this cautionary preamble, we may proceed to a further exploration of the Eucharist under the specific aspect of covenant meal.

It is highly significant that Christ chose to institute, that is, sacramentally render present, his paschal sacrificial self-gift in the sharing of a covenant meal. We have seen, in depth, the profound impact of the common meal on the Israelites and their religious response. We have seen the profound unifying power which they ascribed to these meals. In this, the Israelites reflected a universal phenomenon. "The meal which men share together constitutes a social act which unites them with one another, with their ancestors, with the cosmos, and with the divinity, in response to a common feeling, a universal experience of

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<sup>151</sup>B. Cooke, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>152</sup>Cf. pp. 198-200, and especially notes 52 and 55 above.

<sup>153</sup>E.g., Jesus as the new covenant, pp. 185-197; the Blood of the new covenant, pp. 198-227.

humanity, which has always been aware of the natural, and at the same time mysterious character of the meal we share in one another's company."<sup>154</sup> To reiterate once more, in the context of covenanting the common meal was judged to effect the oneness of life that was the very purpose of entering into covenant. The covenant meal was both source and sign of the most intimate union imaginable in the Oriental world. The sense of brotherhood, of peaceful union and of mutual hesed was experienced most intensely in the sharing of a covenant meal. Christ deliberately drew upon this profound symbolism in situating his self-gift in the framework of such a covenant meal. Not only did he draw upon this universal symbolism but he gave to it a new reality. Where the world had been familiar with the beginning of truth, Christ revealed the fullness of truth.

The Eucharist is a covenant meal in the fullest sense possible. In the Eucharist God is really present with man and really shares his own Life with him. Here is a meal taken really "in the presence" of God.<sup>155</sup> Christ is in person the concrete embodiment and actualization of the new covenant love relationship between God and man; and he is, in person, present to and for us in the Eucharistic covenant meal. The Lord is with us really and totally in the Eucharist which is the actualization of his unrestrained self-gift to the Father and his fellow men. In this sacrificial meal of the new covenant, God and man encounter one another in the most profoundly personal and permanent manner. They encounter one another in the "eating," the sharing of the person of Christ who is the definitive new covenant. In the Eucharist God is with man in an utterly unique and unsurpassable way.

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<sup>154</sup>P. Hitz, op. cit., p. 327; cf. Chapter III, pp. 128-144.

<sup>155</sup>Cf. Chapter III, p. 172, note 125.

At the Last Supper, Jesus announced and constituted the sign of the new Covenant: "This cup is the new covenant. . ." (Lk, 22, 20; 1 Cor., 11, 25). This meant that in Him, in his glorified humanity, God had given Himself to humanity, had united men with Him and with one another, but for all times and in a new, eternal, absolutely personal and faithful way which was accomplished in the Christ "Emmanuel."

The Eucharist, as a permanent sacrament, as "the Lord's meal" perpetuated in the Church, constitutes the visible, social and efficacious sign of this forever actual and faithful Covenant which God has established with his people: it is the sacrament of the new and eternal Covenant, the sacrament of Emmanuel, "God with us."<sup>156</sup>

The efficacy of this new covenant meal lies in the inventiveness of Christ who gives us himself as the sacrificial food which sacramentally effects this new covenantal union. The fare of this new covenant meal is the Son of God, himself, humanly "bodied-forth" to us. To partake of Christ is to accomplish the desired union of lives. "Unlike that of the Sacrifice of the former Covenant this sacrificial food really effects the remission of sin and makes the fidelity to Jahveh, demanded by the terms of the Covenant, a real possibility."<sup>157</sup> By eating of the Eucharist, the sacrificial meal of the new covenant, we become beneficiaries of this new covenant; that is, we share really in its effects now. We become one with God and with our fellow man, and this, in the most remarkably intimate manner.

The early Church's celebration of the Eucharist as a covenant meal, like any covenant meal, supposed, effected and expressed the mutual union of those who partook of the meal.<sup>158</sup> More precisely, because of its commemorative

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<sup>156</sup>P. Hitz, op. cit., p. 336.

<sup>157</sup>J. Alfrink, op. cit., p. 294.

<sup>158</sup>Cf. Chapter III, pp. 145-147; T. Barrosse, op. cit., p. 69.

character -- it "commemorated" Christ -- it supposed, effected and expressed their mutual union in Christ.<sup>159</sup> A covenant meal could effect a union absolutely equivalent to the closest possible natural union. It established a quasi-familial relationship with all that implied.<sup>160</sup> A covenant meal could make of those celebrating it one "flesh," that is "one living human reality as man and woman are one flesh in marriage and relatives are the same flesh, since a covenant inaugurates a family-like relationship. In the case of the Eucharist this is particularly true since sharing the bread and wine over which the blessing has been spoken means sharing not merely a blessing (the one spoken over them) but the body and blood of Christ (to which they have been referred)."<sup>161</sup> Here is the most intimate divine-human covenantal union conceivable. We share in a covenant meal with the Lord and the food of this meal is his own body and blood, his own person. ". . . he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me" (Jn 6:54-57).<sup>162</sup>

Those who partake of the Eucharist, in the deepest sense, become a fellowship,<sup>163</sup> in Christ: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. . .

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<sup>159</sup>pp. 235-237, above; T. Barrosse, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>160</sup>Cf. Chapter III, pp. 128-133, 145-146, 161-163, and notes 13, 14, 15, 56, 101 of that Chapter.

<sup>161</sup>T. Barrosse, op. cit., p. 73; cf. J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, (1966), pp. 231ff.

<sup>162</sup>See pp. 216-225, above.

<sup>163</sup>Cf. Chapter III, pp. 176, 177, notes 133, 134.

Abide in me, and I in you. . . Abide in my love" (Jn 6:56; 15:4,9). To share the Lord's meal with him is to eat "in his presence"; it is to abide in his presence. Not only do we, as did those who shared in the Sinaitic covenant meal, eat "in" the presence of God but, because Christ gives us himself as the sacrificial food of this new covenant meal, we eat "of" the presence of God. We are penetrated by Christ's presence. The vision of Yahweh enjoyed by those who shared the meal at Sinai was an exterior one. The vision of God enjoyed by the disciples at the Last Supper was an interior one. This is the vision open to us when we partake of the Eucharist.<sup>164</sup>

Significantly, just prior to the actual eating of the Last Supper, Phillip asks of Jesus the supreme privilege for a Jew, to see the Father: "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied." To which Jesus replies: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe<sup>165</sup> that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" (Jn 14:8-10). The disciples have "known" and "seen" the Father to the extent that they have come to "know"<sup>166</sup> Christ; that is to the extent that they have personally experienced Christ and

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<sup>164</sup>Chapter III, p. 174, note 128; J. Galot, op. cit., pp. 224ff.

<sup>165</sup>"When Philip asks for some marvellous manifestation of the Father, he is falling short of that faith by which alone the Father is seen to be in the Son and the Son in the Father." The Jerusalem Bible, Jn 14:10, note "f".

<sup>166</sup>"In biblical language, cf. Ho 2:22+, 'knowledge' is not merely the conclusion of an intellectual process, but the fruit of an 'experience', a personal contact (cf. Jn 10:14-15 and 14:20; 17:21-22; cf. 14:17; 17:3; 2 Jn 1-2); when it matures, it is love, cf. Ho 6:6+ and 1 Jn 1:3+! The Jerusalem Bible, Jn 10:14, note "g"; cf. Ho 2:20, note "s"; Jn 17:6, note "h".

believed in him as a person.<sup>167</sup> They have known him as one person knows another, not just intellectually but as a whole person. They have experienced him totally. They have walked with him and talked with and touched him and they have eaten with him. They have enjoyed the closest possible fellowship with him: table fellowship. This intimate experience of Christ in table fellowship reaches its intense fulfillment in the sharing of the Last Supper.<sup>168</sup>

It is at the Last Supper that the new covenant is established in the body and blood of Christ. This new covenant will affect the disciples in the depths of their being. True to the Spirit of this new covenant, their "vision" of God is a profoundly interior one. They "behold" God "in" Christ. "The Eucharistic Meal was destined, then, to prolong indefinitely the intimacy of the disciples with their Lord; it would enable them to continue to see Christ d'un regard intérieur, to "know" him in depth. In eating the "flesh" of the Lord they would penetrate ever more the divine presence and would be able, mysteriously, "to see God," to enter into the most intimate contact with him."<sup>169</sup> By means of the Eucharist, the sacrificial meal of the new covenant, the disciples are brought into a quasi-familial relationship with God; a relationship equivalent to the closest possible natural relationship between God the Father and His Son. Those who partake of the Eucharist are "at one" with God and with each other "in" Christ. No more profound a covenantal bond could have been established than this: to be "one" in the Life, in the Love of God; to be "one" in Christ. In sharing this Meal together with the Lord in our midst, we "abide" in him and he "abides" in us;

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<sup>167</sup>Cf. Chapter V, p. 262, note 19.

<sup>168</sup>J. Galot, op. cit., pp. 216ff.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid., p. 223.

we "abide" in his love (Jn 15:4,9). The Eucharist is the source and the sign of a union that is infinite in its intimacy and in the dimension of its loving service.

