NEW COVENANT, NEW IDENTITY

A SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC READING OF JEREMIAH 31:31-34

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Interpretations of Jeremiah's New Covenant passage have tended toward its use in Christianity. In light of the work that asserts ancient Israel was a tribal coalition, Social Identity Theory can be a useful heuristic tool in understanding how this oracle may have been heard by those who first encountered it. This social-scientific model, first developed by Henry Tajfel and modified by John Turner, is summarised and demonstrated to be a beneficial method for understanding group identity in the Ancient Near East. Against this backdrop, Jeremiah's New Covenant passage is examined and thereby understood as the prophet's attempt to create a new common in-group identity for the post-exilic Israelite community.

INTRODUCTION

The opening chapter of Bob Becking's 2004 monograph *Between Fear and Freedom: Essays on the Interpretation of Jeremiah 30-31* is entitled 'A Dissonant Voice of Hope' because of the marked 'contrasts between these two chapters and the rest of the Book of Jeremiah'(Becking 2004, 3). Indeed, these two chapters, characterised by hope for the future, differ dramatically in tone from the remainder of the book, which is characterised by condemnation and warnings of impending judgment. Despite this drastic difference, however, Jeremiah 30-31, or the Book of Consolation, offers hope of future restoration to a people who had experienced invasion and destruction for centuries. Within this context of hope of future restoration, the prophet records one of the most well-known passages in the Hebrew Bible, the New Covenant passage in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

While many interpreters of this passage search for and find the prophecy's ultimate fulfillment in the advent of Christianity, few have attempted to understand this oracle within its cultural context, asking '[h]ow did this text help people in that historical context to cope [with] the reality they met with?'(Becking 2004, 245). Historical-critical, literary, redaction, narrative, and a multitude of other criticisms have been used to explore this text but ultimately fall short of addressing the way this text was originally heard. The necessity of identifying the culture and *Sitz em Leben* has been acknowledged for over a century and has led a relatively small number of biblical scholars to employ the inter-disciplinary approach of social-scientific criticism to interpret biblical texts.

This article will provide an attempt to understand the New Covenant passage in Jeremiah's Book of Consolation from a social-scientific perspective. Utilising the social-scientific model of Social Identity Theory as well as insights from Mediterranean and Middle Eastern anthropology, I will examine the tribal dimension of Ancient Israel and the role that covenant played in Israelite identity. This investigation will lead to an understanding of the New Covenant passage in terms

of its role in forming group identity. By looking at this passage from this perspective, I will assert that the proclamation of New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34 attempted to provide a new common in-group identity for the people of Israel who had long been estranged from their God and from one another.

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY: AN OVERVIEW

Building upon the work of previous social psychologists, Henri Tajfel introduced Social Identity Theory in his 1972 article entitled 'La Catégorisation Sociale' (Tajfel 1972). Tajfel argued that people categorise themselves, or get categorised, into groups and that these groups attempt to establish a positive sense of value by distinguishing their group, the in-group, from other groups, the out-groups. Positive group (and self) value is derived by making clear distinctions between the in-group and the out-group, distinctions which view the out-group in a negative manner and the in-group more favourably (Mullen, Brown and Smith 1992).

Tajfel's theory was partially dependant upon the social comparison theory of Leon Festinger. Perhaps better known for his theory of cognitive dissonance, Festinger also developed a theory of social comparison that asserts that most people learn about and evaluate themselves by comparison with other people. Accordingly, social comparison may occur in either an upward or downward direction, depending upon the perceived status of the person(s) with whom the individual compares him or herself (Festinger 1954). Tajfel applied to groups the same comparative principles that Festinger theorised regarding the individual, relying upon studies that compared the formation of groups and social comparison that occurred in a United States Boy's Camp in the 1950s which indicated that 'as soon as the boys were allocated into groups, the groups began strenuously competing with one another, even though their members had friends in the other groups' (Esler 2003).

Tajfel defines Social Identity Theory as 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his [sic] membership of a group together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership' (Tajfel 1982, 63). This phenomenon is composed of three dimensions:

Cognitive – recognition of belonging to the group;
Evaluative – recognition of the value attached to the group;
Emotional – attitudes group members hold toward insiders and outsiders.

