



PAUL'S TABLE OF SACRIFICE IN 1 CORINTHIANS

An Intertextual Reading of 1 Corinthians 10-11



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Abstract

Early Christian meal making practices have received considerable attention in recent decades, especially considering recent sociological discoveries around the Greco-Roman Banquet structure in first century Mediterranean cultures. Biblical meal making, such as St. Paul's account of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 11:23-35, have garnered new attention considering these insights. In current scholarship, the dominant model for analyzing meal practices – such as the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians – is through the sociological model which reads Christian meals almost exclusively in conversation with this Greco-Roman banquet culture. Paul's meaning and understanding of the meal is understood through what would be intelligible within this wider first century meal making culture. Too often, Paul's Jewish background is not given proper attention in explicating his meaning of the Lord's Supper.

This thesis argues that it is Paul's Jewish background and theological worldview that are the primary sites of meaning to discern his understanding of the Lord's Supper. Thus, the methodology best suited to “decode” Paul's meaning is the theory of intertextuality, especially as developed by Richard Hays. Using this methodology of intertextuality, this thesis reads Paul's language in 1 Cor 10-11 through the conversation that develops from these OT echoes. What is heard, regarding the Lord's Supper, is that Paul understands it to be a cultic act of worship and sacrifice. As a cultic act, the elements of the meal – the bread and wine – are sacred in themselves and mediate the divine presence to the community. The community themselves shares in the divine presence through the meal, and thus the Lord's Supper ought to be understood as an act of cultic theosis in Paul's Corinthian Community.

Introduction

Mary Douglas's landmark essay "Decoding a Meal" argued that meal making and dietary rules – like those found in Leviticus – are codes that transmit messages about identities and social relations or values within cultures and religions. She writes, "if food is treated as a code the messages it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relations being expressed."¹ As an anthropologist, Douglas seeks to "read" the pattern of social relations present in contextual meal making practices and food that was considered clean or unclean in various cultures. Her insight around meal-making, encoding, and decoding has had a great influence in New Testament scholarly approaches seeking to understand and decode the meal making of Jesus and the earliest Christian communities in recent decades. This paper will seek to join the scholarly conversation around "decoding" NT meals by focusing on one such meal, Paul's account of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 10-11.

A central concern for Paul in 1 Corinthians is how the local community is divided. One way that he addresses their divisions is around their communal meal making practices which he calls the Lord's Supper. What is supposed to be a meal that brings the community together as a sign of their unity and benefit is having the opposite effect spiritually and physically. Whatever the meal was supposed to "encode" for the Corinthians, it was no longer doing that in how they were living out this meal, and this discord causes Paul to comment.

There are a few issues that arise within the history of scholarship concerning Paul's discussion of the Lord's Supper. The following list is by no means exhaustive:

¹ Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," *Daedalus* 101, no. 1 (1972): 62.

- Relationship between the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians and the Last Supper in the Gospels?²
- Historicity of the Lord’s Supper?³
- What exactly was going wrong at the meal and why is there death and sickness that results from its poor celebration?⁴
- What does Paul mean by the phrase, “the Lord’s Supper?”⁵
- What is Paul’s solution for the problems at the meal – is it ethical, religious, or otherwise?⁶
- What does it mean to “discern the body” – is this a reference to the elements at the meal or is it about community identity or proper ethical action?
- How do the Jewish or Greco-Roman meal making paradigms shed light on the Corinthian meal?⁷
- Is the Lord’s Supper a ritual/sacred meal, or is it a common meal?⁸
- Is this account of Paul’s a faithful account of the deeds/words of Jesus or are there any Pauline interpolations present?⁹
- How is the Lord’s Supper related to early church worship and liturgy?¹⁰

This thesis will not address all these scholarly concerns and questions, but nonetheless has been informed by the scholarly conversation regarding each of these topics and will draw on

² Jerome Kodell, *The Eucharist in the New Testament* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988).

³ Albert Schweitzer, *The Problem of the Lord’s Supper: The Lord’s Supper in Relationship to the Life of Jesus and the History of the Early Church*, trans. A.J. Mattill, vol. 1 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1982).

⁴ Yung Suk Kim, *Christ’s Body in Corinth: The Politics of a Metaphor*, Paul in Critical Contexts (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

⁵ Andrew McGowan, “The Myth of the ‘Lord’s Supper’: Paul’s Eucharistic Meal Terminology and Its Ancient Reception,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (2015): 503–521.

⁶ John S. Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations: Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019). Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

⁷ Hal Taussig, *In the Beginning Was the Meal: Social Experimentation and Early Christian Identity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).

⁸ Peter-Ben Smit, “‘It’s the Ritual, Stupid!’: The Ritual Turn in New Testament Studies in Theological Perspective,” *NTT* 73, no. 3 (2019): 169–90, <https://doi.org/10.5117/NTT2019.3.003.SMIT>.

⁹ Andrew Brian McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁰ Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983).

insights from some of them in seeking to join the conversation around how to interpret and understand Paul's meaning of the Lord's Supper. Our primary investigation in this thesis is to examine what is Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper – is it a meal, an act of worship, something else – as well as answer if the elements at this meal, the bread and wine, hold any special significance for him. We will examine these two questions primarily from a methodology of intertextuality.

Over the last twenty years or so, there has been a revolution in understanding ancient Mediterranean meal practices. The consensus today is that all meals in the ancient world – including Paul's account of the Lord's Supper – share a similar structure called the Greco-Roman banquet.¹¹ This structure is a meal comprised of two distinct sections, a supper and then a symposium, with a religious libation that signals the shift between the two. Standard scholarly examinations of Paul's discussion of Lord's Supper, and the whole meal context of 1 Corinthians 10-14, tries to trace similarities between Paul's description and the wider cultural meal paradigm.¹² This sociological approach to studying Paul has had the positive effect of avoiding hasty anachronisms when describing the context and meal practices of Paul's community. The rise of anthropological and sociological insights has helped discipline the imagination about the first Christian worship practices to avoid a hasty identity between modern understandings and practices of the Lord's Supper and what Paul's community did.¹³

¹¹ Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

¹² Taussig, *In the Beginning Was the Meal: Social Experimentation and Early Christian Identity*. This work is an example of how the paradigm from the early 2000s is current in scholarship.

¹³ David E Aune, "The Presence of God in the Community: The Eucharist in Its Early Christian Cultic Context," *SJT* 29, no. 5 (1976): 451, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S003693060004299X>. There is a natural "tendency of each theological tradition to retroject its own understanding of the Eucharist back into the early Church, whether it would find itself at home there or not."

What the recent scholarship has failed to highlight are the distinctive features of Paul's account of the Lord's Supper in comparison to Greco-Roman meal making. What is striking and noteworthy about Paul's account is not so much that it is similar to the wider Roman meal culture, but rather the distinctive features of the Lord's Supper. Sociological similarities ought to begin one's analysis, but they ought not be the final say when difference and distinction can be detected. As McGowan and Jamir rightly note, sociological explanations cannot be the fullest description of Paul's meaning even if it must form an integral part of it.¹⁴ A focus on similarities to the wider Greco-Roman meal culture risks overlooking insights of Paul's Jewish tradition which he uses to explain his understanding of the Lord's Supper. Paul's references and allusions to the Old Testament in 1 Corinthians 10-11 – notably the prophets Malachi and Jeremiah – are often isolated from his discussion of the Lord's Supper and not used to shed light on his meaning.¹⁵ In favor of commonality, modern scholars often ignore the Jewish roots of Paul's theology and the Jewish references that are clearly present in the text of 1 Corinthians 10-11.

The goal of this thesis is to “read” or “decode” Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper through the “key” of Hays's method of intertextuality and to place this “key” in dialogue with the best insights from the more dominant sociological readings of Paul. I will argue that an intertextual reading of Paul in 1 Cor 10-11 – one that has not yet been attempted in the wider scholarship regarding the Lord's Supper – will reveal that Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper that it is both a meal and a sacrifice, and that he understands the elements of the meal itself to possess a sacred character. An intertextual reading of Paul's discussion of the “Lord's table” (1 Cor 10) will be read alongside Paul's discussion of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11),

¹⁴ McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals*, 8.

¹⁵ For example, Paul's allusions to the prophet Malachi in ch. 10 and to the prophet Jeremiah in ch. 11 as well as to the book of Exodus. We will unpack all these references in chapter 2.

showing how each image is actually the same reality and mutually interpret each other to reveal the cultic aspect to Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper. This intertextual reading will argue for a reimagining of Paul's understanding of the bread and wine to have a symbolic realism which communicates to believers the body and blood of the Lord. The bread and wine at the Lord's Supper were sacred realities for Paul and were central to his understanding of theosis for his community which passes by way of cultic practices such as Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We will argue that, for Paul, the Lord's Supper was no ordinary meal but a ritual which stood at the heart of his Gospel proclamation to the Corinthians.

Chapter 1: The Lord's Supper and the Need for Intertextual Exegesis

Chapter one will focus on the context which generated Paul's writing the letter to the Corinthians. Then the letter itself will be outlined and analyzed to reveal Paul's overall theme and how the parts are situated within the whole of the letter. This will place chapters 10 and 11 in the context of Paul's argument. Finally, a brief examination of the history of interpretation of the Lord's Supper will be explored, focusing on some common trends and themes up to the present day which reveal the need for an intertextual reading of Paul and a recovery of his Jewish roots in understanding of the Lord's Supper.

