

Covenant in the Early Church Writings

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In early Christian literature, the term διαθήκη occurs first in a small group of parenetic statements, encompassing the relation between God or Jesus Christ and the believers and including the admonition to obedience to the commandments. A few passages in the First Letter of Clement,¹ Tertullian,² Cyprian,³ Clement of Alexandria,⁴ Augustine,⁵ and Leo I. of Rome⁶ belong to this group. The term διαθήκη, however, has a meaning that is far more extensive and complex when one considers it as evidence of the coherence (and difference) between the old and new covenants. This theme touches on the process of the parting of the ways, which for Jews was increasingly marked by painful experiences of intellectual devaluation, followed by external distress when Christians become the majority in the Roman Empire.⁷ Within the interplay of coherence and difference of the two covenants, the motif of coherence was initially important; in later times, it was rather the motif of difference. While the withdrawal of Marcionite and Manichaean concepts made a revitalization of the idea of the unity of both testaments superfluous, the continued presence of Jews led to a continued emphasis on the idea of the

¹ 1 Clem 35.7 quotes Ps 49[50]:16. In the context of the letter as a whole, the scolding reinforces the admonition to the rebellious boys to submit to the presbyters again.

² Tertullian, *anim.* 35.3, CC.SL 2:837. Irenaeus is called a zealot for the covenant of Jesus Christ (Eusebius of Caesarea, *h.e.* 5:4.2, GCS 9/1:434).

³ In Cyprian, the parenetic line includes the reminder to take seriously the primacy of God's bond over earthly bonds, cf. Cyprian, *or. dom.* 9, CC.SL 3 A:94, referring to Deut 33:9; Matt 23:9; Matt 8:22. In *op. eleem.* 16, CC.SL 3 A:65, he refers to Deut 33:9 and 1 John 3:17. Elsewhere, he emphasizes that the Last Judgment also applies to the faithful (Cyprian, *bon. pat.* 22, CC.SL 3 A:131–132, referring to Mal 4:1; Isa 66:15–16; Isa 42:13–14).

⁴ Clement of Alexandria emphasizes the motif of abstaining from sins, cf. Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 4.32.5, GCS 52:262, quoting Ps 77[78]:36–37; *paed.* 1.86.1, GCS 12:140, quoting Ps 77[78]8.10; cf. also the same motif in *str.* 7.69.5, GCS 17:50.

⁵ Augustine, *corf.* 8:8/19, CC.SL 27:125 (*pactum*).

⁶ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 48.2, CC.SL 138A:281 (“*Christi foedus*”).

⁷ One can explain (but not justify!) Christian blindness to Jewish self-denial: Christians saw themselves standing in the reality of the new covenant, of which they had no doubt. Because they believed that the God of Israel has set this reality, they did not understand that Jews who did not believe in Jesus were reluctant to acknowledge this new reality.

supersession and replacement of the old covenant by the new covenant. Judaism, which does not feature a belief in Jesus, has been perceived as a permanent delegitimization of one's own claim to truth. On the other hand, the view of the relationship of faith as covenant and the self-positioning of Christians in the new covenant also included, since early times of Christian theology, ethically stricter demands for oneself.

In order to avoid repetitions, I have arranged the source material not chronologically but systematically. As a disclaimer, it is not possible to provide exhaustive lists of occurrences for most of the topics in this contribution.

1. The Coherence of the Old and the New Covenant

1.1 *The Identity of the Donator*

It is God who gave both covenants. This notion, unquestioningly assumed by New Testament authors, became important in several ways in the second century.

Against Greco-Roman critique, Tertullian emphasizes the ancient origin of Christianity⁸, whereas Origen refutes Celsus who grasped the seeming antagonisms between the old and the new covenant in order to refute Christianity.⁹

Against the ideas of Marcion and some Gnostics, Irenaeus¹⁰, followed by Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, emphasized the unity of God of both Testaments¹¹ who made several covenants.¹² By the Holy Scripture, people were taught to worship God in a new way, but not another God, because it is one God who will justify the circumcised based on faith and the uncircumcised through the same faith (Rom 3:30).¹³ The new covenant is foretold by the

⁸ Tertullian, *apol.* 19.2–7, CC.SL 1:120–121.

⁹ Origen, *Cels.* 7:25, GCS 3:176.

¹⁰ FERGUSON, "Covenant Idea", 144, emphasizes the structural importance of the motif of covenant in Irenaeus' theology. DUNCAN, "Covenant Idea in Irenaeus", 39–53, gives an exhaustive description of Irenaeus' concept. Irenaeus uses the term in a relational, a historical, and a testamentary sense (41). He is the first who uses the plural *διαθήκαι/testamenta* in the context of Christian theology (46).

¹¹ Irenaeus, *haer.* 3:12.3, FC 8/3:124, referring to Acts 3:6–8; *haer.* 4:8.3, FC 8/4:66, relating Deut 33:9 to the apostles. How could the prophets who proclaimed the new covenant not have known the name of the unspeakable Father (Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:34.3, FC 8/4, 280)?

¹² Irenaeus, *haer.* 1:10.3, FC 8/1:200–204. Irenaeus, *haer.* 3:11.8, FC 8/3:114, refers to the covenants with Noah and Abraham, through Moses and Christ.

¹³ Irenaeus, *haer.* 3:10.2, FC 8/3:82–84, referring to Luke 1:26, 30, 32, 46–47; 54–55; 78–79; Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:9.1, FC 8/4:68, referring to Jer 31:31–2; Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:9.3, FC 8/4:74, referring to Matt 15:3–4 etc.

prophets;¹⁴ Christ fulfilled it.¹⁵ Clement of Alexandria relates the term “God” to the term “covenant”; Θεός is derived from θέσις (placing, and order or arrangement).¹⁶ The cohesion and agreement of the law and the prophets with the new covenant concluded at the presence of the Lord is the guideline for all knowledge of God and interpretation of Scripture.¹⁷ Christians are the new generation in comparison to the Greeks, who are still biased in idolatry, and the Jews, who also still have no faith.¹⁸ Clement understands the new covenant, which is meant for Christians, as a renewal and liberation from sins.¹⁹ The idea that God has also given the philosophy to the Greeks is part of his concept of universal divine educational action: God educates the Greeks through philosophy,²⁰ the Jews through the law. Greek philosophy is a preliminary stage of the philosophy based on Christ.²¹

Against the Manicheans, John Chrysostom stated that Jesus does not want to prove with his antitheses that the old covenant comes from the devil; instead he wants to lead beyond the rules that were useful in the old covenant. Even if the Old Testament had the devil as its author, that would not have prevented the Jews from idolatry.²² The unity of the legislator is proven by Jer 31:31–32 and Gal 4:22, 24.²³ In his exegesis of Gen 9:8–11, John Chrysostom can praise God’s philanthropy to grant the covenant not only for the immediate addressees but also for their offspring.²⁴

Isidor of Pelusium reflects on the coherence between promises and covenant: The term “covenant” implies immutability; that is why Scripture called the promises “covenant”.²⁵

¹⁴ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:33.14, FC 8/4:276–278.

¹⁵ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:34.2, FC 8/4:278–280, referring to Matt 5:17–18.

¹⁶ Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 1:182.2, GCS 52:111.

¹⁷ Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 6:125.3, GCS 52:495. Clement can also use this idea for anti-heretic polemics. The unity of the Church corresponds to the continuous unity of this covenant (Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 7.107.5, GCS 17:76). In his polemics against the Valentinians, Clement can also write elsewhere: The old covenant was of the same οὐσία as the new (Clement of Alexandria, *exc. Theodot.* 24, GCS 17:115).

¹⁸ Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 6:44.4, GCS 52:453–454.

¹⁹ Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 2:47.3, GCS 52:139; similarly *str.* 4:149.5, GCS 52:314.

²⁰ The concept of the Greek’s dependence of God’s revelation in the Old Testament (Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 5:28.4–29.5, GCS 52:344–345 etc.) is part of this concept.

²¹ Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 6:67.1, GCS 52:465; similarly *str.* 5:28.3, GCS 52:344.

²² John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 17.6, PG 57:262. In *hom. in Matt.* 17.2, PG 57:256, he refers on Sir 9:8 as analogy to Matt 5:28.

²³ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 16.7, PG 57:247.

²⁴ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Gen.* 28.2, PG 53:253–254. In the exegesis of Gen 9:4–13, the motif of covenant is not reflected in Ambrose, *De Noe* 103, CSEL 32/1, 484–485, and in Procopius of Gaza. The bow is regarded as a symbol of God’s power, not of God’s covenant (Procopius of Gaza, *Gen.*, GCS NF 22:217).

²⁵ Isidor of Pelusium, *ep.* 2:196, PG 78:641d.

Also the pneumatological part of the Creed implied the unity of the covenants, which should not be separated from each other.²⁶ It was the one Holy Spirit who inspired the law and the prophets in the old covenant, the evangelists and apostles in the new covenant²⁷, who sanctified the righteous of the old covenant and the teachers of the new,²⁸ and who instituted both the old and new covenant.²⁹ This unity can also be illustrated in detail.

