

“We are the Temple of the Living God” (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1): The New Covenant as the Fulfillment of God’s Promise of Presence

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INTRODUCTION

Evangelical Christians from various perspectives have wrestled with how the New Testament (NT) relates to the Old, and, more specifically, how the new covenant relates to the prior biblical covenants. Should the relationship primarily be cast in terms of *continuity*, such that the nature and structure of the new covenant are in essential continuity with the nature and structure of previous covenants? Or should the relationship primarily be understood in terms of *discontinuity*, such that the newness of the new covenant is emphasized? No doubt, such themes of continuity and discontinuity are located along a spectrum, but different points along the spectrum delineate some of the key differences among theological systems today. To put it simply, one’s view of how the new covenant relates to the old will determine in large part what theological system is embraced.¹

In order to be faithful to Scripture, we must pay close attention to the contours and nuances of the text itself. It is easy to overemphasize biblical continuity at the expense of discontinuity, or vice versa. Our job as interpreters is to trace the storyline of redemption so we can carefully discern what elements of the new covenant are in continuity with the old and what elements are discontinuous. Elements of abolition and fruition, of mystery and fulfillment, form the nexus of the issue.

The focus of this article will be on elements of *continuity* within Paul's theology of the new covenant. Specifically, I will argue that the new covenant is in significant continuity with previous biblical covenants in that it fulfills the intention or goal of the Old Testament's (OT) promise of God's presence among his people. The *telos* of the covenants was tied to the establishment and maintenance of God's everlasting presence, a goal that in Paul's theology was climactically fulfilled in the new covenant. Such teleological continuity among the covenants is found in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, the center of which includes a catena of Scriptural citations that together paint a portrait of the centrality of the promise of God's presence within the Sinai covenant, the prophets' restoration oracles, and the covenant with David.

THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CONTEXT OF 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-7:1

Paul penned 2 Corinthians in order to defend the legitimacy of his apostolic ministry. At the time of writing, Paul had already planted the church at Corinth and had met subsequent opposition with a "painful visit" followed by a "tearful letter" (2 Cor 2:1-4; 7:8). Titus, who had delivered the "tearful letter," reported to Paul in Macedonia that the letter had been well-received and that the Corinthians had repented and sided with Paul. Among other things, then, 2 Corinthians expresses Paul's joy for their repentance and desire to see them encouraged in the faith (2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:5-16).²

In the midst of this historical narrative, which is introduced in 1:15-2:13 and concluded in 7:5-16, is a lengthy theological section on Paul's gospel and the new covenant (2:14-7:4). This section is crucial to Paul's purpose, for it defends the content of his gospel and his method of ministry. The foundation of his ministry was the new covenant itself, which held the promise of full forgiveness of sin for the repentant as well as divine power to live in significant obedience (cf. Jer 31:33-34). The Corinthians had not recognized their spiritual poverty but imagined themselves fully

able to please God by their own strength. But Paul reminded them that their repentance was in accord with his gospel of the new covenant and entailed elements of transformation.

Why did Paul consider the new covenant to be a solid basis for his ministry? How did he contend for its superiority in comparison to other covenantal contenders? As the argument unfolds, we can see a twofold perspective on the nature of the new covenant that runs along the continuity-discontinuity spectrum. In 2 Corinthians 3:1-18, which contains one of the few places Paul uses the phrase “new covenant” (cf. 1 Cor 11:25), the new covenant is presented mainly in terms of discontinuity, especially as it is contrasted with the old covenant. That discontinuity is emphasized in 3:1-18 is clear, for the very presence of the descriptor *new* (3:6) assumes a contrast with something *old* (3:14).³

On the other hand, in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 the new covenant is presented mainly in terms of continuity.⁴ In this text the term “new covenant” is not found, precisely because Paul is not emphasizing the old/new antithesis but rather the particular ways in which the new covenant fulfills God’s saving promises to his people. Indeed, along with the use of the covenant formula in 6:16, Paul’s use of OT covenant texts shows a remarkable continuity in terms of fulfillment.⁵ That it is the new covenant in particular that Paul refers to in 6:14-7:1 is not in doubt, since Paul clarified in 3:1-18 that his ministry was a ministry of the new covenant.

Hence, as Table 1 indicates, Paul defended his apostolic ministry of the new covenant by characterizing it in terms of both continuity and discontinuity. Like a mosaic, these twin elements together provide a holistic and nuanced depiction of the redemptive-historical nature of the new covenant.

Table 1
Covenantal Continuity and Discontinuity in 2 Corinthians

Covenantal Discontinuity	Covenantal Continuity
3:1-18	6:14-7:1

For the sake of space, this article will focus on the latter piece of the mosaic, where Paul emphasizes the continuity with the promise of God’s everlasting presence among his people.

“WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD”: 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-7:1

Paul’s main point in 6:14-7:1 is expressed at the beginning and end of the text. In 6:14a he commands believers not to be unevenly mixed with unbelievers.⁶ This is teased out in 7:1, where on the basis of the promises in 6:16-18 he urges the Corinthians to live holy and undefiled in the fear of God. They were to resist the temptation to find their identity in the unbelieving world but were to act in accord with their true identity as God’s “beloved.” The reasons given in 6:14b-16a bear the same message: just as it is unthinkable for God and his character to join forces and partner with Satan, so it is unthinkable for believers to join forces and partner with unbelievers. Just as righteousness cannot coexist with lawlessness, light with darkness, Christ with Beliar,⁷ the believer with the unbeliever, or the temple of God with idols, so the Corinthians must reject or flee from any unholy pact or agreement with unbelievers.⁸ Hence, the literary structure of 6:14-7:1 is clear:⁹

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 6:14a | Do not be unequally yoked |
| 6:14b-16a | For (<i>gar</i>) what fellowship do believers have with unbelievers? |
| | Righteousness and iniquity |
| | Light and darkness |
| | Christ and Beliar |
| | Believer and unbeliever |
| | Temple of God and idols |
| 6:16b-18 | For (<i>gar</i>) Christians are the temple of the living God |
| | Lev 26:11-12 (+ Ezek 37:27) |
| | Isa 52:11 (+ Ezek 11:17) |
| | 2 Sam 7:14 (+ 2 Sam 7:8; cf. Isa 43:6) |
| 7:1 | Therefore, pursue holiness |

The main point is in 6:14a where Paul urges the Corinthians not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. The five questions that follow in 6:14b-16a ground this point by rhetorically implying the inconceivability of such unequal relationships. The last question brings up the temple of God, which in 6:16b leads Paul to explain that believers actually are God’s temple.