Each Eucharistic celebration is a renewal of this new covenant which Christ ritually established in the Last Supper. By actually entering into this unique table fellowship with the Lord, we are united to him and to one another in a covenant love bond that is unparalleled. The Eucharistic covenant meal enables us to become members of Christ's own body: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Co 10:16,17). The unification is in the eating. We are one body, the body of Christ, because we all share the one bread. "The transubstantiation is in the eating. . .By eating we become his body; eating makes it so."<sup>170</sup> Christ gives us his body-person<sup>171</sup> to eat so that we might be assimilated into his body-person; so that we might become his body-person. Such an undreamed-of union is indeed mystical.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup>N. Brown, Love's Body (New York: Random House, 1966), p.168; "The partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ does nothing other than transform us into that which we consume." St. Leo the Great, Serm., 63,7, as quoted in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, article 26, p. 50.

<sup>171</sup>This expression, "body-person," is used in an attempt to offset the purely biological connotation of the word "body." We are speaking of Christ's "whole self, somatically conceived," his whole bodily self, totus Christus cf. notes

<sup>172</sup>The new Eucharistic covenantal union far exceeds a mere moral or juridical unity, a unity of cooperation and obedience. The Mystical Body is one "by a distinct internal principle, which exists effectively in the whole and in each of its parts, and whose excellence is such that of itself it is vastly superior to whatever bonds of union may be found in a physical or moral body." Pius XII, Encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi (New York: Paulist Press), number 66. cf.

The Eucharist as the visible sign of the covenant which God has established with humanity "manifests the wonderful realism of the Love which God bears us: . . . A bodily love which embraces and transforms man in the depths of his physical being in and through the glorified Body of Christ, signified by the meal of bread: the union of our bodies with the very Body of Christ."<sup>173</sup>

We become one as we become the Body of Christ who is our sacrificial food. The Eucharist transforms us into the sacrificial food that is Christ so that we might become as "pure food" to one another. The Eucharist summons us to sacrifice, that is, to give of ourselves as food to one another.<sup>174</sup> We are bound communally, in love, because we feed on the "one bread," the "bread" of the self of Christ who is Love's body-person.<sup>175</sup>

The new covenant is, then, our new union of Life in Christ's body-person. It is a Eucharistic unity; a unity effected and signified by our sharing in the Eucharistic covenant meal. It is a unity so sublime that we become "one" with Christ, analogously as the Father and His Son are "one" (cf. Jn 17:21).

As in the Old Testament, here too the sacred covenant meal is the source and the sign of a twofold communion: with God and with our fellow men. At the same time that it

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E. La Verdiere, op. cit., pp. 305, 306. cf. notes 111-113 above.

<sup>173</sup>P. Hitz, op. cit., p. 339.

<sup>174</sup>This point will be elaborated upon existentially in Chapter V, pp. 263-269.

<sup>175</sup>"Truly partaking of the body of the Lord in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with Him and with one another. 'Because the bread is one, we though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread' (1 Co 10:17). In this way all of us are made members of His body (cf. 1 Co 12:27), 'but severally members one of another' (Rom 12:5)." Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, article 7, p. 20.

symbolizes covenantal union with God, the meal symbolizes the union and the solidarity of all those who share in it. The meal is taken in community. The two fellowships -- with God and with our fellow man -- are "concurrent."<sup>176</sup> The deepest characteristic of this twofold communion is to be loving service.

In the context of the celebration of the Last Supper, Christ explicitly underscores the loving service that is to characterize the disciples' lives: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:34,35). Thus, the new covenant implies the observance of a new command which "corresponds to the very nature of the covenant itself."<sup>177</sup> It is the stipulated obligation of those who enter into the new covenant community. The terms of the new covenant are summed up in this one law. However, it is not so much a "law" as it is the very definition of the new covenant relationship between God and man.<sup>178</sup> The true "law" of the new covenant is incarnate in the person of Christ who is the mediator of this Covenant: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (Jn 1:17). The "law" of the new covenant is the law of the heart that loves, even "unto the end." it is the "law" of the heart of the Son of God. No written command is able to capture adequately such a love; it can only be manifested personally. Christ, in person,

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<sup>176</sup>Chapter III, p. 176, notes 132-134.

<sup>177</sup>G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," ID. I, p. 722; cf. Chapter I, p. 47, note 112 and p. 192, note 31, above; J. Galot, op. cit., pp. 224, 225.

<sup>178</sup>Cf. G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," ID. I, pp. 722, 723.

is the new law of the new covenant. He exemplifies personally what it means to live according to this new law of love, to live a life of covenant love to the full.<sup>179</sup>

Although he is "Lord and Teacher," Jesus is among us as "one who serves" and washes the feet of his disciples (Lk 22:27; Jn 13:1-17).<sup>180</sup> He enjoins us to love as he loves and to serve as he serves (cf. Jn 13:15). Our covenantal love response to God consists in our partaking of the "divine Agapè which the Father and the Son hold for mankind: it consists in giving up one's own life for men, as Jesus did and does now in this Sacrament: "This is my body which is given for you. . . 'This bread I give you is my flesh for the life of the world.' 'Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another' (1 Jn,4,11). 'He (Jesus) laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren' (1 Jn,3,16 and the whole context of 1 Jn,3 and 4 which is supremely applicable to the Eucharist)."<sup>181</sup>

Here is the real climactic point in the celebration of the Eucharist: a living of Christ's Eucharistic action, here and now, in the present moment of our lives.<sup>182</sup> "The Eucharistic celebration is not an end in itself; it is ordained for the Church and destined to make her as a whole, and to create in each one of the faithful individually, 'the body of Christ for the life of the world,' the body of Christ in his redemptive sacrifice. The Eucharist is celebrated in and by the Church so that the Church may learn to sacrifice herself through Him and with Him (Christ)."<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup>Pp. 185-197 above.

<sup>180</sup>Pp. 185-188, 203-208 above.

<sup>181</sup>P. Hitz, op. cit., pp. 326, 327.

<sup>182</sup>This point will be elaborated upon in Chapter V.

<sup>183</sup>P. Hitz, op. cit., p. 323; cf. Augustine, De Civitate Dei, X, 20. "This is the real meaning of the

To accept to partake of the Eucharist, the sacrificial meal of the new covenant between God and man, is to accept to live a life of new covenant love, hesed, with all the intensity of Christ's hesed for God and man. We are to love "to the end" in the anticipation and the progressive realization of the consummated covenant when all mankind will be gathered in the unifying and intimate love of the Lord. The Eucharist is presented as the great instrumental means of that progressive unification of humanity,<sup>184</sup> a humanity caught up in a bond of cosmic covenantal love. The Eucharist anticipates the fullness of that mysterious union and inchoatively realizes and celebrates it now.<sup>185</sup>

### (3) Eschatological Significance

We have seen how the meal concept came to be closely connected to Israel's Messianic expectations and how Christ, in accomplishing his Messianic task, situated himself within that tradition and expectation of Israel.<sup>186</sup> Jesus presides -- with a presidency of service -- at the Last Supper as the Messiah.<sup>187</sup> "According to the entire biblical perspective, the sign of the meal, especially the meal shared with the Messiah, announces the Kingdom of eternal glory. The Eucharist constitutes the meal of messianic times, that joyful feast which inaugurates the wedding

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Eucharist: '. . .that the Church as the body united to her Head may learn through him to sacrifice herself: se ipsam per ipsum discat offere'" P. Hitz, op.cit., p. 327.

<sup>184</sup>Cf. J. Galot, op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>185</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp.46-49; Chapter III, pp. 183,184.

<sup>186</sup>Chapter III, pp. 179-184; pp. 229-231, above.

<sup>187</sup>Cf. J. Delorme, op. cit., pp. 66, 67.

celebrations of the Kingdom. For this reason it is always a banquet!"<sup>188</sup> The Eucharist is the Messianic Feast that fulfills the Pasch and announces the arrival of the Kingdom and the new covenant. It is the anticipation of the Messianic Feast of the fully established Kingdom and the fully consummated covenant. The Eucharist is the meal par excellence where the members of the Kingdom and the new covenant community receive the Messianic blessings.<sup>189</sup>

In the person of Christ, the Kingdom is already present and operative, actualized for the community constituted by the new covenant. At the Last Supper, "kingdom and covenant are tied together in an eschatological framework as the Lukan Jesus speaks to his disciples: 'You are those who have continued with me in my trials; as my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom' (Lk 22: 28-30). The road to that kingdom, for the new Israel as for its covenant-Lord, lies through the cross; but beyond the suffering there is the glory, the messianic banquet of fulfillment."<sup>190</sup> The Last Supper is presented as the inauguration and the anticipation of that consummation, "when sign and foretaste shall at last give place to messianic fulfillment in the perfected kingdom. 'I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' (Lk 22:18). 'The New Covenant is established with an eschatological reference. Here and now is set up that which will be fulfilled in the beyond.'"<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup>P. Hitz, op. cit., p. 332.

<sup>189</sup>Cf. E.J. Kilmartin, op.cit., pp. 48-53; J. Galot, op. cit., pp. 228ff.

<sup>190</sup>N. Clark, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>191</sup>Ibid., p. 69 (Clark is quoting J.O. Cobham, "The Sacrifice of the New Covenant," in The Parish Communion, ed. A. G. Hebert, p. 58).

The celebration of the Eucharist is the ritual anticipation and the sacramental preparation for that consummate celebration: "eating and drinking at Jesus' table" in the fully realized Kingdom.<sup>192</sup>

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul recalls this eschatological dimension of the Eucharistic celebration: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (in glory)" (1 Co 11:26).<sup>193</sup> The Eucharist is, then, "the ritual meal of the Church, which knows that it is redeemed by the saving death of its Lord and understands itself to be a society awaiting the return of Christ and its own fulfilment."<sup>194</sup>

The Eucharist is a paschal meal, a covenant meal and a messianic meal. It is a memorial meal: it commemorates Christ. It is a commemoration that is an actualization, a rendering present of Christ personally. It is a commemoration, an actualization that is hope-filled.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup>R. Schnackenburg, The Church in the New Testament. trans. W.J. O'Hara (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1965), pp. 192, 193.