The number of the gospels corresponds to the number of the covenants under Adam, under Noah, under Moses and in Christ.³⁰ Miracles happened in both old and new covenant.³¹ Jerusalem is the starting point also for the new covenant.³² Not only the God of the Old Testament asks questions but also Jesus Christ.³³ Not only the God of the Old Testament blinds human beings, but also Jesus Christ (Mark 4:12: ἵνα ... μὴ ἴδωσιν).³⁴ It is heresy to make the God of the old covenant the author of sin on the basis of Deut 4:24 (“eating fire”); it is written, “The Lord kills and makes alive” (1 Sam 2:6).³⁵ According to John Chrysostom, John 1:10–11 and Matt 10:35 (ἤλθον γὰρ διχάσαι) refute the thesis of those who say that the God of the old covenant is evil, while the God of the new covenant is good.³⁶ Terrible punishments are addressed not only in the Old Testament but also in the New Testament.³⁷

The concept of the coherence of the two covenants, however, causes exegetical problems. Augustine justifies John 13:34 (“new commandment”) with reference to Lev 19:18 by pointing to the final clause “as I have loved you”.³⁸

Unfortunately, this motif was also being used for anti-Jewish polemics. If the dead could be raised in the old covenant – see the stories of Elijah and Elisha – then why would the raising of Jesus Christ be impossible? Why do the Jews, therefore, not believe the apostles who were Jews themselves?³⁹

²⁶ Cyril of Jerusalem, *catech.* 16:3–4, Rupp 206–208.

²⁷ Rufinus of Aquileia, *ymb.* 34, CC.SL 20:170.

²⁸ Theodoret of Cyrus, *h.e.* 1:4.53, GCS 19:22.

²⁹ *Ab eodem Spiritu conditum foedus secundum, a quo primum fuerat institutum.* Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 75.1, CC.SL 138 A:466.

³⁰ Irenaeus, *haer.* 3:11.8, FC 8/3:114.

³¹ Athanasius of Alexandria, in *Psalm.*, PG 27:444a, in his comment on Ps 104:5.

³² Augustine, *civ.* 18:54, CSEL 40/2:360, referring to Isa 2:3 and Luke 24:27.

³³ Epiphanius of Salamis, *Anc.* 108.1–7, GCS 25:132, referring to Gen 3:9; 4:9; 18:9; John 11:34; Luke 8:45.

³⁴ Cyril of Jerusalem, *catech.* 6.28, Reischl 192–194. Paul’s statement in 2 Cor 4:4 (ὁ θεός τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου) therefore is no proof for the theory of two deities.

³⁵ Cyril of Jerusalem, *catech.* 6.27, Reischl 192.

³⁶ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 16.6; 35.1, PG 57:246, 406.

³⁷ Quodvultdeus, *lib. prom.* 2:1/2, CC.SL 60:70–71, referring to 1 Tim 1:20; 1 Cor 5:5; Act 5:5, 10.

³⁸ Augustine, *tract. Ev. Ioh.* 65.1, CC.SL 36:490–491.

³⁹ Cyril of Jerusalem, *catech.* 14.15, Rupp 126.

Interpreting Matt 12:40, John Chrysostom justifies the punishment of the Jews with their unwillingness to repent. God had already announced the punishments in the old covenant to provide the opportunity for repentance, and he only punishes if these warning are being ignored.⁴⁰

1.2 The New Covenant is Announced in the Old Testament

Almost⁴¹ all early Christian scholars offer Old Testament quotations, which they understand as announcements about the new covenant. Examples can be found in Barnabas,⁴² Justin,⁴³ Irenaeus,⁴⁴ Tertullian,⁴⁵ Athanasius of Alexandria,⁴⁶ Augustine,⁴⁷ Leo I. of Rome,⁴⁸ or Fulgentius of Ruspe.⁴⁹ Standard refer-

⁴⁰ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 43.2, PG 57:458–459.

⁴¹ The unity of the lawgiver of the Old and the New Testament was no issue in the Trinitarian debates (except Ambrose, see below). The subject “covenant” is almost absent from the works of the Cappadocians. On the other side, theologians who did not support the ὁμοούσιος were convinced of that idea of this unity; cf. Hilarius of Poitiers, *Trin.* 6:5, CC.SL 62:200.

⁴² *Barn* 13.1 quotes Gen 25:23: “the older brother will serve the younger one”.

⁴³ Justin, *dial.* 11.3, Bobichon I 210, with reference to Isa 55:3–5 and Jer 31:31–32.

⁴⁴ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:33.14, FC 8/4:274, referring to Jer 31; Ezek 36:26–27; Isa 43:18–19.

⁴⁵ Tertullian, *adv. Iud.* 3.7, CC.SL 2:1346.

⁴⁶ Ps 118:135 means that the pious want to see the arrival of the Lord (Athanasius, *in Psalm.*, PG 27:501d).

⁴⁷ Augustine, *catech. rud.* 17:11/28, CC.SL 46:153: The saints of the old covenant recognized and foretold his future appearance thanks to the revelation of the [Holy] Spirit, and so they were saved because they believed in his one coming, just as humans were saved by the faith that he had already come.

⁴⁸ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 51.7, CC.SL 138 A:302, on Jesus’ Transfiguration (Matt 17:1–9); *tract.* 75.1, CC.SL 138 A:465. The matching testimonies of the old and new covenants serve our knowledge: the Gospel tells us what the prophets announced (Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 60.1, CC.SL 138 A:363).

⁴⁹ Fulgentius of Ruspe, *ep.* 14.46, CC.SL 90:443, quotes Sir 9:14–15 for the teaching that one should not despise the old covenant just because the new covenant has begun. The old covenant contains the real promise of the new. The fact that, according to Sir 9:15, wine should be allowed to age so that it tastes good also means that the name and promise of the new covenant are recognized in the old covenant.

rence texts are Ps 110:9,⁵⁰ Isa 43:18–21,⁵¹ Jer 31:31,⁵² Ezek 36:26–27,⁵³ and other biblical texts without the term “covenant” which are interpreted with regard to the new reality in Christ, his incarnation,⁵⁴ crucifixion,⁵⁵ resurrection,⁵⁶ and ascension,⁵⁷ sometimes also with regard to debates concerning the biological ancestry of Jesus,⁵⁸ his preexistence and consubstantiality with God the Father,⁵⁹ and his true humanity.⁶⁰

One should note with regard to the quotations from Jer 31:31–32 and Ezek 36:26–27 that the references to the Torah within these texts are usually omitted.

⁵⁰ Most commentators relate this passage to the new covenant, but with distinct arguments. According to Augustine, the eternal covenant is the new covenant, which is the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal 4:25–26). While the old covenant contained earthly gifts, e.g. the gift of the city of Jerusalem for the Israelites, and was therefore a transitory covenant, the new covenant contains heavenly gifts, so that one must beware of all earthly covetousness such as greed (Augustine, *en. Ps.* 110.8, CC.SL 40:1624). Cassiodorus grasps that attribute “eternal”; this means that nothing follows, unlike it was the case with the old covenant (Cassiodorus, *in Psalm.*, CC.SL 98:1018). Prosper of Aquitania emphasizes the transitory character of the old covenant (Prosper of Aquitania, *in Psalm.*, CC.SL 68 A:65).

⁵¹ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:33:14, FC 8/4:274–276.

⁵² Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* 1:20.4, CC.SL 1:461.

⁵³ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:33:14, FC 8/4:274.

⁵⁴ Cf. the reception history of Isa 7:14 (cf. Matt 1:21) e.g. in Justin, *dial.* 66.4, Bobichon I 364 etc; Gen 3:14–15 in Cyprian, *test.* 2:9, CC.SL 3:41; 2 Kgs 7:12–14, in Cyprian, *test.* 2:11, CC.SL 3:43. Sometimes even Ezek 36:26 is related to the incarnation (*Barn* 6.14).

⁵⁵ Cf. the reception history of Deut 28:66^{LXX} (Clement of Alexandria, *paed.* 2:73.3, GCS 12:102; Irenaeus, *haer.* 5:18.3, FC 8/5:150; Melito, *pasch.* 61/444–446, SC 123:94), Isa 53 (Acts 8:32; Justin, *dial.* 13.2–7, Bobichon I 214–216); Isa 65:2; Jer 11:19 (Cyprian, *test.* 2:20, CC.SL 3:57; for Jer 11:19 cf. also Melito, *pasch.*, 63/453–458, SC 123:94).

⁵⁶ Cf. the reception history of 1 Sam 2:6 (The Venerable Bede, *in 1 Sam.*, CC.SL 119:23–24).

⁵⁷ Cf. the reception history of Ps 23[24]:7 (Eusebius of Caesarea, *in Psalm.*, PG 23:224a et al.); Ps 46[47]:6 (Cyril of Jerusalem, *catech.* 14.24, Rupp 140–142 et al.); Ps 103[104]:3 (Arnobius, *in Psalm.*, CC.SL 25:153 et al.) and Ps 109[110]:1 (Justin, *dial.* 32.3, Bobichon I 260 et al.).

⁵⁸ Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* 3:20.4–6, CC.SL 1:535, uses Isa 42:6–7 and Isa 55:3–5 to prove that Jesus is also carnally descended from David. The motifs of “until the end of the earth” (Ps 2:7–8) and “eternal covenant” (Ps 110:9) do not apply to David (Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* 3:20.3, 5, CC.SL 1:535).

⁵⁹ Whereas, according to Ambrose, nobody can see God (John 1:18), the Son has been visible also in the old covenant: Heretics should abstain from attributing the son’s origin to the birth from the virgin. He, who is born from a virgin, was seen before (Ambrose, *in Luc.* 1:25, CC.SL 14:19).

⁶⁰ Leo I. of Rome formulates consequences for the Christology against the Manicheans and against Apollinaris: Types of the old covenant announced that the true Son of God is also true human being (Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 47.2, CC.SL 138A:276).

