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THE COVENANT OF REDEMPTION AND BIBLICAL REASONING:
AN EXEGESIS OF HEBREWS 7:20-25

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Introduction

The Covenant of Redemption has oft been described as extrabiblical or theologoumena, even though it has historic pedigree and a culmination of exegetical grounding, as Richard Muller has demonstrated.[1] Its extrabiblical reputation is not without merit, since Scripture lacks this terminology. However, the doctrine is biblical, and the path forward to establish its biblical merit is by returning to a mode of reasoning derived from the Bible. I will argue for the Covenant of Redemption from the epistle to the Hebrews, centering on a close exegesis of Hebrews 7:20-25 shown in the light of biblical reasoning.[2] This unit in Hebrews shows a substructure of salvation, and while the Covenant in its fullness cannot be defended from this unit in Hebrews, it nonetheless supplements our understanding of the Covenant of Redemption.[3] I will proceed by explaining the methodology of biblical reasoning, the patterns of covenant in Hebrews, and into a theological exegesis of Hebrews 7:20-25. Throughout the exegetical portion, I will present dialogues to ground the exegesis in its context. The thesis is twofold: preparing the way for the Covenant of Redemption in Scripture by biblical reasoning and showing the way of the Covenant of Redemption in Hebrews. The conclusion will be that Hebrews 7:20-25 is a profound prooftext for the Covenant of Redemption when seen in the light of biblical reasoning.

Methodology

Biblical Reasoning

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[1] Richard A. Muller, "Toward the *Pactum Salutis*: Locating the Origins of a Concept," *MJT* 18 (2007): 11-65. Letham, for example, argues that since it lacks confessional status, it is theological opinion. Unlike the pre-fall covenant, it has not attained confessional status and so, while commonly expounded and defended, is still more of a theological opinion: "It has not attained confessional status and so, while commonly expounded and defended, is still more of a theological opinion." *Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 432; O. Palmer Robertson famously opined: "To speak concretely of an intertrinitarian "covenant" with terms and conditions between Father and Son mutually endorsed before the foundation of the world is to extend the bounds of scriptural evidence beyond propriety." *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), 54.

[2] John Webster, *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason* (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 128.

[3] Defining the Covenant of Redemption in its systematic theological terms is beyond the scope of this project. However, I will be operating off of the default Reformed definitions, especially from the Dutch. Vos defines it as, "The agreement between the will of the Father in giving the Son as head and redeemer of the elect and the will of the Son in presenting Himself for them as surety." *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. and trans. Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012–2016), 90. He describes Christ's role in the Covenant of Redemption: "Christ also bears this name in relation to the covenant of grace, which flows from the counsel of peace. He became 'surety' by taking upon Himself in eternity the obligations of His own. But He is also presented in time as the surety for believers and appears as such where the covenant of grace between God and them is formally concluded. This suretyship thus binds the counsel of peace and the covenant of grace to each other." For more on the Covenant of Redemption, see Guy M. Richard, "The Covenant of Redemption," in *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muether (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 43-61; Douglas F. Kelly, *Systematic Theology: Grounded in Holy Scripture and Understood in the Light of the Church* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Mentor, 2008), 398–400.

John Webster coined the phrase "Biblical Reasoning."[4] The phrase describes Webster's articulation of the relation between dogmatic reasoning and exegetical reasoning.[5] When these are rightly ordered by grace, they operate in an orderly manner, a mutually informative, reciprocal manner: "Rather than implying a one-way arrow from exegesis to dogmatics, a proper construal of their relationship recognizes two-way traffic."[6] Webster defines it as "the redeemed intellect's reflective apprehension of God's gospel address through the embassy of Scripture, enabled and corrected by God's presence, and having fellowship with him as its end." Biblical reasoning is a description, in part, of the mind redeemed as it reflects on the Triune God, as well as its environment, the Triune God. So, when we read the biblical text, we are redeemed thinkers in process as we consider the Triune God in his presence. So, while biblical reasoning accounts for redemption in the mind, it likewise, accounts for the noetic effects of sin.

Biblical reasoning is pushing back against the divorce of systematic theology and exegetical theology, or as Webster puts it, "the tug-of-war between 'historical' and 'theological' interpretation."[7] This divorce attempted to free each discipline from the restrictions imposed by the other.[8] Yet, this resulted in a more fundamental restriction, circumventing the biblical scholar's ability to reckon with the theological nature of Scripture. These disciplines are not at odds, however. Rather, biblical reasoning argues that these disciplines can be rightly ordered in redeemed reasoning, reasoning in light of the Triune God who speaks in his divine Word.[9] To

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[4] John Webster, *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason* (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 128. For more on the nature of biblical reasoning, see Michael Allen, "Theological Theology: Webster's Theological Project," in *A Companion to the Theology of John Webster*, ed. Michael Allen and R. David Nelson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), 28–29.

[5] Webster defines dogmatic reasoning as, "Dogmatic reasoning produces a conceptual representation of what reason has learned from its exegetical following of the scriptural text." He defines exegetical reasoning as, "Exegetical reasoning is, most simply, reading the Bible, the intelligent (and therefore spiritual) act of following the words of the text." *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason*, 130.

[6] R.B. Jamieson and Tyler R. Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Academic, 2022), xix.

[7] Webster, *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason*, 116.

[8] Brueggemann describes this historical development: "Thus historical-critical studies undertaken by university professors ... were an attempt to stake out a zone of emancipated scholarly reasoning that did not need to conform to the dogmatic requirements of restrictive church theology." "Old Testament Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, ed. J. W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 676.

