

COVENANT FULFILLMENT IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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Within the scholarly investigation of the presence and function of a covenant theology in the Johannine writings, a lacuna exists in regard to its association to the divine kinship relations that are present in the foreground of the gospel. This study will attempt to fill this lacuna.

Following Frank M. Cross and others,¹ I have argued elsewhere² that the covenant institution in the ancient Near East was the legal means by which kinship relationships were extended beyond the natural kinship sphere. They generated sacred bonds of kinship with those who are outside one's blood kinship group. Covenants, at any level (individual, tribal, international; either secular or divine), utilized kinship language to disclose that blood kinship relations (and their consequent obligations) have been extended across family lines to non-relatives (that is, "kinship-by-covenant").

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that a covenant theology is operative in the background of John 13–17 (which functions as an adequate representative of the entire Johannine tradition). This will be accomplished by showing that the kinship-by-covenant principle disclosed in the Old Testament (OT) is employed as a formative and controlling principle with respect to how Jesus, and through him the Father, relates and guides his community of disciples. In other words, my aim is to point out that in the actions and discourses of his final meal narrated in John 13–17, Jesus established the new covenant with his eschatological

1 Frank Moore Cross offers the following definition of "covenant": "Oath and covenant, in which the deity is witness, guarantor, or participant, is ... a widespread legal means by which the duties and privileges of kinship may be extended to another individual or group." *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 8. See also G. Quell, "διαθήκη," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. G. Bromiley, eds. G. Kittel and G. Bromiley, Vol. II (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964), 106–124; Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law & Ethics Governing Marriage, Developed from the Perspective of Malachi*, *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 52 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 168–215; Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship By Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises*, Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 28–31; Mark Smith, "'Your People Shall Be My People': Family and Covenant in Ruth 1:16–17," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69 (2007): 242–258; Duane A. Smith, *Kinship and Covenant: An Examination of Kinship Metaphors for Covenant in the Book of the Prophet Hosea*, Ph.D. Diss. (Harvard University; Cambridge, Massachusetts: University Microfilms, 1994), 28. Of vital importance are the works of Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978) and Paul Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1982).

2 Vincent P. DeMeo, *Covenantal Kinship in John 13–17: A Historical-Narrative Approach*, Vol. 22 (Roma: Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum, 2012), 43–109.

community and, in doing so, generated a divine kinship relation (with corresponding familial obligations) with them. They are the definitive children of God (see John 1:12; 11:52; 13:33; 14:18). My intent is, therefore, to further and deepen the recent research on the covenant tradition in the gospel by explaining how Israel's covenantal kinship relation and obligations with their God are, according to the gospel of John, fulfilled with a realism that is heightened in an unexpected manner.

I. Covenantal Relation: Generation of the Children of God

Covenant Meal

Jesus' discourses with his disciples in John 13–17 take place within the setting of a meal.³ One characteristic of this meal that emerges is that it is shared between members of kin. Not only does John 13–17 contain a detailed discourse about Jesus' Father and his own divine sonship, but his disciples are referred to as "his own" (13:1)—a phrase with familial connotations—and as his "children" (v. 33) who possess a dwelling place in his "Father's house" (14:2).⁴ They will not be "orphans" (14:18) but will be called by the name of the Father (17:6, 11, 12, 26). This particular meal seems to adhere to the principle commonly found in banquets of the ANE, namely, only members of the same kin, broadly understood, ate together.⁵

Another indicator of the character of this supper is that it is associated in some manner with the Passover feast (see 13:1). The Passover celebration was a festival of kin and for kin celebrated in the home. Jesus' disciples constituted a type of kinship community known as a *ḥabburà* (חבורה — that is, a fictive family unit who together celebrate the Passover). It is possible that Jesus was acting as the *paterfamilias* (father of the family) whose duty it was to bring to mind the redemptive events of God in the Passover and exodus events (Exod. 12:24, 26–27).

The Passover context is also the first hint that this meal could be associated with the covenant between God and Israel. Not only was God's election of Israel in the Passover-Exodus and Israel's acceptance of sonship sealed by a shared meal at the covenant ratification ceremony on Mt. Sinai (Exod. 24:9–11), but two parties sharing a meal together when establishing a covenant was a standard practice within the ancient Near East and ancient Israel.⁶ A banquet eaten in the context

3 See John 13:2, 4, 18, 26–30.

4 All English quotations of Scripture are taken from the *Revised Standard Version* (1952). Modifications of this translation are my own. All Hebrew quotations of the Old Testament reflect the Masoretic Text (MT), while all Greek quotations reflect the Septuagint translation (LXX).

5 See Jan G. Van Der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 339; Joachim Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 204; DeMeo, *Covenantal Kinship*, 69–81.

6 See, for instance, Gen. 26:26–30; 31:43–54; Deut. 27:6–7.

of a covenant expressed their belonging to one family and the sharing of a common life. Especially in light of the other traditions of the OT divine covenant found throughout John 13–17 (which will be discussed below), it is probable that this meal functions analogously to the common practice of sharing a banquet at a ratification or renewal of a covenant.⁷

His Own

According to John 13:1, Jesus' disciples are considered to be "his own" (τοὺς ἰδίους). The phrase "his own" is powerfully evocative of Israel being given the status of God's own possession in their covenant: "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples" (Exod. 19:5). In the midst of the renewal of this divine covenant in Exodus 34:9–10, Moses begs God to "take us as your own possession." Both of these texts are rooted in God's overall plan with Israel as revealed in the covenant formula of Exodus 6:7 which has as an essential aim God's active "taking" of Israel as his own possession: "I will take you for my people, and I will be your God."⁸ In a similar vein Deuteronomy 7:6 states, "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession."⁹ This verse highlights the relationship between mutual possession (Israel has given themselves to their God and he has chosen Israel as his own) and covenant belonging ("The Lord your God" expresses the covenant relationship).

The prophets, too, foretold that God would establish mutual possession and belonging in the covenant given on the eschatological day. According to the prophet Malachi, when the "messenger of the covenant" comes (3:1–2) those Israelites who fear God shall be possessed by him as his covenantal sons: "They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him" (3:17). The hope of this eschatological day for mutual possession in a covenant relationship was previously disclosed in 3:7: "Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts." This mirrors the covenant formula: "I will be yours and you will be mine."¹⁰

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- 7 Other New Testament traditions support this conclusion. The Synoptic gospel tradition explicitly states that this final meal is a covenant meal: "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20; see also Mark 14:24; Matt. 26:28). The Pauline tradition also confirms the meal's covenantal character: "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 Cor. 11:25).
 - 8 The prophet Ezekiel reiterates the motif of personal possession in the OT divine covenant: "I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you; you became mine, says the Lord" (Ezek. 16:8).
 - 9 Deut. 26:17–18 reads: "You have declared this day concerning the Lord that he is your God, and that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and his commandments and his ordinances, and will obey his voice; and the Lord has declared this day concerning you that you are a people for his own possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments." See also Deut. 4:20; 9:26; 14:2; 26:18; 33:12; Ps. 135:4.
 - 10 See also Hos. 1:9; 2:1, 25 for further insights into the notions of possession, covenant, and

The status of being God's "own," which is deeply inherent to the OT divine covenant, is taken up and applied to the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the disciples. A covenantal understanding of Jesus' "own" is supported by John 10:1–2. Here the relationship between Jesus and his own is depicted through the shepherd-sheep imagery, suggestive of the OT covenant between God and Israel.¹¹ The fundamental characteristics of this relationship are present: divine initiative, a redeeming intervention, careful providence, election and possession, obedience and love towards the divine word and commandment, and knowledge that is significantly interior, personal, and decisive.¹² Jesus depicts his reciprocal relationship to his own in a manner identical to the OT covenant formula: "I know my own and my own know me" (John 10:14).

Furthermore, as with the other usages of "his own" in the gospel,¹³ the phrase in John 13:1 has a familial character and refers to relations between kin. Jesus' "own" are those disciples who have been definitively taken by Jesus as his personal possession. He has taken them to himself in the fullness of love ("he loved his own ... he loved them to the end," v. 1), which implies that they have given themselves to him. Because they have been loved by him and have given themselves to him in belief and love they have been granted the definitive status of those "who received him" (John 1:12a). In receiving him, they receive what he alone has the authority to give—they become like him.¹⁴ According to the logic of 1:12, this likeness is one of sonship in relation to the Father: as those "who received him" (1:12a), the disciples are like the Son by having been given the grant of the status of "children of God" (1:12c). Such status is explicitly confirmed in 13:33 where Jesus himself calls them "children." Jesus' "own" are, in fact, those who have been given to him by the Father: "they were yours, and you gave them to me" (17:6; see also v. 9). They are the Son's "own" as they are the Father's "own"—they are the children of God. In sum, in being given the status as Jesus' "own," the disciples have not rejected the new covenant offered by their God,¹⁵ but, on the contrary, have been generated as children of God in the new covenant.

divine sonship.

11 See, for example, Jer. 31:1, 10, 31–34; Ezek. 34:15–16, 23–25, 30–31; 37:23–28.

12 Jesus' "own" who responded positively to him are "defined as those who heed his message (10:3–4), those who were truly in covenant relationship with him." See Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2003), 399.

13 See, for example, John 1:11; 4:44; 7:53; 10:3, 4; 19:27.

14 There appears to be a general principle functioning in the background of the use of the phrase "his own" in 13:1 that was operative in later Israelite traditions, namely, the principle that like generates and loves its like. This principle is exemplified in Ps. 115:8 and Sir. 13:15 respectively: "Those who make them are like them" and "Every creature loves its own like."