This is true for Irenaeus,⁶¹ Tertullian,⁶² Clement of Alexandria,⁶³ and other authors. Leo I. realizes the issue of law but, in a sermon on Matt 5:1–9, associates the laws of the old covenant to the decrees of the New Testament.⁶⁴

While this Christo-centrism has been the rule, the so-called Antiochene school allowed for some exceptions when relating the Psalms mostly to events of the history of Israel instead of Jesus Christ. Following Chronicles, Israel's salvation from Sennacherib,⁶⁵ the exile,⁶⁶ and the events during the Maccabean wars⁶⁷ are being referenced; the exception here is the fall of the Northern Kingdom.

1.3 The New Testament Includes Testimonies for the Old Covenant

Old Testament quotations in the New Testament such as Matt 26:31,⁶⁸ Luke 4:17,⁶⁹ Rom 1:1–3,⁷⁰ or general references like Luke 24:27,⁷¹ Rom 3:30,⁷² or Gal 4:24–26,⁷³ or allusions like in Matt 17:1–9⁷⁴ have given rise to an emphasis on the coherence of the two covenants. In his comment on Matt 28:20b, John Chrysostom states that Christ already gave the promise of his assistance to the prophets of the old covenant, who hesitated because of their task.⁷⁵ (The reception history of 2 Cor 3:6, 14 and Heb 8:8–13 will be treated in separate paragraphs below).

⁶¹ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:33.14, FC 8/4:274. The prophets refer to the freedom of the new covenant according to Matt 9:17 (Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:33.14, FC 8/4:276).

⁶² Tertullian, *adv. Iud.* 3.7, CC.SL 2:1346.

⁶³ Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 6:41.5, GCS 52:452.

⁶⁴ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 95.1, CC.SL 138 A:583, in his quotation of Jer 31:31.

⁶⁵ Cf. e.g. Diodor of Tarsus, in *Psalm* 26, CC.SG 6:152. In the prologue to his commentary, Diodorus lists the captivity of Babylon, events in Egypt, events in the Maccabean period, and events in the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel as historical points of reference (Diodor of Tarsus, in *Psalm*, prol., CC.SG 6:5).

⁶⁶ Cf. eg. Diodor of Tarsus, in *Psalm* 24, CC.SG 6:143; Theodore of Mopsuestia, in *Psalm* 41 (Hill 520).

⁶⁷ Cf. eg. Theodore of Mopsuestia, in *Psalm* 69, Hill 894, 910.

⁶⁸ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 82.2, PG 58:740.

⁶⁹ Ambrose, in *Luc.* 4:44, CC.SL 14:121–122, against Marcion.

⁷⁰ Quodvultdeus, *adv. quinque haer.* 5:3, CC.SL 60:277, against the Manicheans.

⁷¹ Fulgentius of Ruspe, *ep.* 14.47, CC.SL 90:443.

⁷² Irenaeus, *haer.* 3:10.2, FC 8/3:82–84, referring to Luke 1:26, 30, 32, 46–47, 78–79; Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:9.1, FC 8/4:68, referring to Jer 31:31–32; Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:9.3, FC 8/4:74, referring to Matt 15:3–4 etc.

⁷³ Epiphanius of Salamis, *haer.* 66.74.6, GCS 37:115, against the Manicheans.

⁷⁴ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 51.4, CC.SL 138 A:299. Even the motif of the two fishes in Luke 9:13 evoked such a statement (Ambrose, in *Luc.* 6:82, CC.SL 14:204).

⁷⁵ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 90.2, PG 58:789–790.

1.4 Mysteries of the New Covenant are Hidden in the Old Covenant.

Christian scholars used not only quotations but also the similarity of certain motifs to develop their point of view. Writings of Barnabas, Justin and Irenaeus⁷⁶ evince a preference for the literary device of typology, which is construed as synonym, antithetic or superior typology, concerning persons,⁷⁷ other figures,⁷⁸ objects,⁷⁹ and rites like circumcision,⁸⁰ or offering⁸¹, even the color “red” for blood.⁸² Origen based his theory of spiritual reading of the Old Testament on the apparent contrast between 2 Cor 3:6–8 and Rom 7:12, 14 on the one hand, and Ezek 20:25 and Ezek 20:11, on the other; the letter that kills and the commandments that are inferior all belong to the realm of the literal; Origen juxtaposes all of that to spiritual reading.⁸³

Unfortunately, also the motif of the prefiguration of the old in the new offers an opportunity for anti-Jewish polemics. Moses had regarded the two tables of the laws as sufficient instruments, but was unaware that they symbolized the old and the new covenant.⁸⁴ Christological reading often prevents the recognition of fulfillment in the history of Israel: Theodoret mentions the “covenant of peace given to David” (Ezek 34:25) because of the phrase “Christ is our peace” in Eph 2:14.⁸⁵

⁷⁶ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:25.1–2, FC 8/4:198–200, referring to Gen 38:28.

⁷⁷ Cf. Isaac in *Barn* 7.3; Clement of Alexandria, *paed.* 1.5, GCS 12:103; Aaron in Methodius, *lepra* 7, GCS 27:459; Jonah in Cyril of Jerusalem, *catech.* 14.20 Rupp 132–134. Cf. also the series “Abel, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, David” as types of Jesus’ crucifixion in Melito, *pasch.* 59/430–435, SC 123:92.

⁷⁸ Cf. e.g. Melito, *pasch.* 30–33/205–231, SC 123:76, on the sacrifice of the Passover lamb (DUNCAN, “Covenant Idea”, 27–28, emphasizes the differences between Melito and the Letter of Barnabas in covenantal theology); cf. further Ambrose, in *Luc.* 2:92, CC.SL 14:73–74: The dove (Gen 8:10, 11; Luke 3:22) inspires Ambrose to see Noah’s ark as a type for the church.

⁷⁹ Noah’s ark is a figure for the church (Maximus of Turin, *serm.* 49:3, CC.SL 23:193) but can also be interpreted as a type of Mary: As the chest carried the tablets of the covenant, so Mary carried the heir of that covenant (Maximus of Turin, *serm.*, 42.5, CC.SL 23:172). The “stone” can be an allusion to Jesus, on the basis of 1 Cor 10:3 (Cyprian, *test.* 2:16, CC.SL 3:52 et al.) and 1 Pet 2:6, 8, cf. MERKT, *1. Petrus*, 156, with n. 665–666. Also the ladder of Gen 28:12 can be interpreted typologically as a symbol for the two testaments (Zeno of Verona, *tract.* I 37.1, CC.SL 22:101).

⁸⁰ Cf. Ambrose, in *Luc.* 2:56, CC.SL 14:55, in exposition of Luke 2:22: The law in its entirety is a type of the future; circumcision is a type of cleansing from transgressions.

⁸¹ The offering of Melchizedek (Gen 14:18) was a prefiguration of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 4:161.3, GCS 52:319–320; Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 5:3, CC.SL 138:53). The Old Testament sacrifices announce the sacrifice of Jesus, which fulfills them (Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 58.1; 59.7, CC.SL 138 A:340, 358).

⁸² Cf. 1 Clem 12:7.

⁸³ Origen, *Cels* 7:20, GCS 3:171–172.

⁸⁴ Maximus of Turin, *serm.*, 20.5, CC.SL 23:77.

⁸⁵ Theodoret, in *Ezek*, PG 81:1161cd.

1.5 The Analogy of Ethical Demands

According to Gregory of Nazianzen, God showed full mercy to fallen humanity by previously providing it with, besides everything else, the law (of Moses), the prophets and the unwritten law as “a judge” to rebuke, admonish and educate it. Finally, God offered not only himself as a sacrifice of atonement for the life of the world, but also the apostles, evangelists, teachers and shepherds; furthermore, there were healings, miracles, return to life, deliverance from death, victory over the victor, a shadowy and true covenant, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the mysteries of the new covenant. In this way, Christians too should be merciful and ready to help, to give something of our possessions to the poor.⁸⁶ Both laws call for tolerance in face of evil,⁸⁷ mercy,⁸⁸ righteousness,⁸⁹ eagerness to martyrdom,⁹⁰ they prohibit adultery⁹¹ or any wrath⁹² and admonish to heed divine judgement⁹³ so that Christians abstain from sin and perform good deeds.⁹⁴ The unity of divine speech in both the old and new covenants underlines the urgency of ethical reminders.⁹⁵

This paragraph also reflects on the fact that certain ethical norms in the new covenant already existed in the old covenant, for instance monogamy,⁹⁶ or that some stipulation with generally validity in the New Testament has its origins in the old covenant, for example the demand for priests to renounce land ownership.⁹⁷

⁸⁶ Gregory of Nazianzen, *or.* 14.27, PG 35:893ab.

⁸⁷ Matt 5:39 has its analogy already in Lam 3:27–30 Origen, *Cels.* 7:25, GCS 3:176.

⁸⁸ Salvian, *eccl.* 2:11/50–52, CSEL 8:261, referring to Ps 111[112]:9; Matt 6:19, 24.

⁸⁹ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *in Gal.*, Swete 76–77. Insofar as Augustine, *Qu. Deut.* 54, CC.SL 33:307, could ascertain it, this is true also for the Septuagint’s addition of ἐν χερσὶν σου/*in minibus tuis* in Deut 30:14. The Hebrew version, insofar as he could check it, did not include these words. Also Theodoret, *qu. Deut* 38, PG 80:414a, regards Paul’s usage of Deut 30:11–14 as analogous to proposing reward and punishment for compliance and disregard of the law.

⁹⁰ In both the old and the new covenant, humans are expected to imitate the willingness of the Maccabean martyrs to suffer by fighting against the passions within them so as to glorify God (Gregory of Nazianzen, *or.* 15.12, PG 35:932c–933a).