That the temple in 6:16a is not merely illustrative is clarified or explained (16:6b) quite remarkably in the following phrase, for Paul asserts that all

The structure also highlights the imperative of the covenant relationship. If God is to dwell among his people, they must live accordingly. However, it must be noticed that the structure demonstrates that the promises are the foundation and impetus for the commands and not vice versa. William Webb has argued that the promises are the foundation for the imperatives in 6:16-17a but that the imperatives serve as the foundation for the promises in 6:17b-18.¹³ But this misinterprets the A – B – B' – A' framework, which shows that the imperatives of separation (B – B') are grounded in and buttressed by the promises of covenant presence (A – A').¹⁴ Here, as elsewhere in Paul's theology, the indicative grounds the imperative—a point Paul wished to emphasize by inserting the inferential conjunction *dio* in 6:17.¹⁵ Paul's theology does not detract from the necessity of the imperative, but rather undergirds and propels it.

Finally, the structure highlights the veracity of God's word by utilizing strategically-placed biblical citation formulas: at the beginning ("just as God said"), the middle ("says the Lord"), and the end ("says the Lord Almighty"). The strategic placement of the formula reminds the Corinthians that God is faithful to his promises (cf. 2 Cor 1:18-20) and that these promises and commands truly apply to the Corinthians, for they are "just as God said"! More specifically, these citation formulas remind the Corinthians that the divine promise of God's temple presence among his people—indeed, that God's temple would *be* his people—is not new but is rooted in his covenant promises, being echoed and woven throughout the fabric of all of redemptive history. Beginning with Eden's lost paradise (Gen 2-3) and continuing through God's saving acts to redeem a people for himself, Scripture unfolds a story of redemption wherein God has worked to create anew *so that* he may once again dwell with a new humanity in peace and harmony forever. The trajectory of the promise of God's presence is therefore a major theme in the Old Testament, and the trajectory has come to fruition in the inauguration of the end-time temple presence of God among his people: "we are the temple of the living God" (6:16).¹⁶

Paul traces this trajectory of God's presence by means of citations from the OT. Not surprisingly, given the link between temple and covenant, the trajectory follows the same path as the biblical covenants, for the promises of God's presence are located within specific covenants in the OT.

THE PROMISE OF GOD’S PRESENCE IN THE SINAI COVENANT (6:16)

The first quote (6:16b) most likely derives from Leviticus 26:11-12 and shows that the promise of God’s presence was an integral part of the Sinai covenant. In order to discern the possible theological significance of this text for Paul, we must briefly analyze the content of the promises in Leviticus 26, their Edenic basis in Genesis, and their canonical trajectory in Ezekiel.¹⁷

Leviticus 26 summarizes for Israel the blessings and curses of the covenant. In vv. 3-13, God offers the blessings, which are conditioned on covenant obedience (v. 3). The blessings revolve around promises of peace and prosperity in the land (vv. 4-10). The climax of the blessings is issued in vv. 11-12, where God promises his own presence, based on a covenant relationship of love and loyalty. His presence is suggested by the presence of his sanctuary or tabernacle (*mishkan*) in the midst of his people, among whom he “walks about” (*hithallek*). The covenant relationship is intact, for “my soul will not abhor you” (v. 11), a reality confirmed by the realization of the goal of the covenant: “I will be your God, and you will be my people” (v. 12). In its placement towards the end of Leviticus, Leviticus 26 provides the hermeneutical lens through which to understand the preceding chapters. Specifically, the statutes and laws given in Leviticus are covenantal and thus exist within the framework of a covenant relationship. The old covenant, given through Moses at Mt. Sinai (Lev 26:46), held before the people a promise of God’s own presence, which would be characterized by love and devotion. The fact that the people of Israel subsequently broke the covenant did not nullify the legitimacy of this offer, as Paul’s citation demonstrates.

In the midst of the blessings of Leviticus 26 there are indications that the basis for the promise of God’s presence is rooted in the Edenic portrait of Genesis 1-3. In Leviticus 26:9, for instance, God promises “to make you fruitful and multiply you,” an allusion to the creation mandate of Genesis 1:28. The point of the allusion is to show that what God had commanded humanity in the Garden was now going to be realized through the establishment of a covenant relationship. Another allusion to the creation narrative is located in the promise that God would “walk about” (*hithallek*) in the midst of his people (26:12). The Hitpael stem of the verb *halak* is used of God only seven times in the OT, the first of which occurs in Genesis 3:8 when God “walks about” in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day.¹⁸ The anthropomorphic portrait of God walking around in the midst of a garden

is meant to indicate the sublime relationship God had with Adam and Eve; God's normative activity in the Garden was to fellowship with humanity, and they with him.¹⁹ The use of *hithallek* in Leviticus 26:12 suggests that the same paradisiacal state, though lost on account of sin, will one day be regained by means of a covenant relationship. In fact, the camp of Israel itself is portrayed in the Old Testament as a sort of new Garden of Eden in which God "walks about" in the midst of his people (see Deut 23:14 [MT 23:15]; 2 Sam 7:6-7; 1 Chr 17:6). Although Israel's sin in the camp kept them from experiencing these blessings in full, the blessings were still legitimately offered as those that would restore the Edenic paradise by means of a covenant relationship.

The enduring legitimacy of the promise of God's presence in Leviticus 26 finds expression within Ezekiel's prophecy as it is recast as a promise of the new covenant. The central concern within Ezekiel pertains to the place and permanence of God's sanctuary. Because of the people's abominations committed in and around the temple (Ezek 8:5-18), God's glory had departed from the temple (10:1-21), and the covenant curses of Leviticus 26 had come to pass in the exile. Yet God did not forsake his people (cf. Lev 26:44-45) but promised in 11:16 that even in exile he "will be their sanctuary for a little while (*miqdash mē'at*)."²⁰ This promise was encouraging, to be sure, but only in a restrained and restricted sense, for God's brief presence with his people in exile was but a small ray of hope against the backdrop of impending doom. Nevertheless, it offered a glimpse of hope that God was not finished with his people, but would one day restore them from exile and dwell among them permanently.