15 Unlike "his own" who received him not (John 1:11), namely, some of his own Israelite kinsman.

The Status of Children

The kinship relationship that is implicit in the phrase “his own” is explicitly expressed in 13:33 where Jesus calls his disciples “children” (τεκνία). The significance of this title is highlighted since this first-time usage occurs within the context of the ushering in of Jesus’ decisive hour which has finally come, when his love for his own has reached eschatological fulfillment (“to the end,” 13:1). Moreover, “children” appears immediately following the mutual glorification of God and the Son of man (vv. 31–32). In a gospel which places such emphasis on the divine kinship motif,¹⁶ this first-time designation of “children” functions as a climactic high-point within the gospel as a whole.

Τεκνία in 13:33 recalls the use of τέκνα in 1:12 and 11:52 and ought to be understood in light of them.¹⁷ John 11:52 discloses the meaning of Caiaphas’ prophecy regarding Jesus’ death: he will die “to gather into one the children of God (τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ).” Regardless of the exact referent of the phrase “children of God” (the Gentiles, the diaspora Israelites, or both),¹⁸ the notion that Jesus has gathered his disciples into one is implied in the phrase “his own” (13:1). John 17:1–26 explicitly states that the Father, the Son, and Jesus’ own will be “one” (vv. 21, 22, 23). In deeming them “his own” (13:1) and “children” (13:33), Jesus is fulfilling his mission (at least in principle) to gather into one the children of God.

If the gospel is strongly influenced by the thought world of biblical Israel and Judaism—as I believe it is¹⁹—the reference to a gathered group of people claiming to be God’s “children” is significant. Such Jewish groups thought of themselves, in one way or another, as the remnant of Israel and that God was performing his eschatological interventions of restoration and vindication through them.²⁰ The reason for this is that divine childhood or sonship is a central feature of Israel’s covenant relationship to their God.²¹ Israel’s designation in the covenant as God’s

16 See DeMeo, *Covenantal Kinship*, 133–140.

17 See Mary Coloe, “Welcome into the Household of God: The Foot Washing in John 13,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 66 (2004): 409. The difference between τεκνία and τέκνα is insignificant. See Keener, *John*, 921; Matthew Vellanickal, *The Divine Sonship of Christians in the Johannine Writings* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1977), 91. We fully agree with Bruce Vawter that John 13–17 functions as a commentary on 1:12: “to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.” See Bruce Vawter, “The Gospel according to John,” in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1968), 2:450.

18 See the discussion in John Dennis, *Jesus’ Death and the Gathering of True Israel: The Johannine Appropriation of Restoration Theology in the Light of John 11:47–52*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2006), 258–259.

19 See DeMeo, *Covenantal Kinship*, 140–144.

20 See R. Alan Culpepper, “Pivot of John’s Prologue,” *New Testament Studies* 27 (1980): 25.

21 See Exod. 4:22; Deut. 14:1; 32:18–19; Isa. 63:8, 16; 64:8; Jer. 3:19; 31:9; Hos. 11:1, 10; Ezek. 16:21; 2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 89:26–27; etc. Raymond Brown concurs with our conclusion: “the status of Israel as God’s son or child is a covenantal relationship.” See Raymond Brown, *The Epistles of John*, *The Anchor Bible* 30 (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1982), 389. See also DeMeo, *Covenantal Kinship*, 64–108.

“people” (עַם) implies a kinship relation.²² Israel is explicitly given the status of “first-born son” in Exodus 4:22–23 which is confirmed in the Sinai covenant’s blood and meal rituals²³ and later described in Deuteronomy.²⁴ Within the ratification of the covenant with David, God promises that “I will be his father, and he shall be my son” (2 Sam. 7:14; see also Ps. 89:26–27 where God deems David his “first-born son”). Finally, the grant of the prophetic new covenant includes, as a vital component, the promise of the restoration of the Father-son relationship between God and Israel: “At that time, says the LORD, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my kin (עַם)” (Jer. 31:1). According to the Septuagint, Jeremiah 31(8):8 relates how God will gather a remnant of Israel from the ends of the earth to the feast of the Passover where a great multitude will be begotten. Jeremiah 31:9 states that such a restorative gathering is rooted in the re-establishment of God’s fatherhood and Israel’s consequent first-born sonship: “I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn” (v. 9). Jeremiah 31:20 echoes 31:9 by underlining their restored father-son relationship: “Ephraim is a beloved son, a pleasing child to me.” The “new covenant,” explicitly stated in Jeremiah 31:33, is the proximate setting for the restoration of God’s fatherhood and Israel’s divine sonship.²⁵

Kinship language is utilized in John 13:33 (and elsewhere in John 13–17) for the same reasons as in the examples of covenant making in the OT, namely, for the sake of indicating that family ties have been furthered across family bloodlines. In giving his disciples the title of “children” at his final Passover meal, Jesus is signifying that a chief promise of the OT divine covenant—namely, the establishment of intimate, personal bonds of divine kinship between God and his people—has been fulfilled. According to Brown, “Jesus was proclaiming the arrival of the eschatological times when men would be God’s children.”²⁶ Commenting on 11:52, he holds

22 See Cross, “Kinship and Covenant,” 13; Vellanicke, *Divine Sonship*, 14; Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 1:55–57; Norbert Lohfink, “The People of God,” in *Great Themes from the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1982), 122; Dennis J. McCarthy, “Israel, My First-Born Son,” *The Way* 5 (1965): 187.

23 John W. Pryor highlights the birth of Israel at the covenant of Sinai as reflected in Rabbinic tradition: “Song of Songs 8:2 read: ‘I would lead you and bring you to my mother’s house ...’ The interpretation of this Cant r. 8:2 reads: ‘I will lead you: I [Israel] will lead you [God] from the world above to that below [i.e., God will come down]. ‘I will bring you to my mother’s house’: that is, Sinai. R. Berekiyah said: Why was Sinai called ‘the house of my mother’? Because there the Israelites were made like a newborn child.” *John: Evangelist of the Covenant People* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 174.

24 In the context of election and covenant, Deut. 14:1 LXX exclaims, “You are the children of the Lord your God.”

25 The writings of Qumran, the Pseudepigrapha, and certain Rabbinical texts utilized the title “children of God” in one form or another in reference to the covenant institution. See DeMeo, *Covenantal Kinship*, 144–169.

26 Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII*, The Anchor Bible 29a (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1966), 139. In his commentary on 1 John he writes, “one of the tasks

that “John has rephrased the covenant saying, ‘I will be your God, and you shall be my people,’ into ‘I will be your God, and you shall be my children.’”²⁷ He sums up the principle at work in the conferral of the status of children to his disciples in John 13:33: “where sonship is mentioned, it is the result of covenant choice.”²⁸

Conferral of Inheritance

In John 13:8, Jesus grants his own the gift of inheritance: “If I do not wash you, you have no inheritance with me.” “Inheritance” (μέρος) signifies the grant of participation in Jesus’ life. It makes explicit what is implicit in the phrase “his own” (13:1), namely, a relationship or communion of mutual belonging and abiding—the disciples share in Jesus’ life in such a manner as to be with him (and therefore he with them). This inheritance is familial in that it is a gift passed down from kin to other members of kin.²⁹ Analogous to the double-portion of inheritance received by the first-born son in the ancient Near East, Jesus, the only Son (μονογενής, see 1:14, 18; 3:18),³⁰ has received “all things” from the Father (13:3) and authority over “all flesh,” (17:2). In sum, “all that the Father has” belongs to Jesus (16:15).

As the only Son “coming” from God and “sent” by the Father,³¹ Jesus is the agent or envoy who speaks in the name of the Father and acts as his representative.³² As the Father has life in himself, so he has also given the Son to have life in himself (5:26; see also 5:21) for the sake of perpetuating it for the future prosperity of Jesus’ own: “from his fullness have we all received” (1:16). Jesus stands in the Father’s stead as a kind of “father-figure” to his “children” (13:33)³³—or, as St. Au-

of the Messiah will be to distinguish the true children of Israel; for Ps. Sol. 17:28–30 says of the Son of David: ‘he shall gather together a holy people whom he shall lead in justice ... He shall know them, that they are all sons of God.’” He concludes, “divine childhood is part of the New Covenant.” *Epistles*, 389–390. See also Sherri Brown, *Gift Upon Gift: Covenant through Word in the Gospel of John* (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 228.

27 Brown, *Epistles*, 391. See the related text in Rev. 21:7, “I will be his God and he will be my son.”

28 Brown, *John I–XII*, 139.

29 See Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John XIII–XXI*, The Anchor Bible 29b (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1970), 566.

30 Jesus is considered to be the “first-born” (πρωτότοκος) in other NT traditions such as Rev. 1:5; Luke 2:7; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; Heb. 1:6; 12:23.

31 See John 13:3; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:3, etc.

32 According to Jewish rabbinic tradition, “the One who is sent is like the one who sent him.” See Brown, *John XIII–XXI*, 632; Marinus De Jonge, “The Son of God and the Children of God in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Saved by Hope: Essays in Honor of Richard C. Oudersluys*, ed. J. Cook (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 48; Marianne M. Thompson, “The Living Father,” *Semeia* 85 (2001): 27; Jan A. Bühner, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg im 4. Evangelium*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 2 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, Taschenbuch, 1977), 210, 233.