⁹¹ Tertullian, *pud.* 18.6, CC.SL 2:1318, quoting Ps 49[50]:16.

⁹² John Cassian, *inst.* 8:15, CSEL 17:161, referring to Lev 19:17; Prov 22:28^{LXX}.

⁹³ Cf. Maximus of Turin, *serm.* 29.3, CC.SL 23:114: 1 Cor 11:29 (*qui manducat et bibit indigne*) is subtly announced to the Israelites by the worms for those who collected Manna on the Sabbath (Exod 16:13–15, 31).

⁹⁴ Fulgentius of Ruspe, *serm.* 1.10, CC.SL 91 A:894.

⁹⁵ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt* 29.3, PG 57:361; *hom. in Matt.* 50.4, PG 58:509.

⁹⁶ Jerome, *ep.* 123.12, CSEL 56:87.

⁹⁷ Salvian of Marseille, *eccl.* 2:9, CSEL 8:257.

1.6 The Analogy of Religious Practice

In addition to the above-mentioned aspects, there were analogies in the area of religious practice, like the laying on of hands, which was understood as a gesture of blessing,⁹⁸ and fasting, at least in later times, although it had already been demanded in Joel 2:15b–16a.⁹⁹ Elijah and Elisha were considered as proto-types of monastic life in the old covenant.¹⁰⁰ Some of the saints of the old covenant lived in more severity than obliged by the Law of Moses; they were perfect even though it is said with regard to the mosaic law that it could not render anything perfect (Heb 7:19). In this way also the perfect Christians supersede the normal obligations of the Quadragesima.¹⁰¹ In the order of the Benedictines, Ps 119:164 is the scriptural basis for the rule of seven times of prayer throughout the day.¹⁰²

1.7 The Righteous of the Old Covenant Lived in Accordance with the New Covenant

The notion that the righteous of the old covenant already lived in accordance with the new can be traced back to Irenaeus.¹⁰³ In general, New Testament prooftexts are Gal 3:8 and Matt 22:31,¹⁰⁴ but also John 8:36 (for Abraham); Heb 11:26 (for Moses); John 12:41 (for Isaiah); Jud 5 (for all the righteous)¹⁰⁵; Gal 3:16; Matt 1:1–16; Luke 3:23–38,¹⁰⁶ etc. Irenaeus interpreted the faith of Abraham as persevering the peregrination in this world.¹⁰⁷ Abraham was justified even before his circumcision¹⁰⁸ and received the covenant of circumcision so that he is a prefiguration of both testaments. He also became the father of all, the believers from circumcision and those from the foreskin.¹⁰⁹ God had justified Abraham by faith before he made the covenant with Israel.¹¹⁰ Clement

⁹⁸ Tertullian, *bapt.* 8.2, CC.SL 2:283.

⁹⁹ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 88.1, CC.SL 138A:546; however, he includes an anti-Jewish polemic when suggesting that Christians should obey the demand of Joel 2 to finally achieve the sanctification that was could not be accomplished due to Jewish transgression.

¹⁰⁰ John Cassian, *inst.* 1:2, CSEL 17:8.

¹⁰¹ John Cassian, *coll.* 21.29, CSEL 13:604–605.

¹⁰² CSEL 75:64. In this way also a counterbalance to 1 Thess 5:17 was possible.

¹⁰³ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:27.2, FC 8/4:218 who refers to 1 Pet 3:19; 4:6 without explicit indication.

¹⁰⁴ Origen, *in Ioh.* 6:18, SC 157:144.

¹⁰⁵ Jerome, *in Gal.*, CC.SL 77 A:59.

¹⁰⁶ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 30.7, CC.SL 138:158–159.

¹⁰⁷ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:25.1, FC 8/4:198.

¹⁰⁸ Circumcision is only a sign of the covenant (Gen 17), but not yet of perfection (Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:16.1, FC 8/4:116).

¹⁰⁹ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:25.1, FC 8/4:198.

¹¹⁰ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:16.2, FC 8/4:118–120, referring to Deut 5:2. Does Irenaeus not overinterpret the words διαθήκην ταύτην, which imply that God has indeed made other

of Alexandria emphasizes that Abraham¹¹¹ and Moses had distinguished themselves in virtue; everyone who has learned to free himself from passions and to do good can see himself as one of the apostles.¹¹² According to Jerome, the righteous of the old covenant lived *non sub lege, sed quasi sub lege* (“not under the Law, but as if under the Law”).¹¹³ According to Rufinus of Aquileia, Jesus brings these righteous into the paradise during his descent into Hades.¹¹⁴

In the fourth and fifth century, the rationale for their salvation was a topic of debate on its own. Ambrosiaster points to their love of God¹¹⁵ and Cyril of Jerusalem to their pleasant lives to God.¹¹⁶ The Pelagians stated, at least according to Augustine, that the righteous of the old covenant reached salvation without grace.¹¹⁷ Augustine rejects this thesis with arguments based on Gal 4:28¹¹⁸; 3:11–12¹¹⁹ or Gal 4:24 and Gal 3:21.¹²⁰ In the same line of thought, Tajo of Saragossa understands the “freeing” in Gal 4:5 as a reference to the salvation of these righteous.¹²¹

Unfortunately, arguments of anti-Jewish polemics have also been derived from this motif. According to Leo I. of Rome, the merits of the Old Testament pious do not cancel the verdict of guilt against all human beings, which is only lifted by Christ.¹²² The righteous who preceded us only knew a hope of salvation in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Jewish attitude of literally fulfilling the law is regarded as wrong.¹²³ The cross of Christ replaces the sacrifices of the Old Testament, which were supposed to prefigure the future, but are now superfluous.¹²⁴

covenants with the fathers? According to Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:16.3, FC 8/3:120, God did not make a covenant with the fathers, because the law is not given to the righteous (1 Tim 1:9), but they have the Decalogue in their hearts.

¹¹¹ God acted as an educator on Abraham, with the admonition γίνου ἄμεμπτος (Gen 17:1), and made a covenant with him, which includes a friendly connection with the educator (Clement of Alexandria, *paed.* 1:56.3, GCS 12:123).

¹¹² Clement of Alexandria, *str.* 6:103.1–106.2, GCS 52:483–485.

¹¹³ Jerome, *in Gal.*, CC.SL 77 A:182.

¹¹⁴ Rufinus, *symb.* 27, CC.SL 20:162, referring to Matt 27:52; Heb 2:10.

¹¹⁵ Ambrosiaster, *qu. nov. test. app.* 66, CSEL 50:460.

¹¹⁶ Cyril of Jerusalem, *catech.* 5.10, Reischl 146.

¹¹⁷ Augustine *c. ep. Pel.* 4,5/10, CSEL 60:531.

¹¹⁸ Augustine, *c. ep. Pel.* 3,4/13, CSEL 60:501. The patriarchs do not owe their virtue to their own free decision but to the Holy Spirit.

¹¹⁹ Augustine *c. ep. Pel.* 4,5/10, CSEL 60:531.

¹²⁰ Augustine, *nupt. et conc.* 2,11/24, CSEL 42/2:277. Cf. Augustine, *conf.* 10:43/68, CC.SL 27:192.

¹²¹ Tajo of Saragossa, *sent.* 2,8, PL 80:785d.

¹²² Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 66.1, CC.SL 138 A:400–401.

¹²³ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 66.2, CC.SL 138 A:401–402.

¹²⁴ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 59.5, CC.SL 138 A:356.

2. The Transitory Character of the Old Covenant

2.1 *The Motif of Shadow*

The motif of shadow, found already in the Letter to the Hebrews, also occurs in John Chrysostom¹²⁵, Jerome¹²⁶, Leo I. of Rome¹²⁷ and Ambrose who makes the contrast explicit: the Jewish feasts are shadows and types of the celestial feasts. “Here’s the shadow, there’s the truth. Let us then try to penetrate through the shadow to the truth ...”¹²⁸

2.2 *The Motif of Inferiority*

According to Augustine, Christ revealed the new covenant of eternal inheritance, in which humanity is restored by the grace of God and new life is created. The Lord was to show a life of the law. But in so doing, the Lord also exhibited that the old covenant was only a precursor because carnally minded people, with the exception of a few clear-eyed patriarchs and prophets and a few hidden saints, lived in the old ways of carnal desires, demanding from the Lord only a temporal reward and receiving it as models of spiritual goods.¹²⁹ John Cassian states that, according to Ezek 20:25, the laws of the old covenant are inferior when compared to the perfection of the Gospels.¹³⁰

2.3 *The End of the Old Covenant*

The motif of the end of the old covenant is found in Irenaeus,¹³¹ Eusebius of Caesarea, John Chrysostom¹³² and others.¹³³ According to Eusebius, Moses himself already prophesied it. When the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem, the fulfillment of the Torah became impossible.¹³⁴ The end of

¹²⁵ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Col.* 10.3, PG 62:369.

¹²⁶ Jerome, *ep.* 112.14, CSEL 55:383 (to Augustine).

¹²⁷ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 58.1, CC.SL 138 A:340.

¹²⁸ Ambrose, *exc. Sat.* 2:107, CSEL 73:308.

¹²⁹ Augustine, *catech. rud.* 22/40, CC.SL 46:164.

¹³⁰ John Cassian, *coll.* 23.4, CSEL 13:644.

¹³¹ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:4.2, FC 8/4:34.

¹³² According to John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 6.3, PG 57:65, Jesus τὴν μὲν παλαιὰν ἀναπαύειν ἔμελλε πολιτείας.