[9] Biblical reasoning is not a recent innovation but can be traced back deep into the community of interpreters especially St. Augustine and Gregory of Nazianzus. The latter writes, for example, "Time and time again you repeat the argument about 'not being in the Bible.' … The fact stands already proved by a host of people who have discussed the subject, all men who read the Holy Scriptures not in a frivolous, cursory way, but with penetration so that they saw inside the written text to its inner meaning. They were found fit to perceive the hidden loveliness; they were illuminated by the light of knowledge." *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius*, ed. John Behr,

contrast, biblical reasoning is juxtaposed to Biblicist reasoning. The problem with Biblicism is under-interpretation of Scripture because its default argument is an appeal of absence of explicit evidence, even though explicit evidence is oft undefined. Biblicist reasoning, therefore, is a type of anti-reasoning, demanding an exclusion of reasoning and reckoning with the concepts and judgements of the whole. Biblicism falls prey to Enlightenment principles of unbiased, impartial empirical interpretation of the brute fact of Scripture, attempting to interpret without the accumulation of biblical exegesis and theological reflection of the church.[10]

Biblical reasoning empowers the interpreter to exegete the substructure, the divine discourse deep within Scripture. Biblical reasoning is not an imposition of dogmatics, but it is an exposition of "what must be the case if everything Scripture says is true."[11] Jamieson and Wittman write, "As much or perhaps more than they erect a superstructure upon Scripture, dogmatic judgements discern just the reverse: a substructure. … dogmatic judgements, as it were, plunge beneath the surface of the text's discrete assertions."[12] Biblical reasoning empowers the interpreter to see what is there *in* the text of Scripture.[13] The rhythm follows the sequence of exegetical theology to dogmatic theology—these in dialogue: "theology thinks from Scripture, with Scripture, and to Scripture."[14] This rhythm engages in two-way traffic. Jamieson and Wittman write, "Dogmatic judgements and concepts that are properly derived from exegesis can enrich and direct exegesis."[15] The concepts, which are derived from Scripture, are used when interpreting Scripture. Swain writes, "The task of dogmatics in relation to the covenant of redemption is not simply to indicate the biblical texts from which this doctrine arises but also to explicate, as far as possible, the pattern of biblical reasoning by which it emerges."[16] The epistle of the *Diatheke* exhibits and engages in this pattern of biblical reasoning.

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trans. Frederick Williams and Lionel Wickham, Popular Patristics Series (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), 133.

[10] Letham describes tradition in this manner. *Systematic Theology*, 222.

[11] Jamieson and Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis*, xx.

[12] Jamieson and Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis*, xx.

[13] In Presbyterian parlance, "The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or *by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture*" (WCF 1.4).

[14] Jamieson and Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis*, xviii.

[15] Jamieson and Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis*, xviii.

[16] Scott R. Swain, "Covenant of Redemption," in *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic*, ed. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 118–119.

Biblical reasoning operates off of established rules. These are rules derived from the theological grammar or pressure (principles) exerted by the biblical text. Jamieson and Wittman provide two rules informative for our project. The first is the *analogy of faith*, which they describe as, "To rightly respond to God's pedagogical pressures in his Word, read Scripture as a unity, interpreting its parts in light of the whole."[17] The second is the *pedagogical pressure* where we read Scripture presupposing a larger theological vision.[18] To these two rules, I am adding a third rule for the purposes of this project: *redemption and revelation*. This rule is premised on the nature of revelation in that its content is historical execution and its context is eternal. The subject matter of revelation is redemption and its organic outworking in time. For example, the Scriptures do not speak of God as Trinity in isolation of his work in redemption, even though we can extrapolate back (i.e., Eph. 1:3-11). Swain writes, "*Revelation*, then, refers to this eloquent and radiant dimension of God's covenantal self-communication *ad extra*."[19] This principle dictates the rule of reading past, as it were, the Covenant of Grace, down into the Covenant of Redemption. Myers writes, "The eternal redemptive covenant is related organically to its outworking in history."[20] This organic connection between means that the Covenant of Redemption is not spoken of in isolation but in connection to the Covenant of Grace. Myers writes, "When that eternal covenant is discussed, *the Scriptures always reveal it as being in organic unity with the covenant of grace*."[21] Yet, the Covenant of Redemption is particularly perceivable in meta-discourses where redemptive-covenantal history is reflected upon by the biblical authors.

Context

Covenant in Hebrews

Covenant is an architectonic concept in Hebrews since "covenant (διαθήκη)" occurs seventeen times throughout the epistle.[22] Vos writes, "Hebrews makes the covenant-idea

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[17] Jamieson and Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis*, 239.

[18] Jamieson and Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis*, 239.

[19] Scott R. Swain, *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and Its Interpretation* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 8. Swain reflects on this elsewhere: "The pactum salutis teaches us that the story which unfolds on the stage of history is the story of an intra-trinitarian fellowship of salvation, a fellowship that reaches back 'before the world began' (17:5) and that continues even to 'the hour' of Jesus' cross, resurrection and ascension (17:1)." Quoted in Myers 89, footnote 26. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 24 of New Studies in Biblical Theology (England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2008), 170.

[20] Stephen G. Myers, *God to Us* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2021), 87.

[21] Myers, *God to Us*, 89. Emphasis mine.