Overview of the Letter

N.T. Wright observes that "thanks to Paul, we know more about life in Corinth than we do about life in any other first-century city in Greece."¹⁶ This is true not just of the social setting but also of early Christian life as well.¹⁷ The topics that 1 Corinthians touches upon are broad, vast, and reveal a dynamic yet troubled community. We get a window into early Christian life and debates around issues of morality, worship, belief, work, communal relationship between

¹⁶ N.T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2018), 209. Pauline authorship is undoubted for this letter. (Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching [Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997], 9.) See also Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 2.; Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul & His Letters*, Second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2017), 281. 1 Corinthians is one of the undisputed letters of Paul according to scholarly consensus. Written around the year 54 AD, it is likely the second of at least four letters that Paul wrote to Corinth. It is considered by most as a unified letter without much divergence in its transmission through the centuries. Metzger flags a few places where minor additions or subtractions appear in the manuscript tradition, but we shall address those when we get to chapters 10-11. Overall, the letter is a stable and unified work attributed as authentically Pauline. (Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [London: United Bible Societies, 1971]).

¹⁷ Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 274.

churches, and factions that are grounded in different preaches or visions of the Gospel. Paul's letter tackles all these issues and more adroitly and with rhetorical deftness.¹⁸

When analyzing any one part of the letter, like the Lord's Supper, it is helpful to situate it within the overall theme or focus of the letter. Some scholars, like Karl Barth, argued for the Resurrection as being the major theme of the work that gives continuity to the whole piece, putting the emphasis on 1 Cor 15.¹⁹ Barth is in good company here in that Paul himself argues that without the Resurrection our faith and the life of the Corinthian church is in vain (1 Cor 15:14). Gorman, on the other hand, concedes that unity is a major theme but not *the* theme. Rather, he argues that Paul stresses conversion and "cruciform communion and love" as the major theme of the letter, with unity being a fruit of this communion and way of loving.²⁰ Thus, for Gorman, the heart of the letter is 1 Cor 13 where Paul gives his famous exhortation on love. Again, Paul himself would support such a position with his relativization of all things and all gifts in comparison to love (1 Cor 13:13). Murphy O'Connor brings Barth and Gorman together arguing that the two major themes of Paul's letter are unity through Christ (ch 1-4) and the Resurrection (ch. 15); without these two aspects the Corinthian church would cease to exist.²¹

There is strong consensus that a major theme of the letter is Paul's focus on unity.²² Paul himself says as much early in the letter (1 Cor 1:10-12) and he continually works to overcome various divisions in the community throughout the letter, like those that arise at the Lord's

¹⁸ Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: His Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 163.

¹⁹ Karl Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1933). "The chapter devoted to the Resurrection of the Dead does not stand in so isolated a relation to the First Epistle to the Corinthians as at first glance it might appear. It forms not only the close and crown of the whole Epistle, but also provides the clue to its meaning, from which place light is shed on the whole, and it becomes intelligible, not outwardly, but inwardly, as a unity."

²⁰ Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 283.

²¹ Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: His Story*, 163.

²² Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1993). Mitchell argues for unity based on a literary analysis. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 283. See also, Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: His Story*.

Supper. What all the scholars mentioned above highlight, albeit implicitly, is that Paul's concern for unity must be grounded in something beyond itself. There is no unity for unity's sake for Paul. Rather, there is call for unity because God is one, because Christ is one, and the Corinthians are Christ's body. Gorman is right to argue that disorder, chaos, and disunity reveal a lack of God or God-centered action, and thus unity, order, and peace are a fruit of a communion with God rooted in a new way of living which he calls "cruciform love." The overall theme of the letter is Paul's interest in the community becoming "imitators of Christ," like Paul says in 1 Cor 11:1. For each example of chaos and disorder in Corinth, Paul holds up Christ to the Corinthians as their model to guide their action and to bring "peace" and "unity" to each issue. At the heart of imitating Christ is to love as he did and let this standard of love – cruciform love as Gorman says – guide all their actions and bring them into unity with one another.²³ Richard Hays summarizes Paul's purpose in writing the letter: the Corinthian church is to call them to a conversion of their imagination in light of Christ.²⁴ The disunity within the community, according to Hays, can be attributed to the Corinthians acting in ways that were culturally normal, yet contrary to the Gospel. Thus, Paul is calling them to discern their way of living and being with Christ as their exemplar, and not the wider Greco-Roman culture. The chaos that Paul addresses is a result of this lack of conversion.

The structure of 1 Corinthians usually varies according to how scholars subdivide the body of Paul's letter (1:10-15:58). All agree that there is an opening, a body, and a concluding formula typical of Paul's letters. Within the body, scholars further divide the letter based on themes and topics.²⁵ I find the outline of Gorman's analysis convincing in how he divides the

²³ Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 282.

²⁴ Hays, *First Corinthians*, 11.

²⁵ For example, Richard Hays argues for three major sections to the body of Paul's letter, while Brown argues for four, Conzelman discerns five sections, while Orr and Walther push for seven.

body of 1 Corinthians through the lens of chaos/disorder and Paul's solution for each one. This labeling of the letter is creative and is hermeneutically faithful to Paul's own structure. His outline is as follows²⁶:

1:1-9 – Opening and Thanksgiving

1:10-4:21 – Ecclesial Chaos and Need for Unity through the Cross

- 1:10-17 – Divisions
- 1:18-2:5 – The Word of the Cross
- 2:6-3:4 – Cruciform Spirituality and Corinthian Immaturity
- 3:5-4:13 – Ministers as Cruciform Servants
- 4:14-21 – Concluding warning: Paul's Potential '*Parousia*'

5:1-7:40 – Moral Chaos and the Need for Holy Living

- 5:1-13 – Incest and the Holiness of the Church
- 6:1-11 – Lawsuits and the Justice of God
- 6:12-20 – Sex with Prostitutes and the Temple of the Spirit
- 7:1-40 – Confusion about Marriage and the Call of God.

8:1-14:40 – Liturgical Chaos and the Need for Peace during Prayer

- 8:1-11:1 – Meat Associated with Idols
- 11:2-16 – Disorderly Women and Men in the Assembly
- 11:17-34 – Abuse of the Lord's Supper
- 12:1-14:40 – Spiritual Gifts in Worship

15:1-58 – Theological Chaos – Witness to the Resurrection and the Power of the Cross

- 15:1-11 – The Common Creed
- 15:12-34 – The Consequences of Disbelief and Belief
- 15:35-50 – Questions about Bodily Resurrection
- 15:51-57 – The Final Victory
- 15:58 – Concluding Exhortation

16:1-24 – Closing

²⁶ Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 284.

Liturgical Chaos 1 Cor 8-14 and the Context of 1 Cor 10-11

Gorman's outline highlights chapters 8-14 under the heading of liturgical chaos within the community. Gorman's outline is compelling because it rightfully argues that there is a thematic unity within chapters 8-14 around the notion of liturgy or ritual for Paul. This unity of chapters 8-14 is important because it will provide exegetical connections between Chapters 10 and 11 which form the crux of our argument in chapter two. That worship is at the heart of Paul's concern in chapters 8-14 helps ground Paul's discussion of the Lord's Supper within the context of worship overall – that the supper itself is an act of worship – and that the supper, as an act of worship, ought to be read through Paul's discussion of other issues of worship that he mentions in chapters 8, 9 and 10.

Gorman's inclusion of this entire section under the heading of liturgical chaos distinguishes him from some commentators who would restrict Paul's thought on community worship to chapter 11 alone or maybe 11-14.²⁷ Why some scholars restrict Chapters 8-10 as not concerning worship hinges on how they understand the term τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα and its meaning in the letter (e.g., 1 Cor 8:1). Our argument centers around reading Paul's usage of the "table of the Lord" in Chapter 10 and his discussion of the Lord's Supper as identical realities under different names, and one way these ideas are linked passes by way of a unity of themes which Paul writes

²⁷ William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, *1 Corinthians*, Anchor Bible Series (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 251. Other commentators, like Hays and Conzelmann, see a concern for worship extended from chapter 11 until chapter 14. (Hays, *First Corinthians*, 14.; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 182). Raymond Brown, on the other hand, sees Paul's worship concerns reflected in chapters 10-11. (Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* [New York: Doubleday, 1997], 521). Fee, on the other hand, does note that worship is a primary concern of Paul in chapters 8-11, but distinguishes distinct concerns for Paul on the one hand idolatry and on the other the Lord's Supper later in ch. 11. (Gordon D Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1987], 359). Fee argues, convincingly, that Paul's concern is not with generic marketplace food itself but with the "sacrificial food at the cultic meals in the pagan temples."

about in these chapters. This unity between the Lord's table and the Lord's Supper is dependent upon Paul's use of the term τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα.

In 1 Cor 8-10, Paul discusses the issue of τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα, which is translated as "food offered to idols" (RSV) or "food sacrificed to idols" (NRSV). He discusses this food in three places: 1 Cor 8:1-13, 1 Cor 10:1-22, and 1 Cor 10:23-11:1. In 1 Cor 10:23-11:1 Paul says that the τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα can be eaten if it does not cause scandal, whereas in the other passages, Paul forbids partaking of the τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα since it is involved with pagan worship. How is Paul's discussion here to be read: is he primarily concerned with idolatry or with the formation of conscience between the "weak" and the "strong?" If τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα is understood as primarily having a cultic symbolism – tied to pagan religious rites – than Paul's chapters (8-10) can be seen as discussing the theme of worship. If the issue of meat that Paul discusses is about how to approach eating marketplace food that once was associated with idols, then chapter 11 ought to be read more in isolation from Paul's treatment in chapters 8-10.