¹³³ Tertullian, *or.* 1.1, CC.SL 1:257; Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* 1:20.4–6, CC.SL 1:461–462; Athanasius, *in Psalm* 49, prol., PG 27:229b; Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 58.1; 59.7, CC.SL 138 A:340, 358, etc.

¹³⁴ Eusebius, *d.e.* 1.6.38–40, GCS 23:28–29. Cf. also Athanasius, *in Psalm.* 126.1, PG 27:516cd for the motif of the destruction of the temple as the end of the old covenant.

sacrifices is a common topic.¹³⁵ In the old covenant, there were various sacrifices, in the new only the son is sacrificed.¹³⁶

In his homilies on the Gospel of Matthew, also John Chrysostom represents the well-known strategy of distinguishing between the ongoing obligation to Old Testament ethics and abrogation of ritual commands. In his exegesis of Matt 5:17, he asks for the objective of Jesus and answers: The Jews believed that Jesus wanted to abolish the regulations of the old covenant; Jesus, however, did not want to weaken virtue but extend it.¹³⁷ In his exegesis of Matt 26:26–29, he states that Jesus establishes the Eucharist to lead out of Jewish customs.¹³⁸

The end of the old covenant has been signaled by symbolic acts of people of the old covenants¹³⁹ and adversaries of Jesus,¹⁴⁰ or by symbolic events like the tearing of the curtain in the temple, which, according to Leo I. of Rome, happened to reveal the mysteries of the old covenant. Leo includes a sharp anti-Jewish polemic: “Heaven and Earth have condemned you, the Jews.”¹⁴¹

2.4 Relativization of the Ceremonies Announced and Confirmed

Tertullian quotes Isa 43:19; Jer 31:31 (sic!); Jer 4:4; Hos 2:11 as proof that the creator himself foretold the new covenant through the prophets when the Jewish ceremonies are abrogated, according to the new dispensation.¹⁴² According to Epiphanius of Salamis, the hymn of praise of the three men in the furnace of Babylon (Dan 3:25–90) – they knew that no altar was available for a sacrifice – implies that under the influence of the Holy Spirit they turned the old covenant into the new covenant and made their sacrifice of praise (Ps 106:22) in humility (Luke 18:14).¹⁴³

The relativization of the ceremonies is seen as though it were confirmed by the New Testament. According to John Chrysostom, the supremacy of the commandment of charity over sacrifice suggested by Jesus’ interlocutor (Mark

¹³⁵ Tertullian, *or.* 1.1, CC.SL 1:257; Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* 1:20.4–6, CC.SL 1:461–462; Athanasius, *in Psalm* 49, prol., PG 27:229b; Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 58.1; 59.7, CC.SL 138 A:340, 358, etc.

¹³⁶ Athanasius, *in Psalm.*, PG 27:400b; cf. also Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 58.1, CC.SL 138 A:340–341.

¹³⁷ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 16.1, PG 57:239.

¹³⁸ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 82.1, PG 58:739.

¹³⁹ The author of the Epistle of Barnabas uses the external biblically described process that Moses breaks the two plates of the testimony (Deut 9:17) as an indication that the covenant has become invalid (*Barn* 14:3).

¹⁴⁰ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 57.2, CC.SL 138 A:334, refers to the high priest who tears off his garment during the process against Jesus (Matt 26:65).

¹⁴¹ Leo I., *tract.* 53.2, CC.SL 138 A:314, in application of Matt 27:51.

¹⁴² Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* 1:20.4–6, CC.SL 1:461–462.

¹⁴³ Epiphanius of Salamis, *Anc.* 23.4–5, GCS 25:32.

12:32) was confirmed by Jesus' answer "You are not far away..." (Mark 12:34).¹⁴⁴ Already the Old Testament relativizes the sacrifices and demands mercy, as John Chrysostom argues because of the quotation of Hos 6:6 in Matt 9:13.¹⁴⁵

2.5 *The Lack of Effect*

The argument of lack of efficacy is already Justin's argument to justify the expiration of the old covenant. If the law could enlighten the heathen, what would be the purpose of a new covenant?¹⁴⁶ John Chrysostom gives the following characteristic of the old covenant: "when sin was not yet put away, when the law had not yet ceased, when death was not yet bound, when the brazen gates were not yet broken up, but while the ancient polity still was in force."¹⁴⁷ Augustine comments similarly: the law was characterized by threats, but did not provide aid; it commanded, did not heal; made human weakness manifest, but did not take it away.¹⁴⁸ To be sure, such statements may claim Gal 3:19 and Rom 3:20 as their scriptural base, but in the end, these Christian scholars formulated a cliché without having Ps 118[119]:70 in mind.

2.6 *Israel's Failure in Past and Present*

Texts which are used as prooftexts were Exod 32,¹⁴⁹ Deut 31:16,¹⁵⁰ 32:21,¹⁵¹ Ps 49[50]:16,¹⁵² Isa 52:13–53:1,¹⁵³ Jer 32:32,¹⁵⁴ etc. Hermeneutically, one can discover a recurring pattern: a point of criticism that was once conceded within the Jewish community now becomes an external argument to undermine the legitimacy of Judaism as a whole, while Christians claim to be the true Israel.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁴ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 71.1, PG 58:662.

¹⁴⁵ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 29.3, PG 57:365.

¹⁴⁶ Justin, *dial.* 122.5, Bobichon I 514 (cf. φῶς ἐθνῶν in Isa 42:6 concerning φωτίζειν).

¹⁴⁷ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 10:4, PG 57:189.

¹⁴⁸ Augustine, *tract. Ev. Io.* 3.14, CC.SL 36:26; similarly Maximus of Turin, *serm.* 30.3, CC.SL 23:76.

¹⁴⁹ Barn 4.7; Tertullian, *adv. Iud.* 3.13, CC.SL 2:1347 (with regard to Tertullian, *adv. Iud.* 2.10–3.13, see the analysis in DUNN, *Tertullian's Adversus Iudaeos*, 113–114). In Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:15.1, FC 8/4:110–112, the laws considered to be "not good" are the consequence of Israel's failure according to Exod 32. Irenaeus refers to Stephen's speech Acts 7:38–43, including the quotation of Am 5:25–26, to corroborate his opinion.

¹⁵⁰ Justin, *dial.* 74.4, Bobichon I 482.

¹⁵¹ Irenaeus, *dem.* 95, FC 8/1:92–93.

¹⁵² This text, which was later used as a reminder within Christ, is quoted as a charge against the Jews by Justin, *dial.* 22.7–10, Bobichon I 236–238.

¹⁵³ Justin, *dial.* 118.3–4, Bobichon I 500–502 including the polemics: "we surpass you Jews, who in your imagination, but not in deed, love God and are wise" (*dial.* 118.3).

¹⁵⁴ Jerome, *adv. Pel.* 2:28, CC.SL 80:93.

¹⁵⁵ Justin, *dial.* 11.5, Bobichon I 210.

The ritual commandments were given to Israel only because of its stubbornness.¹⁵⁶ According to Origen, the Jews of Jesus' days were not believing in Jesus' miracles although they are greater than the miracles during the exodus.¹⁵⁷ The destruction of the temple is often seen as a divine punishment for Israel's rejection of Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁸ By contrast, a divine promise of correction such as Ezek 16:59 was referred not to the covenant of the law but to the covenant of grace, mediated by the apostles. Theodoret quotes Jer 31:31 in this context but does not mention that it is about the law.¹⁵⁹

2.7 *The Period of Transition in Church History*

In early Christianity, the apostles were allowing for temporal accommodation: Their Jewish addressees were not supposed to think that they would destroy their faith but lead them to the new way of worshipping God. This notion was based on the contrast between Acts 16:3 and Gal 2:14. Tertullian regarded the circumcision of Timothy as temporal accommodation,¹⁶⁰ Gregory of Nazianzen as ethical οἰκονομία,¹⁶¹ John Chrysostom as a procedure of οἰκοδομή.¹⁶²

3. Difference between the Old and the New Covenant

3.1 *The Mediator of the New Covenant*

Irenaeus deals with the Jewish denial of the Christian claim that the new covenant had become reality in Jesus Christ. The new covenant, Irenaeus emphasizes, had not already become reality in the reconstruction of the stone building of the Second Temple; after all, the law of Moses continued to be used.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁶ Justin, *dial.* 43.1, Bobichon I 288.

¹⁵⁷ Origen, *Cels.* 2:75, GCS 2:196. He refers to Luke 11:48 which stands in continuity to the motif "Israel and the fate of the prophets" well-known from 2 Chr 36:15–16.

¹⁵⁸ Eusebius, *d.e.* 1.6.38–40, GCS 23:28–29. For the motif of the destroying of the temple as the end of the old covenant, cf. also Athanasius, *in Psalm.* 126.1, PG 27:516cd. However, misconduct by Israelites can always serve as a warning against one's own misconduct (John Cassian, *coll* 24:17, CSEL 13:693, on Num 25).

¹⁵⁹ Theodoret, *in Ezek.* PG 81:953d–956a. In his exegesis on Gen 17:2, Philo, *mut. nom.* 52, COLSON, V 168, characterizes διαθήκη itself as a symbol of grace, given to those who are worthy to accept it.

¹⁶⁰ Tertullian, *pub.* 17.19, CC.SL 2:1317; cf. Tertullian, *monog.* 14.2, CC.SL 2:1249.

¹⁶¹ Gregory of Nazianzen, *or.* 31.25, FC 22:318–320.