[22] Heb. 7:22, 8:6, 8:8, 8:9, 8:10, 9:4, 9:15, 9:16, 9:17, 9:20, 10:16, 10:29, 12:24, 13:20. Canonically speaking, the epistle to the Hebrews utilizes concept more times than the entire New Testament together. Vos writes, "This makes

central."[23] The center of the debate is the nature of the newness of the New Covenant. The degree of newness is disputed on a scale of continuity to discontinuity.[24] Cara describes the relationship between the covenants as a "*contrast within continuity.*"[25] He argues for two types of contrasts, antithetical and graded. Yet, Cara argues that "the continuity of *God* and his redemptive plan is more basic than the contrasts taking place as this plan unfolds."[26] God is the basis of continuity, even when in his plan, contrasts occur but not contradiction.[27] Within the deeper continuity, the contrasts exist, and so the newness enters through Christ's redemptive work, his mediation and suretyship, his High Priesthood and victimhood, and how these aspects of his person are efficacious for redemption—unto perfection, unlike the blood of bulls (Heb. 10:4; cf. 9:13-14). Yet, the infrastructure for Christ's redemptive work is derived from the Mosaic covenant, as he fulfills his duty as the High Priest and victim, and even the shape of redemption flows from the Mosaic covenant, as it is the Mosaic law written into the hearts of the people as they participate in their priestly duties in the new eschatological temple, as it is to Mount Zion that Christians come who have been made perfect on the basis of the New Covenant, a perfection of consecration to priesthood (Heb. 12:22-24).[28] The manner of comparison made by the author builds on this point

sixteen instances of its occurrence outside of Hebrews. Over against this stand seventeen occurrences in Hebrews alone. In other words in this single epistle the conception is more frequent than in all the rest of the New Testament writings put together." *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001), 161. The term "covenant" is characterized by "better (κρείττονος)", "new (καινῆς)," "first (πρώτη)," "new (νέας)," and "eternal (αἰωνίου)."[22] The term is in relation to "surety (ἔγγυος)," "mediator (μεσίτης)," "house of Judah," "ark (κιβωτὸν)," "tablets (πλάκες)," "death," "blood."[22] Covenants are mediated (ἐστιν … μεσίτης, 8:6), completed (συντελέσω, 8:8), made (ἐποίησα, 8:9), continued (ἐνέμειναν, 8:9), commanded (ἐνετείλατο, 9:20), covenanted (διαθήσομαι, 10:16). The main covenants in view are the first covenant with Moses and the New Covenant drawn directly from Jeremiah, the New Covenant being better built on the basis of better promises (8:6).

[23] Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, 227.

[24] For the different interpretations on the relationship between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant in Jeremiah, see G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 728.

[25] Robert J. Cara, "Covenant in Hebrews," in *Covenant Theology*, 249. Italics are original. Likewise, Brandon Crowe describes this as a "*relative* newness." *The Path of Faith: A Biblical Theology of Covenant and Law*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2021), 145.

[26] Cara, "Covenant in Hebrews," in *Covenant Theology*, 249.

[27] Beale writes, "God's gracious initiative in establishing a relationship with Israel at Sinai overlaps with the new covenant, since God will again exercise a gracious initiative toward Israel." *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*, 732.

[28] Beale argues from the cognate of τελειόω that it has a priestly hue, especially in Hebrews, and when this language is connected with the concept of drawing near, the democratization of priestly ministry is shown. For more on this argument, see *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*, 737. Likewise, Ferguson writes, "What other law would the first readers understand but the Decalogue?" Quoted in *The Path of Faith: A Biblical Theology of Covenant and Law*, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2021), 148.

of contrast within continuity, since it is by a comparative the author builds his argument: "The repeated use of 'better' suggests that the antecedent versions of the respective notions were in fact 'good.'"[29]

On the question of continuity and discontinuity, Richard B. Hays presents a paradigm that argues that the New Covenant is built out of the Old Covenant, that it is on the basis of Israel's Scriptures that the author theologizes the New Covenant.[30] The superiority of New Covenant is derived from the Old Testament through typological and figural exegesis, showing not the inferiority of the Old Covenant but the temporality, since the infrastructure and promises of the New are based on the Old. Summarily, Hays translates Hebrews 8:13a as, "In saying 'new' he has made the first old."[31] The "sketches and shadows" (ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ, 8:5) and "parables" (παραβολῇ, 11:19) point beyond themselves to fulfillment in Christ. Hays writes, "We are meant to read Israel's whole story in a figural way as pointing forward to the reality embodied in Jesus."[32] Supplementing Hays, I might add that the hermeneutical framework is given in the opening clause where he juxtaposes the "various parts and various ways" (πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως) and the wholistic, climatic revelation of the Son (Heb. 1:1).[33] The author of Hebrews is not disposing of and denigrating previous revelation but showing how the pieces find their fulfilment in Christ.

Covenant is a basic concept in Hebrews, and the authors develops it as a concept through a redemptive-historical lens. This context of the covenantal theology of Hebrews provides a foundation to work off of in reflecting on the pre-temporal, intra-Trinitarian because it shows the fundamental continuity of the covenant in Hebrews, and as we will see, this continuity flows out of a deeper, older (so to speak) covenant: the Covenant of Redemption. The redemptive-historical development of the covenants has an eternal foundation.

Exegesis

Literary Context and Overview

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[29] Daniel I. Block, *Covenant: The Framework of God's Grand Plan of Redemption* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021), 507. For a deep dive on the use of the comparative, see Andreas J. Kostenberger, "Jesus, the Mediator of a 'Better Covenant': Comparatives in the Book of Hebrews," *Faith & Mission*, 21.2 (2004): 30-49.

[30] Richard B. Hays, "'Here We Have No Lasting City': New Covenantalism in Hebrews," in The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 151-173.

[31] Hays, "'Here We Have No Lasting City': New Covenantalism in Hebrews," 160.

[32] Hays, "'Here We Have No Lasting City': New Covenantalism in Hebrews," 163.

[33] William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 847.