Within the scholarly world there is a disagreement about how to translate and understand τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα. Thiselton argues that τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα should be taken more broadly to mean "meat (or food) associated with offerings to pagan deities," and not food that was eaten at the worship of pagan deities.²⁸ Fee, on the other hand, asserts that this term always carries a cultic connotation and that Paul's primary concern in these chapters is proper worship for his community.²⁹ Fee notes that the central group that Paul addresses in chapters 8-10 are Christians who were formally pagans who continued to go to the cultic feasts of the gods with their

²⁸ Anthony C Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 620.

²⁹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 357-59. "the best solution to all the date is to view 8:10 and 10:1-22 as the basic problem to which Paul is responding throughout. This means that τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα does not refer primarily to marketplace food, but to the eating of sacrificial food at the cultic meals in the pagan temples."

neighbors. These Christians seem to think that that joining in these cultic feasts did not matter because, in the first place, idols were not real (1 Cor 8:1;4) and so the meat had no religious significance whether eaten in a temple or in a home (1 Cor 8:8). Second, because they have drawn into communion with the table of the Lord Jesus they are protected while eating at these feasts from any notion of idol worship (1 Cor 10:1-4). Finally, they thought that Paul had no right/authority to tell them what to do in light of their new freedom in Christ (1 Cor 9).³⁰

Fee's understanding of τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα is preferable in how it ties together Paul's rhetoric and the historical context of meat eating in the ancient world. Paul discerns the temptation to idolatry as a key factor for this response in all three of his uses of τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα.³¹ The origin of τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα itself is to be found within Jewish-Christian circles as a term denoting forbidden meat associated with idol worship or cultic meals.³² It was not a general term for marketplace meat, but meat acquired at pagan worship. The more common gentile religious term was ἱερόθυτον (meaning the same thing). This grammatical point illustrates that Paul had proper worship in mind in these chapters, because he mostly uses the Jewish term. Paul only uses this gentile word (ἱερόθυτον) in 1 Cor 10:28 when he *allows* his community to eat meat (ἱερόθυτον) unless it causes scandal. The change of words for Paul indicates that, in the case of 1 Cor 10:28, a Christian would be a guest a neighbor's house and so he uses the common Greek term for the food. Thus, the food Paul has in mind here is not τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα in the Jewish sense, food associated with idol worship, but rather ἱερόθυτον, food purchased from a temple but eaten elsewhere and not in the act of worship. Paul cautions against eating this food so that one might

³⁰ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 362.

³¹ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 783. Scholars recognize that the meat sold in markets would almost all have come from temple sacrifices. Thus, this concern of Paul's and the Corinthian Church would have not been a small concern.

³² Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 617. Scholars have pushed for a Christian origin of this term, not finding reference to it in many sources in the pre-Christian Jewish world.

avoid giving scandal, not that one was at risk of idolatry itself. In fact, it is this change of word for Paul that is the sole time he references a house meal that is disassociated from a cultic context directly. For Paul, τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα, had a more direct idolatrous and cultic link in 1 Corinthians. The main thrust of Paul's argument regarding τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα was against the more publicly available meat offerings which were closely associated with religious and cultic gatherings. This conclusion is strengthened by the historical fact that lower to middle class persons of Paul's time – most of his community – would only have access to meat through public festivals which almost always had religious and cultic connotation.³³

Paul's concern regarding meal making at pagan temples or food sacrificed to gods and eaten in their honor was due to the exclusive relationship Christ has with his people and the communion that is engendered through cultic meal making. Gorman notes that, "for Paul, 'participation' is the very heart of the spiritual and cultic, or liturgical, life"³⁴ and the participation of the Christian with Christ. Whether a sacred meal has Jewish, demonic, or Christian roots, it is a meal that draws one into communion with the deity which is the focal point of the cultic meal and celebration.³⁵ The Jewish and Christian conception of God is that the covenant relationship with YHWH, and now Christ, is an exclusive and total one. Unlike their pagan neighbors, Christians were called to draw into exclusive communion with Christ, their one true God. This meant that the table fellowship of the Christians must be exclusively with the Lord. Meals and meat eaten from the general marketplace (even with temple origins) were

³³ Gerd Theissen, "The Strong and the Weak in Corinth: A Sociological Analysis of a Theological Quarrel," in *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, ed. John Howard Schütz and Gerd Theissen (London: T&T Clarke, 1990), 128. Meat was "almost exclusively as an ingredient in pagan religious celebrations, and the acts of eating meat and worshipping idols must have been much more closely connected for them than for members of the higher strata who were more accustomed to consuming meat routinely." (Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 128).

³⁴ Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 313.

³⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 363. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 313.

acceptable for Christian to partake in, except in the case of scandal (1 Cor 10:25). Paul's concern for marketplace meat was because of the risk it might cause in making people think that Christians were drawing into communion with a pagan god. Even here, Paul's primary concern is idolatry and not the meat itself, which he acknowledges it holds no danger *per se*. Any reading that does not argue for Paul's liturgical focus of chapter 8-10 misses his rhetorical arguments and the issue of worship at the heart of the community.

This contextual background of chapters 8-10 highlights Paul's liturgical concern as he turns to Christian meal making and worship in chapter 11. The extended excursus above on chapter 8-10 was necessary to develop a literary and thematic link between the Lord's Supper in chapter 11 and the "table of the Lord" in chapter 10. Paul's discussion of the "table of the Lord" in chapter 10 is intimately related to his discussion of the Lord's Supper in chapter 11.³⁶ This is true rhetorically and literarily within the overall liturgical thrust of these chapters, and it is also true theologically as the two terms identify the same reality. Paul refers to the "table of the Lord" as an argument against participation in pagan cultic meals, and this "table of the Lord" will be developed in chapter 11 as the Lord's Supper, the place where Christians draw into a certain kind of communion with the Lord and one another. This is significant because in chapters 8, 10, and 11, Paul is highlighting the participation that grounds table fellowship within a cultic and religious context. Paul is not concerned with meal making practices in general in either chapter, but rather he is concerned when these meal practices are linked to in cultic acts of worship. This cultic meal-making is the background that grounds his discussion of the Lord's Supper in chapter

³⁶ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 777. This connection is noted but is not given it's scholarly due, which we hope to flush out in this paper.

11.³⁷ Commenting on this thematic unity that often is missed in commentaries on these chapters,

Thiselton writes:

It is very surprising how readily virtually all commentators appear to ignore the fundamental continuity between the arguments and themes of 8:1-11:1 and the application of these very same themes to issues concerning public or corporate worship in 11:2-14:40.³⁸

It is precisely this lack of integration that causes the diversity of interpretations in the history of an understanding of Paul's interpretation of the Lord's Supper.

History of Interpretation of 1 Cor 11:17-35

Our primary interest in surveying the history of interpretation of Paul's account of the Lord's Supper is to examine general trends in understanding of the Pauline commentators around three central issues: the understanding of the Supper as sacrifice and/or meal, the liturgical character of the meal, and Paul's understanding of the elements at the meal. Our interest in the scholarship will center around the exegesis of vv. 23-35, considering our focus as stated above. This passage will get attention here because it is these verses that have garnered the greatest divergence of interpretation.³⁹ Within the pericope there are three movements or sections: vv.17-22, where Paul lays out some problems at the supper; vv.23-26, where Paul appeals to the tradition he received "from the Lord" and his excursus on this tradition; vv. 27-35, where Paul warns against participating in the supper unworthily.⁴⁰ In chapter 2 I will give my own exegesis

³⁷ This thesis is more fully developed here in this work. Brant Pitre, Michael P. Barber, and John S Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew: Rethinking Pauline Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2019). Another work that develops this thesis of theosis in Paul is John Kincaid and Michael P. Barber, "Cultic Theosis in Paul and Second Temple Judaism," *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters* 5, no. 2 (2015): 237–56.

³⁸ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 799.

³⁹ Gerald Lewis Bray, ed., *1-2 Corinthians*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999). For example, the most sacramental readings of this passage of Paul comes from the early Church Fathers. Even these, however, agree with modern exegetes that in vv. 17-23 the condemnation is over poor meal practices and turning what was meant for a common meal into something private.

⁴⁰ PHEME PERKINS, *First Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 141.

of the entire passage in light of an intertextual reading. The goal here is to show overall trends and developments in interpretation throughout history, and the need for a new reading of this passage.

The earliest extant commentaries on this passage from 1 Corinthians come from the Patristic age in the fourth century.⁴¹ In many of these earliest commentators, there is an understanding of the meal itself as a sacrifice and ritual, and the elements within the meal as possessing a sacral character themselves.⁴² Chrysostom “decoded” Paul’s meaning of the Lord’s Supper as a ritual which was also a sacrifice – albeit an unbloody one.⁴³ Cyril of Alexandria argued that the bread and wine ought to be “read” as that which makes present the Lord in some way, at the supper itself. Ambrose agreed with Cyril’s understanding, that the Lord is present in some way through the ritual and elements themselves.⁴⁴ Essentially, these early commentators argued that the tradition that Paul received from the Lord in vv. 23-26 was the ritual beginnings of what would later be known as the Eucharist that Christians were celebrating in the fourth century.⁴⁵ Paul’s understanding of the Lord’s Supper was read in continuity with their own Christian worship.