¹⁶² John Chrysostom, *hom. in Act.* 34.3, PG 60:247.

¹⁶³ Irenaeus, *haer.* 4:34.4, FC 8/4:282.

Whereas an angel¹⁶⁴ or Moses¹⁶⁵ can be regarded as mediator of the old covenant, only Jesus Christ is regarded as mediator of the new one. This concept was justified by different biblical passages like 1 Tim 2:5, John 1:17, and Gal 4:5.¹⁶⁶ Justin also used Isa 42:6 as proof that God will not keep his glory but will give it to the servant of God.¹⁶⁷

3.2 The Addressees of the New Covenant

In Justin's argumentation, the inclusion of the Gentiles is based on the literal parallel of Isa 42:6–7: εἰς διαθήκην γένους, εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν.¹⁶⁸ The argument of experience, the conversion of many Gentiles from their idols just under the name of Jesus crucified, is an argument first put forward by Justin,¹⁶⁹ then repeated as fulfillment of Isa 54:1 and Gal 4:27. The new covenant provides regulations suitable not only for Israel but for every people.¹⁷⁰ The inclusion of Gentiles is a common motif in early Christianity, to be illustrated by texts from Tertullian,¹⁷¹ Athanasius,¹⁷² Leo I. of Rome, etc.¹⁷³ Prooftexts were Isa 2:2–4,¹⁷⁴ Ps 17:45,¹⁷⁵ Isa 17:6–8, 65:1,¹⁷⁶ Isa 42:6–7,¹⁷⁷ Acts 2:9–11,¹⁷⁸ Eph 3:6,¹⁷⁹ etc. Jewish openness for integrating non-Jews is not explicitly mentioned, although Judaism was an obstacle of concurrence in Antioch¹⁸⁰ or Edessa¹⁸¹ or elsewhere.¹⁸²

¹⁶⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *paed.* 1:59.1–2, GCS 12:124–25, referring to Exod 3:5.

¹⁶⁵ Theodore of Mopsuestia, in *Gal.*, Swete 76–77.

¹⁶⁶ Augustine, *tract. Ev. Io.* 3.2, CC.SL 36,20–21, refers to John 1:17 and Gal 4:5.

¹⁶⁷ Justin, *dial.* 65.4, Bobichon I 360.

¹⁶⁸ Justin, *dial.* 26.2, Bobichon I 246; cf. Justin, *dial.* 65.4 Bobichon I 360.

¹⁶⁹ Justin, *dial.* 11.4, Bobichon I 210–212.

¹⁷⁰ Justin, *dial.* 67.9–10, Bobichon I 364–366.

¹⁷¹ Tertullian, *adv. Iud.* 3.7, CC.SL 2:1345–46.

¹⁷² Athanasius, in *Psalm.* 9:20, PG 27:88b.

¹⁷³ Leo I., *tract.* 59.5, CC.SL 138A:356 ... *crux Christi non templi esset ara, sed mundi.*

¹⁷⁴ Tertullian, *adv. Iud.* 3.8, CC.SL 2:1346.

¹⁷⁵ Tertullian, *adv. Iud.* 3.11, CC.SL 2:1347.

¹⁷⁶ Irenaeus, *dem.* 91–92, FC 8/1:91.

¹⁷⁷ Justin, *dial.* 26.2, Bobichon I 246; cf. *dial.* 65.4 Bobichon I 360.

¹⁷⁸ Tertullian, *adv. Iud.* 7.4, CC.SL 2:1354, who expands this list.

¹⁷⁹ Irenaeus, *haer.* 1:10.3, FC 8/1:202.

¹⁸⁰ John Chrysostom, *adv. Iud.* 1:5.1, PG 48:850.

¹⁸¹ LANGE, *Ephraem I*, 17–18.

¹⁸² KINZIG, *Ephraem* 139–145, presents a wealth of material with regard to Jewish practices concerning table fellowship, mixed sexual relations, ownership of slaves, medicine, and rites.

3.3 The Necessity of the New Covenant also for Christians

At the beginning of his homilies on the Gospel of Matthew, John Chrysostom states that Christians should not actually be dependent on the aid of the Holy Scriptures; instead they should live a life guided by the Holy Spirit instead of the Holy Scriptures. Why, however, do they need the Holy Scriptures? God personally interacted with Abraham and Moses; but since the Jewish people fell into the abyss of sin, God gave them the Holy Scriptures to admonish them. In the end, however, there is no difference to the religion of the new covenant either: Christians have gone astray, partly in matters of faith, partly in their way of life; therefore, they also need admonitions through the written word.¹⁸³ Jesus does not want to diminish the meaning of the Old Testament but increase it. If the Old Testament does not lead to the kingdom of heaven, it is not because of its inferiority; otherwise the same would apply to the New. When Christians are in heaven, then the new covenant will also end.¹⁸⁴

Jerome is adamant in his refutation of the Montanist's claim that only the coming of the Holy Spirit in Montanus, Prisca and Maximilla brought salvation, not the ineffective two covenants (partially based on 1 Cor 13:12).¹⁸⁵

3.4 New Law and New Gifts of the New Covenant

The idea of the new law¹⁸⁶ is based on the future tense of the verb in Isa 51:4 (νόμος παρ' ἐμοῦ ἐξελεύσεται¹⁸⁷). According to the patristic concept of "Introduction in the Old Testament", Isa 51:4 cannot refer to the Pentateuch, since Moses is regarded as its human author.¹⁸⁸ In general, early Christian authors claim that Jesus Christ is the lawgiver.¹⁸⁹

The gifts of the new covenant are in accordance to the new, spiritual worship of God. The spiritual character of those gifts was a major theme in Augustine's theology. The new covenant unveiled what was veiled in the old, namely that the one true God should not be worshipped for the sake of earthly and transitory good deeds, which divine providence indiscriminately bestows on the good and on the evil, but for the sake of eternal life, for the sake of enduring gifts, and for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 1.1, PG 57:13.

¹⁸⁴ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 16.4–5, PG 57:244.

¹⁸⁵ Jerome, *ep.* 41.4, CSEL 54:314.

¹⁸⁶ Justin, *dial.* 34.1, Bobichon I 264.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. also νόμος ἐξελεύσεται in Isa 2:3; Mic 4:2.

¹⁸⁸ Justin, *dial.* 34.3–6, Bobichon I 266–268. Therefore, Ps 71 is not addressed to Solomon but to Jesus.

¹⁸⁹ Athanasius, *in Psalm.* 9:21, PG 27:88a.

¹⁹⁰ Augustine, *civ.* 5:18 fine, CSEL 40/1:251. Cf. also Augustine, *civ.* 4:33, CSEL 40/1:207.

3.5 *Appropriate Human Behavior: Fear vs. Love*

The difference between the circumstances of mediating the two covenants – Justin¹⁹¹ and Leo I. of Rome¹⁹² emphasize the calm vs. the fearful style of mediation – has its corollary in the intended effects in the receivers. According to Clement of Alexandria, the old covenant contains the commandment to fear God, the new one to love him¹⁹³; Deut 6:4–5 is absent from this argumentation. With true freedom, a human fulfills a law not out of fear but love. In a similar way, Leo describes the difference between Christian and Jewish fasting, which he strongly devalues.¹⁹⁴ In general, spiritual worship of God is appropriate;¹⁹⁵ of course, also the act of offering is spiritualized, for example as gifts associated with praise,¹⁹⁶ etc.

3.6 *The New Covenant and Religious Practice*

3.6.1 *Understanding the Holy Scripture*

Regarding human fulfillment of the Law, the dichotomy “carnal – spiritual” is prominent since Justin and Tertullian.¹⁹⁷ For Origen, it was one of the main issues of his theology to establish a spiritual reading of Holy Scriptures that met the intellectual demands of his time and simultaneously promoted Christian separation from Judaism. The spiritual, not the literal, understanding of Holy Scripture corresponds to the existence in the new covenant.¹⁹⁸ Jerome emphasizes the onerous character of Jewish ceremonies – he disregards Ps 118[119]:70 for this purpose.¹⁹⁹

Sometimes this spiritual understanding of the Law caused an aggressive anti-Jewish polemic with regard to Jewish customs at the author’s own time. Augustine criticizes Jews who use the Sabbath “for luxuriousness and drunkenness. How much better would their women be employed in spinning wool than in dancing on that day in the balconies?”²⁰⁰

¹⁹¹ Justin, *dial.* 67.9–10, Bobichon I 364–366.

¹⁹² Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 95.1, CC.SL 138 A:583.

¹⁹³ Clement of Alexandria, *paed.* 1:59.1–2, GCS 12:124–25.

¹⁹⁴ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 89.3, CC.SL 138 A:553.

¹⁹⁵ Eusebius, *d.e.* 6:38–40, GCS 23:28–29, quotes John 4:23–24 in order to characterize the new way of worship.

¹⁹⁶ Athanasius, *in Psalm* 49, prolog., PG 27:229b.

¹⁹⁷ Tertullian, *or.* 1.2, CC.SL 1:257. Cf. also Augustine, *civ.* 18:31, CSEL 40/2:312.

¹⁹⁸ Origen, *Cels.* 6:70, GCS 3:140.

¹⁹⁹ Jerome, *adv. Pel.* 2:28, CC.SL 80: 93: *duro pondere.*

²⁰⁰ Augustine, *tract. Ev. Io.* 3.19, CC.SL 36:29.

3.6.2 Stricter Demands in the New Covenant

The motif of supersession of the new covenant is realized also with regard to ethics. In early times the polygamy of the patriarchs, an object of critique by anti-Christian pagans and Manicheans,²⁰¹ served as example.