Thus, the theory concerns itself with the way group members understand themselves as part of the group and differentiate their group from other groups in order to achieve positive social identity.

The most significant challenge to SIT has come from Steve Hinkle and Rupert Brown. Citing 14 separate studies, of which only nine revealed comparative inclinations, Hinkle and Brown challenged Tajfel's main argument, that all groups characterise themselves over-against other groups, and have demonstrated that not all groups engage in this process of inter-group comparison. They assert that the link between identity and intergroup comparison may be affected by the cultural location of the group. Their study concludes that, indeed, the presumptions of SIT are valid when two conditions are met. First, the groups must be located within a collectivist, rather than an individualistic, culture. This does not mean that groups in individualistic cultures

do not engage in the social identification and categorization process, only that it is not certain that all groups do so. The second condition that must be met for all groups to engage in social identification and categorisation is that groups must have a comparative outlook, that is a high level of competition between individuals and/or groups must be present within the culture. When these two conditions are met, Hinkle and Brown maintain that group identification and comparison according to Tajfel's theory of Social Identification is certain to be present (Hinkle and Brown 1990).

SIT does not, however, address the relational dynamics within a group; SIT addresses intergroup, not intra-group, relations. In the late 1970s, social identity theorists began turning their attention toward intra-group relations. John C. Turner led the way toward developing what would eventually be called social categorisation theory (Turner 1987). This theory focuses more on the internal processes and identity of a group or of sub-groups within a larger group. Relying on experimental results that demonstrated that a person's self-concept varies from situation to situation, Turner asserts that the central idea of self categorisation is that people define themselves in terms of membership in particular social categories. This elaboration of Tajfel's SIT by Turner concludes that '[w]hen social identity becomes relatively more salient than personal identity, people see themselves less as differing individual persons and more as the similar, prototypical representatives of their ingroup category' (Turner 1999, 11). In his important study on Paul's letter to the Romans, Phil Esler adds, '[s]elf-categorization theory postulates a fairly mobile sense of self, with different situations leading to personal and/or group derived characteristics becoming dominant for a time' (Esler 2003, 26). Thus, social identity shifts as it responds to various external situations, including tension and conflict between groups or subgroups.

Addressing tension between and within groups has become a major area of study in the past two decades. One major approach to reducing group conflict is known as recategorisation or 'the common ingroup identity model' (Gaertner et al. 2000). This approach refers to the redefinition of the tense situation in which the groups (or subgroups) find themselves so that the members of the groups (or subgroups) begin to view themselves as a larger single, superordinate category. Although the study is dated, R. D. Minard's work on race relations in the coal mines illustrates this phenomenon well. Minard's 1952 study showed that black and white coal miners, who were generally in conflict with one another, left their hostility behind when they were working in the dangerous environment of the coal mine. In that context, their common ingroup identity as coal miners became the most salient feature of the group (Minard, 1952). Thus, Minard's study demonstrates that two groups with distinctive group characteristics can, for a time at least, understand themselves as one group based on a common ingroup identity.

In summary, SIT attempts to explain the formation of groups and comparison between groups. This theory is helpful when one is working with data from two or more groups who are competing, merging, co-existing with one another. Social Categorisation Theory, SIT's theoretical cousin, on the other hand, provides a methological approach for examining processes within groups and among sub-groups of a larger group. The collective work of Tajfel and Turner, along with the work of scholars like Gaertner on group conflict, provides a theoretical framework for understanding both in-group and out-group relations. Though many recent studies have undertaken to demonstrate how this model might serve large organisations by helping those involved better understand the dynamics at work in a group environment (Brown 2000; Hogg and Abrahams 1988; Turner 1999), the appropriateness of these contemporary models for use by biblical

scholars requires some justification. Below I will argue that the use of these models as heuristic tools is appropriate since the biblical world meets perfectly the criteria set forth by Hinkle and Brown and the biblical writings are essentially about religious groups and subgroups which interact in a variety of contexts.

TRIBAL IDENTITY AND COVENANT IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

To answer the question of the appropriateness of SIT as a model for biblical interpretation in general and Jeremiah's New Covenant passage in particular, we must turn to cultural anthropology and the study of the Ancient Near East (ANE). Relying on the works of notable anthropologists including Julian Pitt-Rivers and E. E. Evans Pritchard, biblical scholars have explored the issues of collectivism and competition in the ANE (Malina and Neyrey 1996). These studies have produced compelling evidence that corresponds to the criteria of Hinkle and Brown.