33 See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, §1922 [*Super Evangelium Johannis*, caput 14, lectio 5].

gustine says, to the “begotten of the only begotten” (*invenies unigeniti genitorem*),³⁴—and “younger brethren” (20:17) granting his disciples an “inheritance” in his very own power to become children of God who are “born ... of God” (1:12–13). In other words, “inheritance” in 13:8 signifies a grant of participation in Jesus’ inheritance in such a manner that the disciples share *in him*—they are “sons in the Son”—and are drawn into his destiny as Son of the Father. They have a prepared place for them in the “Father’s house” (14:2). Jesus has brought Israel’s disinheritance to an end.³⁵ This marks the fulfillment of the eschatological promise: the Father himself is now, in Jesus, the inheritance of Israel.

Lastly, the inheritance that Jesus gives to his own in John 13:8 is acutely appropriate in a covenant context, for, according to many OT and NT traditions, the divine covenant and the reception of inheritance are integrally related. As Israel was promised in the covenant to receive God himself and the ancestral land of Canaan as an inheritance,³⁶ so now Jesus’ own are given an inheritance with him in the new covenant.³⁷ Such inheritance is a central effect of the formation of sacred kinship bonds via the ratification of the new covenant at this final meal. It denotes a mutual sharing of a common life within a covenant relationship. Such an understanding of inheritance as familial communion in covenant relation is found in another Johannine text, namely, Revelation 21:7, “He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

Blessed and Chosen Ones

According to John 13:17–18, Jesus’ disciples have received the status as the “blessed” and “chosen” ones.³⁸ Such a status is quintessential to the OT divine covenant. To be “blessed” in the OT is practically equivalent to being in a right covenant relationship with God.³⁹ For instance, as a final declaration of their divine covenant relationship, God swears a covenant oath to Abraham to bless him, his future seed, and all the nations: “I will indeed bless you ... and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves” (Gen. 22:17–18). Likewise, in the midst of the ratification of the Deuteronomic covenant a promise of blessing is given: “And

34 St. Augustine, *Gospel of John*, 49.2 quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea-The Gospel of John* (New York: Preserving Christian Publications, 2000), 433 [*Catena Aurea in Joannem*, caput 13, lectio 3].

35 For Israel’s disinheritance see Exod. 32:7–9; 34:9; Num. 14:12; Deut. 32:5–26; Jer. 16:18, 19.

36 See, for instance, Exod. 32:13; 34:9; Lev. 20:24; Num. 18:20; 26:53ff.; 34:2ff.; Deut. 12:10; 1 Chron. 16:7–18; Jer. 10:16; Isa. 57:13; Ezek. 44:28; 57:13; Sir. 24:8–12; 45:20.

37 See the connection between covenant and inheritance in several NT traditions such as Gal. 3:8–29; 4:21–31; Heb. 6:13–18; 9:15; 11:7–9; 1 Pet. 1:4–2:10.

38 John 13:17–18 reads: “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. I am not speaking of you all; I know whom I have chosen; it is that the scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’”

39 For instance, Gen. 9:1–26; 17:16; 22:17–18; Deut. 11:26–28; 23:5; 28:2–6, 8; Jos. 24:10; 2 Sam. 7:29.

all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God" (Deut. 28:2; see also vv. 3–6). For that matter, in the whole of Deuteronomy the term "blessing" seems to be a technical word indicating favor within the covenant relationship.⁴⁰ Similarly, the divine blessing is emphatically solicited by David in the covenant that God granted him in 2 Samuel 7:29.⁴¹ The logic of being "blessed" in the divine covenant is as follows: similar to a father blessing his son because of the latter's loyalty and filial obedience, so those of Israel who rightly live out their covenant position in faithfulness and love as divine sons were blessed by God their Father.⁴²

Hence, in obeying Jesus' teaching and imitating his example as his own who believe and love him, the disciples are the blessed ones (John 13:17).⁴³ Such a blessing not only acknowledges the divine sonship of the disciples, it indicates that they are successfully living out their covenant relationship with the Father and the Son.⁴⁴

John 13:18 relates that Jesus has conferred upon his disciples the relational status of being his "chosen" ones.⁴⁵ As the chosen ones of the "chosen one of God" (1:34),⁴⁶ Jesus' disciples participate in his relation to the God who chooses. Being chosen by Jesus is comparable in meaning to the disciples' status of being "his own" (v. 1). According to v. 18, Jesus is fulfilling the scripture in choosing his disciples by inserting them into the theological history of Israel's covenant election.⁴⁷ Among other texts,⁴⁸ the intimate association between being "chosen" in the covenant is poignantly expressed in Deuteronomy 7:6–7, 9:

For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has *chosen* you to be a people for his own possession ... the Lord set his love upon you and *chose* you ... Know therefore that

40 It is opposed to the term "curse" reserved for those who are disobedient to the covenant commands.

41 Pedersen writes, "Those who have peace with one another impart a mutual blessing, and if one gives blessing, then one creates peace and covenant," and "to make a blessing ... is the same as to make a covenant ... because the covenant consists in mutual blessing," *Israel*, 1:303–304.

42 See DeMeo, *Covenantal Kinship*, 46–63.

43 See John 16:27, 30; 20:29 and the connections between them.

44 See Charles H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 403.

45 A similar statement is given in John 15:16, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you." Also 6:70; 15:16, 19; Rev. 17:14. See Alf Corell, "The Idea of Election in the Fourth Gospel," in his *Consummatum Est: Eschatology and Church in the Gospel of St. John* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), 166–200.

46 According to some manuscripts—Codex Sinaiticus, OL, OS, and some Church Fathers—John 1:34 states that Jesus himself is the "chosen one of God." See Brown, *John I–XII*, 57.

47 See Francis Moloney, *Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina (Minneapolis: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 380.

48 See, for instance, Exod. 6:2–8 in conjunction with Ezek. 20:5 (which appears to be a commentary on God's intervention with Israel in Egypt).

the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps *covenant* and steadfast love with those who love him.

God's choice of David as his representative king and temple master was utterly fundamental to Israel's divine covenant.⁴⁹ In Psalm 89:3 God states, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant." Later in the same text, it is said that David, the chosen one, will cry to his God, "You are my father, my God" (v. 26). God replies, "I will make him the first-born" (v. 27). David has been adopted through covenant election to be the first-born of God.⁵⁰ Lastly, Isaiah prophesizes about a servant-son (παῖς) "chosen" by God who will be a "covenant to the people" (Isa. 42:1, 6; see also 43:10; 49:7–8). Therefore, we agree with the conclusion of Mendenhall that "the religious meaning of God's 'choosing' must be looked for within the framework of the religious bonds which held early Israel together. This can only be the covenant tradition."⁵¹

In this eschatological hour of Jesus' final meal (13:1), Israel's theological history of covenant election is fulfilled: Jesus' own are the definitive "chosen" ones of God (13:18). According to the covenant logic found in the OT, this grant of the status of being Jesus' elect coincides with the disciples' adoption as children of God in the new covenant. As the ones "chosen" by the Son, they participate in the divine sonship of the Son as his children and they eat his bread at his table as his kin (vv. 18, 28, 33).

Friendship With Jesus

The relational status granted to the disciples by Jesus is further qualified in a remarkable way in John 15:13–15. They are "friends" (φίλος) with Jesus. Their friendship consists in sharing a common life, namely, in Jesus' filial life that he lays down in love for his own (see v. 13). Furthermore, Jesus shares everything that he has heard from the Father with them (v. 15; see also v. 16); the Father's life is also commonly possessed. Thus, their friendship finds its ultimate referent in the Father. As friends, therefore, they share a quasi-familial life together, a communion comparable to kinship.⁵² The meaning of their status as "friends" and their

49 See 2 Sam. 7:1–29; Ps. 132:1–18.

50 See Ps. 2:1–12; 2 Sam. 7:14.

51 George Mendenhall, "Election," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 79.

52 See Watt, *Family*, 365; Sandra Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003), 54; Sjef V. Tilborg, *Imaginative Love in John*, Biblical Interpretation Series 2 (New York: E.J. Brill, 1993), 128; Dorothy Lee, "Friendship, Love, and Abiding in the Gospel of John," in *Transcending Boundaries: Contemporary Readings of the New Testament*, eds. R. Chennattu and M. Coloe (Roma: Lireria Ateneo Salesiano, 2005), 71.

status as “brothers” (see 20:17) is similar.⁵³ This is an illustration of how, in the ancient world, friendship was analogous to kinship relations.⁵⁴

The use of the term “friends” in John 15:13–15 also supports the covenantal status of Jesus’ own. In the OT, the status of friendship was commonly linked to the covenant relationship. According to Psalm 25:14, friendship and covenant are interrelated: “The friendship (

Bestowal of The Father's Name

Multiple texts throughout John 13–17 relate that Jesus' own definitively know the Father's name and are invited to invoke it.⁵⁸ Hence, they share in it: they possess his name, are under his name, and resemble various features of the meaning of his name. Such sharing resembles a child being given the same name by his father and, therefore, possessing it. The familial unity shared between the Father, the Son, and the disciples is made manifest by their mutual possession of one "name" (17:11).