Tertullian points out that even in the old covenant people lived monogamously.²⁰² Isaac was married only once; therefore those who consider themselves Isaac's offspring according to the apostle Paul (Rom 9:7) could not justify polygamy for Christians, laymen or clergy.²⁰³ According to Methodius of Olympus, polygamy was only a temporary concession, necessary due to the small population of the earth. However, the gift of the Law prepared humans in their moral development under Christ of virginity.²⁰⁴

By contrast, still Theodoret reports that Christian believers would have referred to the polygamy of Abraham to justify their debauchery.²⁰⁵ Ps.-Athanasius points to Jesus' skepticism even to monogamy (Luke 14:26), relating the exact wording of Gen 2:24^{LXX}: it is said *καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν*, and not *οἱ τρεῖς*.²⁰⁶ The polygamy of the patriarchs, this author concludes, is the result of the devil's tyranny.²⁰⁷

In John Chrysostom's homilies, this motif of stricter demands is present when he discusses subjects as swearing,²⁰⁸ gratitude in illness and poverty,²⁰⁹ and almsgiving.²¹⁰ Should those who should have surpassed the righteous under the old law be inferior to the philosophers among the pagans?²¹¹ Those who live after the coming of Christ have received a higher grace and are called to greater struggles.²¹² Sometimes the punishments according to the Old Testament are milder in comparison to the New. Whereas David, guilty of adultery and murder, is saved by repentance, Ananias, who kept only a part of his proceeds for himself, is punished with death. According to the author, the

²⁰¹ NISULA, *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence*, 224.

²⁰² According to Tertullian, *uxor.* 1:2.3, CC.SL 1:375, it was necessary to introduce things that would later be eliminated by the Law. This was required to perfect the Law.

²⁰³ Tertullian, *monog.* 11.4, CC.SL 2:1244.

²⁰⁴ Methodius of Olympus, *symp.* 1:2, SC 95:56–58. Therefore, Gen 1:28 is a command which is restricted to the era before Christ.

²⁰⁵ Theodoret of Cyrus, *qu. Gen.* 67, PG 80:176a.

²⁰⁶ Ps.-Athanasius, *qu. ad Antiochum Duce*m 98, PG 28:657cd.

²⁰⁷ Ps.-Athanasius, *qu. ad Antiochum Duce*m 98, PG 28:657d–660a.

²⁰⁸ John Chrysostom, *hom. stat.* 19.4, PG 49:195.

²⁰⁹ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Eph.* 19.2, PG 62:129–130, referring to Sir 2:4.

²¹⁰ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Eph.* 4.4, PG 62:36.

²¹¹ John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 21.4, PG 57:300.

²¹² John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 52.5, PG 58:525. – Matt 5:20 gives the rationale (John Chrysostom, *hom. in Matt.* 56.2, PG 58:551; Ambrosiaster, *qu. nov. test. app.* 66, CSEL 50, 460).

reason for this unequal treatment is the inequality of persons.²¹³ Similarly, Quodvultdeus justified the relatively mild penalty in John 8:11 compared to the death penalty for adulterers by tightening Matt 5:28.²¹⁴

Also Leo I. of Rome uses this parenetic strategy, combined with anti-Jewish polemics: Christians should not fail where Jews have failed.²¹⁵ Jesus Christ is the end of the law (Rom 10:4), not in the sense that he had proved the models relating to him null and void but by fulfilling them. Although the old and new covenant have the same author, he transformed the mysterious customs of the exemplary promises by fulfilling the promise and, by his coming, put an end to the prophecies. But in the moral law nothing of what the earlier testament commanded was abolished!²¹⁶ Even though the old law with its variety of types and strict compulsion is a matter of the past, the salutary demands on the people of the new covenant, although they are now voluntary, have grown.²¹⁷

4. The Reception History of Some Biblical Texts

4.1 *The Reception of Ps 43[44]:17; 49[50]:16; 77[78]:10*

4.1.1 *Ps 43:17[18]*

This text is interpreted either generally as referring to sins²¹⁸ or tribulations,²¹⁹ or specifically as referring to the distress²²⁰ or the virtue²²¹ of the pious during the Maccabean revolt.

4.1.2. *Ps 49:16*

In the interpretation of this text, general accusations and criticism of the Jews or heretic teachers can be found side by side. Eusebius of Caesarea emphasizes that the author characterizes the sinner not by *ἄλλότριος τῶν Γραφῶν* but *παράβιας*. The point of *παράβιας* is not the ritual law but the natural law that is exemplified by the golden rule.²²² In the fourth and fifth century, some commentators read the passage as a general warning against the contradiction

²¹³ John Chrysostom, *hom. in 1 Cor.* 16.2, PG 61:131.

²¹⁴ Quodvultdeus, *lib. prom.* 2:1/2, CC.SL 60:69–70.

²¹⁵ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 88.1, CC.SL 138 A:546.

²¹⁶ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 63.5, CC.SL 138 A:385–386.

²¹⁷ Leo I. of Rome, *tract.* 63.5, CC.SL 138 A:385.

²¹⁸ John Chrysostom, *in Psalm.*, PG 55:179. He refers to the structure of a covenant: οὐκ ἠδικήσαμεν περὶ ταῦτα ἃ ἐπιστεύθημεν.

²¹⁹ Augustine, *en. Ps.* 43:17, CC.SL 38:489.

²²⁰ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *in Psalm*, Hill 550.

²²¹ Diodor, *in Psalm.*, CC.SG 6:265; Theodoret, *in Psalm.*, PG 80:1184b; similarly (without using the term ἄρετή) Nicephorus Blemmyda, *in Psalm.*, PG 142:1460d.

²²² Eusebius of Caesarea, *in Psalm.*, PG 23:437a.

between self-claim and practice.²²³ The critique against Jews can be rather general²²⁴ or more specifically against priests and scribes.²²⁵ Cassiodorus offers two different interpretations, first a general warning of sin and second, a general attack against heretical teachers who pretend to teach God's law.²²⁶

4.1.3 Ps 77:10

In the reception of this passage one can observe both admonition and anti-Jewish polemic. Theodore of Mopsuestia interprets the psalm on the whole as directed against Jews but not explicitly as proof of Christian superiority. He refers the charge in Ps 77:10 to the veneration of other deities, in contrast to God's command in Exod 20:2.²²⁷ According to Theodore, David proved well (καλῶς) that human beings have a free will.²²⁸ Augustine reads the passage in the light of the preceding *conversi sunt in die belli* as a general warning: *quia promissionem oboedientiae non auditio, sed tentatio probat.*²²⁹ Cassiodorus, however, only offers anti-Jewish polemic: *hoc sic planum est, ut expositione non egeat.*²³⁰

4.2 The Reception of 2 Cor 3:6, 14

In the Eastern tradition, John Chrysostom's homilies on Second Corinthians were seminal. In his interpretation of 2 Cor 3:6, the demarcation to Judaism is obvious,²³¹ but the emphasis on the Spirit who makes humans alive focuses on ethical implications. At first, he has to balance Rom 7:14 and 2 Cor 3:6 and explains that the law is spiritual, but cannot mediate the Holy Spirit.²³² The mortifying character of the γράμμα is related to the punishment of the sinner²³³ exemplified by the execution of the man who collected wood on the Sabbath

²²³ Diodor, in *Psalm.*, CC.SG 6:308; Theodor of Mopsuestia, in *Psalm.*, Hill 660; Augustine, *en. Ps.* 49:23, CC.SL 38:592; John Chrysostom, in *Psalm.*, PG 55:250; Theodore, in *Psalm.*, PG 80:1206b.

²²⁴ Cyril of Alexandria, in *Psalm.*, PG 69:1084b: the Jew is still a servant of sin.

²²⁵ Nicephorus Blemmyda, in *Psalm.*, PG 142:1469b.

²²⁶ Cassiodorus, in *Psalm.*, CC.SL 97:448–449.

²²⁷ Theodor of Mopsuestia, in *Psalm.*, Hill 1044; similarly Eusebius of Caesarea, in *Psalm.*, PG 23:912a, who mentions the veneration of foreign deities in Samaria.

²²⁸ Theodore, in *Psalm.*, PG 80:1488a.

²²⁹ Augustine, *en. Ps.* 77.10, CC.SL 39:1075.

²³⁰ Cassiodorus, *expos. Ps.* 77.10, CC.SL 98:713.

²³¹ According to John Chrysostom and John of Damascus, the old covenant was given because of arrogant people within Judaism (John Chrysostom, *hom. in 2 Cor.* 6.2, PG 61:438; John of Damascus, in *2 Cor.*, PG 95:720d).

²³² John Chrysostom, *hom. in 2 Cor.* 6.2, PG 61:438.

²³³ John Chrysostom, *hom. in 2 Cor.* 6.2, PG 61:438; Theodore, in *2 Cor.*, PG 82:393b; John of Damascus, in *2 Cor.*, PG 95:721a; Ps.-Oecumenius, in *2 Cor.*, PG 118:948b.