First, the ANE was largely dyadic, or collectivist, in personality. The dyadic personality of the ANE is foreign to most that have been raised in the individualistic culture of the (Post-) Modern West. In contrast to the characteristic individualism of the West, collectivists, as anthropologists call them, generally think of themselves in terms of the opinions of others and constantly need others to know who they are.

As for Hinkle and Brown's second requirement, the ANE culture is agonistic, or competitive, in nature. Agonism refers to the highly competitive nature of daily life, especially in social interaction. Persons in the ANE were constantly engaged in competition for the most pivotal value of their society: honor. Honor refers to 'the value-rating a person carries in his [sic] own eyes and in society' and involves a person's claim of honor and the public recognition of that honor claim by others (Van der Jagt 2002, 48). Honor, then, was primarily oriented toward the approval of others; a claim to honor could not result in honor unless recognised by the public. One example of this phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible is found in 1 Samuel 25 where David resorts to violence because he was shamed before his men, his in-group (Olyan 1996, 203–204).

The presence of these two characteristics in the ANE is reflected in the Hebrew Bible. Since the work of H. Wheller Robinson (1936, 1964) on ancient corporate personality and the elaboration of that theory by Johannes Pedersen, the notion of dyadic personality has become commonplace (Pedersen 1953). Despite his regrettable reliance upon Levy-Bruhl's notion of the 'primitive mentality' (Lévy-Bruhl and Clare 1923), Wheeler asserts that 'corporate personality means… the treatment of the family, the clan, or the nation, as the unit in place of the individual' (Robinson 1925, 375). Indeed, despite the many justifiable critiques leveled against his work, the corporate mentality described by Wheeler Robinson provides useful insights into ancient Israel's corporate personality and thus corresponds directly to the modern anthropological category of dyadic personality.

Moreover, the collectivist culture of ancient Israel is seen most clearly in the tribal division recorded in the Torah. Scholarly discussions on the tribal nature of ancient Israel increased with publication of Martin Noth's 1930 work *Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels*, in which Noth argues that the twelve tribes that made up unified Israel did not exist prior to the covenant assembly in Canaan but were instead groups of pastoral nomads in the Syro-Arabian desert. This view brought much criticism from those who were unconvinced of Noth's study. For example,

Georg Fohrer (1966) argued for a loose tribal coalition based upon the number of disparate tribes described in the Book of Judges.

The most thorough critique of Noth, however, and the most sociological approach to the Old Testament since Weber, was published in 1979. Norman Gottwald's *Tribes of Yahweh* relied on anthropological field research to offer five flaws in Noth's model of the pastoral nomadic and his comparison of biblical texts with archaeological excavations result in the conclusion that 'the conquest model is a failure'(Gottwald 1979, 203). These negative assessments prepared for a fresh analysis of Israelite organization. His anthropological study of 'tribalism' combined with his thorough treatment of the Hebrew terminology for various social units in ancient Israel led to his assessment that tribalism was more than a linear descent group extending from the extended family. Rather, it 'was an autonomous project which tried to roll back the zone of political centralization in Canaan, to claim territory and peoples for an egalitarian mode of agricultural and pastoral life' (325). Thus, in many respects, Gottwald follows Mendenhall in the establishment of a 'peasant revolt' model.

This cursory review of the concept of tribalism in ancient Israel serves to establish the movement from the previous idea of a unified Israel toward an understanding of ancient Israel as a tribal coalition. This position is adequately, if overly simplistic, summarised by Van der Jagt:

> The history of Israel can be characterized as an evolution from a loose federation of small-scale societies to a province of a world empire… The tribes of Israel used to live in small villages and townships. All people who lived in a town belonged to the same tribe and often they were all of the same subtribal unit. Councils of elders governed the tribes… The elders served as ruler and judges in the society. At a certain point, the tribes of Israel felt the need to integrate the different tribes into a nation under one single ruler, a king, who, as chief of all the tribes, could foster unity among the different groups. (Van der Jagt 2002, 67)

By the close of the twentieth century, the view of ancient Israel as a tribal confederation seems to have become a scholarly consensus. This consensus is demonstrated in a recent chapter on tribal organization in Ancient Israel by Robert Coote. There Coote asserts that '[i]n all probability, Israel emerged in the late Bronze Age as a tribal coalition' rather than a united group (Coote 2006, 35). Although Coote offers no substantive evidence for this assertion, he is clearly relying on the influential works of Weber, Fohrer, Geus, and Gottwald.