Ezekiel 34:25-31 clarifies that God's presence among his people would coincide with the fulfillment of the blessings of Leviticus 26 in what is called a "covenant of peace" (34:25).²¹ In this environment there would be an abundance of rain and vegetation, so that food would not be scarce. Wild beasts would be banished from the land, so that God's people might lie down in safety, free from terror of any kind. God himself would dwell among his people, as he would be their God and they his people. In short, this "covenant of peace" would bring about a new Garden of Eden, a paradise that would be regained not through the Sinai covenant but through the new covenant.

Table 2
A Comparison of Leviticus 26:3-13 and Ezekiel 34:25-31

Leviticus 26:3-13	Ezekiel 34:25-31
Rains (4)	Rains (26)
Produce of the earth/tree (4)	Produce of the earth/tree (27)
Much food (5)	Much food (29)
Security (5)	Security (25, 27, 28)
Peace (6)	Covenant of peace (25)
Can lie down in safety (6)	Can sleep in safety (25)
No one terrifies (6)	No one terrifies (28)
No wild animals (6)	No wild animals (25, 28)
Covenant (9)	Covenant of peace (25)
Covenant formula (12)	Covenant formula (30-31)
The covenant God who freed from Egypt (13)	The covenant God who frees from exile (27)
	No longer ruled by nations (28-29)

Ezekiel 37 forms the climax of Ezekiel’s restoration oracles, for it brings to a conclusion many of the themes of restoration located earlier in the prophecy. In particular, 37:26-28 describes a new covenant called the “covenant of peace” that would be an “everlasting covenant” (37:26). The everlasting duration of this covenant would entail God’s everlasting and permanent presence in the midst of his people (37:26-28). And this covenant would fulfill the promises of the old covenant, for verse 27 hearkens back to Leviticus 26:11, where God promises that “my dwelling place (*mishkani*) will be among them.” The scene unfolds in great detail in Ezekiel 40-48, where the temple is rebuilt and God’s glory once again fills it. The end of Ezekiel’s prophecy tells the whole story: “The name of the city from that day is ‘The Lord is There’” (48:35).

Hence, the promise of God’s presence in Leviticus 26 is picked up and recast in a new way in Ezekiel’s “covenant of peace.” In Ezekiel God does not

renege on the Sinai covenant's promise of presence, but he locates it within a new and better covenant, which is based on the forgiveness of sins, cleansing from impurity, and the power of the Spirit (see 36:25-29).

The content, basis, and canonical trajectory of the promise of God's presence in Leviticus 26:11-12 provided Paul a rich and robust foundation from which to urge believers to holiness. Indeed, Paul's citation of Leviticus 26 in the context of his new covenant ministry suggests that he was aligning himself with Ezekiel's canonical trajectory.²² Like Ezekiel, Paul conceived of the enduring legitimacy of God's promise to dwell among his people, and such a promise would only come to fruition in and through a new and everlasting covenant. Certainly there was an irreducible discontinuity associated with this new covenant, but the fact that Paul drew from a canonical trajectory *tethered to and encapsulated by a promise within the old covenant* suggests that for Paul there were significant elements of continuity between the covenants. This continuity is traced along teleological lines, for the old covenant's *goal* or *intention* of a restored Edenic relationship with God by means of a covenant now had finally and climactically come to fruition in the new covenant inaugurated by Christ and enjoyed by the church.

THE PROMISE OF GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE PROPHETS (6:17)

In 6:17 Paul continues the catena by quoting two prophetic texts: Isaiah 52:11 and Ezekiel 11:17. Though Isaiah 52:11 is a command and Ezekiel 11:17 a promise, both texts envision a restoration of previous covenant promises and thus illustrate elements of continuity with those covenants. In particular, Isaiah 52:11 assumes that the Sinai covenant's promise of God's people as a "kingdom of priests" (Exod 19:6) has now become a reality; and Ezekiel 11:17 promises a divine welcome for God's people in fulfillment of the covenant ideal of reconciliation. Paul's linkage of these two prophetic texts, which together offer the hope of a reconciled "kingdom of priests," shows that through the new covenant the hope had become a reality.

Isaiah 52:11

In 2 Corinthians 6:17a Paul quotes from Isaiah 52:11.²³ Isaiah 52:1-12 is a unit that foresees the return of the God of Israel to his people, Zion. The text is replete with promises of redemption and salvation, as God promises to bare his arm before the sight of the nations (52:3, 7-10). Everyone among God's

people will rejoice when they hear the good news that God is king and that he is returning to Zion (52:7-8). The return of God to his people signals the return of his people from exile, and the return from exile is patterned after the exodus from Egypt. Just as God had protected Israel during the exodus, so God would surround his people with protection (52:12; cf. Exod 13:21; 14:19). And the second exodus is even better than the first, for just as Israel had left Egypt in haste (Exod 12:11, 33-39; Deut 16:3), so in the new exodus they would not need to go out in haste (Isa 52:12).²⁴

Bracketing this good news in the text is a call for Zion to prepare herself for the coming king by acts of repentance and holiness (52:1-2, 11-12). They were to leave behind their old ways of life and walk in new ways, with purity and cleanness.²⁵

In fact, the returning exiles in Isaiah 52 are described as priests. For instance, in 52:1 Zion is called to “wear your beautiful garments,” which alludes to the description of the priestly garments as “for glory and beauty” (Exod 28:2).²⁶ Second, those called to purify themselves in 52:11 are “you who carry the vessels of the Lord.” The Lord’s “vessels” are the articles for the temple that were carried off to Babylon when the temple was destroyed (2 Chron 36:10, 18-19). The individuals who carried these “vessels” were priests, for the only other place where the verb *nasa’* (“to carry”) occurs in connection with God’s *kelim* (“vessels”) is in Numbers 1:50-51, where it was the duty of the priests during the wilderness period to “carry the tabernacle and all its vessels.” As J. Alec Motyer explains, “The ideas of contagion through touching (Lv. 5:2) and of ‘carrying the vessels of the Lord’ are characteristically priestly.”²⁷ Finally, the description of God as the “rearguard” for his people (52:12) suggests not only his protection of them in the midst of the return from exile but also their priestly status before him. The term “rearguard” occurs elsewhere in the context of the protection of priests who bear the responsibility of caring for the ark of the covenant—the sign of God’s presence (Num 10:25; Josh 6:9, 13).²⁸ If this is the meaning of God as his people’s “rearguard” in Isaiah 52:12, the indication is that God’s returning people are his priests who are protected by him all around and who serve and minister to him in his presence.