<sup>193</sup>Cf. R. Schnackenburg, op. cit., p. 193; P. Hitz, op. cit., p. 331.

<sup>194</sup>P. Neuenzeit, Das Herrenmahl: Studien zur paulinischen Eucharistieauffassung (1960), p. 132 -- as quoted in R. Schnackenburg, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>195</sup>It is not possible to explore fully the implications of this dimension of the Eucharist. Obviously important, this dimension needs fuller research. This is especially true in view of the current "theology of hope" (cf. e.g., Jurgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1967); R. Schnackenburg, "The Christian and the Future of the World," in Christian Existence in the New Testament, II, trans. J. Blenkinsopp (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), pp. 184-229; J.B. Metz, "Relationship of Church and World in the Light of a Political Theology," in Theology of Renewal, II, Renewal of Religious Structures--Proceedings of the Congress on the Theology of the Renewal of the Church, Centenary of Canada, 1867-1967 (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1968), pp. 255-270).

In the Eucharist we celebrate Christ's transforming presence and we hope for the fullness of transformation when we will all be one in the consummate covenant love of the Lord: "and they sang a new song, saying, 'thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God'" (Rv 5:9,10; cf. 7:13-17). Such is the anticipated covenantal union: a union of all mankind with no barriers and no discrimination, for all have been ransomed in the covenant blood of Christ.

The Eucharist anticipates that moment when all mankind will be one in the intimate covenant love of the Lord and will be gathered together to celebrate that union in the meal of the consummated covenant: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me" (Rv 3:20).

The Eucharist, the sacrificial meal of the new covenant, inchoatively realizes the consummated new covenant relationship between God and all mankind, a relationship so poignantly described by the author of the Book of Revelation: ". . .I heard a great voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away. . .He who conquers shall have this heritage and I will be his God and he shall be my son'"(Rv 21:1-4,7).<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>196</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp. 48, 49. The author of the Book of Revelation describes the fulfillment of the original, Old Testament covenant by weaving together classical expressions which designate the covenant. e.g., "kingdom and priests to our God," "He (God) will dwell with them and they shall be his people," "I will be his God and he shall be my son." He stresses the fulfillment, using four terms ("tribe," "tongue," "people," "nation,") no less for all nations of

But the "conquest" has taken place in Christ. The consummated new covenant love relationship between God and man begins here and now, to the extent that we celebrate the Eucharist, and to the extent that we realize the climactic point of that celebration: the existential living of Christ's Eucharistic covenantal action, in the present moment of our lives.<sup>197</sup>

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the new covenant as contrasted to the one nation of the old covenant.

<sup>197</sup>This will be elaborated upon in the following Chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### Towards An Increased Awareness Of The Eucharist

The reflections offered in this Chapter represent a modest attempt to contribute toward a deeper awareness of Christ's Eucharistic action. Born of the research presented in the preceding chapters, the context of these reflections is covenantal. The conclusions presented in this Chapter have, to a large extent, been anticipated in the preceding Chapter.<sup>1</sup> What is presented in this Chapter is an existential elaboration of these prior findings. There is, of course, no question of challenging or detracting from the traditional dogmatic statements on Christ's Eucharistic action. There is question only of an ongoing effort to discover ever more fully the meaning of Christ's Eucharistic action for us today. Such an effort is never exhausted and is perfectly attuned to the spirit of genuine enquiry that is characteristic of our Church.<sup>2</sup>

#### A. Christ's Eucharistic Action and Hesed

As has been remarked upon throughout this thesis,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>E.g., Chapter IV, pp. 189ff.; 204ff.; 220ff.; 245ff.

<sup>2</sup>In the Encyclical Letter, Mysterium Fidei, Pope Paul acknowledged and approved "the praiseworthy effort to investigate this lofty mystery(of the Eucharist) and to set forth its inexhaustible riches, revealing its meaning to the men of today." (Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts: St. Paul Editions, 1965), p. 8. cf. pp. 6,7,14; cf. also, The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, article 23, p. 126.

<sup>3</sup>Chapter I, pp. 22-24, 31-33; Chapter II, pp. 122-124; Chapter III, pp. 148f.; 177, note 136; Chapter IV, pp. 193-196.

essential to an authentic covenant relationship is the living of covenant love, hesed. Hesed constitutes the proper object of a covenant and may be described as the very content of the relationship. Under the transforming and illuminating influence of Yahweh, hesed, for Israel, came to mean supportive loving-kindness, the unfailing fidelity, the tender love and concern that were to characterize the conduct of covenant partners.

As the chosen covenant partner of Yahweh, Israel was called, by the very nature of the covenant relationship, to respond in kind to Yahweh's hesed. Individually and collectively, Israel was asked to abandon herself to the supportive will of her God. She was asked to be totally trusting in Yahweh, to be totally in covenant love with Yahweh. Further, this Yahweh-like covenant love was to find expression in an active covenant love for her fellows. The ritual expression of Israel's covenant love for Yahweh was to be born of and reflect genuinely the covenant love that characterized their everyday existence. The ritual acknowledgement of Yahweh was to be born of lives that were always, (in all ways), an acknowledgement of Yahweh, their covenant Lord. Ritual expression divorced from lives lived in covenant love, fidelity, loving kindness and concern for the other, was indeed incongruous and unacceptable in the eyes of Yahweh.<sup>4</sup>

As it came to be understood by Israel, then, hesed was not only a response to the Spirit of God, but also a fully human reflection of that very Spirit itself. Man's hesed was to be a covenant-love response to God but as well it was to be a reflection among men of God's own covenant love; the dynamic Spirit of God's Love truly operative among men. The Israelites were to reflect the quasi-familial love relationship which God had drawn them into by means of His

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<sup>4</sup> Chapter I, pp. 38-41.

covenant with them. Essentially, their hesed was to be the quality of their lives; a quality which issued in unfailing faithfulness, supportive loving-kindness, tenderness, availability and concern for the other; all this for both God and man. In entering into covenant with Yahweh, the Israelites were enjoined and enabled to live lives of hesed and, by so doing, to announce by the quality of their lives the presence among men of their Covenant God.

When Christ celebrated the Last Supper, the sacrificial meal of the new covenant, he ritually enacted with his disciples a covenant relationship the essence of which was the sharing and living of this hesed. Christ made it possible for the disciples -- and all those who would partake of this covenant meal in commemoration of him -- to share the divine hesed which He and His Father possess for all mankind. He enabled them to share also the human hesed which He holds for His Father and His fellowmen. That is, those who partake of the Eucharist are brought into the oneness of the divine-human covenant-love relationship which Jesus personifies.<sup>5</sup> Our notion of the Eucharist rests squarely on our notion of Christ. An awareness of His personal manifestation of hesed is vital to our full understanding of what it means to live in covenant relationship with God.

To partake of the Eucharist is to accept to live a life of covenant love; the same covenant love which the Father and the Son have for mankind. It is to accept to live as Christ lives, to love as He loves, to serve as He serves. It is in the context of the Last Supper that Christ explicitly focuses on the life of hesed that the disciples are to live in light of the new covenantal relationship he enters into with them. Clearly, Christ enjoins the disciples to live a life of covenant love -- steadfast loving-kindness,

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<sup>5</sup>Chapter IV, pp. 185-189; 196-197.

supportiveness, concern and ready availability for their fellow men -- and, His injunction is set within the context of the Supper and the covenant relationship it actualizes and celebrates. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:34,35). "You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (Jn 13:13-15). "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us" (1 Jn 4:11,12).<sup>6</sup>

This then is the stipulated obligation of those who, by partaking of the Eucharist, renew and declare their participation in the community of the new covenant. Our covenant love response to God has to be expressed in our covenant love for one another. Strict logic would have it that "if God so loved us, we also ought to love God," but as St. John puts it, "if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."<sup>7</sup> St. John has captured the truth that we do not encounter God as Pure Spirit. Nor do we encounter Him in a vacuum. Rather, we encounter Him humanly, that is, as He is bodied-forth to us in our relationships with our fellow men.<sup>8</sup> "For all men, encounters with their fellow men are the sacrament of encounter with God."<sup>9</sup> This is not

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<sup>6</sup>The whole of 1 Jn, Chapters 3 and 4, is profoundly applicable to the Eucharist. cf. Chapter IV, p.248, note 181.

<sup>7</sup>1 Jn 4:11; cf. Jn 13:13-15,34.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. G. Moran, Theology of Revelation (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), pp. 58, 59 and note 3 on p. 59.