That Jesus grants his disciples knowledge of the Father's name and the right to invoke it clearly echoes the OT tradition where God's name was manifested and called to be known and incanted within the covenant relationship. In the renewal of the Sinai covenant Moses petitioned God to restore his name (Exod. 33–34). In fact, the mutual knowledge of each of their respective names signified their covenant relationship itself (33:12, 17, 19). Moreover, this covenant renewal took place through the proclamation of the divine name (34:5–7). By revealing his name in covenant, God desires his people to claim it for themselves, so that he can be their God and they can be his people.

In their covenant, both God and David mutually knew each other's name (2 Sam. 7:9, 13). At the heart of the Davidic covenant was God's promise that a son of David would "build a house for my name" (v. 13) so that God will "make himself a name" (v. 23) and that his name will be "magnified forever" (v. 26).⁵⁹ The grant of his name to Israel signified that he will be "God over Israel."

The vindication and knowledge of God's holy name was a vital element in the eschatological covenant as foretold by the prophets. According to Isaiah 42, in the eschatological time God will give over the Servant as a "covenant to the people" (42:6), so that his name may be manifested: "I am the Lord, that is my name" (42:8). Isaiah 56 relates how the foreigner and eunuch who "hold fast my covenant" (56:4) will be granted "a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which shall not be cut off" (56:5). Moreover, the prophet Jeremiah foretells that the new covenant relationship will be the locus of the definitive revelation of the divine name (Jer. 31:35). The gift of the covenant and the revelation of God's name go hand in hand.⁶⁰ According to the prophet Ezekiel, the vindication of the holy name will take place through a new covenant (Ezek. 36:24–28; see also vv. 29, 33).

According to John 17:6, 23, and 26, the Father's name is central to the generation and formation of Jesus' own as the children of God, and their subsequent

⁵⁸ John 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:24, 26; 17:6, 11, 12, 26.

⁵⁹ This covenant was renewed (1 Kings 8:20–21, 23–26, 54–63) when Solomon dedicated the temple as "the house of the name of the Lord" (1 Kings 8:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, 43, 44; see 35, 41).

⁶⁰ Jer. 33:14–26 expresses something similar, for, in a discussion about the perpetuity of the covenant with creation, the covenant with David, and the covenant with the Levites, God discloses his name: "And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness'" (v. 16).

relationship of love with the Father and the Son. This is a significant indicator that the Sinaitic, Davidic, and prophetic promises regarding the divine name and the covenant relationship with Israel are fulfilled. Knowledge of the Father's name and the invitation to incant Jesus' name signifies that the Father is "God over Israel." According to 17:11, because the children of God possess the Father's name, and because they are protected by it, they will be one as the Father and the Son are one. To be unified in the divine name in a manner analogous to the unity found in God is the simultaneous fulfillment of the prophetic promise of a reunified Israel (and the gathering of the nations) and the unprecedented escalation of interpersonal, interfamilial communion.⁶¹

II. Covenantal Obligations For Kinship Relation

Commandment to Love

In John 13:34–35, Jesus presents his "new commandment." Commandments were characteristic or typical of the OT covenant relationship; where you find commandments, you usually find a covenant.⁶² For instance, the promulgation of the Decalogue (Exod. 20:1–17) expressed the essence of the Sinai covenant. It was a gracious revelation of God's will defining Israel's status and relation to him. Deuteronomy 4:13 notes the link between commandments and this covenant: "And he [the Lord] declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the ten commandments." Deuteronomy 4:13 is a specific case of the general rule, namely, the OT divine commandment is "a relational term which can be understood only within the covenantal context."⁶³

That love is the essential content of Jesus' commandment is undoubtedly evocative of the OT divine commandment given in the divine covenant.⁶⁴ Few passages in the OT illuminate as fully the relation of covenant, commandments, and love as Deuteronomy 7:6–13. According to this text, love lies at the heart of the covenant relationship between God and Israel (vv. 7, 8, 9) and is the principal core

61 In addition, the holiness of the Father's name is affirmed by Jesus: "Holy Father" (17:11). This is in accord with Ezekiel's prophecy regarding the vindication of the holiness of God's name in the new covenant.

62 See Gen. 2:16–17; 9:1–17; 17:1–14; Exod. 19–24; Lev. 26; Deut. 6:1–25; 7:9; 26:17–19; 27:9; Josh. 24:25; Jer. 31:31–34. See Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant*, 18; Matthew O'Connell, "The Concept of Commandment in the Old Testament," *Theological Studies* 21 (1960): 379; Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Johannine Commandments: 1 John and the Struggle for the Johannine Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 227.

63 Raymond F. Collins, "A New Commandment I Give to You, That you Love One Another..." (John 13:34)," in *These Things Have Been Written: Studies on the Fourth Gospel* (Leuven: Peeters Uitgeverij, 1990), 234. For other examples of the relation between commandment and covenant in the OT and Qumran see DeMeo, *Covenantal Kinship*, 257–258.

64 On the relation of covenant and love in the ancient Near East and ancient Israel see William L. Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25 (1963): 79–80.

of the covenant commandments (v. 9). Love is the reason for their covenant relationship; it explains why God chose Israel and bound himself by a sworn covenant oath to Israel (vv. 7–8, 13). In addition, it is the indispensable obligation required to maintain their covenant relationship. From this text, and others (for instance, Exod. 20:5–6), we can conclude, along with Stauffer, that in the OT “the concept of love is the ultimate foundation of the whole covenant theory.”⁶⁵

Jesus’ commandment to love is the primary indicator that John 13–17 presents a relationship between the Father, the Son, and the disciples that can be deemed “covenantal.” Its vital content and function is unmistakably identical to the OT covenant commandments: as the OT commandments disclosed the will of God for Israel and in doing so defined their covenant relationship, so Jesus’ new commandment definitively discloses the will of his Father for his own for the sake of defining their covenant relationship.⁶⁶ In other words, Jesus’ commandment is the core obligation required of the disciples’ newfound status in the new covenant: in keeping it, Jesus’ own are securing their relationship and shared life with the Father and the Son as children of God.

However, Jesus’ commandment is noticeably dissimilar to its OT counterpart. The uniqueness of the commandment is appropriate for the uniqueness of the event: Jesus’ commandment is qualitatively new because it is promulgated for a new, effective covenant⁶⁷ which is ratified by a new sacrifice that is bound up with his efficacious love—“as I have loved you” (13:34c)—that does not remain alone, but bears much fruit (12:24–25). In laying down his life for his friends in great love (see 15:13; 10:15, 17–18), Jesus has loved them with the fullness of sacrificial love—“to the end” (13:1)—and in doing so the power of divine love is “given to” them (13:34a; also 15:9) in order to keep his commandment.⁶⁸ Jesus’ command-

65 Stauffer, “ἀγαπάω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. G. Bromiley, eds. G. Kittel and G. Bromiley (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:27 where he notes further, “There can be no doubt that the thought of covenant is itself an expression in juridical terms of the experience of the love of God.”

66 Mendenhall writes, “The Gospel of John ... has a reference to a ‘new commandment’ appropriate to a ‘new covenant’ (John 13:34). The commandment to love thus corresponds to the very nature of the covenant itself ... [It is a] stipulated obligation assumed by those who enter the covenant community.” See also George Mendenhall, “Covenant,” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 1:722; Brown, *John XIII–XXI*, 644; G. R. Beasley-Murray, “The Community of True Life,” *Review and Expositor* 85 (1988): 476.

67 See Brown, *John XIII–XXI*, 614; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994), 199. See also Pryor, *John*, 163; O’Connell, “Concept of Commandment,” 351–403. This qualitative newness is implied in 1 John 2:8, “I am writing you a new commandment, which is true in him and in you,” and 1 John 5:3, “his commandments are not burdensome.”

68 Although the OT covenant commandments were given by God as their source and, therefore, were good and holy, Israel’s history manifests that they were ineffective and insufficient to overcome their spiritual blindness and deafness (see Deut. 29:2–4; Isa. 6:10). Such disobedience to the commandments, caused by a deficient belief and love for their God, not only led to the administration of the covenant curse (for instance, exile—Deut. 27:26; 28:15), but

ment to love is, therefore, the living principle by which the children of God can accomplish the Father's will and live with him in a mutual covenant.⁶⁹ In this way, the OT eschatological expectation of an intimate, reciprocal covenant relationship rooted in keeping the divine commandment of love is fulfilled and surpassed in an unforeseen manner.

Belief

In this hour of plain revelation of the Father (John 16:25, 29), Jesus' own make a solemn profession of belief in the divine sonship of the Son who has his origin and end in the Father: "now we know that you know all things ... we believe that you came from God" (v. 30). Through their profession of belief in the sonship of the Son, which was anticipated by Jesus in v. 27b ("you have loved me and have believed that I came from God"), they also declare their belief in the fatherhood of the Father: God is their Father and they believe that "the Father himself loves" them (16:27). This fulfills the logic of John 1:12–13, namely, their belief marks that they have received the Father and the Son (see 17:8 "they received") and their reception manifests that they are children of God.⁷⁰ By receiving him in belief, they will not only participate in the very life of the Father and the Son (14:10–11), but also in the future will imitate the Son as children of God ("he who believes in me will also do the works that I do," 14:12a).

The function of "believing" in John 13–17 generates and maintains a relationship with God which the OT would consider to be distinctly covenantal in character. God's dealings with Israel in the Exodus (see Exod. 4:4–5, 7–8; 14:31) and in his theophany on Mount Sinai (see Exod. 19:9; also 34:10–12) were ordered to empower Israel to firmly believe in him for the sake of entering into a covenant relationship with him. In a similar manner, Jesus is appealing to the heart of his disciples to empower them to fidelity and faithfulness to God. Furthermore, as the dangers of disbelief and apostasy were usually addressed during ratifications and renewals of the OT divine covenant, so Jesus' appeal to believe is underlined by the real danger that the disciples may forsake their covenant God by not believing in him (see 16:1).