The author of Hebrews has been arguing for the superiority even the supremacy of Christ's priesthood (7:1-28). The author of Hebrews activated this priesthood argument after showing the absolute certainty of oathbound agreements (Heb. 6:13-20). The context of oaths is significant because the superiority of Christ's priesthood climaxes in its oathbound nature, a center spoke from which its eternality and certainty can be glimpsed (Heb. 7:21, 24). The author uses the oath concept to activate the covenantal nature: "This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant" (Heb. 7:22). Westfall writes, "With this conclusion, the author activates the covenant and connects it with Jesus' high priesthood."[34] The argument is an interlocked argument being enveloped by the concepts of oath and covenant, concepts activated by the author. Therefore, the oathbound nature of Christ's priesthood is covenantal.[35]

The section (7:20-25) consists of two complex sentences, including an extended parenthetical comment. This section has three subsections: 1) the oath of the priest (7:20-21); 2) the suretyship of the priest (7:22); 3) the permanence of the priest (7:23-25). The first subsection connects to the second as its support, and the third expounds the significance of the second subsection. The main point of the section is that the priesthood of Christ is premised on an eternal oath equipping him to save for eternity.

Oath of the Priest (vv. 20-21)

The priesthood of Christ was not without an oath (ὀρκωμοσίας). The και is developmental marking a progression in the argument.[36] The argument carries on from proving Christ's priestly pedigree based not on bodily descent but on his connection to Melchizedek through his indestructible life (Heb. 7:16), and a continued interpretation of Psalm 110:4. The syntactical structure is complex, since everything after "for" (γὰρ) is a parenthetical comment. The parenthetical comment contrasts the Aaronic priesthood and Christ's priesthood, showing how the former were appointed as priests but without an oath and how the latter has an oath. The argument is based on silence, a style of argument utilized by the author (i.e., Melchizedek, 7:3).[37]

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[34] Cynthia Long Westfall, *A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews: The Relationship between Form and Meaning* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 175.

[35] In his forthcoming volume, Cara describes this passage as having "obvious covenantal overtones." *Hebrews Section 7* (Forthcoming),

[36] Dana M. Harris, *Hebrews*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2019), 179.

[37] Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1993), 383.

The oath term (ὁρκωμοσίας) is crucial. The term occurs four times in the NT; all are attested within this passage. The term occurs in the LXX in EsdraA 8:90 where Ezra has the tribal chiefs of the priests and Levites swear to send out the foreign women. Elsewhere in the LXX, the term is used in Ezekiel 17:18-19 where God will destroy the king of Babylon and Pharaoh who dishonored his oath (ὁρκωμοσία) and broke his covenant (διαθήκη). An oath is a confirmation and even binding of a word spoken, a commonplace practice during this period (Heb. 6:17). In this passage, God is showing a deeper reason why Christ's priesthood is superior to the Aaronic/Levitical: it is confirmed by oath. The nature of an oath includes a higher power, and in the Greco-Roman context, it meant a statement made in the presence of a deity. Schneider writes, "The oath is thus a declaration which backs up a human statement, which guarantees its veracity, and which is affirmed by divine co-operation."[38] Along with the element of a deity, an oath can be past facing (assertive) or future (promissory). Schneider defines it as, "The oath is a definitive and binding confirmation of the spoken word."[39] In Hebrews, the term is even explained. The principles undergirding oaths are a higher power ("for people swear by something greater than themselves," Heb. 6:12) and a confirmation (βεβαίωσιν). God guaranteed his promise to Abraham with an oath (ὅρκος) in order that the author's readers (and by implication, Abraham) would have strong encouragement (ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν, Heb. 6:18). As Lane puts it, "The divine oath stands behind the guarantor and supports him in his mission."[40]

The contrast between these priesthoods is temporally oriented. The former priests were provisional, the latter eternal. Schreiner writes,

> God's oath demonstrates that the Melchizedekian priesthood is permanent. By way of contrast, no oath accompanied the Levitical priesthood, showing that the Levitical order was restricted to a certain period in salvation history. The author is not suggesting that the Levitical priesthood was contrary to God's will or intention; he is simply emphasizing that it had a built-in obsolescence.[41]

The author describes the Aaronic priests by a perfect periphrastic construction (ἱερεῖς γεγονότες) and Christ's oathbound priesthood by a present participle (διὰ τοῦ λέγοντος), setting these in contrast, a stylistic move based on tense which he will utilize again (7:23-24). Ellingworth writes,

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[38] Schneider, "Ὅρκος, Ὁρκίζω, Ὁρκωμοσία, Ἐνορκίζω, Ἐξορκίζω (ἐξορκιστής), Ἐπίορκος, Ἐπιορκέω," TDNT, 5:458

[39] Schneider, TDNT, 5:462

[40] William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, vol. 47A of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1991), 186.

[41] Thomas R. Schreiner, *Hebrews*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), 229.

"The careful use of tenses, typical of Hebrews generally, is specially marked in this paragraph."[42] The priesthood of Christ is not a difference in terms of degree but of kind: the oathbound nature sets him apart.[43]