When seeking to understand Paul’s notion of “discerning of the body” and “being guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” in vv. 27-29, thinkers like Chrysostom concluded that the

⁴¹ Cyril of Alexandria, “Letter 17.12,” in *1-2 Corinthians*, ed. Gerald Lewis Bray, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999). Origin commented on 1 Corinthians, but his full commentary is not extant and only scraps remain which do not include this passage. Other early writers make mention of the Eucharist – Justin Martyr, Ignatius, Polycarp – but none of these comment on Paul’s understanding and so we will pass over these. In fact, ancient and modern readers will agree on all ethical requirements of the Lord’s Supper but not on how to view the elements.

⁴² Ambroiaester, “Commentary on Paul’s Epistles,” in *1-2 Corinthians*, 111. “Paul shows that the Lord’s Supper is not a meal in the normal sense but spiritual medicine.”

⁴³ John Chrysostom, “Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 27.5,” in *1-2 Corinthians*, 110.

⁴⁴ Ambrose, “The Sacraments 4.5.21-23,” in *1-2 Corinthians*, 110.

⁴⁵ Augustine, “Letter 36,” in *1-2 Corinthians*, 111. “The Lord’s Supper is the sacrament of the Lord.” Further, Augustine can write “Old things passes away and are made new in Christ, so that altar yields to alter...bread to bread, victim to Victim, blood to Blood.” Christ’s supper is read as the fulfillment of the Old Testament covenants and their rituals of sacrifice.

body had a Christological referent contained in the sacred bread and wine of the ritual meal.⁴⁶ Paul's admonition was read as flowing from the sacred character of the meal and the need for Christians to come to their ritual worship with proper interior and exterior dispositions. The behaviors and attitudes of the Christians bring condemnation on themselves because they approach sacred realities in a duplicitous state.⁴⁷

This sacrificial reading of the meal and Christological understanding of the elements did not cause the Patristic Fathers to miss Paul's ethical charge in these passages. Ethical concerns at the meal will become important for later commentators on 1 Corinthians, and so it's important to note here that the Fathers did not ignore the ethical problems occurring at the feast, namely that the poor were being ignored, humiliated, or left hungry. Chrysostom wrote that "the Corinthians were disgracing themselves by turning the Lord's Supper into a private meal and thus depriving it of its greatest prerogative," namely communal unity. Another commentator noted that "Paul is not talking about doctrinal error but about moral failures" of the Corinthians at the meal.⁴⁸ These commentators were clear that the Lord's Supper ought to change the moral behavior of the community, and that one's moral behavior ought to affect how one approached the sacred meal itself. The moral importance of the meal was recognized, but these ancient commentators still gave primacy of importance of the Lord's Supper to the presence of Christ within the meal through the elements and ritual itself. They argued that Paul had this sacred character in mind in his conception of the meal.

⁴⁶ Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians," 113. And further, "Paul teaches that one should come to Communion with a reverent mind and with fear, so that the mind will understand that it must revere the one whose body it is coming to consume" (Ambrosiaster, "Commentary on Paul's Epistles," 112).

⁴⁷ John Chrysostom, "On Fasting," in *1-2 Corinthians*, ed. Gerald Lewis Bray, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 112–13. Thus, Chrysostom writes: "correct your mistakes, and in this way, with a clean conscience, touch the sacred table and participate in the holy sacrifice."

⁴⁸ Severian of Gabala, "Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church," in *1-2 Corinthians*, 108.

This Christological referent of the elements at the meal continued as the dominant understanding of this passage into the Middle Ages, through the Reformation, and even into the 19th century.⁴⁹ As the Church's sacramental theology continued to be refined and developed, later commentators read Paul's reference to the Lord's Supper with more explicit sacramental language in line with their own theologies. Aquinas, for example, argued that Paul is talking about "the sacrament itself" when talking about the supper, both in its "dignity" and in how one should approach it "reverently."⁵⁰ In Aquinas, there is a much more refined doctrinal polish to his analysis of Paul, but the thrust of his understanding of the meal was similar to earlier commentators: the elements of bread and wine have a Christological referent primarily, and the Lord's Supper ought to be understood as a sacrificial and ritual meal. When commenting on Paul's lines in vv. 27-29, Aquinas was clear that the body and the blood of the Lord refer to the sacred elements themselves, and not to the body understood as the community.⁵¹

With the Reformation in the 16th century onward, new understandings of Paul's passage emerged. This is not to say there was one unified interpretation of Paul's meaning among the reformers, but there was a subtle shift away from understanding the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice which created debates regarding how to understand the elements of the meal. Martin Luther wrote: "we maintain that the bread and wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ," but he goes on to reject the notion of transubstantiation as a means to theologically explain how the Lord is present in the elements.⁵² John Calvin wrote that Paul is definitively

⁴⁹ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 892. He discerns a turn in the scholarship in the 19th-20th centuries with thinkers like Käsemann, and Schweizer and others as we will see shortly.

⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, <https://sites.google.com/site/aquinasstudybible/home/1-corinthians/st-thomas-aquinas-on-1-corinthians/chapter-1/chapter-2/chapter-3/chapter-4/chapter-5/chapter-6/chapter-7/-7-15-10-33/chapter-11> Aquinas spends a good deal of time reflecting on how the bread becomes the Sacrament, which goes far beyond Paul's thought and reflects questions of Aquinas' own day.

⁵¹ Aquinas, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, 692.

⁵² Martin Luther, "The Schmalkald Articles: Concerning the Sacrament of the Altar," in *1 Corinthians*, ed. Scott M. Manetsch, Reformation Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 252. See also for

referring to the bread when saying that “this is my body,” and thus it is through the reception of the bread that Christians are brought into spiritual communion with Christ.⁵³ John Jewell agrees that the elements of the meal are sacred, but they convey their sacredness through the act of faith of the believer and not because of anything inherent in them: “we affirm that bread and wine are holy and heavenly mysteries of the body and blood of Christ...by faith we truly receive his body and blood.”⁵⁴ Other commentators stress that the Lord’s Supper is a memorial of what Christ did for humanity, and so the bread and wine remind us of what has happened, but they do not convey Christ in any meaningful way.⁵⁵

Without trying to flatten differences of thought between these commentators, they all understood Paul’s meal and the elements of the meal to retain a sacred character, even if the language of the meal understood as a sacrifice was no longer present or prominent for most of them. The sacrifice of atonement was understood to be that of Christ, and the meal was a reminder of this sacrifice, not a sacrifice itself. When speaking of Paul’s usage of “discerning the body,” the reformers placed Paul’s emphasis on having moral rectitude prior to the celebration of the sacred meal. The moral counsel offered by Paul in this passage, for them, flows from the sacred character of the meal itself and calls the community to discern how well they are imitating Christ in their lives. It is not for the perfect reception of Christ present in the elements that the reformers discerned a call for moral rectitude, but because of the message of Christ’s call to repentance and holiness. The reformers disagreed with Roman interpretations based on different notions of “real presence” of Christ in or through the elements and of the sacrificial nature of the

Calvin’s understanding, Joe Mock, “The Lord’s Supper in Calvin’s Sermons on 1 Corinthians,” *The Reformed Theological Review* 79, no. 2 (August 2020): 97–118.

⁵³ John Calvin, “Commentary on 1 Corinthians,” in *1 Corinthians*, 255.

⁵⁴ John Jewel, “Apology of the Church of England,” in *1 Corinthians*, 255.

⁵⁵ Hubmaier Balthasar, “Summa of the Entire Christian Life,” in *1 Corinthians*, 256. We can hear the systematic and sacramental debates of the Reformation playing out through commentaries on Paul.

Lord's Supper, but they retained an understanding of Paul that held the elements of the meal as sacred in some way. This Christological reading of Paul's notion of the "body" in vv. 27-29 and Christ's references to the bread being his body continued to populate scholarship into the 20th century. However, in the 20th century a shift to a more ecclesial reading of Paul's language around the body begin to become prominent and continues to dominant the scholarship today.⁵⁶

Thiselton detects a shift in the 20th century toward reading Paul's discussion of the "body" in vv. 27-29 to have an ecclesial and communal referent more than a Christological one. Thus, when Paul writes that one ought to "discern the body," modern commentators see in this a reference "primarily to respect for the congregation of believers as the body of the Lord."⁵⁷ Orr and Walther write: "Paul's explanation of the Lord's Supper furnishes no justification for the complicated eucharistic theologies that were developed," and discerning the body is a reference to the poor who were part of the communal body in Corinth.⁵⁸ Authors such as Hays, Fee, Schweizer, and Stanley agree that the ecclesial referent of the body/bread in this passage is primary or exclusive, with Hays going as far as to claim that "the meal proclaims the absence" of Jesus, not any notion of his presence in the bread or otherwise.⁵⁹ One reason for the shift to the ecclesial interpretation of Paul's language is that since elsewhere in Paul's letters "the body" refers to the community, he must also mean that here too.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ See for example a 19th century protestant commentary that still affirms the reformation position with the Christological referent. Frédéric Louis Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians.*, vol. 2, 1889, 163. See also, Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 892.

⁵⁷ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 892. What is interesting is that he includes Käsemann in his list, and yet, from this author's reading, Käsemann fits into the older protestant reading of Paul which affirms a certain kind of "real presence" and a Christological referent of the elements themselves. (Ernst Käsemann, "The Pauline Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," in *Essays on New Testament Themes* [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982], 128).

⁵⁸ Orr and Walther, *I Corinthians*, 269.

⁵⁹ Hays, *First Corinthians*, 199. Hays argues that rhetorically and logically Paul must mean the community when he brings up the body in vv. 27-29 because 'real presence' or Christ doesn't make sense within his overall argument at this point in the letter.

⁶⁰ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 559. Representative of this position.