Lastly, their profession of belief is comparable to the manner in which a covenant oath was sworn at covenant making ceremonies and it bears an analo-

also generated prophetic, eschatological expectations for a divine grant of interior power and assistance to keep his covenant commandments (see, for example, Deut. 30:6–7; Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 11:20; 36:27; 37:24). John 13–17 presents the unprecedented fulfillment of these expectations in the person of Jesus and his love.

69 See Edward Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant: An Exegetical Study of the εἶναι ἐν and μένειν ἐν Expressions in 1 John*, *Analecta biblica* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 105–106.

70 See also the link between belief, being born from above, water/Spirit, and eternal life in 3:3–18 and belief, being "out of God," and being a son who abides in the house forever in 8:31–59.

gous function to it, namely, it ratifies a covenant.⁷¹ For example, at the ratification ceremony of the divine covenant at Sinai, Israel swears a verbal oath of allegiance to the covenant: “Then he [Moses] 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’” (Exod. 24:7; see also 24:3). Likewise, in the renewal of the divine covenant in the land of Canaan, Israel professes its allegiance to their covenant God: we “will serve the Lord, for he is our God” (Josh. 24:18; also 24:21, 24). An equivalent occurrence is happening in John 13–17. The profession of the disciples’ present belief in the Father and the Son, therefore, manifests their being bound to the relationship they have with them in the new covenant.⁷²

III. Covenantal Interiority of the Father, Son, and Children of God

The covenantal kinship status with God that is conferred upon the disciples by Jesus in John 13–17 is further qualified as a relationship of deep interiority which surpasses all traditional and prophetic expectations of Israel.

In 14:1 Jesus reassures and encourages his disciples not to fear his imminent departure: “let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me.” Interior belief is that which will grant courage to the “heart,” which refers to the very depths of the person and is the “organ of interiority.”⁷³ Throughout the OT, the heart was the reference point for Israel in their covenant with their God (see Deut. 30:1–20)—he continually called and appealed to their heart.⁷⁴ It is precisely a relationship of the heart, of great interiority, that Jesus grants his own during his final meal. Their relationship to the Father and the Son will be one of in-being and mutual indwelling, and mutual indwelling generated by the Spirit of truth.⁷⁵

71 See Gen. 15:17–18; 22:16; Exod. 19:8; 24:3, 6–8; Deut. 26:17–18; 27:14–26; 29:12; Josh. 24:18, 21–22, 24; 2 Sam. 7:11; Ps. 132:2, 11. The OT covenant relationship is a permanent relationship because it is essentially based on an immutable oath made in God’s unchanging, holy name (see Heb. 6:13–18). See Donald L. Magnetti, *The Oath in the Old Testament in the Light of Related Terms and in the Legal and Covenantal Context of the Ancient Near East*, Ph.D. Diss., Johns Hopkins University (Michigan: University Microfilms, 1969), 55–65, 83–85; Quell, “διαθήκη,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:114–115; Mendenhall, “Covenant,” 1:720.

72 See Rekha M. Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2006), 129–130; Aelred Lacomara, “Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourse (John 13:3–16:33),” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36 (1974): 75.

73 See Malatesta, *Interiority*, 70; idem, “Covenant and Indwelling,” *The Way* 17 (1977): 25. In the OT, the heart is the center of the personality, the source of intelligence and decisions, as it is the seat of memory. See Schnackenburg, *St. John*, 3:58.

74 The covenant, whose law will be written on the heart (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:26), was, as McCarthy states, “an affair of free choice and therefore pre-eminently human ... [which] could become a true and a conscious union of minds and hearts.” McCarthy, “Israel, My First-Born Son,” 191.

75 Their relationship of interiority is also expressed as permanent “abiding” together. Especially with its association with the “vine and the branches” in John 15:1–17, abiding can be deemed “covenantal.” Unlike Israel who “abode not in my covenant” (Jer. 38:32, LXX), the covenant

Spirit of Truth

As the representative of Jesus who speaks in his name (14:26; 16:13), the Spirit-Paraclete helps in bringing to completion the mission of the Son to die for the nation of Israel so as to gather into one the scattered children of God (11:51–52; 7:39; 16:7). The Spirit “gives life” (6:63). As the one who comes from above (1:32, 33), the Spirit is a source and agent of eschatological,⁷⁶ divine birth “from above” (3:3, 7) resulting in participation in the familial life of the Father and the Son, “eternal life” (3:15, 16).⁷⁷

At the hour of glorification of the Son (13:31–32; 17:1–5; 12:23, 28), the Spirit of truth is presently given to the disciples (see 7:39) as Jesus discloses: “you know him, for he abides with you, and is in you” (14:17).⁷⁸ The role of the Spirit in generating the children of God is explicitly referred to the next verse: “I will not leave you orphaned” (v. 18). In being sent by the Father through the mediation of the Son (14:16; 3:34), the Spirit manifests the caring, protective action of the Father for the children of God—they will not be left without the Father. The manifestation of the generation of Jesus’ own as his children through the Spirit is the long awaited fulfillment of the promise of covenant restoration, especially as foretold by the prophet Ezekiel (see Ezek. 36–37, 39) who foresees the Spirit of God (36:26–27; 37:5–6, 9, 14) as the agent of the vindication and unification of Israel (37:16) through cleansing water (36:25, 33; 37:23) for a renewed covenant relationship (36:28; also 37:23, 26–27).⁷⁹

established at Sinai, the abiding relationship in John 15 seems to fulfill the new covenant foretold by Jer. 38:33–34. The Johannine covenant formula makes this manifest: “abide in me.061 T9.70.000

In-Being

The covenantal relation of the children of God to the Father and the Son is a specific kind, namely, one of “being-in-another.” Not only do the Father and the Son share a relation of in-being, “I am in the Father and the Father in me” (14:10, 11),⁸⁰ but their in-being relationship is extended to Jesus’ own, “I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you” (14:20). While maintaining a distinction between persons, this relationship suggests a union of wills and activity resulting in a total, reciprocal belonging to the other. It is the father-son relationship which characterizes this mutual in-being relationship: because the Father is the father of the Son and the Son is he who comes from the Father, they are “in” one another. By way of extension, because the Son is in his own, the Father is also in them. In this manner, their status as children of God is highlighted by this interiority.

The triple in-being expression found in John 14:20 is equivalent, in both form and content, to the OT divine covenant formula which expressed the very heart of the covenant relationship, namely, mutual being-together and belonging: “You shall be my people, and I shall be your God.”⁸¹ The covenant formula was grounded in the understanding that God was in the midst of his people. Deuteronomy 6:15 states, “The Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God.”⁸² In this text, as in others, the Septuagint translates the Hebrew “in your midst” (קרִב) as “in you” (ἐν σοί). “His very presence in the midst of them signifies that he is in a covenant relationship with them.”⁸³ The depth of interiority, force of interchange of mutual presence, and extent of familial intimacy of the in-being presence of the Father and the Son in the children of God and they in them marks the fulfillment of the OT divine covenant with a hitherto unexpected escalation of divine in-being.⁸⁴

Indwelling

The interiority of the covenantal kinship relationship is further qualified as a relation of mutual indwelling: the disciples will mutually dwell with their God within the “many dwellings” (μοναί) in the “Father’s house” (John 14:2, 23). Beyond the multiple chambers within the physical temple building, “many dwellings” signify the dwelling of persons in mutual relationship and communion as emphasized in 14:23: “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.”⁸⁵ The Father and the Son are dwelling with the children of God in such a reciprocal fashion as to share their life with

80 See also John 1:1–2, 18; 5:19–20; 6:57ab; 10:38; 17:21, 23.

81 See Exod. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 29:13; Song 6:3, “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.”

82 See also Exod. 34:9–10; Hos. 11:9; Joel 2:27; Zeph. 3:17.

83 Varghese, *Imagery*, 344.

84 See Malatesta, “Covenant and Indwelling,” 31.

85 See Brown, *John XIII–XXI*, 618–619; Frederick Hauck, “μονή,” *Theological Dictionary of the*

them in a manner analogous to how life is shared within a dwelling place or house.⁸⁶ Hence, through such mutual indwelling their divine sonship will flourish—they will not be left “orphans” (14:18).

The temple reference contained in “my Father’s house” (John 14:2) indicates that Jesus is establishing a new covenant. This is evident because the temple (and the mountains associated with it), which was the “cosmic center of the universe” where “heaven and earth converge,”⁸⁷ was the place where covenants were made.⁸⁸ The close association between the dwelling place of God and the covenant with his people is disclosed in 1 Kings 8:21 where the tabernacle is the covenant: “And there I have provided a place for the Ark, in which is the covenant of the Lord which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.”⁸⁹ His concrete presence with his people in the tabernacle and temple expressed the mutual dwelling together in the peace of their covenant relationship.

More specifically, the temple was “the embodiment of the covenant of David.”⁹⁰ In this divine covenant God requested that the son of David build “a house for my name” (2 Sam. 7:13) or, as 1 Chronicles 17:12 relates, a “house for me.” Building this temple “house” is closely associated with the divine paternity of God and the divine sonship of the Davidid that was promised in their covenant: “I will

New Testament, 4:579–581; Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009), 77.