Having seen the temporal orientation of the subsection, we are prepared to enter in dogmatic dialogue to see the doctrinal implications of its temporality. The question is, when was this oath sworn? The answer is in eternity. The argument for this answer follows from three premises. First, the author of Hebrews sets up arguments from the Psalms which hinge at their timing. He utilizes the timing of Psalm 95 in his discussion of Israel awaiting a rest (Heb. 4:1-10). Second, the author later argues from the premise of Christ's awareness of his redemptive mission when he was born ("when Christ came into the world," Heb. 10:5).[44] The awareness arises from Psalm 40, which he spoke (λέγει). If this Psalm was spoken in his coming (present participle, εἰσερχόμενος), which is dependent on pre-existence, then it follows that the conversations transcribed in the Psalms between the eternal persons existed in eternity. That Psalm 40 relates to Psalm 110 can be argued on the basis of how the author of Hebrews uses them to build out Christ's priesthood. Third, the author argues from the ontological status of Jesus Christ to show his fitness for salvation to the uttermost (7:24; cf. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever," 13:8), a status which reaches back into eternity (Heb. 1:2). If the author uses the Psalm to show Christ's perpetuity as priest (which he does, cf. 7:24-25), showing his use of the timing of the Psalm shown through Christ's awareness in pre-existence, then the timing of the conversation can be placed in eternity. More briefly, Cara writes, "Since (1) Christ knew of the agreement as he came into the world (Heb. 10:5–10); (2) the oath must be applicable in some sense when David penned Psalm 110; and (3) the contextual emphasis includes Christ's eternal person in Hebrews 7:3 and 7:16; therefore, this oath must have occurred in eternity 'past.'"[45]

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[42] Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC, 384. Ellingworth writes, "The perfect is chosen, on the one hand, because the author is not concerned to claim that the Levitical priesthood has ceased to operate (though it would be dangerous to draw conclusions from this regarding the date of the epistle); and on the other hand, because it is the appropriate tense to describe Christ's continuing ministry in heaven, the counterpart of his once-for-all self-offering on earth."

[43] David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 427.

[44] "'Coming into the world' is a Jewish expression for birth (S-B 2.358), just as 'going out of the world' (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9) denotes death." Ellingworth, The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC, 500.

[45] Cara, *Hebrews Section 7* (Forthcoming),

The oath language is endemic of a covenantal ceremony. In this conversation, the author hears a swearing-in ceremony between the Father and the Son in eternity past.[46] Significant for our discussion is the interpretive term "oath" (ὁρκωμοσίας). The author acquires his term from the verbal cognate, "sworn" (ὤμοσεν). The question is, how is the term covenantal? The language is covenantal on account of the broader context of Hebrews. As shown above, the vocabulary is fundamentally covenantal for Hebrews, as shown in his argument from the Abrahamic Covenant (Heb. 6:13-20). The language is covenantal on account of the immediate context where the logic of the oathbound priesthood generates a greater covenant: "The author understands this to imply that Jesus guarantees a better covenant."[47] The logic of this argument follows from the "suretyship" of Christ, which will be investigated below. The point is that oaths seal covenants.[48] Williamson writes, "While one may conclude that the making of a *bĕrît* involves the taking of an oath, one must not deduce from the mere taking of an oath that a *bĕrît* has been established."[49] In most cases, Williamson's point stands, but since Hebrews is so deeply covenantal, as is the passage's immediate context, the oath indicates a covenant ceremony. The covenantal ceremonial witnesses the Father speaking (substantival participle, τοῦ λέγοντος) to the Son (πρὸς αὐτόν). Guthrie argues that there is an "implicit trinitarian perspective is in play, as one member of the Godhead (the Father) addresses another (the Son) with a proclamation."[50] The quotation moves from the third person to the second person. The swearing in results in a permanent priesthood, pressing into eternity (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα), "of time to come which, if it has no end, is also known as eternity.[51] This is forward facing but from the vantage point of pre-existence.

Dialogue: Psalm 110 and Biblical Reasoning

An interpreter could argue that the author of Hebrews is using biblical reasoning to perceive Christ's messianic and eternal priesthood in Psalm 110. The authors of the New

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[46] The author of Hebrews has an erudite ability of interpreting Christocentrically. By engaging in prosopological interpretation, the author of Hebrews hears conversations between the Godhead in his Psalter (Heb. 1:5, 8, 10-12, 13; 2:5, 12-13; 5:5, 6; 7:17, 21; 10:5-7).

[47] George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 968.

[48] "Genesis 15 provides an example of a covenant sealed by divine oath." Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 16.

[49] Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 23 of *New Studies in Biblical Theology* (England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2007), 36.

[50] Guthrie, "Hebrews," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 961–962.

[51] BDAG, 32.

Testament spent considerable time reflecting on the theological import of Psalm 110, and so, this Psalm has exercised considerable influence on their theological, or better yet, biblical reasoning.[52] Kistemaker writes, "Only the author of the epistle to the Hebrews discusses the priesthood of Christ. He does this exclusively by quoting and applying Psalm 110:4 to Jesus. … 'Psalm 110 *is* the primary priestly contribution to the book of Hebrews.'"[53] The author of Hebrews utilizes the Psalm to reflect on the Messiah's relationship to God. The Messiah is the Son of God who has sat down at the righthand as the King (Heb. 1:3; cf. 1:13, 12:2) and the High Priest *par excellence* from the order of Melchizedek (5:6, 10; 6:20, 7:3, 17, 21).

The author of Hebrews reasons into the substructure of the Psalm, hearing a discussion between the Father and the Son and their plan of redemption, thus the author of Hebrews engages in prosopological exegesis in his interpretation of the Psalm. In their plan of redemption, the Son will be appointed eternally to a priesthood in the order of Melchizedek, and therefore, the Son will stand even as the surety for his people. The conclusion to the author's argument is where the tools come into play since this concept of "surety" is absent from a *prima facie* interpretation of the Psalm. Yet, when interpreted in the light of biblical reasoning, we can follow the author as he exposes the substructure of the Psalm, a substructure built on the covenant of redemption. The logic of surety can only make sense in light of the covenant a redemption, a logic unfolded only by use of biblical reasoning, what J.V. Fesko terms "covenantal subtext."[54] Swain writes, "The Son's eternal and irrevocable appointment to be our great high priest, and his ensuing enthronement at the Father's right hand, is rooted in an eternal and irrevocable covenant oath."[55] This eternal oath connects us to eternity as well as to the execution of the oath, fulfilled in his mission.