Thiselton denotes another trend in the scholarship that is dissatisfied with both readings mentioned above and seeks to carve out a third way. This one argues that what Paul is driving at in his reference to “discerning the body” refers to the salvific body of Jesus who died for all, and the social transformation that Paul hoped for flows from this meaning of the body.⁶¹ These scholars argue that “the body and blood” in v. 27 neither mean the ecclesial body nor the body of Christ somehow mediated by the elements, but rather the body of Christ and him crucified “as proclaimed through a self-involving sharing in the bread and wine.”⁶² If one’s life and beliefs negate this reality, then Christ’s body is being defamed. “Discerning the body,” for Thiselton, means discerning one’s presence within the body of Christ in one’s beliefs and conduct. Despite this “third way approach,” the most common understanding of Paul’s notion of “the body” in this pericope continues to be the ecclesial interpretation. This ecclesial reading of Paul’s understanding of the “body” is buttressed by recent insights regarding meal making practices in Ancient Near East (ANE).

Beginning around the third millennium, a new paradigm around how to understand meal making in the ANE became dominant.⁶³ The older paradigm of thinking about ANE meal making was heterogenous, that many forms of meal making existed which were distinguished by their distinct purpose or structure. Thus, a funeral meal and wedding meal were different ways to structure a meal.⁶⁴ However, scholars like Dennis Smith, Hal Taussig, and others pioneered a new way of understanding ANE meal making. Rather than a heterogenous model of meal

⁶¹ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 893.

⁶² Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 890.

⁶³ Matthias Klinghardt and Hal Taussig, eds., *Mahl Und Religiöse Identität Im Frühen Christentum: Meals and Religious Identity in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Francke, 2012). This work is the publication after from much of the SBL research on the project.

⁶⁴ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 3.

practices, they argued for a homogenous model of the Greco-Roman banquet that was the exclusive paradigm for all meal making practices in the ANE.⁶⁵

The banquet was the most important meal of the day in the ANE, taking place in the late afternoon/evening, and was divided into two main parts. The first was the supper proper, where the meal was shared, and the second part was the symposium, which was a time for drinking, singing, conversing, or being entertained. To mark the transition from the supper to the symposium, a ritual took place which included the washing of hands and the pouring out of a libation – sometimes called a sacrifice – to the “good deity.”⁶⁶ The presence of this ritual libation and prayers or hymns to the gods at a standard banquet meal reveals that in the ANE the lines between the sacred and the secular were not as distinct as they are in modern times. All meals had religious undertones. This banquet model of eating, Smith argues, forms the basic structure for any meal making ceremony in the ANE, including Christian practices. Distinct variations were real – thus Jews, Christians, and ANE peoples had distinct customs during, prior, or after the meal – but the general pattern was the same.⁶⁷ He writes: “if we are to understand properly any individual instance of formularized meals in the Greco-Roman world such as...Christian community meals, we must first understand the larger phenomenon of the banquet as a social institution.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 3–5. See also, Vojtech Kase, “Meal Practices,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Ritual*, ed. Risto Uro et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 410. In contrast to Jeremias, the Passover/Jewish model of meal making is not seen as the primary influence upon Christian meal making, and in contrast to Leitzmann, the distinction between the agape feast and *The Lord’s Supper* as two distinct types of meals is no longer deemed credible. (Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* [New York: Scribner, 1966]).

⁶⁶ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 28. Scholars debate if this ‘good deity’ was understood as a particular god or any god who might be honored that evening.

⁶⁷ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 149–50. In describing the Jewish Passover, Smith argues that the general form of the supper and symposium are still present, even though the Jewish Passover has details that would mark it off as having different symbolic value than a regular banquet (e.g., different hymns, more cups of wine for prayer, different topics of conversation).

⁶⁸ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 2.

The banquet, in the ANE, served certain communal and ideological purposes as Smith highlights in his work. At its root, meal-making in ANE cultures was about identity formation, group cohesion, displaying social status or social obligation, and social enjoyment. Meals could reveal social difference or social equality, and they could also be ways to bind people together and create new social relationships. Smith argues, then, that Paul's discussion of the Lord's Supper was another instantiation of this common banquet meal within the Christian community. As such, Paul develops his theological "reading" of this meal in conversation with the expectations and norms of the Greco-Roman banquet customs in the wider culture. Smith concludes from this that the primary explanatory referent for Paul's discussion of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians is the Greco-Roman meal making culture and the social ideology and expectations surrounding these meals.⁶⁹ Meals were places of social and communal identity formation. Smith, by discovering parallels that existed within meal-making in the ANE, uses these similarities to interpret Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper, no longer seen as a unique instance of Christian worship, but rather as a Christian derivation of social formation within the culture of meal making.

Recent commentators follow Smith's lead in exegeting Paul by utilizing more sociological methodology.⁷⁰ These methodologies seek to produce "thick descriptions" of culture and history that avoids the ahistorical approach to theology or ideas that divorce the meaning of ideas from original contexts. Authors like Meeks, Kloppenborg, Horrell, and even McGowen, have all contributed to a "thicker" description of the cultural situation in and around Corinth

⁶⁹ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 217.

⁷⁰ N. T. Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters: Some Contemporary Debates* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 258–304. Wright uses the term "thicker" to describe the sociological approach. By this he means it is grounded in history and the local context and not a description that floats above history or context. He quotes the works of Meeks, Horrell, and McGowen, which we will refer to later in chapter 1.

which helps contextualize Paul's thought around the Lord's Supper. An advantage of this method, according to Kloppenborg, is a more disciplined scholarly imagination regarding the daily context and issues which Paul was speaking from and into.⁷¹ The modern scholar, considering these historical and sociological insights, can avoid hasty anachronisms in their exegesis.

What has resulted from this sociological and cultural focus on first century meal making and Pauline thought is a moving away from a focus on the liturgical readings of the Lord's Supper that tended to focus on how Paul's discussion was the earliest evidence of later Christian liturgies, or on how Paul viewed the *elements* of bread and wine in the meal, or even the notion of sacrifice in Paul's understanding on the Lord's Supper.⁷² These more "Christological" readings of the meal have given way to more "ecclesial" readings of the meal considering the wider Greco-Roman paradigm. These readings focus upon the ritual as identity making/marking within the cultural context of the Corinthians.⁷³ Further, these sociological readings emphasize the similarities between Paul's meal and ANE meals, and they focus less on places where Paul's meals might be distinct from ANE customs. Communal and ecclesial readings are comprehensible within the wider Greco-Roman Culture, but a Christological referent is less so.⁷⁴ The popularity of the unified Greco-Roman meal making paradigm for understanding Paul's meaning for the Lord's Supper risks a reduction of Paul's concern to only ethical or social

⁷¹ John S. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations: Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 8. Christ's Associations" states as his research goal studying what was typical in the ancient world in terms of groups and gatherings so that "knowing about what was typical in comparable associations will help to discipline our imaginations as to what was both possible and likely for Christ assemblies. Without such controls, our imaginations can run free and turn to baseless speculations

⁷² Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*.

⁷³ Klinghardt and Taussig, *Mahl Und Religiöse Identität Im Frühen Christentum: Meals and Religious Identity in Early Christianity*, 22.

⁷⁴ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 78–79. For example, Smith dismisses the idea that a god could be present in the food eaten because there is no evidence of this practice being present in the wider sacrificial meal making practices of the ANE.

problems, instead of highlighting his theological concerns as well.⁷⁵ As McGowen and Jamir have rightly noted, sociological explanations cannot be the fullest description of Paul's meaning even if it must form an integral part of it.

Another factor that has caused modern scholarship to downplay the sacrificial nature of Paul's discussion of the Lord's Supper and the Christological referent of "body and bread" is a lack of attention to the Jewish roots of Paul's thought.⁷⁶ Stubbs argues that "the past few centuries in particular have witnessed great resistance within academia to acknowledging those Jewish roots" of Israelite worship in the Christian tradition.⁷⁷ Often Protestant scholars have had an aversion to the cultic activity of the Old Testament and how it related to Christian worship in the New Testament.⁷⁸ Further, a history of religions paradigm which is still present in some exegesis looks to explain Christian or Jewish practices in light of the surrounding cultures alone, and risks flattening or ignoring distinctions present in Paul's account. At its core, some of these modern approaches to Paul's thought on the Lord's Supper risk losing the Jewish roots of Paul's theology, and the Jewish references that are clearly present in the text of 1 Corinthians. In favor of context and similarity, Paul's distinctive understanding of the Lord's Supper considering the Old Testament and his Jewish background needs to be recovered.

Communal Meal is not Enough

The context of Paul's use of term the "Lord's Supper" is to correct divisions or "abuses" that have occurred around this 'supper.' Addressing divisions is a clear theme in 1 Corinthians,

⁷⁵ McGowen, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals*, 8.

⁷⁶ A cultic reading of Paul's Lord's Supper is not in vogue presently. See I.H Marshall, "Lord's Supper," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P Martin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 573. For an interpretation of why such a reading is not popular see, David L. Stubbs, *Table and Temple: The Christian Eucharist and Its Jewish Roots* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2020), 13.

⁷⁷ Stubbs, *Table and Temple*, 13.