- 86 See Keener, *John*, 976; Robert H. Gundry, “In My Father’s House Are Many *Μοναί* (John 14:2),” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 58 (1967): 70; James McCaffrey, *The House with Many Rooms: The Temple Theme of John 14*, 2–3 (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1988), 184; Johannes Beutler, *Habt Keine Angst: Die erste johanneische Abschiedsrede (Joh 14)* Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 116 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984), 31–32.
- 87 Carol Meyers, “Temple, Jerusalem,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:359. See also Delbert Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 74.
- 88 John M. Lundquist, “The Legitimizing Role of the Temple in the Origin of the State,” in *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. D. Parry (Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1994), 220. See Jon Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” *Journal of Religion* 64 (1984): 275–298; Meyers, “Temple, Jerusalem,” 360; John M. Lundquist, “Temple, Covenant, and Law in the Ancient Near East and in the Old Testament,” in *Israel’s Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, ed. A. Gileadi (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1988), 293.
- 89 John Welch concludes, “the Temple in Israel was a shrine of the covenant, the home of the ark of the covenant, and the place where the covenant was renewed and perpetuated. There the priest acted as a mediator between God and his covenant people Israel, offering the sacrifices of Israel up to God and instructing the people in God’s name.” *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), 35.
- 90 Toomo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel. A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology*, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 142 (New York: W. de Gruyter, 1977), 145, quoted in Hahn, “Temple, Sign and Sacrament: Towards a New Perspective on the Gospel of John,” *Letter & Spirit* 4 (2008): 109. See also Tom Holmén, *Jesus and Jewish Covenant Thinking* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 277. See 2 Sam. 7//1 Chron. 17; 2 Sam. 23:5; 2 Chron. 7:18; 13:5; Pss. 89 and 132; Isa. 55:3.

be his father, and he shall be my son" (1 Chron. 17:13). Following the kinship-by-covenant principle, 1 Chronicles 17:14 manifests the relationship between God's house and the Davidic divine son: "I will confirm him in my house ... forever." A permanent dwelling place will be established and confirmed for the Davidic divine son within God's house which is, subsequently, his "Father's house." This takes place in the fulfillment of their divine covenant.⁹¹

John 14:2–3, 23 signifies analogously the expected restoration and fulfillment of two necessary traditions of the Davidic covenant, namely, divine sonship and the house-temple as expressed in 2 Samuel 7/1 Chronicles 17.⁹² Jesus is the Davidic divine son who not only dwells forever with the Father in the "Father's house," but, as John 2:21 relates, he is the Father's house.⁹³ Having a dwelling place prepared for them by the Son (14:2–3), the disciples participate in the filial life of the Son to the Father within the Father's house as children of God.⁹⁴

Knowledge and Sight

"Knowing" in the gospel of John suggests more than intellectual apprehension and is an existential, active, concrete experience where one has profound contact with another's presence and their family, occurring at the heart of a personal relationship. It seems to extend to recognition and discernment of another person, and to will or to choose another person, leading to personal communion.⁹⁵ John 10:14–15 attests to such a meaning: "I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father." "Seeing" in the Fourth gospel is different than knowledge, but is intrinsically bound up with it, for knowledge determines the content of what is seen, that is, the content of the personal presence that we interiorly see and behold through perception.⁹⁶

91 It is important to note that the Davidic king is the representative of Israel as a whole. Therefore, through the son of David, who is the covenanted son of God, Israel is promised in this Davidic covenant the opportunity to permanently abide in their Father's house as his covenantal sons.

92 See W. H. Oliver and A. G. Van Aarde, "The Community of Faith as Dwelling Place of the Father: βασιλεία του θεου as 'Household of God' in the Johannine Farewell Discourse(s)," *Neotestamentica* 25 (1991): 393–394. Besides discovering the link between 2 Sam. 7 and John 14:2, 23, they also claim that 2 Sam. 7, John 14:2, 23, and the establishment of the new covenant by Jesus in Luke 22:28–30 share similar traditions. See also Sverre Aalen, "'Reign' and 'House' in the Kingdom of God in the Gospels," *New Testament Studies* 8 (1962): 237–238.

93 On the Johannine royal Davidic messianism/christology see Margaret Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), especially 108–110.

94 The close association between the divine dwelling and the divine covenant is reiterated in a different Johannine tradition, namely, Rev. 21:3, "I heard a loud 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.'"

95 See Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3 vols. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 3:67; George Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36, 2d Edition (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 257; Schneiders, *Written*, 13.

96 See Keener, *John*, 247–251; Brown, *John I–XII*, 501–503; G. L. Phillips, "Faith and Vision in

These particular aspects of the knowledge and sight of God in the gospel are almost identical to knowledge and sight of God associated with the OT covenant relationship.⁹⁷ For instance, to “know” God and to “see” him face to face in a profoundly personal manner was a chief promise manifested in the Sinai covenant (Exod. 24:9–11; 33:18ff.). At the ratification of this covenant the representatives of Israel “saw the God of Israel” (24:10) and “beheld” him (v. 11; see Deut. 5:1–4). Instead of taking away their life because they saw him (v. 11a), God rather granted them the gift of an exclusive participation with him.

Similarly, within the context of the renewal of the Sinai covenant in Exodus 33, God “knows” Moses and has found favor with him “in his sight” (33:12; see vv. 13, 17). Moses was then granted the gift of seeing God “face to face” (v. 11)⁹⁸ so that he may “know” and, according to the Septuagint, “see” (ἰδω) him and receive his favorable glance in return (vv. 13, 14). In vv. 18–19, Moses boldly requested, “show me your glory” and God remarked, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name, ‘the Lord.’” Thus, within the context of the renewal of the divine covenant with Israel (see 34:6–32), God confirmed the covenant faithfulness of Moses and demonstrated the purpose of the covenant relationship, namely, to see the face of God, to behold his glory, and to know his name and his ways. To “see,” to “behold,” and to “know,” therefore, manifest the interpersonal communion and friendship promised in the divine covenant.

Furthermore, in his prophecy of the eschatological covenant, Ezekiel included the knowledge and sight of God as vital components to it. Israel will “know that I am the Lord” (36:6–11; see v. 38; 39:6–7, 22) and “the nations will know that I am the Lord” (36:23; see v. 36; 37:28; 39:6–7, 13, 21). This definitive knowledge of God is linked to a newborn communion of persons within a new covenant (36:25–28; also 39:22). Through his jealousy for his holy name, Israel’s God will mercifully restore their fortunes again for the purpose of generating an effective covenant communion through the fullness of eschatological divine knowledge where they will “see” his face: “then they shall know that I am the Lord their God ... and I will not hide my face any more from them” (39:28–29).

The intimately personal bond generated by knowledge and sight in the OT divine covenant relationship is indistinguishable from the knowledge and sight given to Jesus’ own in the gospel of John. For instance, in John 10:14–15 an interior,

the Fourth Gospel,” in *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Frank M. Cross (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1957), 85.

97 Herbert B. Huffmon argues that *וידע*, the OT Hebrew equivalent to the verbs *γινώσκω* and *οἶδα*, refers to “mutual legal recognition” that occurs frequently in covenants (“covenant recognition”). See Huffmon, “The Treaty Background to Hebrew *YĀDA*,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 181 (1966): 31–37. See DeMeo, *Covenantal Kinship*, 55–58, 69–81; Charles K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 504. For these Hellenistic influences see Keener, *John*, 234–239.

98 See also Num. 12:8; 14:13–14; Deut. 5:1–4; 34:10.

mutual knowledge is central to the relationship between Jesus and his own (notice that the structure of these statements is similar to the OT covenant formula): “I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father.”⁹⁹ Furthermore, in John 13–17 the disciples presently possess definitive knowledge and sight of their God as Jesus reveals: “you know him and have seen him” (14:7) and “he who has seen me has seen the Father” (14:9; also 12:45). They have seen his glory (13:31–32; 17:1–5; 1:14). Through their interior, mutual knowledge and sight of God they have been granted the gift of participation in the eternal life of the Father and the Son (17:3; 6:40). This radically fulfills the promise and expectation of eschatological knowledge and sight of God foreshadowed in the Sinai covenant and foretold in the prophecies about the new covenant.¹⁰⁰ Within the new covenant relationship between the Father, Son, and disciples, Israel knows definitively “the one true God” (17:3) and has at long last seen their God “face to face” (14:9; 12:45).¹⁰¹

Peace

In having received the gift of covenantal interiority with the Father and the Son, the disciples have received the gift of peace: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you” (John 14:27; also 16:33). This consoling gift of peace is not any ordinary, worldly peace but rather it is precisely the peace that only Jesus gives—it is his personal peace (“my peace”); it is intrinsic to him and represents the “all-embracing sphere of his life (see 14:19), his love (14:21, 23), his joy (15:11; 16:22; 17:13).”¹⁰² Being “in” him (16:33), the disciples have entered into a communion of peace with the Son and, subsequently, into the familial harmony and peace that he shares with the Father.¹⁰³ Especially by possessing the protection of the Father (17:11, 12, 15),¹⁰⁴ the children of God dwell in the “Father’s house” (14:2–3) in spiritual tranquility and peace with him.

99 See Keener, *John*, 234.

100 Brown, *John XIII–XXI*, 614, 752. See Keener, *John*, 1054.

101 See Alexander Tsutserov, *Glory, Grace, and Truth: Ratification of the Sinaitic Covenant according to the Gospel of John* (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 210. See Rev. 22:3–5.