<sup>9</sup>E. Schillebeeckx, Christ The Sacrament Of The Encounter With God (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p. 206.

offered as a nice truth without any real consequences. Nor is it offered as a new subtle form of convert propaganda. It is offered as a matter of fact and fundamental Christian belief: human encounter can be an inward encounter with God, a sacrament of divine love. E. Schillebeeckx has well described this great Christian truth and the concomitant dangers:

It is symptomatic that in the Western world, in which the Church has been rooted for centuries, the mass of the people no longer see or hear its witness. It is so easy simply to pass Christianity by. Hence in one way or another the witness, the telling visibility of the grace of Christ, is kept hidden. Yet it cannot be said that the level of the Church's holiness has fallen. There are, therefore, only two possible explanations: Either human encounter is no longer made use of as the effective sacrament of our love of God, and Christians sanctify themselves in their own little corner without having any contact with the rest of the world, or where new methods of approach in Apostolic work have re-established living contact with men, this human encounter is not sufficiently an interpretation of an inward encounter with God, a sacrament of divine love, but merely a new kind of convert propaganda.<sup>10</sup>

Here is the reality: human encounter is an effective sacrament of divine love. Here is the danger: to use this order of things as a technical means of religious efficiency which degrades real holiness to a level of mere propaganda.<sup>11</sup> It is so easy to distort the reality of Christ's personal presence in our human relationships. Either we treat this reality as a "nice truth" but devoid of any real consequences or we find it useful as a kind of convert propaganda. It is so difficult to bring ourselves to an immediate awareness that the power of the appeal of Christ's person lies in our own lives and concomitantly demands a real and existential personal love of neighbour as "an interpretation of an inward encounter with God." It demands a love that issues

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 207 (underscoring mine).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 207, 208.

in service of the most personal and immediate kind.

The parable of Mt 25:31-26 makes it very clear that one criterion by which we are to be judged by God is the rendering of loving service to others. Parabolically, neither the righteous nor the cursed "saw" Christ in the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick. They did not "see" Christ in those whom they served or failed to serve. This was not at all the crucial point. What was crucial was the fact that there were human persons in need and they either responded or failed to respond to those persons in their need. It is their response or lack of response upon which they are judged. The parable's lesson is clear. Christ is totally identified with all men. So radically identified with all men is God, in Christ, that whatever we do to the least of men is, in a real sense, done to God. "In the Gospel revelation," writes Yves Congar, "not only does the love of God seem linked to the love of neighbour, but it is somehow enveloped by it."<sup>12</sup> St. John underscores the fact that one's love of God is to be shown in one's love of his fellow men (1 Jn 4:20).<sup>13</sup>

Here then is the real climactic point of the Eucharistic celebration: the living of Christ's hesed, here and now, in the present moment of our lives. By partaking of the Eucharist we become "the body of Christ," precisely "for the life of the world."<sup>14</sup> To accept to eat of the Eucharist, the sacrificial meal of the new covenant, is to accept to live a life of new covenant love, with all the

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<sup>12</sup>Y. Congar, Jesus Christ, trans. Luke O'Neill (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), p. 74.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. J.L. McKenzie, The Power And The Wisdom: An Interpretation of the New Testament (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 229ff.

<sup>14</sup>P. Hitz, op. cit., pp. 324-329.

urgency and intensity of Christ's covenant love for God and man. We are to love as Christ loves. "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:1,2). Christ manifested perfect covenant love, hesed, and he did so "unto the end." In partaking of Him in the Eucharist we share His hesed and we are to manifest that hesed in our lives.

In saying this, we must accept the full implications of Christ's revolutionary love for mankind. We must face the fullness of the summons to sacrifice that is the Eucharist. We must face the profound predilection that Jesus possessed for the apparent "godless" and the notorious "sinners" of his time. We must realize that he deliberately sought out the so-called sinners and outcasts (Lk 5:32, 15:7, Mk 2:15).<sup>15</sup> He celebrated meals with them. That is, he celebrated life with them. He realized for them and celebrated with them the life of the new covenant love relationship which he shared with the Father. Christ showed a profound preference for these outcasts; he sought their company. He searched them out and humanly manifested the love of God to them. He gave Himself totally to them. He brought them into the closest possible fellowship with God.<sup>16</sup>

In accepting the self-gift of Christ in the Eucharist, we accept the summons to give of ourselves as Christ gives of Himself. The command, "Do this in remembrance of me," enjoins us to perform a rite that is born of our whole lives as Christ's Eucharist was born of His. In the Eucharist we commemorate Christ in the totality of His self-gift. Christ

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<sup>15</sup>Cf. Y. Congar, op. cit., pp. 66-85.

<sup>16</sup>Chapter IV, especially pp. 228-231.

asks us to celebrate the total action of His sacrificial covenant meal and the new relationship it actualizes. The Eucharist as a ceremonial meal cannot be divorced from our everyday effort to live a life of covenant love. The Eucharist summons us to a self-giving that knows no limitations of time or place.

We have observed that in saying, "Take eat; this is my body which is given for you," and "this is my blood of the (new) covenant, which is poured out for many," Christ is equivalently saying, "I give you myself, my very person. I am yours. Take and eat of me, take and drink of me. Take all of me. I will be your food, your life-blood. Feed on me, on my person. Life on me; live with my life."<sup>17</sup> When Christ asks us to do "this" in remembrance of Him, he is asking us to extend His self-gift by means of the gift of ourselves. He is asking us to celebrate the Supper in its full context and to extend, by our lives, His Eucharistic self-gift. He is asking us to extend his personal and redeeming presence by means of our own person and presence. This is the unique responsibility we are summoned to when we share the sacrificial meal of the new covenant, the Eucharist. We are summoned to lives of hesed and self-gift on behalf of our fellow man. The emphasis is on our own personal presence to our fellow men for it is primarily personally that we are able to communicate another person.

Reflection upon the Apostles' experience of Christ and their responsibility to Him and their fellow men is very instructive in this regard. The Apostles "are not merely relaying good news. Their function is more real than that: by their profession of faith and their very presence in the world, they bring men face to face with the death of Christ and the power of His resurrection. . . The Apostles speak in concepts and preach a doctrine, but what they are

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<sup>17</sup>Chapter IV, pp. 216-224.

bringing into the world is a presence. They are themselves sacraments of the presence of the dead and risen Christ, and the organs whereby he is in contact with the world."<sup>18</sup> The Apostles did not simply receive a teaching. They know, they experienced a person. They believed in a person.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, in testifying to their message, "the person of Christ," only a personal life-witness could be something of an adequate testimony. As David Stanley writes: "it was in the person of His Apostles. . .that He (Christ) was to announce the good news of redemption to all the nations!"<sup>20</sup>

While we are not Apostles in the identical sense that the original witnesses to Christ are Apostles, nonetheless, we are to strive to share in the same experience of Christ the Apostles enjoyed. Like them, we are attempting to enter into communion with the person of Christ. The whole of our Christian life is a constant striving after and growth into an ever fuller communion with the person of Christ. Also, the fundamental mission of the Christian remains essentially the same today as it was for the Apostles originally: to communicate, by our lives, communion with the person of Christ. (1 Jn 1:1-4).

If we are to communicate effectively this 'communion with the person of Christ,' then there is a real sense in which we, like the Apostles, have to exercise a kind of sacramental presence in our relations with one another.

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<sup>18</sup>F.X. Durrwell, The Resurrection: A Biblical Study. trans. R. Sheed (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), pp.309,310.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. the Second Vatican Council's definition of "the obedience of faith" as "an obedience by which man entrusts his whole self freely to God, offering 'the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals,' and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him." Dogmatic Constitution On Divine Revelation, article 5, p. 113.

<sup>20</sup>D. Stanley, The Apostolic Church In The New Testament (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1966), p. 309. cf. p. 308.

We are called to become effective signs of God's love for mankind. This love is uniquely and perfectly manifested in the full humanity of Christ. We are called then to become effective signs of a life of communion with the person of Christ. If we are, in fact, to signify effectively this communion with Christ's person, it will be to the extent that we manifest, by lives of covenant love, His Eucharistic action.

To the extent that we live lives of tender and supportive concern for the other, to the extent that we are sensitive to the needs of other persons and respect them for the persons they are, to the extent that we live lives of loving-kindness and ready availability for the other, to that extent we will announce, by our lives, what it means to be in a covenant love relationship with Christ and what it means to share in His Eucharistic self-gift. We will, to that extent, put on Christ Jesus, and fill up in our flesh what is wanting to the sufferings of Christ. (cf. Ga 3:27; 2 Co 4:11). The attraction of others to share the Eucharistic Celebration will come only from their observation of our lives. To the extent that we are men and women of genuine hesed and genuine self-gift, to that extent and that extent only will they be drawn to join with us in the breaking of the bread of the self of Christ.

#### B. On Becoming "Pure Food" For The Neighbour

There are, of course, a number of dangers or possible misinterpretations in what has been presented above. First, there is the possibility that we would accept the above as a "nice truth," rather abstract, almost esoteric, with no concrete or immediate consequences. That is, we could interpret the above in a way that would not be costly at all. However, the kind of sacramental presence, the kind of Eucharistic action we are called to extend must effect our whole lives. The truth that we are to extend Christ's

Eucharistic action in our lives is a truth that must penetrate us as whole persons. It is not simply a truth to be intellectually accepted while at the same time leaving us as total persons unaffected. It is in our everyday lives, in all aspects of our lives, that we are to extend Christ's Eucharistic action.