⁷⁸ Stubbs, *Table and Temple*, 14.

and here Paul highlights how these divisions occur even with the community at prayer and ritual gathering (1 Cor 11:18-22).⁷⁹ The precise details of what is going wrong at the meal has been open to scholarly debate. The greatest consensus among commentators is that there is a division between rich and poor, and this results from those who could arrive early and thus eat first (the wealthy) and those who came late, due to work, and thus experienced a shortage of food or an excess of drunkenness (the poor).⁸⁰ A more creative, and historically grounded, stance is that advanced by John Kloppenborg. He argues that it was not the divisions among workers and the rich, nor lateness that was the issue. Rather, it was the intense competition that fueled ancient meal-making as sites to exhibit or win social standing that was causing some to be hungry and others to be drunk.⁸¹ Whatever the precise nature of the mealtime abuses, the result is that these abuses risk negating the celebration of the “Lord’s Supper” (1 Cor 11:17) which is about communion, covenantal remembrance, and unity (1 Cor 11:20-21). Paul’s primary critique here was that the Corinthian church was disingenuous: they claimed to be coming together as a Church to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, but their behavior belied that intention and claim, and risked negating that reality. What, then, is this Lord’s Supper that Paul references in the context of these divisions?

⁷⁹ Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 320.

⁸⁰ George T. Montague, *First Corinthians*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 193.; Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 319.

⁸¹ Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 243. His insight is based on his study of group associations and the historical conditions of workers and the wealthy in society. He concludes that punctuality was a high value in ancient society, and lateness would rarely have been an issue. What would be an issue, was how one’s social status and capital was “spent” or “earned” at a meal. Thus, the neglect that was going on was within the meal itself, and not something that occurred beforehand or was caused because of the tardiness of some. A further insight from Kloppenborg’s analysis is that it breaks down the traditional boundaries of wealthy versus poor as the cause of division, but rather those who had social capital to spend and those who did not. In the ancient world, the slave of a wealthy person might have more social capital than a laborer, even though the slave himself was not wealthy. In the Anchor Bible series, the commentators argue that each brought their own meal to the supper, and the difference of these meals, and the difference when each began eating caused the divisions (Orr and Walther, *I Corinthians*, 270).

First, it is a communal gathering of the church in Corinth. This ought to be understood in two senses. The first is that the supper occurs when the Christians at Corinth “come together as a church” (1 Cor 11:18). As a common and public meal, it is meant to be a unifying experience for the whole community. Further, this supper is a communal gathering in that it is a meal that Paul (and the church of Corinth) has received “from the Lord” and it has been “handed down” (1 Cor 11:23). The nature of this meal is not private or particular to Paul or to Corinth. Rather, it is a common heritage which Paul, and the church of Corinth through Paul, has been invited into “from the Lord.” It is precisely this communal heritage of the Lord’s Supper that makes the divisions that are occurring so problematic for Paul.

Second, the Lord’s Supper for Paul has a historical referent, to a meal of Christ Jesus, and it is this meal that the Lord’s Supper at Corinth stands in relationship to and in some way reenacts (1 Cor 11:23). Paul’s description is very terse. It includes one historical reference to a meal Christ had (1 Cor 11:23), two actions and sayings attributed to Christ (1 Cor 11:24-25), a Pauline gloss on what the Corinthian Church is doing when they celebrate it (1 Cor 11:26), and a stern warning to participate in this meal with the sacredness it deserves (1 Cor 11:27). Paul’s brief yet illuminating description holds some key clues that make it hard to see the Greco-Roman meal-making practices as the primary referent for Paul’s term. He introduces the term by appealing to what he has received from Jesus, a Jew, regarding this meal. This meal, and Paul’s understanding of it, stands in direct relationship to the Jewish context of Jesus’ meal in the past. Further, Paul’s language of covenant forces a Jewish religious meaning of the meal to the center, contra a typical Greco-Roman meal for the dead or in a god’s honor. From Paul’s brief introduction to the meal there is a rhetorical signaling that Paul’s meaning must be found primarily in his Jewish cultural heritage. The Jewish reading of Paul’s thought is amplified

through an intertextual reading of his texts, considering the Old Testament passages that he is alluding to. Through listening to his intertextual echoes, we can hear that this cultural heritage is grounded in the Passover and the cultic ritual of the temple.⁸²

Building on recent insights from scholars who try to recapture the importance of the cultic and the Old Testament in Paul's through, I will argue for a reimagining of Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper considering these insights and an intertextual reading of Paul and the prophetic texts that occur in 1 Cor⁸³ Chapter 2 will seek to "read" or "decode" Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper through the "key" of Hays' method of intertextuality and to place this "key" in dialogue with the best insights from the more dominant sociological readings of Paul. I will argue that an intertextual reading of Paul in 1 Cor 10-11 – one that has yet to be done in the scholarship regarding the Lord's Supper.

⁸² Orr and Walther, *I Corinthians*, 251. According to Capes, "Paul's discussion of the Lord's Supper must be considered against the backdrop of Passover (and only secondarily against contemporary pagan practices except as he is specific in this regard – pace Schmithals)." (David B. Capes, *The Divine Christ: Paul, the Lord Jesus, and the Scriptures of Israel*, Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018], 33). This insight about the primary referent to Paul's Jewish background is reinforced by this work which argues that the strict divide between non-Hellenized and Hellenized Judaism at the time of Paul is hard to maintain. It is not that Hellenistic influences permeated some communities on the outskirts (like Paul's) and thus it is to Hellenistic practices to understand Paul's terms. Rather, it is that all Judaism lived in a world of Hellenistic influence, and yet their religious practices still found distinction from their neighbors due to their monotheistic roots and traditions from the Old Testament. Conzleman writes that the Pauline description of the meal "in contrast to the Synoptic account" does not frame the meal within a Passover context. This, he argues, from two reasons: first, from the lack of explicit Passover references like those found in the Synoptic tradition; second, from Paul's reference to Jesus as the Passover Lamb in 1 Cor 5:7 which does not appear in the context of the Lord's Supper. As a result, Conzleman concludes that Paul does not have the Passover in mind here (Conzelmann, *I Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 197).

⁸³ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul, a New Covenant Jew*. Kincaid and Barber, "Cultic Theosis in Paul and Second Temple Judaism."

Chapter 2 – Intertextuality in 1 Corinthians 10-11, Mapping the Echoes

In this chapter, I will highlight the importance of Paul's Jewish roots for hermeneutics and exegesis. It is Paul's Jewish religious and cultural context that ought to be the primary place for locating the meaning of his thought, and secondarily the wider Greco-Roman culture of his day. This insight opens the need for the method of intertextuality as a means for interpreting Paul's thought on the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 10-11. Intertextuality, especially as applied by Richard Hays, detects and amplifies the echoes to the semantic worldview and texts of the Old Testament. I will draw on this methodology of intertextuality as my method of exegeting Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 10-11 which draws out the relationship between these two chapters, and magnifies the echoes contained within Paul's discussion of the Lord's Supper to their Old Testament referents to temple, sacrifice, and presence.⁸⁴ This chapter will argue that Paul's phrase – the Lord's Supper – ought to be understood primarily within three key Old Testament motifs: the covenant at Mt. Sinai, the Passover meal, and the altar of sacrifice of the Jewish temple. The first two references emerge from the echoes present in the context of 1 Cor 11:17-34 itself, and the last one manifests in conversation with Paul's image of the "table of the Lord" in 1 Cor 10:20. These echoes present in both passages reveal that Paul understood the Lord's Supper as a cultic and covenantal meal, a ritual sacrifice that brought one into communion with both God and one another and as such the elements themselves have a sacredness about them.

⁸⁴ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989). Hays articulates an approach to intertextuality that we will be adopting here in this paper. Hays' insight regarding intertextual references in Scripture that move beyond direct citation and include echoes and allusions will be employed.

The Jewish Worldview of Paul as Primary Hermeneutical Lens

NT Wright, in his work *Paul and His Recent Interpreters*, discusses the recent scholarly focus upon Paul's Jewish background for understanding his letters.⁸⁵ A key feature of the mid-20th and early 21st century scholarly contribution to the academy has been the tearing down of metaphorical conceptual walls or silos in how modern scholars think about the ancient world and Paul's role within it. In particular, scholars have come to see how essential Jewish thought and theology were to understanding Paul's theology and meaning in his letters.⁸⁶ Wright notes three trends that have made the reclaiming of Paul's Jewish roots possible.⁸⁷

First, Martin Hengel's work in the later part of 20th century argued that there was no part of the Jewish world that was not influenced by Hellenizing factors of language and culture.⁸⁸ A consequence of his work for Pauline studies was that Paul could no longer be seen as either a Jew or as a Hellenist, but as a man who was immersed in both cultures.⁸⁹ No part of the Jewish world, Palestine included, was untouched by the influences of Hellenization.⁹⁰ Hengel's work – which blurred the lines between pagan and Jewish culture – also opened the way for a recovery of Paul's distinctly Jewish thought that used to be attributed to Hellenizing forces.

⁸⁵ Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters*.

⁸⁶ Ben Blackwell, "Paul and Judaism," *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters* 5, no. 2 (2015): 157–68.

⁸⁷ This trend within Pauline studies, reflects a wider trend in NT Scholarship where the first century context of Jewish thought and the OT relationship to NT thought and writings is made clear. (Brant James Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2015]). Richard Hays has produced works in this vein as well where he argues for a figural reading – or reading backwards – from the Gospels to the OT since it is the religious worldview of the OT that the NT writers are primarily in conversation with. (Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* [Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2016]).

⁸⁸ Martin Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (London: Trinity Press International, 1991). This work, while being published toward the end of his illustrious career, summarizes the points being argued here and some of which he made much earlier in his writings.

⁸⁹ Anders Klostergaard Peterson, "Paul the Jew Was Also Paul the Hellenist," in *Paul the Jew: Rereading the Apostle as a Figure of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Carlos Segovia (Fortress Press, 2016), 272.