102 Schnackenburg, *St John*, 3:84.

103 Peace is a generally accepted common good of any kinship group. Pedersen (*Israel*, 1:354) states: “Peace of the family is the foundation to everything.” See also Leo G. Perdue, “The Household, Old Testament Theology and Contemporary Hermeneutics,” in *Families in Ancient Israel*, eds. L. G. Perdue, J. Blenkinsopp, J. J. Collins, and C. Meyers (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 238. The “peace” between the Father and the Son is disclosed by their unity and that they act in one accord. Texts like John 8:28–29, “I do nothing on my own but I speak these things the Father taught me ... I always do what is pleasing to him,” and 10:30, “I and the Father are one,” support that there is harmony and peace between them.

104 On the Father’s protection of Jesus’ own as fulfilling the protection promised in the OT covenant relationship see DeMeo, *Covenantal Kinship*, 413–416.

Peace was the quintessential effect of the interpersonal communion forged in any covenant. The terms “covenant” and “peace” were not only frequently juxtaposed in the OT but the latter was the expressed content of the former.¹⁰⁵ For example, peace between Isaac and Abimelech was effected by the covenant they made with each other in Beersheba. After sharing a covenant meal (Gen. 26:30), they “took oath with one another; and Isaac set them on their way, and they departed from him in peace” (v. 31). In dealing with the Gibeonites, Joshua “made peace with them, and made a covenant with them, to let them live” (Josh. 9:15). Likewise, in the covenant between Solomon and Hiram, the main content was that “there was peace between” them (1 Kings 5:12). To make a covenant was equivalent to “make peace.”¹⁰⁶ Similarly, in Malachi 2:5, God proclaims, “my covenant with him [Levi] was of life and peace.”¹⁰⁷ The prophets foretold a future communion and indwelling with God in a “covenant of peace.”¹⁰⁸ Therefore, in the OT “the covenant effects a unity which is peace.”¹⁰⁹

Because Jesus’ own are “in” him (16:33), they have entered, as children of God, the wholeness of the sphere of his filial life with the Father and their shared communion of peace. As a result, they possess divine peace that goes beyond all expectation. This eschatological peace powerfully signifies a most stable state that prevails in their intimate, interior communion with the Father and Son in this

105 According to Gerhard Von Rad, “the connection between the two words [“peace,” שלום and “covenant,” ברית] is so strong that in this context שלום seems to have become a kind of official term. The thought may be that the relationship of שלום is sealed by both parties in a covenant. Conversely, it may be that the covenant inaugurates a relationship of שלום.” See Von Rad, “εἰρήνη,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:403. See also Pedersen, *Israel*, 1:285.

106 Peace and covenant were so interrelated that if one violated the peace between parties then one subsequently violated the covenant and vice versa. Ps. 55:20 manifests this: “He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; he has violated his covenant.”

107 In the OT, covenant peace was closely related to the divine grant of “rest” in the covenant (Gen. 2:2; Exod. 33:14; Deut. 12:10; 3:20; 25:19; 2 Sam. 7:1, 11; Ps. 95:11; 1 Chron. 28:2; Sir. 47:13; Heb. 3:7–4:13). See Gerhard Von Rad, “A Rest for the People of God” in his *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), 94–102; Dennis McCarthy, “II Samuel 7 and Deuteronomistic History,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84 (1965): 132.

108 See Isa. 42:6; 49:8; 54:10; Ezek. 34:25–30; 37:26; Jer. 33:6. See Von Rad, “εἰρήνη,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:403. The covenant God granted to Phinehas was his “covenant of peace” (Num. 25:12).

109 Quell, “διαθήκη,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:115. Kalluveetil concurs: “The word šālôm indicates the wholeness of the relationship of communion between two parties. It is intimately connected with covenant as its object and effect. Men conclude a pact for the sake of šālôm, which brings security, intactness, and orderliness in their life. It sums up the whole content of covenant. The parties oblige each other to live in such a way as does not break the established harmony among them.” See Kalluveetil, *Declaration and Covenant*, 34. Also Cross, “Kinship and Covenant,” 15; Mendenhall, “Covenant,” 1:714, 716, 720; Guinan, “Mosaic Covenant,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:907; Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962), 1:130.

new covenant. Jesus' gift of peace—this definitive covenant solidarity with their God—is, ultimately, consolation for their hearts.

Consecration

In John 17:17–19, Jesus prays for the consecration of his disciples. It stresses that they are “not out of the world” (17:16), but rather they are “out of God,”¹¹⁰ set apart as his own. As Jesus is consecrated by his Father¹¹¹ and consecrates himself,¹¹² so in a similar fashion the disciples are consecrated by the Father—who is the origin and source of their consecration as the one who is “Holy Father” (17:11)—as those who are sacred, holy to the Father (17:17).

Furthermore, the disciples are consecrated “in the truth” (17:17a), which, as Jesus goes on to specify, is the Father's word (17:17b). Jesus is himself the Word of God (1:1–2), he speaks the Father's word (14:10, 24; 17:8, 14) which is the truth (8:40). In fact, the Son is himself the truth (8:32, 36; 14:6) and fully discloses his interpersonal communion with the Father. In this manner, “truth” in the gospel essentially refers to the definitive revelation of the Father and his love by the only Son of the Father. It is the unveiling of the sonship of the Son and the fatherhood of the Father, and their interrelation.¹¹³ Consequently, the disciples' consecration “in the truth” signifies their participation in the sonship of the Son and in the fatherhood of the Father. As the prologue states, the disciples are children of God because they have received him who is “full of ... truth” (1:12–14). Thus, their consecration “in the truth” definitively seals their participation in Jesus' filial relation to the Father; it seals their status as “children of God.”¹¹⁴

Such a consecration is appropriate at the ratification of a covenant. The covenant between God and Israel on Sinai is framed by the divine call for Israel to be a consecrated nation: “keep my covenant ... [and] you shall be to me ... a consecrated nation” (Exod. 19:6). To prepare to enter into covenant with their God, Israel was to perform a divinely instituted ritual of consecration (19:10; also vv. 14, 22, 23).¹¹⁵ In the “book of the covenant” (Exod. 21–23), the first-born sons of the families of Israel were called to be consecrated (22:29, 31; also 13:1–16). This consecration corresponds to the general consecration of Israel in Exodus 19

110 See John 1:12–13; 8:47; 11:52.

111 John 10:36. See also 6:27, “on him has God the Father set his seal.”

112 John 17:19. See also 6:69, “you are the holy one of God.”

113 See John 1:14, 18; 8:40; 16:25. See Ignace De la Potterie, *La Vérité dans Saint Jean*, *Analecta biblica* 73–74 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1977), 2:1012; Ignace De la Potterie, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life,” *Theological Digest* 16 (1968): 63.

114 See De la Potterie, *La Vérité dans Saint Jean*, 2:782–783. For a similar account of consecration and divine sonship see Heb. 2:11–13 and 1 Pet. 1:14–17.

115 The consecration of the people in Exod. 19:14 is accompanied by a ritual washing. Likewise in John 13–17, the consecration of Jesus' disciples is associated with their feet being washed by Jesus (13:4–16) and “being made clean by the word” (15:3) which Jesus has spoken to them.

since Israel, corporately understood, is God's first-born son (4:22–23). Thus, they are set apart in the Sinai covenant precisely as God's first-born son. Israel's call to be a consecrated nation in a covenant relationship with their God is echoed in Deuteronomy 7:6, "For you are a people consecrated to the Lord your God." The Deuteronomic covenant itself demands that Israel be consecrated to God: "you shall be a people consecrated to the Lord your God" (26:19).

When the Davidic divine covenant was renewed under the Davidic king Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:1ff.), the act of consecration was central to the covenant ratification rituals. Not only did the covenant renewal call for the Levitical priests to consecrate themselves and to consecrate the temple (29:5; also vv. 15, 17, 19), it also functioned to consecrate the assembly of Israel to their God: "You have now consecrated yourselves (מִלֵּאמֶה יְדַכֶּה / ἐπληρώσατε τὰς χεῖρας ὑμῶν)¹¹⁶ to the Lord; come near, bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house of the Lord" (2 Chron. 29:31). It is through the ratification of the covenant that the consecration of Israel takes place.¹¹⁷

In light of the connection between the ratification of the OT divine covenant and the consecration of Israel, the consecration of the disciples in John 17:17–19 functions as a sign that the disciples' new covenant relationship with the Father and the Son is definitively sealed—they are fully and completely Jesus' covenantal "own." More specifically, as with the covenant at Sinai, this consecration in the truth decisively and resolutely sets Jesus' own apart as covenantal children of God.

Glorification

The Johannine meaning of "glory" forcefully reflects common traditions of Israel (especially the Sinai revelations).¹¹⁸ In the Exodus, the glory of God was a sign¹¹⁹ of his victorious power over the Egyptian Pharaoh which visibly manifested himself to his people so that they may believe in him (14:31) and so that all shall "know that I am the Lord" (Exod. 14:4; also 14:17–18; 15:1, 6, 11, 21). During the ratification

116 The Hebrew idiom (followed slavishly by the LXX translators) rendered "you (pl.) have filled your hands," implies consecration and usually refers to priestly investiture (see 2 Chron. 13:9). In this context it applies to the whole assembly of Israel. The same idiom is utilized in this wider sense in 1 Chron. 29:5. See J. A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, The New American Commentary, vol. 9 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 349; Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire: A Theological Commentary on 1–2 Chronicles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 174.