But my neighbour can always only be one. Hence, though there is a universal brotherly love, there is no universal love of my neighbour, but always only a particular one. For the Christian this is due to the fact that Christ can never be for him the universal, but always the unique Person that meets him with an absolute claim, that turns the brother into his neighbour. This singles him out from the crowd of those who may possibly have to be loved, making him the one who demands just now to be loved irrevocably. Thus he becomes the bearer of God's call, the Sacrament of the word of God as it comes to me. This sacrament is dispensed in daily life, not in the Church; in conversation, not during a sermon. It is administered not in prayer and meditation, but in situations where prayer shows that it is genuine and where meditation results in the apostolate. There it will be decided whether I have really heard God's word in my prayer, whether I have received his Body and Blood in Church effectively. And the decision is made in the right way, if it is evident that I am willing to give my neighbour the bread and wine of the word and of my own life.<sup>21</sup>

Secondly, it may be that we would interpret the exercise of this Eucharistic action as involving large numbers; something very dramatic or exotic, something very extraordinary. Indeed, this is not necessarily the case. It is not a matter of searching out the extraordinary but of coming to the ordinary events of our lives with extraordinary sensitivity, awareness and concern for the other. It is not at all a question of quantity, of great numbers to be reached. It is a question of attempting to give of ourselves and of becoming significant persons to those people with

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<sup>21</sup>H. Urs Von Balthasar, Science, Religion And Christianity. trans. H. Graef (London: Burns and Oates, 1958), pp. 150,151. cf. Y. Congar, The Wide World, My Parish: Salvation

whom we ordinarily have contact.<sup>22</sup> It is in our interpersonal relationships with those with whom we have contact --in ministering to their needs and in being ministered to, in loving them and in responding to their love for us-- that we encounter the available person, Christ. Christ Himself tells us clearly and simply that it is in our relationships with our neighbours, the persons whom we encounter in our daily living, that we encounter Him (cf. Mt 25:31-46).

There is urgent need for us to grasp the truth that "to feed the hungry" goes beyond merely supplying physical food. There are people everywhere around us who are in great hunger, not for physical food, but for the food of the "person". Ultimately, they hunger for the available and supportive Person, Christ. But the Person of Christ is available to them through our persons, those of us who have fed on Him in the Eucharist. That is, we are the sacramental means that Christ chooses to extend Himself to all people. Again, "to clothe the naked," goes beyond mere material clothing. There are persons all around us who stand "naked." They have been stripped naked by a dehumanizing society in which it is fashionable to hurry past the downtrodden, the innocent and the violated to the so-called real business of the day. To extend Christ's Eucharistic presence to these persons is "to clothe" them with our compassion, with our tenderness and concern. It is to stand with them and to make possible for them an atmosphere of real hope and love

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and Its Problems. trans. D. Attwater (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1961), pp. 121-126.

<sup>22</sup>"To those, therefore, who believe in divine love He (God's Word) gives assurance that the way of love lies open to all men and that the effort to establish a universal brotherhood is not a hopeless one. He cautions them at the same time that this love is not something to be reserved for important matters, but must be pursued chiefly in the ordinary circumstances of life." The Pastoral Constitution On The Church, article 38, p. 236.

where without our personal presence there would be none. This we can do only to the extent that we are willing to give of ourselves, of our very persons, our energy and time, on their behalf, as Christ wills to be present to them.

Or again, "to welcome the stranger," is a task to be fulfilled daily. It is not an extraordinary occurrence, for so many of us remain "strangers" to one another even though we may share the same profession or the same lodgings. How open are we to one another? How welcoming are we to those who are "different" from us or whose personalities we find unattractive? How Eucharistic is our presence to such persons? To take one more of Christ's criteria: "to visit the sick"; certainly the "sick" are not merely those who are physically ill or hospitalized. Everywhere around us there are persons who are "sick". Their sickness is born of our failure to relate to one another as human persons. They are "sick" because of our failure to treat them as human persons of real worth. They remain sick because we fail to supply them with the only medicine that can cure them, what Paul Tournier calls, "the medicine of the person."<sup>23</sup>

These wounded persons hunger and thirst for the kind of covenant love which we as Christians, because of Christ's Eucharistic action, are able to give. Strikingly and paradoxically, these wounded persons are the very persons who will heal us if we attempt to minister to them and their needs. It is the wounded man who heals. It is the wounded man who will heal our callous hearts, and make of them compassionate hearts. It is the wounded man who will awaken our somnolent hearts. It is the wounded who will turn our indifference into love. It is in the "least" of men that we

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<sup>23</sup>p. Tournier, "The Person in an Age of Conformity," in Are You Nobody? ed. K. Haselden (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966), p. 18.

will encounter the available person Christ who will make us whole and will enable us to become fully human and fully Christian.

To reiterate, it is not a question of great numbers. It is a question of the persons who are immediately present to us in our homes, our schools, our professions. The kind of life we are opting for "is not one in which you have much to do with men, but one in which you really have to do with those with whom you have to do."<sup>24</sup>

A third danger, which follows upon what has been presented above, is that we would feel that we were simply too inadequate as persons to cope with Christ's request. We may feel that what Christ is asking of us when he asks us to extend his Eucharistic action by means of our own persons is simply too onerous, too heroic a task -- larger than our lives are capable of fulfilling. Our consciences may tell us that we are not pure enough, not loving enough to presume to offer ourselves as the food, the nourishment of our neighbours. Our lives may seem too stale and unpalatable, our motivation too self-seeking to enable us, in truth, to attempt to extend Christ's person to others. Jesus alone is "pure food" to the neighbour. While it is true that we have not arrived at the fullness of Christian self-gift, we are, nonetheless, "capable of becoming a pure food" for the neighbour. In the words of Origen:

Because Jesus as a whole is wholly pure, therefore his whole Flesh is food and his whole Blood is drink. For all his works are holy and all his words are true. Therefore his Flesh is food indeed and his Blood is drink indeed. For he nourishes and restores all mankind with the Flesh and Blood of his Word as with a pure food and a pure drink. In the second place, after his Flesh, Peter and Paul and all the apostles are also a pure food; and in the third place their disciples. And

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<sup>24</sup>M. Buber, Between Man And Man. trans. R. Gregor Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1947), p. 20.

thus every man is capable of becoming a pure food for his neighbour according to his worthiness and the purity of his intention. If a man is unable to hear this he may pervert it and turn away his ear as those who said: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Who can hear it? And they left him." You, however, if you are sons of the Church and the Word made flesh is living among you, will realize what we are saying. For these are mysteries of the Lord: every man has a certain food in himself; and if it is good and he draws from it and "from the treasure of his heart brings forth good things", he offers pure food to his neighbour.<sup>25</sup>

Because Christ has given Himself to us, we are capable of becoming as pure food to one another. This in no way implies that we have arrived as full Christian persons. As Christians we are unfinished persons. We are in the process of becoming fully Christian and fully human.<sup>26</sup> This is a life-long process. It is a life process in which we often experience the deep tension between the "already" but the "not yet" of Christ's coming. That is, we are often far less than we should be as Christian persons and lovers. Our Christian integrity is a constant struggle rather than an achievement. Strikingly, this is precisely when we are most helpful and credible to others; that is, when we ourselves are, in fact, struggling for a full Christian and full human life. We are striving to become as pure food for the neighbour. Our whole life is spent undergoing conversion metanoia, so that we might become ever more pure as food for the other. It is the quality of our lives that will "preach" Christ to others. The only real "preaching" which will be

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<sup>25</sup>Origen, hom. 7., as quoted by H. Urs Von Balthasar, op. cit., p. 151.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. E. Schillebeeckx as quoted in Chapter IV, p. 188 note 14; C.R. Rogers, On Becoming A Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961); P. Campbell and E. McMahon, Becoming a Person in the Whole Christ (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967).

effective, in the long run, is the "preaching" we do by becoming--preaching by becoming! And we are becoming ever more fully, ever more intimately, actual sons of God.

### C. Sons of God By Covenant: Union Through Suffering

The Son of God became man so that men might become sons of God.<sup>27</sup> Christ is the Son of God by nature. The Christian is the son of God by adoption and rebirth.<sup>28</sup> We are brought into the same oneness of Life that the Father and Son have shared from all eternity. "All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. . .you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. . ." (Rm 8:14-16).<sup>29</sup> We are children of God. We share really in the life of God (2 Pt 1:4). That which Christ possessed from all eternity and by nature is given to man when "the time had fully come." This unique adoption transcends the legal notion of adoption and gives us the very life of the Father. We are "born" of Him. This is the life we have received as a consequence of the Incarnation. (cf. Jn 1:12,13). The radical identity of life

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<sup>27</sup>Cf. Athanasius, Oratio de incarnatione Verbi: "He was made man that we might be made God and He manifested Himself by a body that we might receive the idea of the unseen Father..." as quoted in Volume III, Patrology, by Johannes Quasten (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1960), p.71; Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 5, Praef.: "...but following the only true and steadfast Teacher, the word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself." as quoted in The Teaching Of The Church Fathers, edited by John R. Willis (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1966), p. 342.

<sup>28</sup>Cf. Rm 8:14; Jn 1:12-13; 3:5.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. Chapter IV, pp. 189-192.

with the Father that is ours by adoption is emphasized by the blood covenant which Jesus inaugurates with man.