⁹⁰ Capes, *The Divine Christ*, 33.

Another development in Pauline studies was the realization that the first century “Christians” understood themselves as faithful Jews and Christ as their long-awaited Messiah. The scholarly movement, commonly called the New Perspective on Paul (NPP), recovered a notion of first century Judaism that was stripped of its ahistorical veneer of “works righteousness”. This allowed Paul’s theology to be read as an expression of Jewish thought, in light of Christ as Messiah, and not as anti-Jewish thought.⁹¹ Christ spoke *into* Paul’s Jewish faith not against it. Thus, Paul was no longer understood as “converting” from one religion to another but rather “serving the one and same God, Paul receives a new and special calling in God’s service.”⁹² Paula Fredriksen argues that Paul’s mission and thought must make sense within a Jewish context because he himself was a Jew on mission to the Gentiles.⁹³

Thirdly, scholars like Hurtado and Capes, have reassessed Paul’s theological insights as having Jewish origins as much – or more so – than Greco-Roman ones. For example, Larry Hurtado has argued that many of Paul’s theological references to Christ worship can – and do – make sense within a first century Jewish framework, and they need not be attributed to some foreign Hellenizing force within Paul’s diaspora communities.⁹⁴ Hurtado and his protégé David Capes have done similar work on Paul’s use of the word *kyrios* in his letters. They argue, that, contra Bousset and others, the New Testament authors predication of *kyrios* to Christ – Paul included – can be understood as arising from Jewish notions of divine agency without appeals to

⁹¹ Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters*, 70–73. Wright focuses primarily on the work of E.P. Sanders in his summary of the movement. For an introduction to this movement and its subsequent research interests see, Kent L Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).

⁹² Krister Stendahl, “Paul Among the Jews and Gentiles,” in *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 7.

⁹³ Paula Fredriksen, *Paul: The Pagans’ Apostle* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017).

⁹⁴ Larry W. Hurtado, *Ancient Jewish Monotheism and Early Christian Jesus-Devotion: The Context and Character of Christological Faith* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017). See also, Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, 3rd ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015).

either a corrupting Hellenizing force, or to a critique of the emperor cult of the Romans.⁹⁵ Capes argues that Paul's *kyrios* usage is semantically tied *primarily* to the Old Testament and how these authors used *kyrios* to refer to God. Paul's usage of the term stands in creative dialogue, continuity, and development with these other books and authors of the Jewish tradition. Capes writes, contra the parallelism of history of religions approach, that Pauline thought ought to be explained first within its Jewish context and after this with reference to the wider Greco-Roman world.⁹⁶

Jewish scholar Daniel Boyarin writes that Paul ought to be recovered as "an important Jewish thinker" and that "Paul lived and died convinced that he was a Jew living out Judaism."⁹⁷ Pauline scholarship has recovered the essential character of Paul's Jewishness and from this scholars have sought to understand Paul's ideas as a first century Jewish man who came to recognize Jesus as the Messiah and how this recognition infused his Jewish categories on God and theology with new insights, but never supplanted the Jewish conceptional framework that he had.⁹⁸ The recovery of the positive and essential role Paul's Jewishness played in his theological thinking opened intellectual doors for theories of intertextuality to relate Paul to Old Testament texts and to see Paul as a commentator and developer of the Old Testament tradition.

⁹⁵ Capes, *The Divine Christ*, 21. Bousset argued that *kyrios* as a title for Christ originated not in the Jewish settings of Palestine, but in the Greek speaking communities of the diaspora. Capes and Hurtado have shown how this theory is not historically credible anymore, and that *kyrios* can be understood within a first century Jewish theological framework.

⁹⁶ Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81, no. 1 (1962): 1–13. The question of whether Jewish or Greco-Roman culture is primary for interpreting Paul's thought is a fault line within Pauline scholarship.

⁹⁷ Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 2. Boyarin has a similar interest in the Gospels, arguing that some of the most central Christian themes in the Gospels can be understood as intelligible within a Jewish theological mindset. (Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* [New York: The New Press, 2012]).

⁹⁸ W.R. Stegner, "Jew, Paul The," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 503. See also, Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 2.

Hermeneutical Framework: Literary Theory of Intertextuality

The methodological approach to interpreting Paul will be through the literary theory of intertextuality. The landscape of literary methods and their application to biblical studies is extremely varied and thus the chosen method and goal needs to be clarified at the outset. Michel Beth Dinkler brings a helpful taxonomy to the classification of literary theories and methods with distinctions based on the interpretive priority or goal of each approach.⁹⁹ In her schema, Dinkler places the theory of intertextuality within an author centered approach, since intertextuality focuses on extra-textual relationships that shaped the authorial production and meaning of a given text.¹⁰⁰ The author himself, Paul in this case, deploys such intertextual references in the rhetoric of his writing.

Intertextuality is a theory of interpretation that understands texts as being in relationship to a diverse web of other texts and semiotic references that are operative in the generation and reception of a text.¹⁰¹ In other words, no text is an interpretive island, and intertextual methods seek to discover and utilize textual bridges that travel in and out of a text's encyclopedic relationships in order to generate interpretative meaning.¹⁰² Like literary theories described above however, authors that utilize methods of intertextuality tend to prioritize one of three possible intertextual foci in their interpretation: production-oriented, reception-oriented, or experimental-oriented.¹⁰³ The meaning potential of an intertextual reading changes depending on which texts

⁹⁹ Michal Beth Dinkler, *Literary Theory and the New Testament* (New Haven: Yale University, 2019), 24. Using the framework that she utilizes, there are four diverse priorities of interpretation in the literary field: "An *author* composes a *text* for a *reader* about a *universe*" (23). Each italicized word indicates a different literary priority that methods can be classified into like a four-fold compass which can guide a reader through the literary and biblical scholarly matrix.

¹⁰⁰ Dinkler, *Literary Theory and the New Testament*, 28.

¹⁰¹ Stefan Alkier, "From Text to Intertext: Intertextuality as a Paradigm for Reading Matthew," *HTS* 61, (2009): 1.

¹⁰² Stefan Alkier, "Intertextuality and the Semiotics of Biblical Texts," in *Reading the Bible Intertextually*, ed. Richard B. Hays and Stefan Alkier (Waco, TX.: Baylor University, 2008), 8.

¹⁰³ Alkier, "From Text to Intertext: Intertextuality as a Paradigm for Reading Matthew," 4.

are brought into conversation with each other.¹⁰⁴ Thus, our intertextual referents will be limited to what can be detected in the text of 1 Corinthians itself and put in conversation with the primarily religious texts of Paul's day for a first century Jew, namely the Old Testament.¹⁰⁵ The intertextual method which will ground this paper's exegesis of Paul will be that expounded by Richard Hays and which can be categorized as a production-oriented method of intertextuality.

Hays has been the most noteworthy scholar in recent decades who applied a method of intertextuality to the study of Scripture and his work was pioneered through application to Paul's thought.¹⁰⁶ Hays's explication of his theory begins with an affirmation that the Old Testament (OT) plays an essential role in Paul's theological writings as a conversation partner and source of theological creativity for Paul. Hays gives pride of place to the OT as the "'determinate subtext that plays a constitutive role' in shaping [Paul's] literary production."¹⁰⁷ Hays's argument is that Paul lived and thought intertextuality in light of God's word contained in the Old Testament and this Word left an indelible imprint upon his own writings. As a result, Hays's intertextual reading

¹⁰⁴ Alkier, "Intertextuality and the Semiotics of Biblical Texts," 9. Reception-oriented readings look at the intertextual relations of the reception of texts, and the experimental-oriented readings look at intertextual relations to reader or any other text that is not related directed to the text in terms of its production or reception history, but rather is a creative dialogue between any reader or work.

¹⁰⁵ Alkier, "From Text to Intertext: Intertextuality as a Paradigm for Reading Matthew," 10. Production oriented intertextuality seeks to look at what texts are in conversation from the evidence of the literary work under study. For example, at the time of production of a text – and thus within its narrative worldview – what intertextual relations can be discerned. As Hays explains when discussing Paul, Scriptures for Paul means the Old Testament, thus while it is a fruitful intertextual exercise to compare Paul to other NT canonical writings, this will not be the focus of our project – namely the Gospel accounts of the *Last Supper*. (Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 5).

¹⁰⁶ Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters*, 98. Hays first deployed his theory of intertextuality in the field of biblical studies. (Richard B Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven: Yale University, 1989]). A few decades later, he further honed his intertextual approach to Paul. (Richard Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005]). In many ways this is an updating and honing of his method in response to some helpful scholarly feedback. He does not change in any substantial way his method but offers some clarifications about how he understands Paul to be using the OT in his own NT letters. Hays also applied his intertextual method to the Gospels. (Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*). This work, however focuses on how the Gospel writers use the OT which is often times different from Paul.