The Suretyship of the Priest (v. 22)

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[52] For the New Testament authors citing this Psalm, consider: Matt. 22:44, 26:64; Mark 12:36, 14:62; Luke 20:42-43, 22:69; John 12:34; Acts 2:34-35; Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:13, 5:6, 5:10, 6:20, 7:3, 7:21, 8:1, 10:12-13, 12:2. Many more could be added as well, if we included echoes and allusions to the Psalm. Following the apostolic witness, the Church Fathers reflected deeply on this Psalm as well. For more on this topic, see Jared Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, ed. Chris Keith, vol. 537 of *Library of New Testament Studies* (London; New Delhi; New York; Sydney: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 87–88.

[53] Simon Kistemaker, "Psalm 110 in the Epistles to the Hebrews," *The Hope Fulfilled: Essays in Honor of O. Palmer Robertson*, edited by Robert L. Penny, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 148-9.

[54] J.V. Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption*, (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Mentor, 2016), 95.

[55] Swain, "Covenant of Redemption," in *Christian Dogmatics*, 120–121.

The center of the section is the authors conclusion that Christ is the guarantor of a better covenant. This statement resumes the mainline discourse closing out the parenthetical point.[56] The combination of the preposition (κατὰ) and pronoun (τοσοῦτο) is complicated to render in English. The force of the two combined is correlating the statement with the above statement (καθ᾽ ὅσον…),[57] and thus shows the causation between the oath-binding discourse and the conclusion: Jesus is the surety of a better covenant.[58] Structurally, this is intended to be a "surprising comparison."[59] The relationship between the oath-less and oath-bound priesthoods correlates to the covenantal structures undergirding their priesthoods; so, the priesthood of Christ is built on a better covenant. So, what is the logical flow of thought that moves the author from a comparison between priesthoods to the conclusion of a better covenant? Unfolding this logic requires the unpacking of the two concepts, "covenant" (διαθήκης) and "surety/guarantor" (ἔγγυος), as well as the use the signature term "better" (κρείττονος).

The author uses the term κρείττων twelve times. The term pertains to "being of high status, more prominent, higher in rank, preferable, better."[60] Christ has a greater name than angels (1:4), his ministry introduces a greater hope (7:19), on the basis of a greater covenant (7:22), enacted on greater promises (8:6), he purified heaven things with greater sacrifices (9:23), and his blood speaks a greater word (12:24). The church has a greater possession (10:34), a greater country (11:16), a greater life (11:35), and something greater provided for us by God (11:40). Schreiner writes, "the word "better" (κρείττονος) plays a major role in the author's argument."[61] The term is crucial for the theology of the epistle since the theology is dependent on a comparison between

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[56] This clause along with its correlative structures the parenthetical argument within, a paratheses of "greater length" G. B. Winer, *A Treatise on the Grammar of New Testament Greek: Regarded as a Sure Basis for New Testament Exegesis* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1882), 706.

[57] BDAG, 729; cf. 1012.

[58] BDAG, 512. For more on the comparison between a covenant and testament, see Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 36 of *Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 364-5.

[59] Harold W. Attridge and Helmut Koester, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 208.

[60] BDAG, 566; Cf. "The interplay of comparative and positive language is interesting. In speaking of Jesus himself, for example in → 3:1–6, the author tends to pass rather quickly from comparisons to contrasts. In speaking of the new covenant, the comparative element is more persistent: the new covenant is typically described as "better" (by implication, than the old), though positive, noncomparative terms such as "true" (8:2) and "eternal" (13:20; → also 5:9; cf. "good," 13:9) are also used." Ellingworth, NIGTC, 386. For more on the comparative language, see Andreas Köstenberger, "Jesus, the mediator of a 'better covenant': comparatives in the Book of Hebrews."

[61] Schreiner, *Hebrews*, EBTC, 230.

covenantal epochs, since the new is better than the old (8:6); yet the comparison necessitates a fundamental continuity as discussed above because it is a contrast within continuity.[62]

Having seen the nature of the comparative in Hebrews, the following question is, what are the two entities being compared? The two entities, as shown in Hebrews 8:1-13, are the first and the second covenant, the old and new (8:6). The author of Hebrews activates this covenantal concept in his discussion of the superiority of Christ's priesthood. If the comparison is between the old and new covenants, how does the Covenant of Redemption enter into the discussion? The key is how the author moves from the pre-temporal conversation between the Father and the Son and into this comparison of the covenants. Cara writes, "This 'better covenant' (Heb. 7:22) refers to the new covenant, but it has close associations to the Davidic through Psalm 110:4."[63] The close associations are indicative of a connectivity between the covenant in time and in eternity. The covenant between the Father and Son, as shown in Hebrews, includes the Son entering into space-time history by a body to do the will as it is written in the scroll of the book (Heb. 10:6-7). This eternal covenant likewise includes the Son taking on the priestly duties and the duties of surety in the New Covenant. The eternal covenant expressed itself in time, and as the covenantal inauguration ceremony shows, this covenant binds by vow the Son's duty of guarantor and even mediator (cf. Heb. 8:6). Myers writes,

> The eternal, intra-Trinitarian covenant, it would seem, is not a covenantal entity sealed off and completed in eternity. It is not even sealed off and completed prior to Christ's earthly ministry. Rather, it is a covenant that even still is coming to fruition in the historical accomplishment and application of redemption (see Heb. 13:20-21). … When that eternal covenant is discussed, *the Scriptures always reveal it as being in organic unity with the covenant of grace*.[64]

This organic unity between the Covenant of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace is the reason why these covenants can be simultaneously the referent in Hebrews 7:22. Cara writes, "Relating this back to the eternal 'oath' and the covenant of redemption, the better covenant is the temporal

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[62] Cara, "Covenant in Hebrews," 249. Cf. "For this reason, as one inspired by God, the author of Hebrews cannot declare the Torah of Moses/YHWH a mistake or Israel's history with the Torah a waste of revelation and thirteen hundred years of resources and energy." Block, *Covenant,* 507.