As has been observed, for the Israelite, a covenant established a relationship absolutely equivalent to the closest possible natural bond. It established an identity of wills, a common life and resolve between the covenant partners that was absolutely equivalent in its intensity and binding power to that which naturally existed within the family. By means of the new covenant, enacted in the very blood of the Son of God, we are brought into a quasi-familial union with God. We are brought into a oneness-of-blood, oneness-of-life, relationship with the Father. Jesus establishes a covenantal union between God and the Christian that is an actual participation in the union naturally experienced by God the Father and His Son. Jesus is the Son of God by nature while the Christian is the son of God by covenant. In giving us Himself as the sacrificial meal of the new covenant, Christ has revealed to the world the substance of truth: We live with the Life of God. We are really His sons. He is really our Father.<sup>30</sup>

Given the above, there is a real and immediate sense in which we are to bear a "family resemblance" to God our Father.<sup>31</sup> There is a real sense in which our lives should reflect that we have been brought into the inter-personal love-life of God. Because of our free acceptance of the Eucharistic covenant, our wills are to be one with the will of the Father, precisely as Christ's will is one with the Father.<sup>32</sup> What pleases the Father should please us, what

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<sup>30</sup>Cf. pp. 46; 114, note 160; 189-191, notes 17-22.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. Rm 8:29, "They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers." JB. translation. cf. also, The Jerusalem Bible, Rm 8:29, note "q".

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Chapter IV, pp. 192ff.; 206; 212-215.

repulses Him should repulse us: "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them. . . Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters,. . ." (Am 5:22-25). "What is good has been explained to you, man; this is what Yahweh asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God." (Mi 6:8). The will of Yahweh is clear: ritual expression must be born of lives of love and concern. We cannot busy ourselves around an altar while ignoring our fellow men who are in need.<sup>33</sup>

In partaking of the sacrificial meal of the new covenant we are accepting to unite our wills to the will of the Father as Christ did (Mt 26:39,42). The oneness of life effected when Christ establishes the new covenant is achieved only through suffering. Our union with God is achieved through the painful self-gift of His Son. Both the union and the painful self-gift are symbolized by Christ's outpoured blood given to us as drink.<sup>34</sup> In every Eucharistic celebration we are invited to reflect on the shocking reality that the outpouring of Christ's blood is an essential part of the ultimate triumph of life over death and love over unlove. For us to share in his blood, his life, he must pour out his blood, his life, for us. To drink of Christ's blood of the new covenant is to drink of his life; the life of the Son and Suffering Servant of God. If we wish to enter into this new covenant love relationship with Christ then we must be prepared to "suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." (Rm 8:17).

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<sup>33</sup>Cf. Chapter I, pp.33, 38-41; Chapter II, pp.122-125.

<sup>34</sup>Cf. Chapter IV, pp. 203ff.; 216ff.

The Eucharist summons us to radical gift of self. The Eucharist summons us to be delivered freely to death so as to be brought to new life as resurrected men and women. To extend Christ's Eucharistic action is to live a life of incarnate love; that is, a love that lives in the present moment and pays the price. The price is high indeed. It is the giving over of one's life to be "broken" and "poured out" so that others may live. Having shared the very person of Christ in the Eucharist, we are to offer our lives to others so that they, too, may live as we live -- as sons of God.<sup>35</sup> We announce by our lives that we are sons of God. To the extent that we live as covenanted sons of the Father bodying forth His transforming love for all men, to that extent the Eucharist will be seen by others to be meaningful and desirable. Those persons with whom we have contact will observe us and they will judge us, qualitatively, by the reach of our compassion and concern and by the dimension of our service. The available loving person Christ will be recognized in the "breaking of the bread" of ourselves, or he will not be recognized at all. As E. Schillebeeckx comments:

. . . when non-Christians come into contact with those whose life is truly Christian, they are in fact coming up against the Church, as the visible and effective presence of grace in the world. It is through this kind of contact that they can be led to the full sacramental practice of Christianity, in which the Eucharist stands out as the point of centrality. It is true to say that, in one respect, there is a greater and more pressing need today for grace to be

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<sup>35</sup> "For the most blessed Eucharist contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth, that is, Christ Himself, our Passover and living bread. Through His very flesh, made vital and vitalizing by the Holy Spirit, He offers life to men. They are thereby invited and led to offer themselves, their labors, and all created things together with Him... Hence the Eucharist shows itself to be the source and the apex of the whole work of preaching the gospel... the Eucharistic Action is the very heartbeat of the congregation of

present and embodied in Christian life in this way --visibly present among men--than there is for a new and more modern form to be given to the Liturgy, in order to narrow the gap existing between it and the people. I feel sure that the first will lead to the second -- that the visible presence of grace, embodied in the Christian way of life, will create a positive and dynamic force which will result in liturgical reform. After all, liturgies are not constructed -- they develop from a renewed spirit. When this point has been reached, the sacraments will be able to exercise once again their true influence, which is of central importance in the Church.<sup>36</sup>

For those with whom we have contact, the cultic celebration of the Eucharist will be seen to be meaningful to the extent that we, as persons, are seen to be meaningful. That is, to the extent that we are genuinely searching after meaning in our own lives -- a life full of meaning. More precisely, others will wish to celebrate the Eucharist with us to the extent that they experience us as men and women who body-forth God's gift of love in our everyday existence. "What we must infer from this is, then, that it is the Christian way of life...which in fact leads to the hierarchical and liturgical way of life of the sacraments. None of us has any right to complain about the slackness of our fellow Christians in following a sacramental way of life (in the latter sense). We are, after all, to blame for the fact that our way of life...does not strike them as acceptable and its sacramental aspect is not recognized by most men in their day-to-day life."<sup>37</sup>

The attraction of others to the Eucharist, in a meaningful way, will follow upon their observation of our everyday lives. If we bear a genuine "family resemblance" to our Father, the God of covenant-love, they will find us attractive. We have become the sons of God bound to Him

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the faithful over which the priest presides." Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, article 5, pp. 541, 542.

<sup>36</sup>E. Schillebeeckx, op. cit., pp. 211, 212.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid. pp. 212, 213.

in a relationship of covenant love; a relationship that is to issue in a life of hesed for all mankind. Our actions follow upon our new being. We "preach" to others by this new being. It is this kind of "preaching" which will draw others to the cultic celebration of the Eucharist.

The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church. Before men can come to the liturgy they must be called to faith and to conversion: "How then are they to call upon him in whom they have not believed? But how are they to believe him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear if no one preaches? And how are men to preach unless they be sent?"<sup>38</sup>

We have been sent by Christ as the Father sent him (Jn 17:18). However, any "preaching" that we do in His Name must be born of our lives; lives that have been transformed in Him. Unless our words are, in fact, born of our lives they will go unheard. Today we are being asked to place our bodies where previously only our voices have been. When people have reflected upon our lives and have been struck by the quality of our lives, it may be that they will then ask us to articulate what it is we are all about; who we are and who we are becoming. We must constantly remind ourselves that when the Gospel is preached from on high or outside and not lived from within, its message no longer reaches the world.<sup>39</sup> Proclamation without life-commitment is a caricature of Christianity, a kind of spurious religiosity. We must earn the right to speak by our lives of service. In the philosophy of the world where the eye can see words become quite secondary. As Bruce Kenrick has

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<sup>38</sup> Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy, article 9, p. 142.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. J. Ellul, The Presence of the Kingdom (London: SCM Press, 1951), p. 19.

written:

. . .until Christ crucified takes on visible form the world will not believe. "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails. . .I will not believe!" This is precisely what the world says to the Church. We who talk of walking the way of the Cross dare not show men our hands: for we have not been wounded for them, we have not suffered for them. We have done little more than preach for them: and we cannot convince the world by our preaching of the Cross when we shrink from the Cross in our own lives.<sup>40</sup>

We "preach" to the world by our lives; lives that are united covenantally to the life of the suffering servant of God. We announce to the world the presence of a God Who is so totally devoted to man that He enters human history as a suffering servant God.<sup>41</sup> This is the dimension of His unique

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<sup>40</sup>Quoted by R. E. Davies, "Liturgy and the Mission of the Church," The Renewal of Worship, ed. R. C. D. Jasper (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 88.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. Chapter IV, pp. 185-197 ; H. Urs Von Balthasar, A Theology of History, p. 53; cf. further, the passage from Origen's 6th Homily on Ezechiel, as quoted by H. Urs Von Balthasar, A Theological Anthropology (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), p. 278: "He came down to earth out of compassion with humanity. He underwent our sufferings before he underwent the cross and before he took our flesh upon him, for if he had not already suffered he would not have entered on the course of human life. First he suffered, then he came down and became visible. What was that suffering that he went through for us? It was the suffering (pathos) of love. And the Father himself, the God of the universe, 'slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love' (Ps 102, 8) does he not also suffer in a certain sense? Or do you not know that when he involves himself in human affairs in the shape of providence that he suffers the suffering of humanity with it? 'The Lord your God bore you, as a man bears his son' (Deut. 1, 31). God supports our misdeeds, just as the Son of God takes our pain upon himself. The Father himself is not without compassion (impassibilis). If he is implored, he is merciful and shares in the suffering, he undergoes something through love and by it is transferred into those beings in which he cannot exist while seeing the sublimity of his own nature."

and irreversible covenant love for man. This is the only "solution" that Christianity offers to the pandemic presence of suffering and iniquity in the world: a God who is bodied-forth to man as a suffering servant. Here, then, is the God of the new covenant: a God of compassion and concern who wills to make Himself present in the available compassionate Christ. Further, He wills to continue His Presence through us. We are to be the instruments of his healing love, the agents of his reconciliation (2 Co 5:17-21). We are to be to others the available supportive person of Christ. Indeed, as Church of Christ we are "the servant of mankind."<sup>42</sup>

However, it is vitally important that we carry to the world this vision of a servant Church, not by rhetoric, not by adopting a new theological language, but by being servants ourselves. "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Co 4:5).