The significance of Isaiah 52, then, is that *all of God’s people* are described as priests before him.²⁹ This was not a new concept for Israel, although it was new in Israel’s experience. Indeed, the aim of the old covenant, which was not

realized on account of Israel's sin, is spelled out in Exodus 19:5-6, wherein Israel for their obedience was to be a "kingdom of priests" before God. This promise, which unpacks the kingly and priestly aspects of the image of God in the Garden of Eden, held forth the blessing of kingship and dominion over the earth, as well as the blessing of priesthood in the presence of God. Isaiah 52 demonstrates that despite their sin and unfaithfulness to God, God had not given up on this Edenic promise. It would certainly not be realized by means of the broken Sinai covenant, but it would find fruition in and through a new covenant inaugurated through the death of the servant of Yahweh (see Isa 52:13-55:13). This new covenant would entail the transformation of the entire covenant community, who would without exception be consecrated as priests to God. And as such, they would no longer give in to patterns of idolatry and disobedience but instead walk in covenant faithfulness to God.

Hence, in 2 Corinthians 6:17 Paul's application of Isaiah 52:11 to the Corinthian believers suggests that the new covenant—the return from spiritual exile—had arrived by means of the death of Christ (see 1 Cor 11:25) and that as members of this new community all the believers at the church in Corinth were priests and lived in the realm of the holy.³⁰ For Paul, the inauguration of the new covenant had redefined membership within the covenant people of God along the lines of faith in Christ. Whereas membership within the old covenant community consisted of the believing remnant mixed with unbelievers, the membership of the new covenant community entirely consisted of those with "fleshly hearts" (2 Cor 3:3; cf. Ezek 36:26-27). Now that in Christ Isaiah's eschatological day had arrived—what Paul calls the "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17; cf. Isa 65:17) and the "day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:1-2; cf. Isa 49:8)—Paul was confident that "we all"—not just Paul, but all believers in Christ—had been granted to see the glory of Christ and were being transformed to a greater degree of holiness (2 Cor 3:18). Through Christ Jesus all of God's people had been consecrated to him as "saints" (2 Cor 1:1; 8:4; 13:12) and played a priestly role in ministering to one another (2 Cor 9:12). The Sinai covenant's vision of a "kingdom of priests" had been realized, for the Corinthians "are" (6:16)—note the present tense!—the temple of the living God (cf. 1 Cor 3:17). In fact, Isaiah's promise of restoration finds escalation in the new covenant, for the Corinthians do not merely "carry the vessels of the Lord" for the rebuilt temple (Isa 52:11); they *are* the vessels of the Lord because they *are* the rebuilt temple!

“Therefore”—*dio* is a Pauline insertion to the catena in v. 17— they were to live like priests consecrated to God, with purity and devotion. Like priests, they were not to come into contact with what was unholy or defiled; they should “touch no unclean thing” (v. 17) but should “cleanse ourselves from every defilement of the flesh and the spirit” (7:1). This did not mean, of course, that the Corinthians were to remove themselves entirely from the world or to abstain from all forms of communication with unbelievers, but it suggests that their new identity as priests necessitated correspondingly new, priestly behavior. Since they were members of the new creation order, they were to live in the midst of the world in such a way as to be unstained by it. Fellowship and friendship with the world—putting in one’s lot with Christ and Belial—were impossible because of their new identity as priests of God.

That Paul aligned himself with Isaiah’s vision of a restored “kingdom of priests” shows once again elements of continuity between the new covenant and the Sinai covenant. The new covenant certainly was distinct from the Sinai covenant as seen in 3:1-18, but Paul’s use of Isaiah evinces a covenantal consciousness in which the new covenant was in one sense not the antithesis but the climactic unveiling of the *intention* and *goal* of the Sinai covenant in Christ. When placed along the covenantal trajectory of Scripture, the new covenant was not the beginning but the fulfillment of God’s plan for the establishment of a covenantal relationship with a humanity exiled from the Garden of Eden. In this teleological sense, the new covenant finds continuity with the Sinai covenant.

Ezekiel 11:17

The final phrase of 2 Corinthians 6:17 resumes the promise of God’s temple presence among his people, for God promises to “welcome” (*eisdechomai*) them. It is not certain which OT text Paul has in mind, although within the LXX only Ezekiel has the future first person singular verb *eisdexomai* (“I will welcome”) followed by the second person plural pronoun *hymas* (“you”; cf. Ezek 20:34, 41; 22:19). A further difficulty arises when these examples from Ezekiel are analyzed, for in them God does not promise to save but to judge his people for their disobedience.³¹ While it is possible that Paul cited a promise of judgment in order to warn the Corinthians not to mix with idol worship, it is more likely that God’s promise to “welcome” his people is a sign of his saving presence among them. After all, not only

does this interpretation fit better with the rest of the catena, but it also fits better with the flow of Paul's thought, for the catena exists to support the legitimacy of Paul's striking statement that the Corinthians truly are God's eschatological temple (6:16). It is difficult to see how a warning of God's judging presence would support the notion that the Corinthians were God's temple, "just as God said" (6:16a).

A more likely source for Paul's quote is Ezekiel 11:17, where God says of his exiled people, "I will gather (*eisdexomai*, LXX) you from the peoples and I will assemble you from the countries in which you were scattered, and I will give to you the land of Israel."³² This promise of restoration to the land is similar to other restoration promises with the verb *qabats* / *eisdechomai* (cf. Jer 23:3; Zech 10:8, 10) but with a significant difference: the immediate context in Ezekiel 11:16-20 emphasizes God's temple presence by means of a new covenant relationship. In 11:16 he assures them that despite their current plight in exile God is with them as their "sanctuary." He will be with them but for a little while because he will soon bring them back to the land (11:17), and when they return they will put away their idols (11:18) because God "will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and I will give to them a heart of flesh" (11:19). In essence, "They will be my people, and I will be their God" (11:20). In other words, swirling around the promise of restoration to the land is the reality of God's temporary sanctuary presence in the midst of exile as well as the future promise of a new covenant relationship accompanied by new obedience in the new land. As Ezekiel unpacks the rest of the promises of the new covenant throughout his prophecy, it is clarified that God's future sanctuary—his tabernacling presence—among his people is included as part and parcel of these promises (cf. Ezek 37:26-28; 43:7-9; 48:35).