Shifting from the tribal nature to discussion of covenant in ancient Israel is not as drastic as it may initially seem; indeed, the two are intricately related. The classic work on covenant in Ancient Israel is volume one of Walther Eichrodt's two volume *Theologie Des Alten Testaments*. Reacting against the 'historic-genetic' approach to the Hebrew Bible, Eichrodt proposes to understand the biblical text through its own culture and through the structural unity and 'cross sections' of Hebrew life, namely the Mosaic covenant. Although Eichrodt's study on covenant has been highly criticised on methodological grounds, his exposition of the concept of covenant in the Hebrew Bible is exceptional.

For the purpose of this article one aspect of covenant described by Eichrodt requires discussion. Although he does not use the social-scientific terms, Eichrodt's study clearly demonstrates that

the covenant in ancient Israel served as the unifying factor among the tribes, thus establishing a common group identity. Concerning the meaning of the covenant, Eichrodt states:

> The context of the will of God thus defined in the covenant also shows its formative power by the way in which it makes the human party to the covenant aware of his [sic] unique position. For participation in the divine covenant impressed a special character on the loose tribal coalition, in which Israel awoke to historical self-awareness. It is no tightly closed national community giving religious expression to national feeling in the worship of Yahweh. That which unites the tribes to one another and makes them a unified people with a strong sense of solidarity is the will of God. It is in the name of Yahweh and in the covenant sanctioned by him [sic] that the tribes find the unifying bond, which proves a match even for the centrifugal tendencies of tribal egoism and creates from highly diversified elements a whole with a common law, a common cultus, and a common historical consciousness. (Eichrodt 1959, 11)

Furthermore, Eichrodt claims that this common in-group identity 'draws no clear lines to exclude the stranger, but is continually absorbing outsiders into itself' and that 'the decisive requirement for admission is not natural kinship but readiness to submit oneself to the will of the divine Lord of the Covenant' (Eichrodt 1961, 39). While these two elements of Eichrodt's description of covenant offer no supporting evidence, their presence in the discussion at least raises the issue of group identity and boundaries.

In his commentary on Jeremiah, Heuy defines covenant as 'an agreement between two or more parties in which obligations are placed on one or both. One common type in the ANE (a 'treaty') was between parties of unequal power, in which the stronger placed obligations on the weaker party (1 Sam 11:1-2, Exod 19-24)' (Huey 1993, 281). This type of covenant also required the weaker party reciprocal obligations to increase the honor of the stronger party. Though in stark contrast to Mendenhall's assertion (Mendenhall 1955, 25), this patron/client agreement is widely known in the ancient world and provides perhaps the most useful analogy for understanding the human/divine relationship (Neyrey 2004). Huey, though, seems to favor the 'grant' model, which requires no reciprocal obligation of the weaker party.

Since the covenant in question in this paper is the Mosaic Covenant and the forthcoming New Covenant, the reciprocal model of covenant will be retained without further discussion, since the Mosaic Covenant is clearly a 'treaty' covenant. Thus, the Mosaic Covenant served to produce a common ingroup identity among the tribal coalition in early Israel. This covenant served to unite these tribes to the extent that they were somewhat unified during the Monarchy until the division into two Kingdoms after Solomon's death. Throughout this period, the covenant was repeatedly broken by Israel, a breach that ultimately resulted in the downfall of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms in 722 and 586 B. C. E. respectively. During the exilic period, with virtually all symbols of tribal and national identity gone, these group identities began to diminish as Israelites began to view themselves with more commonality than difference. Within this context, the prophet spoke an oracle of hope and restoration in the making of a New Covenant that would be different from the previous Mosaic Covenant. But different in what way? How could these exiled Israelites hear the promise of the New Covenant in terms of their own identity?