[63] Cara, "Covenant in Hebrews," 256. Cf. Fesko writes, "Psalm 110 is one of the clearest pieces of evidence for the *pactum salutis*. Yahweh swears a covenant-oath to the Christ in eternity, which establishes His priestly office according to the order of Melchizedek and appoints Him the guarantor or surety of the new covenant." *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption*, 106.

[64] Stephen G. Myers, *God to Us,* 88-89. Emphasis is mine.

outworking of the eternal 'oath' between the Father and the Son."[65] The referent for the "better covenant" is New Covenant and the Covenant of Redemption.[66]

The nature of Christ's suretyship contributes to this discussion. The term (ἔγγυος) that the author of the Hebrews uses is a *hapax legomenon* for the New Testament.[67] The term has etymological roots related to the hollow of a hand, descriptive of the process of pledge making. The term is attested in the Apocryphal literature, descriptive of a benefactor who is in a precarious position: "Being surety (ἐγγύου) has destroyed many who were prosperous, and has shaken them like a wave of the sea. It has exiled mighty men, and they wandered among foreign nations." (Sir. 29:15-16; cf. 2 Macc. 10:28). Griffiths writes, "He has become the tangible guarantee of God's covenantal intentions toward his people."[68] His suretyship is thoroughly textured by his priestly duties and office, especially his victimhood and mediation (Heb. 7:27, 8:6). Mbamalu argues that behind the high priest motif is the Servant's Song of Isaiah (52:13-53:12).[69] Isaiah's Messianism provides the theological concepts of intercession and vicarious suffering as a "lamb" (53:7).

The suretyship of Jesus means that he has guaranteed the benefits of the better covenant. Vos writes, "A surety, in any case, is one who makes himself personally responsible for fulfilling the obligations of another."[70] He underwrites their redemption by his work as priestly mediator presenting them to God, interceding on their behalf, and by offering himself in their place for their sins once-for-all (Heb. 7:27, 8:6, 9:12, 9:15, 9:22, 10:10, 10:14, 10:18).[71] This suretyship maps onto the Covenant of Redemption because it secures an "eternal redemption (αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν)" by an eternal surety (Heb. 13:8; cf. 9:12, 14). Vos writes, "through His eternal suretyship the Son

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[65] Cara, *Hebrews Section 7* (Forthcoming).

[66] Joel Beeke writes, "it is best to regard this oath as one long established … we conclude that the Father made an eternal covenant with his Son to be the Priest of his people." Joel R. Beeke and Paul M. Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology: Man and Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 587.

[67] The nature of suretyship for the Covenant of Redemption in Reformed circles is debated. Cf. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 88–90.

[68] Jonathan I. Griffiths, *Hebrews and Divine Speech*, ed. Mark Goodacre, vol. 507 of *Library of New Testament Studies* (London; New Delhi; New York; Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2014), 119.

[69] Abiola Mbamalu, "Jesus the interceding High Priest: A fresh look at Hebrews 7:25," *HTS Theological Studies* 71(1), 5.

[70] Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 87. Spicq writes, "A person stands surety for another by committing himself to a creditor to supply a guarantee for the execution of an obligation in the event that the debtor defaults. A guarantor is thus one who is responsible for another person's debt; his responsibility becomes operative when the debtor declares himself insolvent with regard to the terms of the contract." Ceslas Spicq and James D. Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) 390.

[71] Gareth Lee Cockerill writes, "'Covenant' establishes an expectation that the Son will be called 'Mediator.'" *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICOT, (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 330.

promised payment or satisfaction completely and unconditionally, without any withholding of benefits."[72] The term is constructed from covenantal concepts and has legal ramifications, so that Christ binds himself to its fulfilment. Insofar as the oath characterized Christ's priesthood, it all the more binds his suretyship for the New Covenant. The oath is what sealed Christ's suretyship: "he has become a guarantor (γέγονεν ἔγγυος)." The chosen tense is a perfect with an emphasis on the completed action from which the present state emerges.[73]

Dialogue: 'Eternal' (αιων) in Hebrews

The eternal suretyship of Jesus is seen through the pre-temporal oath, yet a vantage point provided by the author of Hebrews throughout his epistle is the "eternal" (αιων) language. These glimpses of redemption from the eternal vantage point are like scenic stops on a highway up a mountain before the summit. The cognate αιων is used on fifteen occasions, though with reference to the cosmos as well as eternity.[74] The temporal use can have reference forwards or backwards: "a long period of time, without ref. to beginning or end."[75] The emphasis in Hebrews is often the forward reference: "of time to come which, if it has no end, is also known as *eternity*."[76] The background could be Hellenistic or even Platonic, but since the Old Testament provides the primary conceptual world of Hebrews, it is better to default to its belief in eternity. Since the author's interpretative backdrop is Jeremiah for the New Covenant, the nature of the eternality is influenced by Jeremiah, who places covenantal love in eternity: "I will make with them an everlasting (עוֹלָם) covenant" (Jer. 32:40; cf. Jer. 31:3, Isa. 45:17, 55:3).[77] Along with the eternal language, Hebrews displays an awareness of pre-temporal activity. This awareness can be seen in language such as "since the foundation of the world" (9:26; cf. 4:3), "the eternal covenant" (13:21), and "when Christ came into the world" (10:5). Block writes, "Accordingly, in his portrayal of the solution to the problem of sin, the author of Hebrews was clearly aware that the restoration of all things is a divine work and intimates that this grand scheme was planned by God before the

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[72] Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 88.