Hence, the themes of temple, covenant, and land that surround the restoration promise of Ezekiel 11:17 suggest that in 2 Corinthians 6:17 Paul intended the Corinthians to view themselves as those brought back from spiritual exile, for he had "welcomed" them because of the reconciling death of Christ (2 Cor 5:18). Furthermore, he had given them his Spirit in order to signify his presence among them, as well as to guarantee that they would partake in the future welcome party at the resurrection of the dead (2 Cor 1:21-22; 5:5). All this meant that the Corinthians were current heirs of Ezekiel's promise of a future divine welcome based on the inauguration of a

new covenant. The realization of this promise suggests that the new covenant continues and fulfills in an ultimate and climactic way the promise of God’s welcoming presence among his people through a covenant.

THE PROMISE OF GOD’S PRESENCE IN THE DAVIDIC COVENANT (6:18)

Paul’s citation in 6:18 concludes the catena with a reference to the Davidic covenant, which shows that the new covenant fulfills not only the goal of the old covenant but also the Davidic covenant.

In 6:18 Paul cites 2 Samuel 7:14, which as a part of God’s covenant with David issues a promise that God would be the father to the king and the king would be God’s son.³³ In 2 Samuel 7 David expresses a desire to build God a “house,” i.e., a temple (7:2), but instead God promises to build David a “house,” i.e., a dynasty (7:11). This wordplay on the Hebrew term for “house” (*bayit*), links the construction of the temple with the Davidic monarchy.³⁴ Tomoo Ishida rightly notes, “The Temple was the embodiment of the covenant of David, in which the triple relationship between Yahweh, the House of David, and the people of Israel was established.”³⁵ Prior to this point in Israel’s history the Ark of the Covenant had been mobile (2 Sam 7:6-7). The temple, on the other hand, was a permanent visible and outward sign that God’s presence was with the king and the people. Hence, if David or his progeny was to build this new and powerful symbol of God’s presence, it needed to be clear that David had not done great things for God, but that God had done great things for David.³⁶ If God was going to establish a permanent dwelling on Mt. Zion, David needed to know his place under the authority of God as God’s son (7:14). The temple, then, became a powerful reminder of the covenant God had made with David, and conversely, the permanence of the Davidic covenant offered a powerful hope for the permanence of the temple—the expectation of which is clear in the prophetic literature (cf. Jer 33:14-26; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-28; Amos 9:11-12).

Among the many promises enshrined within the Davidic covenant—which included a great name for David and rest from his enemies (7:9-11a)—the promise that the king would be God’s son is at the heart of the covenant relationship. God would act like a father towards his son, which would entail corrective discipline if needed, as well as never-ending steadfast love (*hesed*, 7:15).³⁷ The notion of a king as the son of God was not a new one, for the idea is present in many societies in the ancient Near East.³⁸ The king was

to be God's son not necessarily in terms of physical likeness but in other common characteristics and attributes.³⁹ What this entailed was that in his function as king, the king was the representative authority for the deity in a particular region, whereas in his status as son of the deity, he had been adopted into a covenant relationship with the deity (cf. Ps 2:7). In the same way, when God promised David that he would be a father to David's son and would adopt David's son as his own, he was promising that David's son would be in a covenant relationship with God and would represent God in the presence of Israel and the nations. Just like Adam and Eve were to live out what it meant to be created in God's image and likeness as God's representatives on the earth, so this Davidic scion was to be a faithful and obedient son who modeled for and led God's people toward covenant faithfulness (see Deut 17:18-20).

The early church ultimately saw the promise to David as fulfilled in Christ, for he was the only king in David's line who lived as the faithful and obedient son of God.⁴⁰ Even in 2 Corinthians we see indications of this early Christian belief, for in 1:19 Jesus is given such Davidic titles as "son of God" and "Christ." The title "son of God" likely emphasizes Jesus' unique status as God's son, yet the link with 6:18 suggests it is a Davidic title as well. Likewise, the title "Christ," which is not a proper name but a title of Jesus' status as the Jewish Messiah, indicates that Paul held Jesus to be the promised son of David (cf. Rom 1:3-4; 2 Tim 2:8).⁴¹

Nevertheless, in 2 Corinthians 6:18 Paul alters the citation from 2 Samuel 7:14 so that it applies the father/son promise of the Davidic covenant to all believers: "I will be your father, and you will be my *sons and daughters*" (cf. Rev 21:7).⁴² Whether Paul can legitimately apply the promises of the one to the many is answered in 2 Corinthians 1:20, which contends that Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God's promises: "For as many as are the promises (*epangeliai*) of God, they are *yes in him*." In other words, there is no promise of God that comes to fruition apart from Jesus, but it is only "in him" that God's promises are fulfilled. The only other instance of the term "promise" (*epangelia*) in 2 Corinthians is in 7:1, where Paul—again utilizing the plural "promises"—summarizes the promises in 6:16-18 as "these promises" (*tautas tας epangelias*). The verbal link between 1:20 and 7:1 shows that the promises of 6:16-18 are some examples of the many promises of God—including those to David—that find their Yes in Jesus.⁴³ This link demonstrates that the only

way in which the Davidic father/son promises of 6:18 can be applied legitimately to the Corinthians is through their union with Jesus Christ. Jesus is the faithful son of David who wins victory and acceptance for all those who are united to him by faith (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-21). Through him the benefits of all the covenant promises of God are legitimately applied to Christians, who in Christ are “sons and daughters” of God.⁴⁴ As beneficiaries of the promise made to David, all Christians function as kings and priests who rule for God as his image (cf. Exod 19:6; 1 Pet 2:9).⁴⁵