117 In the Second Temple Period 2 Macc. 1:25 relates the tradition of Israel's consecration in connection with their covenant election by God: "You did choose the fathers and consecrate them." Sir. 45:3–6 relates that Moses' election is signified by his consecration: "he consecrated him through faithfulness and meekness; he chose him out of all mankind" (v. 4). He was consecrated so that he could "teach Jacob the covenant" (v. 5).

118 See Keener, *John*, 1050. Tsutserov (*Glory*, 189) argues that the use of "glory" in Exod. 33–34 defines the connotations of the term throughout the gospel.

119 According to Numbers 14:22, God's action in the Exodus (among others) is regarded as a glorious "sign" (σημεῖα).

of the Sinai covenant “the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai” for seven days (24:16). This continuous dwelling in glory visibly manifested in the cloud and devouring fire (vv. 17–18) was a perceptible sign of God’s active power to establish a familial communion through the covenant ratified by blood (v. 8).¹²⁰ Furthermore, God’s power and indwelling presence in the tabernacle was signified in glory (Exod. 40:34–35). As a perceptible sign of the covenant relationship itself, the Ark of the Covenant was often referred to as “the glory.”¹²¹

John 13:31–32 and 17:1, 5 relate that the hour of the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son has come. According to 17:24, the Father gives glory to the Son because he loves him. Their mutual glorification is rooted in their communion of love.¹²² Furthermore in 17:22, this glory of the communion of love between the Father and the Son is given to the disciples, who subsequently will be one as the Father and the Son are one (17:22–23). In possessing the Son’s glory they recognize and acknowledge that the Father has “loved them even as you [Father] have loved me [the Son]” (v. 23). Lastly, the mutual glorification of the Father, the Son, and the disciples is ordered externally to all future believers (17:20, 22–23). Verse 23c—“so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you loved me”—indicates that the glory of the communion of love in which the disciples participate will be a glorious sign to the world which will point to the relation of the Son to the Father (“you have sent me”) and, ultimately, to the love of the Father for his Son and for the world. In other words, the disciples’ communion of love will be the glorious sign for all future believers to know and recognize the sonship of the Son and the love of the Father. Through this glorious sign, and the consequent belief and knowledge initiated by it, a relation will be generated which essentially concerns the relationship between the Father and the Son and their love, namely, all future believers will be generated as children of God.¹²³

120 See Varghese, *Imagery*, 318. In a similar manner, the power and presence of God was disclosed in glory amidst the renewal of the Sinai covenant in Exod. 32–34. The glorification between God and his people functioned as a sign of their restored covenant communion: “both I and your people shall be glorified beyond all the nations, as many as are upon the earth” (Exod. 33:16 LXX; see also 33:18, 19, 22; 34:10 LXX).

121 For instance, 1 Sam. 4:21 and 22 state: “‘The glory has departed from Israel!’ because the Ark of God had been captured.” According to the prophetic literature, “glory” is a vital element in Israel’s eschatological hopes. It will be associated with the restoration of Israel and Judah, with the forgiveness of sins, the renewal of the covenant, and the return of God’s presence to the temple (Jer. 33:9; Ezek. 43:4; 44:4). In the eschatological day, Israel will glory in God’s name (Isa. 42:8; Zeph. 10:11). See Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship*, 136 who cites *Tanbura* במורה 20 where God promises, “In the age to come, when I have led my dwelling place [שכינה] to Sion, I will reveal myself in my glory [כבוד] to all Israel, and they shall see and live for ever.”

122 See Michael Waldstein, “The Mission of Jesus and the Disciples in John,” *Communio* 17 (1990): 323. See also Wilhelm Thüsing, *Die Erhöhung und Verherrlichung* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1960), 236; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 262; Schnackenburg, *St. John*, 1:234; De la Potterie, *La Vérité dans Saint Jean*, 2:732.

123 This glorious sign of the disciples’ communion of love is identical to the sign of love manifest to

The glorification of the Father, Son, and disciples in John 13:31–32 and 17:1–26 ought to be understood in light of its primary background, namely, the exodus event and the Sinai covenant, and as the “natural outworking of the analogy with Moses introduced in 1:14–18.”¹²⁴ As glory was the visible sign for generating belief and knowledge in the exodus and the visible sign of God’s fidelity and love in his covenant with Israel, so in John 13–17: through the communication of the glorious, visible sign of the communion of love of the Father and the Son, all future believers in the world will come to know the Father and the Son and their love given in the new covenant. Jesus is evoking OT traditions for the establishment of a sign by which the covenant relationship can be known, remembered, and shared.¹²⁵

IV. Conclusion: Hermeneutic of Continuity and Fulfillment

It has been argued that the covenant principle, which defines the relationship of God to his people throughout the OT, permeates John 13–17 and is functioning within its theology. Put differently, John 13–17 goes to great lengths to describe the relationship between God and his people—the status, obligations, and the character of interiority—with the distinctive elements of what the biblical record calls a covenant. It is not unique in this regard, for it has followed the long period of biblical history which employed a covenant theology to provide a basic set of theological categories and values for understanding the relationship between God and Israel. John 13–17, therefore, possesses a profound continuity with the covenant theology of the OT.

However, such continuity does not mean equality. Although the covenant theology of John 13–17 is rooted in many traditions of the various OT covenant theologies, it presents itself not only as fulfilling these traditions, but as exceeding them in an unforeseen manner, and, therefore, presents a redefinition of the

all men associated with Jesus’ new commandment which is given directly after the statement of the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son, and the conferral of the status of children to the disciples (13:31–35; see also 15:8). Notice that St. Cyril of Alexandria, commenting on 17:24, connects the communication of glory and love with the disciples’ divine sonship: “to live with Him and to be deemed worthy to see His glory, belongs only to those who have been already united to the Father through Him, and have obtained His love, which He has from the Father. For we are loved as sons, insofar as we are like Him who is actually by nature His Son. Although this love is not dealt out to us in equal measure as to the Son, yet it is a complete semblance of the love the Father has for the Son; it coincides with and manifests the image of the glory of the Son.” *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Bk. 11, ch. 12 [*Commentariorum In Joannem*, Lib. XI, Cap. XII].

124 See Keener, *John*, 1052; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 14; also 217; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 385. Notice the parallel between 17:24, “Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world,” and *Assumption of Moses* 1:14, “He prepared me before the foundation of the world, that I should be the mediator of His covenant.” See Glasson, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel* (Illinois: Allenson Inc., 1963), 77; Brown, *John XIII–XXI*, 781.

125 See Gen. 9:12–13; 17:11; Exod. 24:4; Deut. 27:2, 4; Josh. 24:26–27; 2 Sam. 7:16. See Varghese, *Imagery*, 356.

covenantal people of God. This unexpected fulfillment is disclosed through the eschatological revelation of God as “Father” by Jesus “the Son,” who has enabled his disciples to participate in their familial relationship as those “born of the Spirit,” as “children of God.” This unanticipated realization expresses the significant shift in emphasis that has occurred when progressing through the continuous story of Israel as presented in Scripture’s bi-covenantal corpus. The OT frequently and predominately employed the term “covenant” to describe the relationship between God and his people. In contrast, kinship terminology expressing familial relations and obligations in the OT was, for the most part, regulated to the background of God’s dealings with his people. Although an extension of divine kinship status was disclosed at vital moments in Israel’s history, it was often an implicit part of a future promise.¹²⁶ However, the reverse is true when progressing from the OT to its fulfillment in the NT. The term “covenant” has receded into the background while kinship terminology has taken a predominant position and has been employed with such unprecedented frequency and force that it has surpassed all OT expectations.¹²⁷

Thus, there is no substantial discontinuity between the covenant theology of the OT and the covenant theology of the NT. The OT covenant has not been forgotten by the NT, rather it has been fulfilled by the NT. In light of this fulfillment, the language of divine kinship increases, while the explicit use of the term “covenant” predictably decreases. The language of divine kinship, which permeates John’s gospel, is not only employed in a structured and systematic manner, but in relation to the OT it is utilized with unparalleled frequency and force. Like several other NT texts, the Fourth Gospel understands the ratification of the new covenant to fulfill the OT covenant relationship between God and his people with a hitherto unexpected escalation of sacred kinship and divine familial communion. In John’s gospel there does not exist a sharp break or major departure from the covenant theology revealed in the story of Israel, but rather a fulfillment that exceeds all expectations.

126 Baker comments, “The relationship expected as the fruit of biblical covenants is one of family or kinship.” Christopher J. Baker, *Covenant and Liberation* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 38.

127 Janet Soskice observes this shift: “The main name relation of God to the people in Exodus is covenant, not kinship ... The kinship of God and humankind is both compelled and resisted by the Hebrew scriptures—compelled for reasons of intimacy and resisted for fear of idolatry ... [in the NT] we see the turning of the symbol, the God who is ‘not Father’ in Exodus ... is revealed in the intimacy of the address of ‘Abba’ in the books of the New Testament ... the audacity of addressing God as Abba breaks the ‘reserve to which the whole Bible testifies ... The audacity is possible because a new time has begun’ ... within the Christian texts this movement ... from refusal of the language of physical generation to a word of designation, the ‘I Am Who I Am,’ and then to the promise of kinship—is a process completed by the audacious address of the Son.” *The Kindness of God: Metaphor, Gender, and Religious Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 75–78.