[73] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 577.

[74] Heb. 1:2, 8; 5:6; 6:5, 20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28; 9:26; 11:3; 13:8, 21.

[75] BDAG, 32.

[76] BDAG, 32.

[77] "Love, and not the least religious love, seeks to eternalize itself, and that backwards no less than forward. In the unlimitable round of His timeless existence, we have never been absent from nor uncared for by Him. … The best proof that He will never cease to love us lies in that He never began." Geerhardus Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001), 298. Vos utilizes Jeremiah in his prooftext material for this conclusion.

foundation of the world."[78] These scattered references provide scenic stops along the summit to the eternal plan of God, a plan oathbound by covenant.

The Permanence of the Priest (vv. 23-25)

The author continues his comparison between the two orders of priests. His argument is that Christ is the better priest since he is not prevented from continuing in office but can continue forever, interceding and saving. The argument is built on the premise of the plurality of priests in the Aaronic order, their deaths, and Christ's permanency, and so, since he can remain priest engaging in priestly activity, he can save permanently through intercession, as he lives an "indestructible life" (8:16). The pertinent interpretive points in this section are the permanence and eternality of his priestly ministry, the saving to the "uttermost," and the kind of life he lives. These interpretative points will solidify the prior conclusion that the eternal aspect of Christ's priesthood is in view, an aspect aptly understood in its covenantal context.

Christ's priestly ministry continues eternally (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα), a statement supported by his occupying a permanent priesthood. The interpretive question is the meaning of permanent (ἀπαράβατον). It is a rare word in any extant corpus, and it is a *Hapax* in the New Testament. It could mean "without succession," but it should be understood as "permanent, perpetual."[79] Kittel writes, "Heb. 7:24 says that Christ has an eternal and imperishable priesthood, not just in the sense that it cannot be transferred to anyone else, but in the sense of 'unchangeable.'"[80] The meaning of his permanency is better understood in its eternal context. His permanent priesthood is established on the basis of a pre-temporal oath (Heb. 7:21; cf. Ps. 110:4). Kistemaker writes, "Christ's priesthood in the order of Melchizedek was confirmed by oath and therefore is inviolable."[81] While a plurality versus a singularity is in view, it is not to show a transferability, but to show that we have one high priest (Heb. 8:1; cf. 8:6).

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[78] Block, *Covenant*, 508. Block writes, "There was a dimension to that agenda that receives scant attention in the First Testament but comes to full bloom only in the New—namely, the role of Jesus Christ as the key to the entire enterprise. In the New Testament we come face-to-face with this dimension, but from the scattered references to God's activity 'before the foundation of the world,' we learn that it was operative from the beginning" (508-509).

[79] Henry George Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 178. Attridge likewise writes, "While many patristic and some modern interpreters take the term to mean 'untransferable,' the word never has this meaning in ancient sources." Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 210.

[80] Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 773.

[81] Kistemaker, *Exposition of Hebrews*, 204.

Christ's intercession is able to save permanently (παντελὲς). The two views for this adjective are whether it is qualitative or temporal.[82] The temporal context emphasizes the latter: "Just as Christ's priesthood is permanent, so is the salvation which he makes possible."[83] He is able to save forever because he always lives. This kind of life can be built on the basis of his resurrection or on his divine nature.[84] The latter is more appropriate to the context, given his "indestructible life" (7:16). Cara writes, "Christ's eternal divine nature is the necessary background to his mediatorial priesthood."[85] To sum up and situate these developments in our argument: Christ's priestly ministry has an eternal aspect seen in this argument. Attridge writes, "The hallmark of Christ's priestly status, and of the salvation it provides, *is their eternal quality*."[86] This eternal priestly ministry finds its foundation in the Covenant of Redemption, its cogency in a covenant. This priestly ministry is a ministry defined by his intercession as surety, a ministry covenanted in eternity between the Father and the Son.[87]

Conclusion

The Covenant of Redemption can be supplemented in its support as a biblical doctrine from Hebrews 7:20-25. In particular, the eternality, its oathbound nature, and Christ's suretyship and priestly ministry can be seen in this passage. This pericope in Hebrews presents a covenantal ceremony oathbound in eternity securing Christ's suretyship in the outworking of the New Covenant. When approached by biblical reasoning, the passage bears much fruit for theological reflection, supplementing the support for the Covenant of Redemption from Scripture. In this passage, we can perceive into the eternal foundations of our redemption as the people of God, as Bavinck writes, "The covenant of grace revealed in time does not hang in the air but rests on an eternal, unchanging foundation."[88] The Covenant of Redemption as demonstrated in the epistle to the Hebrews show how Christ has completely and permanently save us.

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[82] Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 391.

[83] Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 391. These are not necessarily exclusive: "Probably both ideas are intended here, for they are not mutually exclusive, and both fit the context. Christians are saved forever and fully through the priesthood of Jesus Christ." Schreiner, *Hebrews*, 233.

[84] For more on who argues for what view, see Cara, *Hebrews Section 7* (Forthcoming), 24.

[85] Cara, *Hebrews Section 7* (Forthcoming), 24.

[86] Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 210. Emphasis is mine.

[87] Michael Horton writes, "His mediation is established by the intra-Trinitarian *pactum* in eternity." *Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology*, First edition. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 238

[88] Herman Bavinck, John Bolt, and John Vriend, *Reformed Dogmatics: Sin and Salvation in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 215.

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