Since the temple was inextricably linked to the covenant with David, the climactic fulfillment of the Davidic covenant in Christ meant for Paul that God permanently had established his dwelling among his people. Since the Corinthians were heirs of the promise to David, then they also were “the temple of the living God” (6:16). The inauguration of the new covenant brought to fruition the promise of God’s temple associated with the Davidic covenant. The arrival of the new covenant did not abolish or do away with the covenant with David, but brought it to its proper *conclusion* or *goal*. It was through the final Davidic king, who won victory for his people, that the new covenant community could now reign with him as a “kingdom of priests.” As we have already seen, this covenantal continuity runs along teleological lines, for the redemptive-historical trajectory of the Davidic covenant finds its goal ultimately in Christ and the new covenant community.⁴⁶

CONCLUSION AND THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Hence, in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 the new covenant is portrayed as having significant continuity with the other major covenants of Scripture. In particular, the new covenant fulfills the *intention* or *goal* of the OT’s promise of God’s presence, so that this continuity is to be traced along teleological lines. Significantly, Paul cites from both the Law and the Prophets to demonstrate the extent of this continuity, for in the case of the promise of God’s presence the new covenant fulfills the entire trajectory of the OT.⁴⁷ The future-tense promises of the Scriptural catena (6:6b-18) had become for Paul a present-tense reality in Christ: “we *are* the temple of the living God” (6:16a).⁴⁸

With these observations in mind, a few implications are in order regarding issues of continuity and discontinuity in formulating a theological system faithful to Scripture. First, the text applies Israel’s promises to the new covenant community.⁴⁹ It is striking that Paul can argue that “we *are* the temple of the

living God” (6:16), and that “*we have these promises*” (7:1). The Corinthian church did not consist only of Jewish believers but of Gentile believers as well; and yet Paul considered all Christians, whether Jew or Gentile, to be legitimate heirs and beneficiaries of the promises of 6:16-18—promises that were made to the Jewish nation (Lev 26:11-12) and a Jewish king (2 Sam 7:14)! This does not mean that the church simply replaces Israel, but that through Christ the church becomes the heir of Israel’s promises through Christ. This observation makes best sense if Paul saw Christ as the last Adam, the true Israel, and the son of David, who alone on account of his faithfulness was the legitimate heir of the covenant promises. No other individual but he could lay claim to these promises, for they were Yes in him (2 Cor 1:20). Nevertheless, this meant that anyone—regardless of ethnicity or genealogy—could also lay claim to these promises through faith in him; anyone could experience Isaiah’s return from exile, Ezekiel’s divine welcome, or David’s reign as God’s son. Sometimes it is averred that there remains two distinct groups within the one new covenant people of God,⁵⁰ but Paul’s redemptive-historical and christological hermeneutic within 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 indicates otherwise (cf. Eph 2:11-3:6).

Second, 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 suggests that the Davidic kingdom of Christ is already present and that all believers reign with him. Some scholars argue that there must be a future millennial reign of a Davidic king in Palestine for God to be faithful to his promises to David.⁵¹ But the flow of 6:16-18 suggests otherwise, for Paul argues from the assumption in 6:18 that the Davidic promise of sonship has already been fulfilled in Christ. Further, as was argued, the Davidic covenant is inextricably tied to the presence of the temple. If the covenant with David has been climactically fulfilled, then—and only then—can one expect the climactic fulfillment of the end-time temple as well. But since the presence of the temple is precisely what Paul argues for in 6:16, it stands to reason that the Davidic covenant has been fulfilled as well. Hence, the argument that there are physical and national aspects of the Davidic kingdom that must be fulfilled in a future millennial age flies against the face of the present reality of the end-time temple in the church.

Finally, 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 suggests that the entire new covenant community is regenerate. Paul’s doctrine of the church as God’s temple suggests that God dwells in and among each member of the community. He anointed them and gave his Spirit as a guarantee of their future inheritance (2 Cor 1:21-22; 5:5; cf. Eph 1:13-14). They were priests to God and as members of the new

humanity and creation order were to reflect God’s image in the world (6:17; cf. 3:18; 5:17). It is clear that they were not sinless—otherwise there would have been no need for “godly grief” (7:10)—but this did not preclude their status as the very temple of God!

These observations do not exhaust the implications of the text, but they provide a way forward in formulating a theological system that carefully traces the nuances of the biblical text, keenly discerns the elements of continuity and discontinuity in the storyline, and is thoroughly based on the new covenant as the climax of God’s redemptive work in Christ.

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- ¹ Of course, in some sense it is true that the new covenant is in both continuity and discontinuity with the old. The question before us concerns deciphering *in what sense* this is true. For a good foray into some of the ways theological systems unpack themes of continuity and discontinuity, see John S. Feinberg, ed., *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988).
 - ² For details on the historical background to 2 Corinthians, see John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville: B&H, 1999), 258-59.
 - ³ It is worthwhile to note that even in 3:1-18 there are some elements of continuity between the old and new covenants. For instance, the assumption throughout the passage is that the purpose of both covenants was that God’s people experience God’s glory. The problem in the old covenant was that its “goal” (*telos*) was unattainable because it had no provision to overcome Israel’s hardness of heart (3:13-14). The new covenant is better than the old, not because it has a fundamentally different goal, but because it actually fulfills that goal in Christ.
 - ⁴ This article assumes—but does not seek to defend—the view that 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 is not an interpolation but is part of the warp and woof of Paul’s flow of thought. For various approaches to the issue, see G. K. Beale, “The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5-7 and Its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1,” *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 550-81; Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 40, 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 354-60.
 - ⁵ That the context is quite covenantal is clear from the use of the covenant formula in 6:16 as well as the litany of covenantal promises in 6:16-18 (see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 507-08). Conducting a word study of the term *diathēkē* is insufficient to explain fully the covenant concept.
 - ⁶ While some have argued that Paul is prohibiting participation in idolatrous feasts (e.g., Gordon D. Fee, “2 Corinthians vi.14-vii.1 and Food Offered to Idols,” *New Testament Studies* 23 [1977]: 140-61), one should be cautious against specifying a single application for the prohibition (so Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians* [The Anchor Bible, vol. 32A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984], 372; Margaret E. Thrall, *Introduction and Commentary on II Corinthians I-VII* [vol. 1 of *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary; London: T&T Clark, 1994], 473). If the Corinthians were to accept Paul and his ministry (6:11-13; 7:2-4), then it was necessary for them to live in ways commensurate to their status as God’s people.
 - ⁷ “Beliar” is related to the term “Belial,” which is a Hebrew term that refers to something worthless or evil; here it is personified as a name for Satan. For a discussion and texts on the use of the term in Jewish literature and at Qumran, see Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 362; Thrall, *II Corinthians I-VII*, 474.
 - ⁸ Identifying the “unbelievers” (*apistoi*) in 6:14 is the subject of some debate, with many commentators seeing them as non-Christians (e.g., Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 371-72; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 360-62) or Paul’s opponents (e.g., Mark A. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians* [PNTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014], 289-91; David Starling, *Not My People: Gentiles as Exiles in Pauline Hermeneutics* [Beihefte zur Zeitschrift