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF JEREMIAH 31:31-34

The Book of Consolation or Comfort, in which 31:31-34 is contained, has been the subject of vigorous debate among Hebrew Bible scholars since the early twentieth century. Opinions vary concerning the authorship, date, and place of composition of this block of prophetic material. Blackwood suggests that the new covenant passage must have been composed 'when every visible evidence of the original covenant had been destroyed' (Blackwood 1977, 224), thus after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. E. This claim offers a slightly later date than is argued for by McConville, who seems to date the New Covenant passage between the time of Judah's deportations and the destruction of Jerusalem (McConville 1993, 89). In contrast, Ernst Nicholson maintains that this passage is the work of a Deuteronomic redactor from the early synagogue (Nicholson 1971, 12–14, 82). Despite the debate concerning the book of consolation as a whole, the New Covenant passage was certainly a message of future restoration clearly intended for both Northern and Southern Kingdoms, regardless of who originally spoke the oracle. Based on the textual and historical context, however, I maintain that 31:31-34 is the work of an exilic Deuteronomic prophet who offers the hope of a future restoration to the land and a renewed relationship with their God.

'DAYS ARE COMING'

In his thorough treatment of temporal transitions in the Hebrew Prophets, Simon J. de Vries categorises this form as a temporal introductory formula that is used almost exclusively by Amos and Jeremiah. This particular form introduces 'radically altered, permanent conditions' for the hearers. The plural noun *ymym* is used here since this phrase is meant to introduce 'a new, ongoing condition or situation that is predicted, not a singular event' (De Vries 1995, 78). This new condition has not yet, however, been realised. Adeyemi notes that the anathrous *ymym* stress 'the indefiniteness of the time of this covenant' (Adeyemi 2006, 45). Hence this New Covenant 'is a future expectation not a present reality' (McKane 1986, 817).

The New Covenant oracle was addressed to the people of Judah (and Israel) after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. In this regard, I agree with Blackwood who maintains that this prophecy was given 'when every visible evidence of the original covenant had been destroyed,' either around the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple or shortly thereafter during the early exile, perhaps at 'the recitation of the Deuteronomic law during the feast of booths (tabernacles) in the autumn of 587, after the destruction of Jerusalem' (Holladay 1989, 197).

'NEW COVENANT'

The Book of Consolation is filled with messages of hope for a future restoration of the Israelites to their land. These messages come to a climax at the end of chapter 31 with the proclamation of a New Covenant. Exactly what is meant by the term 'new' (*hdsh*), however, has been the subject of much scholarly debate. The question most often asked about this verse is 'What is new about this new covenant?' Some maintain that there will be no difference in the covenant itself, rather in the manner in which it is observed. According to this viewpoint, as Sarason asserts, the New Covenant is '[n]ot a new Torah… just differently transmitted and more perfectly observed' (Sarason 1988, 105). On the contrary, Adeyemi maintains that the New Covenant is 'categorically contrasted with the Sinaitic Covenant' since the forgiveness of sins is promised in the new covenant

and there were no 'stipulations regarding atonement and procedure for forgiveness of sin found in the Mosaic Law' (Adeyemi 2006, 74). Furthermore, Holladay muses about the possibility of debate about the nature of the covenant among the prophets:

> The passage implies that Yahweh will draw up a fresh contract without the defects of the old, implying in turn that he [sic] could improve on the old one, that he [sic] had learned something from the failure of the old. Is the affirmation of Deutro-Isaiah, 'The Word of our God will stand forever' (Isa 40.8), intended as a reassurance against these implications? (Holladay 1989, 197)

Holladay dismisses this possibility since 'the crisis of the fall of Jerusalem and the exile was so severe that the word 'new' figures largely in the hopeful words of the prophets of the exile' (Holladay 1989).

There seems to be a sense of continuity and discontinuity between the Mosaic and the New Covenant. On one hand, nothing in the Jeremiah passage suggests a change in the content of the covenant. This implies continuity with the previous covenant in terms of its requirements. On the other hand, discontinuity is seen in the fact that, rather than being inscribed on stone tablets to be kept in the temple, the covenant requirements would reside within the human participants of the covenant. Thus, Sarason's proposal, that the content remains while the transmission and observance will change, seems best. The covenant that provides all of Israel with a common identity, therefore, will shift in focus from a merely communal to a more individual relationship.

'THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND THE HOUSE OF JUDAH' AND 'HOUSE (CHILDREN) OF ISRAEL'

One of the more interesting aspects of this passage is the stated recipients of the New Covenant. In 31:31, the New Covenant will be made with the 'house of Israel and the house of Judah.' While some assert that 'house of Judah' in this verse may be an editorial expansion, Becking notes that there is no textual evidence of such an addition (Blackwood 1977, 227). Indeed, Adeyemi notes that these two phrases (house of Israel and house of Judah) are used together only nine times in the Hebrew Bible, of which eight are contained in Jeremiah and always refer to 'national Israel' (Adeyemi 2006, 48).

Adeyemi's claim corresponds to the wording in verse 33a where the recipients are referred to simply as the 'house of Israel'. The apparatus in the MT notes that a few manuscripts contain *children of Israel* rather than *house of Israel*. Although a minority reading, the textual variation corresponds with the hope for a future united Israel that is present in the other Major Prophets and perhaps in the New Covenant passage as well.

'NOT LIKE THE [PREVIOUS] COVENANT'

This issue has already been mentioned briefly in a previous section. Here we will look specifically at the difference between the previous covenant and the new one that is described in the text. The prophet declares the difference between the previous and the new covenants to be a change in location. Rather than writing the covenant upon stone tablets as before, God will place (*ntn*) the divine Torah within the human participant and will write it (*ktv*) upon their heart/mind.

The new location of the divine Torah will eliminate the need for religious teachers in Israel. This prophetic assertion has led many interpreters to conclude that the New Covenant 'will

never been broken since… this time the Mosaic Torah will be inscribed on people's hearts, so that it will never again be forgotten or disobeyed' (Sarason 1988, 105–106). The placing of Torah in the hearts and minds of each individual 'contrasts with the acts of covenant stipulation being placed in a community's temple for periodic public reading' (Adeyemi 2006, 74), and thus places more responsibility on each individual participant of the New Covenant.

In summary, Jeremiah 31:31-34 proclaims a New Covenant that would, unlike the previous Mosaic Covenant, be placed within each covenant participant, thus enabling more perfect obedience to the divine Torah. The recipients of this New Covenant were to be the unified children of Israel with the New Covenant serving as their common identity. For a people whose history had been filled with tribal factions, political division, and warfare, the promising words of a perhaps idealistic prophet offered hope for a better future.

CONCLUSION

The application of Social Identity Theory upon the New Covenant passage found in Jeremiah 31:31-34 demonstrates the attempt of this prophet to develop a new common in-group identity that would better serve the post-exilic community. Jeremiah's proclamation was that the New Covenant, in contrast with the previous covenant which was inscribed merely upon stone tablets, would be placed within each covenantal participant and written upon each heart. This new common in-group identity shifts the emphasis from the collective obligation to the covenant toward a more individual obligation, thereby enhancing individual responsibility to the divine and to the human. This is not to say, however, that the New Covenant did away with dyadic personality. On the contrary, the dyadic personality remained; what changed was the understanding of the role of the individual in remaining true to the divine covenant.

Moreover, after the devastating years following the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile, the prophet may have hoped that this new common group identity would help diminish the tribal or sectarian tensions that still must have existed among the Israelites. Obviously, though, such was not the case. During and after the exile, tensions continued between the Davidic and the Mosaic factions. The Second Temple Period is filled with the emergence of various sub-groups such as the Pharisees and Sadducees as well as the Essenes at Qumran. Further study should be undertaken in this regard asking if the New Covenant as a common in-group identity was an idealistic hope that ultimately failed.

This study has merely opened the door for further study of the New Covenant in Jeremiah using Social-Scientific models. Since the New Covenant concept disappears after Jeremiah only to re-emerge in Qumran and Early Christianity, possible further studies include the apparent abandonment of the concept in the Second Temple Period and the re-birth of the idea in these sectarian groups. Extending this research into the texts of the Essenes, Early Christians, and the Church Fathers will continue to refine our understanding of the ways in which the New Covenant was capable of producing new identity.

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