It would seem impossible, existentially, for us to render a genuine service of reconciliation to estranged man without ourselves undergoing suffering. If we are to become a community of one love -- people united to one another in the one love of the Lord -- then we will have to be prepared to pay the cost, for love is costly. If we wish to be Christ's Body to the world, if we wish to extend the presence of the Christ who is the suffering servant of God and man, then, we, too, will suffer. Indeed, it may be that only through our suffering will we become really sensitive

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<sup>42</sup>"All this rich teaching (of the Second Vatican Council) is channeled in one direction, the service of mankind, of every condition, in every weakness and need. The Church has declared herself the servant of humanity." Pope Paul VI, Address at the last general meeting of the Second Vatican Council, December 7, 1965. (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul Editions), p. 12. cf. The Message to the world from the Second Vatican Council, October 20, 1962, as quoted by Y. Congar, Power and Poverty in the Church, trans. Jennifer Nicholson (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1964), p. 145.

to the sufferings of others and be enabled to be to them the compassionate Christ. Our union then will be precisely in and through our suffering which finds its meaning and fulfillment only in Christ. Given that we are prepared to attempt to be to others the self-gift of the suffering servant, Christ, then others will be attracted to the Source of our courage and hope. Others will be encouraged to join us in the breaking of the bread of the self of Christ and the outpouring of the blood of the self of Christ. Realizing that the "mystery" we celebrate on the altar is the "mystery of ourselves"<sup>43</sup> broken and poured out for man so as to become whole and fulfilled in Christ.

#### D. The Structure Of The Eucharistic Celebration

##### (1) The Eucharist As A Meal

We have researched and commented at length upon the profound significance that the meal, especially the sacrificial covenant meal, held for the Israelites.<sup>44</sup> We have observed, also, the remarkable significance of Christ's Eucharistic action, whereby he gives us himself as our food and structures his self-gift in the form of a meal.<sup>45</sup> In the New Testament, Christ clearly instituted the Eucharist as a meal and structured it as a meal.<sup>46</sup> In choosing to make

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<sup>43</sup> St. Augustine to his communicants: "If then you are the body of Christ and his members then that which is on the altar is the mystery of ourselves. Receive the mystery of yourselves." As quoted by D. Rhymes, Prayer In The Secular City (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), p. 104.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Chapter III.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Chapter IV, pp. 216ff.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Chapter IV, p. 223, note 114.

himself present to us in this manner, Christ deliberately utilized that symbolism which is deepest in man: the symbolism of food. He gave himself to us in the way that he believed and hoped would be most significant to us. It is clear that he was not mistaken in his belief and hope. While the question may be raised as to whether or not the meal is as significant to Occidental man as it is to Oriental man, there is little doubt that meals are deeply significant to man in general. The common meal continues to be a significant instrument of communion. Unfortunately, however, over the centuries the structure of the meal in our Eucharistic celebrations has become obscured. It has been concealed. It is of vital importance that we attempt to restore and recapture that structure.<sup>47</sup> How inductive of a more meaningful celebration of the Eucharist such a restoration will be is a question that only time and careful experimentation will answer. Still, there is no doubt that we should attempt to restore the structure of the meal to our Eucharistic celebrations. Christ deliberately chose the sign of the full meal and we should exploit this full symbolism.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy, article 50, p. 155; P. Hitz, op. cit., p. 308, 309.

<sup>48</sup>To partake of the person of Christ under the sign of bread only is not as significant nor as appropriate as to partake of Him under the signs of bread and wine. It is not a question of greater validity. It is a question of greater signification. This is especially urgent when we reflect upon the profound meaning of Christ's action in offering the disciples the cup of his blood (Chapter IV, pp. 216 ff.). They all drank of his blood (Mk 14:23). We have observed the deep covenantal significance of their action. We seriously impoverish our efforts to educate ourselves to the total significance of the Eucharist as a sacrificial covenant meal if, when we celebrate the Eucharist, we do not drink of the cup. If we wish to recapture the meal structure of the Eucharist, then, we should use bread and wine that are for us today more meal-like. We should use bread and wine which signify as meaningfully as possible Christ's real presence among us--His presence as a body-person. (Cf. Chapter IV, p. 245, note 171.)

At the Last Supper, Jesus intended to signify his continuing presence among his disciples. That is, he intended to signify that he personally -- his whole bodily-self -- would continue to be present to and for us. "He does not wish his presence to be only an inner thought. He wishes this bread to say that he is there, as his body still tells them so for a few minutes longer."<sup>49</sup>

Any call from one person to another, and a fortiori the call of the bodily-risen Christ who is invisible, must of necessity be embodied in a word or gesture. Christ communicates with us in a fashion conformable to that of a body-person. But the form His communication takes at the Last Supper as encapsulating His whole life is that of self-giving. Christ gives Himself under the form of bread and wine. We have seen. . . that for the Hebrew mind symbolism does not exclude realism. The sign performs what it signifies. Therefore, Christ would have to be present, because the word and gesture signify Christ giving Himself. . . It would also seem that Christ's presence, mystery though it is, would be more perfect where the sign is more perfect. And here we "see" Christ giving Himself in His greatest act of love: it expresses<sup>50</sup> the complete gift of Himself to His Father and to us.

If we, as total persons, are to assimilate as fully as possible the significance of Christ's total action at the Last Supper then we should experience this action in the fullness of its realism and symbolism. If we are to grasp the festive yet sacrificial<sup>51</sup> significance of the Eucharist as

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<sup>49</sup>J.F. Leenhardt, "This Is My Body," in Essays on the Lord's Supper, by O. Cullmann and F. Leenhardt, op. cit., pp. 42, 43.

<sup>50</sup>T.D. Stanks, "The Eucharist: Christ's Self-Communication In A Revelatory Event," TS. 28(1967), p. 45.

<sup>51</sup>The festive character of the biblical covenant meal is vividly expressed primarily in the drinking of the wine--cf. Ps 104:15; Ps 23:5; Jg 9:13; Pr 9:2, etc. On the sacrificial character, see Chapter III, pp. 143, 144; Chapter IV, pp. 231 ff.; also, A.-R. van de Walle, "How We Meet Christ in the Liturgical Community," Concilium, Volume 12 (New York: Paulist Press, 1966), pp. 28ff.

a covenant meal, then we should have the richest possible experience of this Meal. We should partake of both the bread and the wine. They should be signs which say to us, as vividly as possible, "I am still with you. I am with you as your life's body and blood. Take and eat of me. Take and drink of me. Take of me in my fullness so that you may live with my life and be one with the Father and with one another!"

As vital as the bread and wine are as signs of the mysterious reality of Christ's personal presence, preoccupation with them could distract us from that which is even more important: the relationship actualized by the sharing of the Meal -- our shared new covenant life in Christ.

The sacramental, guaranteed presence of Christ, therefore, should not be the focus of our attention, but it should decrease in our awareness to let Him increase, in all His personal immediacy. His real presence as food achieves the purpose intended only when He is present to the believer as one person is to another. 'To concentrate on his sacramental presence would be like meeting him in the flesh, only to concern ourselves with his appearance, or even the physical possibility of his being there at all.' In other words, we miss the point if we do not use His sacramental presence as an occasion for the meeting of two "I's" present to each other for real person-to-person exchange. True encounter reveals the other to me as "not a thing", but as an existence, as a source of sense and meaning. Because the other is not a thing, he is a companion, and therefore I can speak of "we". A thing does not accompany me. The more ancient way of regarding the sacramental elements was to treat them as things and not as a person, as media of worship and not as objects of worship.

The symbolism of the Eucharistic celebration lies not so much in the elements as in the action, the entire action, word and deed. . . It lies in action first on Christ's part, then on the part of the community. The Last Supper was a meal, but more importantly it was Christ gathering His close friends together. It was their relationship to each other that counted more than the meal as such which they ate or the utensils which they used. Preoccupation with the meal could detract from its real meaning, which lies in our relationship to <sup>52</sup>one another, our genuine sharing of Christ's life.

<sup>52</sup>T.D. Stanks, op. cit., p. 43. cf. J. M. Powers,

Essentially, then, in the Eucharistic meal we encounter the person of Christ. We encounter him in a profoundly personal covenant-love relationship. To reiterate Christ gives us Himself as food. He is present to us in the breaking of the bread and the outpouring of the wine as one person is present to another person. All that is appropriate to the meeting of persons in a covenant-love relationship is appropriate to our Eucharistic celebrations. It is vital that our Eucharistic celebrations be so structured that an atmosphere conducive to a personal love encounter prevails.

## (2) The Total Human Situation

The Eucharist is meant to involve the whole of ourselves. It is meant to be significant to us in the fullness of our humanities. It is precisely this "full, conscious, and active participation," as demanded by the very nature of the Eucharistic celebration, that the Church "earnestly desires" for all of us.<sup>53</sup>

We must face the fact that there can be a great difference between intellectually apprehending the truth that there is a Person present in the Eucharist and entering into communion with the Person there present. It would seem that, too often, we have succeeded only in conveying the truth that Christ is personally present in the Eucharist while leaving our people, as whole persons, untouched. The very difficult question remains: how do we create a genuine life atmosphere conducive to leading our people toward communion with the Person of Christ and not just the intellectual apprehension of the fact that Christ, as a person, is present in the Eucharist?

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Eucharistic Theology (New York: Herder and Herder, Inc., 1967), pp. 48ff.; cf. R. Laurentin, Développement et Salut (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969), p. 247.

<sup>53</sup> Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy, article 14, p. 144; cf. articles 17, 48, 50, 59.