- für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 184; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011], 71-75).
- 9 Adapted from J. Lambrecht, "The Fragment of 2 Cor vi 14-vii 1: A Plea for Its Authenticity," in *Miscellanea Neotestamentica* (ed. T. Baarda, A. F. J. Klijn, and W. C. van Unnik, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 47; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 148.
 - 10 Some early manuscripts read "You are the temple of the living God," whereas other manuscripts render the term plural: "We are the temples of the living God." Although the meanings are not significantly different, the reading "We are the temple of the living God" is the *lectio difficilior* and most likely is the original reading.
 - 11 Cf. Gen 17:7-8; Exod 19:5-6; Lev 26:11-12; Deut 29:13; Jer 32:38; Exod 37:27; Zech 8:8.
 - 12 Adapted from William J. Webb, *Returning Home: New Covenant and Second Exodus as the Context for 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1* (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 85; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 32.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, 33.
 - 14 The *kagō* at the end of 6:17 does not mark an inference but a continuation of the covenantal promises of 6:16 (so Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 371; contra Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 374).
 - 15 Paul's A - B - B' - A' framework to show how God's new covenant promises undergird his people's obedience is similar to the framework the Davidic covenant found in 2 Sam 7, where the promises to David undergird and ground the call for obedience from the king (see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 393-95).
 - 16 For a helpful survey of the significance of the theme of God's presence in Scripture and how it relates to the storyline of the Bible, see J. Ryan Lister, *The Presence of God: Its Place in the Storyline of Scripture and the Story of Our Lives* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014).
 - 17 That Paul cites Lev 26:11-12 is a frequent observation among the commentators (e.g., Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 364), although some think Ezek 37:27 is primarily in view (e.g., Webb, *Returning Home*, 33-37). The citation does not match Lev 26:11-12 precisely, for *enoikeō* is Paul's conceptual equivalent for the MT *mishkani* and the LXX *tēn skēnēn mou* (Lev 26:11). On the one hand, Paul's third person pronominal references in 2 Cor 6:16 more closely match that of Ezek 37:27, as opposed to the second person references in Lev 26:12. On the other hand, the use of *emperipateō* in 2 Cor 6:16 renders the influence of Lev 26:12 certain, for this verb is used only eight times in the LXX (Lev 26:12; Deut 23:15; Judg 18:9; 2 Sam 7:6; Prov 30:31; Job 1:7; 2:2; Wis 19:21). Perhaps we need not choose between the two (contra Webb, *Returning Home*, 37; rightly Thrall, *II Corinthians I-VII*, 477), for Ezek 37:27 itself is a commentary on Lev 26:11-12. Paul's conflation of both texts illustrates his redemptive-historical hermeneutic.
 - 18 The other six instances are Lev 26:12; Deut 23:14 (MT 23:15); 2 Sam 7:6-7; 1 Chr 17:6; Job 22:14; 38:16.
 - 19 The relational aspects of *hithallek* are evident from the many texts where individuals "walk about" with God as a sign of their peace with and devotion to God: Enoch (Gen 5:22, 24), Noah (Gen 6:9), Abraham (Gen 17:1; 48:15), Abraham's servant (Gen 24:40), Isaac (Gen 48:15), a faithful priest (1 Sam 2:30, 35), Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:3 = Isa 38:3), Israel (Zech 10:12), and David (Pss 26:3; 56:13 [MT 56:14]; 101:2; cf. 116:9; 119:45).
 - 20 It is possible that *mē'at* is adjectival instead of adverbial, in which case God would be promising his presence as a "small" sanctuary for his people in exile (in opposition to the expansive edifice Solomon built). But given the later emphasis in Ezek on the longevity of God's sanctuary in the land, the adverbial sense ("a little while") is preferred.
 - 21 That Lev 26 was a significant source for Ezek is confirmed by Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 304.
 - 22 As Seifrid (*The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 296) notes, "Paul thus 'relocates' the Leviticus text to the context of the prophets, and especially Ezek 37:27."
 - 23 Paul alters Isaiah's order of the imperatives, placing the imperative to "touch nothing unclean" last instead of first. He also inserts the phrase "says the Lord" prior to the last imperative for structural reasons to show God's faithfulness to his promises (cf. 1 Cor 14:21; Thrall, *II Corinthians I-VII*, 478).
 - 24 As J. Alec Motyer (*The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993], 422) explains, "They will experience neither the panic flight of sinners under condemnation nor the opportunist escape of those whose master might change his mind, but rather every favourable circumstance."
 - 25 Contra Motyer (*Prophecy of Isaiah*, 421), it is likely that the original context of the command to "go out from there" in Isa 52:11 was the call to leave Babylon. But Motyer rightly discerns that the solution for Israel's plight was also cast in spiritual terms, since God's return to Zion was predicated on the forgiveness of sin and the transformation of his people.
 - 26 *Ibid.*, 416.