(Num 15:32–36).²³⁴ The Spirit is mediated through baptism.²³⁵ The phrase τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ is related to ethics: To make human beings alive is to make them better, to convert them from their former sins.²³⁶ If the Spirit is given to humans (John 20:23), then they should not fall back to their former life; similarly Jesus Christ will henceforth not die (Rom 6:10).²³⁷

In their exegesis of 2 Cor 3:14,²³⁸ John Chrysostom and John of Damascus emphasize that the Jews do not understand the glory of the old covenant, which consists of conversion to Christ.²³⁹ They do not see that the Law ceases because they do not believe in Christ. For if the Law is ended through Christ, how should they perceive it if they do not believe?²⁴⁰ Different answers were given to the question where in Christ the end of the law becomes visible. John Chrysostom referred to the cleansing of the temple and its destruction, Ps.-Oecumenius of Tricca to Jesus' healings on the Sabbath and the antitheses (Matt 5); both find the end of the Law announced in Deut 18:15, 19.²⁴¹

Concerning 2 Cor 3:18, it may suffice to mention two aspects: John Chrysostom defines transformation as cleaning of human souls.²⁴² According to Theodoret, only Moses had the glory under the old covenant; now, all of the believers have it. But, drawing to Matt 5:8, this is true only for those with a pure heart.²⁴³

4.3 The Reception of Jer 38[31]:31–34 and Heb 8:8–13

A look at early church receptions of Jer 38:31–34 shows:

1. The passage was not referenced too often; the occurrence in Origen, mentioned earlier, is not too important; the passage remains unmentioned in Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Salamis and the Cappadocians. In some commentaries it hinted at implicitly.

2. Where the text is quoted, both the aspect of surpassing and that of continuity were perceived in it.

²³⁴ John Chrysostom, *hom. in 2 Cor.* 6.3, PG 61:438.

²³⁵ John Chrysostom, *hom. in 2 Cor.* 6.2, PG 61:438; Theodoret, *in 2 Cor.*, PG 82:393b.

²³⁶ John Chrysostom, *hom. in 2 Cor.* 6.3, PG 61:438.

²³⁷ John Chrysostom, *hom. in 2 Cor.* 6.3, PG 61:439.

²³⁸ On the reception history of 2 Cor 3:14 vde. the exhaustive presentation in ROUKEMA, "Veil", 240–247.

²³⁹ John Chrysostom, *hom. in 2 Cor.* 7.2, PG 61:445; John of Damascus, *in 2 Cor.*, PG 95:721d. According to Theodoret, *in 2 Cor.*, PG 82:396c, 2 Cor 3:14 in general is valid for people without faith, not especially for unbelieving Jews.

²⁴⁰ John Chrysostom, *hom. in 2 Cor.* 7.3, PG 61:445; Theodoret, *in 2 Cor.*, PG 82:396c; John of Damascus, *in 2 Cor.*, PG 95:724a.

²⁴¹ John Chrysostom, *hom. in 2 Cor.* 7.3, PG 61:446; Ps.-Oecumenius, *in 2 Cor.*, PG 118:953a.

²⁴² John Chrysostom, *hom. in 2 Cor.* 7.5, PG 61:448.

²⁴³ Theodoret, *in 2 Cor.*, PG 82:379d.

Justin took the passage from Trypho as an apologetic argument that Christians, despite their departure from the literally understood ceremonial law, may feel that they belong to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.²⁴⁴ According to Irenaeus, Jer 31:31–34 refers to the calling of the pagans as proclaimed in Isa 17:6–8; 65:1.²⁴⁵ Tertullian quotes Jer 31:31 (sic!) and Jer 4:4 as proof that the creator himself foretold the new covenant by the prophets where the Jewish ceremonies are abrogated, according to the new dispensation,²⁴⁶ but also as an anti-Marcionite proof for the unity of the God of both testaments.²⁴⁷ This interpretation reoccurs in the dialogue of Adamantius,²⁴⁸ Ps.-Polychronius of Apameia,²⁴⁹ and Theodoret.²⁵⁰ Cyprian read Jer 31:31 as biblical proof for the necessity of a new covenant²⁵¹ but also as an admonition to fear God.²⁵² Clement of Alexandria refers in particular to the statement of the laws written on the heart and the possibility of knowing God’s salutary work in Christ, to which non-Christians should respond with their conversion to Christianity. The usual interpretation then became the abrogation of the ritual Torah, to which the Christians are no longer bound.²⁵³ On the basis of the concept of a spiritual reading of the ritual Torah, Ambrosiaster formulates simply: *Noster ergo profeta est Hieremias*.²⁵⁴ Jerome, too, in his commentary on Jer 38, offers such an interpretation; Christians are free from the human statutes of Judaism; rather, they are taught by the Holy Spirit, whose work leads to the possession of all virtues through the knowledge of the one God. But he also deals with a well-known problem: *Quod autem pactum pro testamento ponimus, Hebraicae veritatis est, licet et testamentum recte pactum appellatur, quia voluntas in eo atque testatio eorum, qui pactum ineunt, continetur*.²⁵⁵

Jerome also addresses the possible objection that the church of the Gentiles can hardly be identified with the addressees of the promise: “But if someone has doubts as to why he said: I will make a covenant with the house of Israel ..., the answer is this: the first Christian congregation consisted of Jews, and the Lord came to them and said, ‘I came only to the lost sheep of Israel (Matt 15:24)’; the apostles also confirmed this: ‘the Word of God was to be proclaimed to you first, and now you reject it and prove yourselves unworthy

²⁴⁴ Justin, *dial.* 11.1, Bobichon I 210.

²⁴⁵ Irenaeus, *dem.* 90–92, FC 8/1:90–91.

²⁴⁶ Tertullian, *adv. Iud.* 3.8, CC.SL 2:1346.

²⁴⁷ Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* 4:1.6, CC.SL 1:546.

²⁴⁸ Adamantius, *dial.* 23, GCS 4:44.

²⁴⁹ Polychronius (?), *frgm. in Jer.*, PG 64:981a.

²⁵⁰ Theodoret, *in Jer.*, PG 81:665c–668a.

²⁵¹ Cyprian, *test.* 1:11, CC.SL 3:13–14.

²⁵² Cyprian, *test.* 3:20, CC.SL 3:115.

²⁵³ Clement of Alexandria, *prot.* 114.1–115.2, GCS 12:80–81.

²⁵⁴ Ambrosiaster, *quaest. test.* 44.12, CSEL 50:78.

²⁵⁵ Jerome, *Ier.* 6:26.4, CC.SL 74:319–320.

of eternal life; behold, now we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46)'. For it did not serve to give the bread of atonement to the dogs (Matt 15:26), but since the sons did not want to know the Father when he came into his possession, it gave (scil. the word of God) to all the authority that those who received him should become sons of God (John 1:11–12).²⁵⁶

It is worth comparing the interpretations of Jer 38[31]:31–34 and Heb 8:8–13 by one and the same author, Theodoret. His interpretation of Heb 8 is not spectacular. According to Theodoret, the Old Testament promises earthly gifts such as the land flowing with milk and honey; the New Testament promises the gift of eternal life and the kingdom of heaven, which is why it is superior. Heb 8:8–12 is *ἄγών* in favor of the New Testament, after the superiority of Christ's priestly ministry according to the order of Melchizedek over the priesthood of the old covenant had previously been shown in Heb 7.²⁵⁷ If the first tabernacle had been impeccable, no second place would have been sought. But because the Old Testament is unable to convey eternal life, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews disregards it.²⁵⁸ The continued validity of the ethical content of the Old Testament is, of course, not affected by this assessment.

In his interpretation of Jer 38, Theodoret combines the line of reasoning that is critical of Israel with one that is anti-Marcionite: The one God is the *νομοθέτης* of both covenants, but the first covenant was imperfect; otherwise a second covenant would not have been necessary. The incarnate Word is the donor of the gifts of the gospel.²⁵⁹ He was the one who liberated Israel from Egypt and said, "I am who I am" (Exod 3:14). And this word is enough to uncover the Jewish *παρανομία* as well as the heretical *βλασφημία*.²⁶⁰ Theodoret points to the situation of the Sermon on the Mount when he suggests that God writes the law on people's hearts: Christ wrote the divine laws into the hearts of the apostles and gave the Beatitudes to the keepers of virtue. The statement about the future knowledge of God refers to the eschatological future, because there humans no longer need instruction: first, things will be obvious, second, affects will no longer work, and third, bodies will be indestructible.²⁶¹

5. Conclusion

The motif of the covenant was important for the groups relying on Jesus to formulate proximity and distance, connection and contradiction within a

²⁵⁶ Jerome, *Ier.* 6:26.8–9, CC.SL 74:320.

²⁵⁷ Theodoret, *in Hebr.*, PG 82:736d.

²⁵⁸ Theodoret, *in Hebr.*, PG 82:737b.

²⁵⁹ Theodoret, *in Jer.*, PG 81:665cd.

²⁶⁰ Theodoret, *in Jer.*, PG 81:668a.

²⁶¹ Theodoret, *in Jer.*, PG 81:668b.

competitive situation.²⁶² As time moved on, however, the emphasis shifted increasingly to the aspects of distance and contradiction. Those Jews who did not believe in Jesus were always perceived as a de-legitimization of a Christian claim to universality.

In terms of textual criticism, however, Old Testament texts were preserved as texts on their own. Old Testament quotations in the New Testament are not automatically corrected to the New Testament text-form. This does however not include hermeneutical consequences which could have reduced the thoroughgoing Christian anti-Judaism.²⁶³

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²⁶² Cf. MCMICHAEL, “Covenant”, 46, who exposes distinct factors: The ongoing validity of moral obligations, the inclusion of Gentiles, the principle of faith instead of the principle of physical descent, the unity in the economy of salvation, the difference of the covenants, and the interpretation of Israel’s Holy Scripture. His overview is useful, but I would stress the diachronic shift.

²⁶³ Warm thanks to Richard J. Bault for improving my English.

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