In that which has gone before, we have already begun to speak, at least implicitly, to this question. With the realization that it is a question which simply does not admit of any quick or easy answer, a few further thoughts are presented with extreme tentativeness.

It is clear that in the attempt to create a life-atmosphere that will be conducive to entering into communion with the person of Christ and of one another, the "by whom given" and the "how given" are very significant. What is vital to our full experience of the Eucharist is not merely the objects or the utensils of the meal, but rather, the total human situation. It is not simply a matter of having bread and wine that are truly meal-like and genuinely reflective of real life and nourishment; the total "atmosphere" in which the meal is taken is important. The "by whom given" and the "how given" are themselves significant.<sup>54</sup>

In raising the "by-whom-given" aspect of the meal, we are raising the question of the image of the priest. This is a question which in its fullness goes well beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is germane to reflect on the image of the priest precisely as he presides at the sacrificial meal of the new covenant.

We have observed that Christ's presidency at the Last supper was a presidency of service. He sat among his disciples as "one who serves" (Lk 22:27). We have observed, as well, that it was precisely as suffering servant that Christ established the new covenant.<sup>55</sup> It is imperative,

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<sup>54</sup>On the psychological importance of the "total human situation," and on the "dynamic reality" the person who presents the food gives to the food-symbol, see W. F. Lynch, Images Of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless (Toronto: The New American Library of Canada, 1967), p. 32. Originally, Helicon Press Inc., 1965.

<sup>55</sup>Cf. Chapter IV, pp. 185-189; 204ff.

then, that the person who presides at the sacrificial meal of the new covenant come to that meal precisely as Christ does: as suffering servant.

If the image of Christ, as conveyed to us so movingly and forcibly in Scripture, is to come across to those gathered for the meal, then it is essential that the presiding priest be seen to be a man who is honestly undertaking the life-long task of becoming a full disciple of Christ. That is to say, a man who is marked by the criterion of discipleship announced by Christ himself: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:34,35). Thus, the priest is "set apart" so as to be able to render this loving service even more intensely than the rest of the covenant community. The reach of his love and the dimension of his service are limited only by his own imagination and inventiveness for as Albert Gelin so poignantly remarked: "Imitation of Christ is not literal but inventive."<sup>56</sup> The image of the priest who presides at the Eucharistic celebration will be fashioned out of the fabric of his everyday existence; an everyday existence which will reflect his constant attempt to become ever more fully a man of genuine covenant love for all men.<sup>57</sup>

As to the "how given" of the Eucharist, it is certain that if it is at all impersonal then, immediately, we have raised a barrier to any authentic attempt at personal communion with one another in Christ. Here again, the experience of those gathered for the Last Supper is very

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<sup>56</sup>A. Gelin, The Poor of Yahweh, trans. K. Sullivan (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1964), p. 104.

<sup>57</sup>Cf. Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, article 9, pp. 552-554.

instructive. There it is apparent that Christ was gathered with a small number of close friends whom he had known for approximately two years. Their knowledge of one another was quite intimate. Their gathering for the Last Supper followed upon their shared common life. Already they were a koinonia of love, finding their very purpose in Christ. Given this, we may well ask whether it is possible for a large gathering -- such as the number who gather for the Sunday Mass -- to experience themselves as a real community? Can real inter-personal communion be experienced in such a gathering? As Godfrey Diekmann comments:

Another hindrance to the Eucharist affecting a true people of God is the obstacle of a congregation so large that even the Eucharist cannot make of it a community. . . already Plato recognized that community ceases when personal relationships become impossible. The structuring of the people of God into mammoth congregations instead of communities would seem to be the greatest long-range pastoral and therefore<sup>58</sup> liturgical problem facing the American Church.

It may well be more significant and effective of real and experienced community to come together in smaller groupings of the people of God to celebrate the Eucharist which makes them the people of God. People who, in their everyday existence, share the same style of life or occupation or concern. People then whose gatherings would be born of an already existing sense of community as well as an explicit desire to celebrate together that covenantal communion which arises from the sharing together of the Eucharistic Christ.<sup>59</sup> Whatever the constitution of the

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<sup>58</sup>G. Diekmann, "The Eucharist Makes the People of God", Wor. 39(1965), p.466. cf. D. Rhymes, op.cit., pp. 111ff.

<sup>59</sup>There are, of course, a number of inherent risks in these groupings. It may be that they would become elite or exclusive or even esoteric groupings. While it seems necessary to run these risks in the attempt to arrive at a more personal and authentic sharing of the sacrificial meal of the new covenant, it is essential that these groups remain really open to others.

groupings, the Eucharistic celebration will have little effect on an empirical world unless it is seen to arise out of, and be expressive of, real community.

Whatever the changes in the structure, they should be such as to facilitate our deepening awareness of Christ's covenantal action in the Eucharist. We must continue to strive after a ritual expression of the Eucharist that more authentically reflects our new covenant love relationship with God and man, in the person of Christ. We must move towards a ritual that concretizes for us today, as personally and immediately as possible, the totally transforming and profoundly unifying self-gift of Christ to God and man. We must strive for a ritual that will allow us to experience Christ's personal presence so really and penetratingly that we will, as whole persons, be drawn "into the compelling love of Christ" and "set afire."<sup>60</sup> That is, we must strive after a ritual that will enable us to go beyond the structure, beyond the sacrificial Meal, to the world and its need.

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<sup>60</sup>Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy, article 10, p. 142; cf. articles 1 and 2.

CONCLUSION

Hopefully, there will be open and ongoing experimentation with the structure of the Eucharist. If this experimentation is to remain authentic then the point of departure and the constant point of reference should be the all-important biblical data on the Eucharist. As we have seen, that biblical data may be conveniently summarized under the formula: the Eucharist is the sacrificial meal of the new covenant. In this thesis we have been asking the questions: what did the Last Supper, precisely as the sacrificial meal of the new covenant, mean to those gathered for it? What precisely did Christ wish to communicate to his disciples by means of this covenant meal which he celebrated with them? What meaning had this meal for the disciples then? What meaning could and should it have for us today?

We have attempted, within the limited context set in the Introduction, to articulate the impact that Christ willed his Eucharistic action to have in our lives. With profound insight the Second Vatican Council has spoken to the Mystery of the Eucharist and its potential impact upon man:

At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

The liturgy in its turn inspires the faithful to become "of one heart in love" when they have tasted to their full of the paschal mysteries; it prays that

"they may grasp by deed what they hold by creed."  
The renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them afire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist. . .the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God. . .are most powerfully achieved.

The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators. On the contrary, through a proper appreciation of the rites and prayers they should partake knowingly, devoutly, actively. . .by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn to offer themselves too. Through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever closer union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.<sup>1</sup>

The above conciliar texts are a forceful reminder of the fact that it will be a long while before the Church which held the Second Vatican Council becomes the Church of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>2</sup> This realization should in no way deter us from attempting to grasp and to live as fully and immediately as possible the mysterious reality of the Eucharist so profoundly articulated by the Council. On the contrary, reflection upon these conciliar statements -- which summarize succinctly the biblical data on the Eucharist -- and reflection upon the world and its need should create in us a sense of urgency in accepting the task which confronts us: to become ever more fully that which we have acknowledged ourselves before the world to be!

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<sup>1</sup>Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy, articles 47, 10, 48, pp. 154, 142, 154.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. K. Rahner, The Church After The Council, trans. D. Herron and R. Albrecht (New York: Herder & Herder, 1966), pp. 28, 29.

Our hope and our credibility lie precisely in the truth that we are in the process of becoming. We are in the process of becoming "of one heart in love" and the more that we truly "have tasted to their full the paschal mysteries," the more truly will we become "of one heart in love."<sup>3</sup> "The renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them afire."<sup>4</sup> Compelled by the covenant love of Christ we are "set afire" for God and man. By the renewal of the new covenant between God and man in the Eucharist we are released into the world so as to be architects of renewal in the human heart and the human community. Existentially, we know that all of this is a life-long process and struggle. We are continually in process of becoming fully human and fully Christian. Strikingly, this is precisely when we are most credible to others: when we ourselves are striving after a full human and Christian life. This integrity of life is always a struggle rather than an achievement. We are in movement, in pilgrimage, towards a total-life experience of Christ's Eucharistic action which is, indeed, the summit of our whole Christian lives.

Every effort that we make to respond in kind to God's covenant love for man is progress towards that summit. Every effort to respond in kind to Christ's covenant love for God and man brings us closer to realizing in our lives the mystery of his Eucharistic action. To arrive at the summit of our Christian lives is to have grown to live as Christ lives and to love as Christ loves. He has given us himself in the sacrificial meal of the new covenant precisely that we may live with his life and that we may love with his

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<sup>3</sup> Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy, article 10, p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., article 10, p. 142.

love. He has given us himself in the Eucharist precisely that we might become his Body for the life of the world. More profoundly and mysteriously still, by means of the sacrificial meal of the new covenant, Christ has given to us, as fully as humanly possible, that which by nature is his alone: the Life that the Father, Son and Spirit have shared from all eternity! In the words of the Council, Christ has given us himself in the Eucharist that we might "be drawn day by day into ever closer union with God and with one another, so that finally God may be all in all."<sup>5</sup>

To celebrate the Eucharist is to renew and declare the new covenant-love relationship between God and mankind. To celebrate the Eucharist is to renew and declare the totally-transforming, communion-creating Presence of God among men! If this thesis has in the least measure contributed to an increased awareness of that Presence then it shall be its own reward and more.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., article 48, p. 154.

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