- ²⁷ Ibid., 421. It should also be added that the call to bring back the vessels of the Lord suggests that the temple will be rebuilt.
- ²⁸ What is translated as “rearguard” is the Piel participle of the verb *ʿasap*. It only carries the meaning of “rearguard” in a few places in the OT: Num 10:25; Josh 6:9, 13 (cf. Isa 58:8). Num 10:25 says the tribes of Dan formed the “rearguard” of the 12 tribes as they left Mt. Sinai, and at the center was the tabernacle (*mishqan*) and “what is holy” (*miqdash*; e.g., lampstand, altar, ark of the covenant; cf. Num 3:31; 10:17, 21). In Josh 6:9, 13 the priests and the ark were surrounded in the front and back by armed men as they marched around Jericho, whereas in Isa 52:12 God is the one surrounding his people before and behind.
- ²⁹ So Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 370.
- ³⁰ So Seifrid (*The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 298), although it is not Paul’s omission of the phrase “you who carry the vessels of the Lord” that suggests an expanded priesthood, for Isa 52:11 already hints at this reality.
- ³¹ Frequently the LXX provides *eisdechomai* as a gloss for *qabats* (“to gather”), an action where God “gathers” his people for judgment (e.g., Hos 8:10; Zeph 3:8) or salvation (e.g., Jer 23:3; Ezek 11:17; Mic 4:6; Zeph 3:19-20; Zech 10:8, 10).
- ³² The second person pronoun in the phrase “I will gather you” matches the MT (*wēqibbatsti ʿtkem*), although the LXX has the third person pronoun *autous* (“I will welcome them”). It is possible that Paul cited the MT directly, although it is perhaps more likely that he altered the pronoun to fit the plural imperative verbs of Isa 52:11. Such a shift in pronouns is made more plausible because of the regular occurrence of other pronominal shifts in the citations of 2 Cor 6:16-18.
- ³³ Paul uses the second person plural pronoun (“I will be your father”) in place of the third person singular pronoun (“I will be his father”) in order to apply the promise to the Corinthians. Further, the phrase “says the Lord Almighty” at the closing of the catena is not found in 2 Sam 7:14, although it is present in 2 Sam 7:8.
- ³⁴ Thus, Scott W. Hahn (*Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009], 201) rightly notes: “The Davidic monarchy was inextricably bound to the Temple. The building of the Temple was integrated into the terms of the Davidic covenant from the very beginning, as can be seen from the wordplay on ‘house’ (‘temple’ or ‘dynasty’) in 2 Samuel 7:11-13” (emphasis original).
- ³⁵ Tomoo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties of Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology* (Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Fur die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft; New York: de Gruyter, 1977), 145 (as quoted in Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 201).
- ³⁶ As Thomas R. Schreiner (*The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013], 157) notes, “The Lord is pleased that David wants to build him a house, but the danger is that David will think that he has done great things for God. Therefore, the Lord focuses on what he has done for David, pledging to build him an enduring house.”
- ³⁷ On the relationship between conditional and unconditional elements with the Davidic covenant, see Bruce K. Waltke, “The Phenomenon of Conditionality within Unconditional Covenants,” in *Israel’s Apostasy and Restoration* (ed. A. Gileadi; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988), 123-39. Ultimately, the promise to David was unconditional because the condition was infallibly fulfilled in Jesus, the obedient son.
- ³⁸ See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 395-97; J. K. Hoffmeier, “The King as God’s Son in Egypt and Israel,” *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 24 (1994): 28-38.
- ³⁹ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 396-97.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. Matt 1:1; Luke 1:32, 69; John 1:49; Rom 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8; Rev 5:5.
- ⁴¹ N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 41-55.
- ⁴² While it is true that Paul’s theology included ontological equality of males and females (see Gal 3:28), the addition of the term “daughters” (*thygatēr*)—a term found nowhere else in Paul’s literature—owes more to his use of Old Testament restoration language (contra Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 371-72; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 299). As Thrall (*II Corinthians I-VII*, 479) has pointed out, the phrase “sons and daughters” is frequently found in Old Testament restoration contexts and thus served as an apt description for God’s restored people (cf. Isa 43:6; 49:22; 60:4; 49:22; 60:4; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 364).
- ⁴³ Similarly G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 638.
- ⁴⁴ The term *huios* occurs only four times in 2 Corinthians (1:19; 3:7, 13; 6:18), two of which refer to the “sons of Israel” (3:7, 13), one to Jesus as the “son of God,” and one to all believers as “sons and daughters” of God (6:18). This point strengthens the link between 1:18-20 and 6:16-7:1, suggesting that believers are adopted into God’s family by virtue of their connection with Jesus, the true son of God.

- ⁴⁵ So Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 299.
- ⁴⁶ For a helpful discussion showing how the Davidic covenant relates to the other biblical covenants, see Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Blessing of David: The Charter for Humanity," in *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies Prepared in Honor of Oswald Thompson Allis* (ed. John H. Skilton; Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974), 298-318. He unpacks the relationship of the Davidic covenant to the covenant with Abraham, as well as David's own understanding of how the covenant was the *torah* for humanity, i.e., the blueprint for how God would bring the blessing of Abraham to the world.
- ⁴⁷ Similarly Thrall, *II Corinthians I-VII*, 477.
- ⁴⁸ Rightly *ibid.*, 479, although there is no need to place the realized promises in a baptismal context.
- ⁴⁹ Seifrid (*The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 289) rightly notes, "The appeal to Scripture identifies believers with Israel directly and without qualification."
- ⁵⁰ For example, Robert L. Saucy (*The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: the Interface between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993], 218) contends: "[Israel's] difference lies not on the spiritual plane in their relationship to God, but in their specific identity and corresponding function in God's historical kingdom program. In both Testaments, the identity of 'Israel' is always that historical people descended from Abraham through Jacob that became a nation. Israel was called to witness God's salvation to the other nations as a nation among nations" (cf. *idem*, "Israel and the Church: A Case for Discontinuity," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments* [ed. John S. Feinberg; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988], 242-44). Likewise, Bruce A. Ware ("The New Covenant and the People(s) of God," in *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church: The Search for Definition* [ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992], 92) suggests, "Between the two extremes of a strict distinction between Israel and the church and a strict identity of Israel and the church there is a middle position that would suggest that Israel and the church share theologically rich and important elements of commonality while at the same time maintaining distinct identities."
- ⁵¹ Even the more progressive dispensationalists who operate with an "already/not yet" hermeneutical framework contend that there must be a future fulfillment of Christ reigning in the millennium as the Davidic king. For example, Darrell L. Bock, "Current Messianic Activity and OT Davidic Promise: Dispensationalism, Hermeneutics, and NT Fulfillment," *Trinity Journal* 15 (1994): 55-87; *idem*, "The Son of David and the Saints' Task: The Hermeneutics of Initial Fulfillment," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (1993): 440-57; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Kingdom Promises as Spiritual and National," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments* (ed. John S. Feinberg, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988), 289-307; and Stephen J. Nichols, "The Dispensational View of the Davidic Kingdom: A Response to Progressive Dispensationalism," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 7 (1996): 213-39. I am indebted to Brent Parker for pointing me to some of these resources.