¹⁰⁷ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 16. Hays does not deny other influences on Paul's writing, but he argues that the Old Testament is the primary one.

of Paul will focus upon Paul's use of the OT in his writings and try and draw out where such uses are present in Paul's text.¹⁰⁸

The next element of Hays theory is to define intertextuality more broadly than direct citation, but to include intertextual allusions or echoes as well. He argues that intertextual connections should not be reduced only to when one can identify direct citation in a work. Rather, intertextuality can operate on the level of echoes, where one author alludes to, or utilizes, a prior text's image in more subtle and yet no less meaningful ways. Hays claims that these implicit echoes are an important part of the hermeneutical listening to a text. These echoes are generated between texts which exists in a shared literary, cultural, or religious traditions, or using Alkier's language, a shared encyclopedic discourse.¹⁰⁹ Hays's intertextual theory is incisive given that the ancient world did not cite in the same ways as the modern world, and thus to limit intertextual relationships to direct quotations alone risks flattening the depth of meaning in each text. Once an allusion or echo is identified between two texts, Hays argues that a "trope of metalepsis" occurs whereby the text that is alluded to generates new meaning within the context of the text under production.¹¹⁰

The "trope of metalepsis" is key to Hays's theory. In describing metalepsis, he writes that "when a literary echo links the text in which it occurs to an earlier text, the figurative effect of the echo links the text in which it occurs to an earlier text, the figurative effect of the echo can lie in the unstated or suppressed (transumed) points of resonance between the two texts."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Hays, xi. Hays notes that the linguistic version of the OT that Paul primarily cites is the LXX version. This will be the version we examine as well of 1 Corinthians and the Greek text will be from Barbara Aland and Eberhard Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 2012).

¹⁰⁹Hays's most creative use of this method is in how he uses it to understand St. Paul in dialogue with the Old Testament, especially the prophet Isaiah. The interpreter must attempt to listen for these intertextual echoes and he must: draw attention to the presence of these echoes and to "give an account of the distortions and new figurations that they generate" within another work. (Richard B Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*), 19).

¹¹⁰ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 23.

¹¹¹ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 20.

Metalepsis between two texts can occur through overt citations, clear allusions, and also distant echoes. The reader is invited to discern the intimations between texts through the “trope of metalepsis” by a careful reading and listening of Paul to detect where the OT is present in creative dialogue with his own thought. For Hays, then, Paul’s use of Scripture is not really as “proofs” of a certain point but as tropes: “they generate new meanings by linking the earlier text (OT Scripture) to the later (Paul’s letters) in such a way as to produce unexpected correspondences, correspondences that suggest more than they assert.”¹¹² Thus, Hays, when he discovers an echo, tries to show how this echo – its original context, and its locus in Paul – shed’s interpretive light on Paul’s writings. The first step is to layout and argue for the existence of the echo and the subsequent step is to argue for the theological or interpretive significance of these echoes in Paul’s thought. This is the path we too shall walk below.

A final note to Hays’s method is about his understanding of the locus of the echo and whose mind this echo is primarily found within. Hays calls these intertextual echoes a “hermeneutical event.” He goes on to ask where this hermeneutical event is primarily located? Hays acknowledges that the echo, the intertextual fusion that generates new meaning, can lie in one of five places: the mind of Paul, the original readers of Paul’s text, the text itself, the modern reader herself, or within a community of interpreters.¹¹³ None of these grounds his theory exclusively because all of them are at play in some way in a reading of the text. What is central for Hays’s project, which I myself echo, is that there is “an authentic analogy – though not a simple identity – between what the text meant and what it means.”¹¹⁴ In other words, at the root of Hays’s method is the claim that what he as an interpreter hears as an echo or trope is really

¹¹² Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 24.

¹¹³ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 26.

¹¹⁴ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 27.

there within the text and that the meaning he draws from this trope may be plausibly understood to be the meaning Paul had for the text or the meaning that the communities of Paul's day would understand by the text.¹¹⁵ In other words, Hays does not think that his method is merely intelligible to modern readers but seeks to make a historical claim about the text's meaning in Paul's own day.¹¹⁶

Hays argues that "Israel's Scripture was...the grand textual matrix within which Paul's thought took shape, the privileged predecessor with which he wrestled."¹¹⁷ Paul interprets these scriptures eschatologically, that is "because God has acted in Jesus Christ to initiate the turn of the ages, everything past must be read with new eyes."¹¹⁸ God's word of the past speaks directly to Paul's communities (1 Cor 10:11). God's inbreaking into the world, in unknown and new ways in the person of Christ, opens new ways of seeing and hearing God's message contained in the OT. God's word in the OT takes on new meanings, new patterns, and new applications in Paul's own mind, heart, and life. It is precisely on account of this understanding of Paul's use of the OT in his writings that Hays method of intertextuality becomes critical in discerning Paul's meaning in his letters. This reimagining of the cultural context of Paul and his letters has opened new "keys" for decoding his understanding of the Lord's Supper – which is the focus of this thesis. Turning now to Paul's text of 1 Cor 10-11, I will map out and argue for both OT citations, allusions and echoes present within these chapters in light of Hays's method outlined above.

¹¹⁵ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 28.

¹¹⁶ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 29–32. Hays gives 7 criteria for discerning the existence of an echo. We will refer to these criteria in our footnotes as we deal with each echo in 1 Corinthians below.

¹¹⁷ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 122.

¹¹⁸ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 168.

Echoes Present in 1 Cor 11

Paul begins his discussion of the Lord's Supper with a moral condemnation (1 Cor 11:17-22).¹¹⁹ His community is abusing the ecclesial and communal gathering by neglecting members during or before the feast and the meal is not manifesting its true character of forging unity and communion with God and others. The precise nature of what is going wrong has been debated, and we have referenced some theories in the first chapter.

As part of Paul's addressing the moral problems around the Lord's Supper, he turns to the tradition of this supper and presumably reminds the Corinthians of what he has already taught them, but which their behavior indicates they have forgotten (1 Cor 11:23). Paul appeals to a tradition that he has received and which he is passing on to his community. The meal is not Paul's or the Corinthian's, but is Christ's. Paul feels compelled by this inherited tradition to pass on exactly what has been given to him. In the sparse details that Paul passes on we hear echoes to the Jewish Passover feast.

Paul's description of the Lord's Supper has clear echoes and allusions to the Jewish Passover feast. The first of these echoes is the time of day that Paul describes the Lord's Supper as taking place: at night (1 Cor 11:23).¹²⁰ Scholars point out that the normal time for meal making – Jewish and otherwise – was midafternoon ending by night at the latest.¹²¹ Evening meals were not the normal time for eating and occurred only for special festive meals. The major ritual meal

¹¹⁹ Aland and Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 540. No OT echoes are detected in this section of Paul.

¹²⁰ We are not tracing the canonical echoes that exist here with the synoptic Gospels. While this is fruitful, in the time of Paul these texts were yet to be written and so any echoes between Paul's account and the later Gospel writers would not be present in the mind of Paul.

¹²¹ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 21. "The *cena* was the evening meal and the major meal of the day. It usually began at the ninth hour and ended at dark." It's possible some meals lasted until after dark, but the Jewish Passover was unique in that it waited *until* dark to begin, because it was in the night that they were delivered from death in the book of Exodus.

eaten at night for the Jewish people was the Passover (Exod 12:18).¹²² Thus, the time that Paul indicates that the Lord's Supper happened puts his understanding of the meal within a Passover context.¹²³ Further echoes of the Passover in Paul's description of what had been handed on to him is found not only in what is eaten – bread and wine – but his words of interpretation of the meal and the ritual remembrance that the meal signifies.¹²⁴

The Passover meal was a ritual remembrance which required certain words of explanation of the significance of the meal that helped those at the meal remember God's salvific act.¹²⁵ We hear Paul directly invoking this tradition when he passes on the words of Jesus which explain what is being offered and eaten at the meal (1 Cor 11:23-24). Paul is passing on the significance that he understood which Jesus gave to the elements at the meal: this bread is my body which is for you, and this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Paul adds his own gloss to Christ's words for his community when he says that their eating and drinking at the meal "proclaim" the Lord's death until he comes (1 Cor 11:26). This ritual remembrance and the words of explanation over the bread and wine make sense within a Passover type meal more than another Jewish meal or Roman type meal. According to Brant Pitre, it was during the time of eating the Passover unleavened bread that an explanation would be given as to why this bread

¹²² Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 147. See also, Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 44. See also, Jane Lancaster Patterson, *Keeping the Feast: Metaphors of Sacrifice in 1 Corinthians and Philippians*, *Early Christianity and Its Literature* 16 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 150. Further, Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 409–10.

¹²³ Brant Pitre, Michael Barber, and John Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 237.

¹²⁴ Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 321. The bread and wine alone would not indicate a Passover significance, as this food could be eaten for many meals. However, when you add these elements to Paul's focus on the meal as a ritual remembrance of Jesus' past actions, then this is a clear echo of what the Passover meal did for the Jewish people. Jeremias notes, also, that wine was not a common element at the first century table of Jewish meals. It was essential in Passover celebrations however. (Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 50. Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner, "1 Corinthians," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007], 695–749). There are echoes to the Passover feast in this commentary, but they are not stressed strongly in the author's reflection.

¹²⁵ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 406. Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 230. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 321–22.

was eaten and the nature of the meal itself.¹²⁶ Paul's understanding of Christ's explanation prior to the consumption of bread, and Paul's own gloss on the meal stand in ritual continuity with this Jewish practice.

Another connection to Jewish ritual, especially the Passover feast, is Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper as a memorial. Twice, Paul quotes Jesus saying, "do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor 11: 24-25). Pitre notes that the language "do this" is often used in the OT to indicate a ritual cultic action that needs to be done.¹²⁷ Paul's double use of the term within Jesus' ritual gestures highlights a ritual and cultic parallel to the OT within his notion of the Lord's Supper meal. The ritual language is tied into the Passover with the language of "remembrance."

The Passover feast and the eating of the unleavened bread was done as a memorial for the Jewish people to remember God's actions and that its original meaning had redemptive value for those who partake of the Passover each year. To ritually remember was to enter into the saving act of what was being presented.¹²⁸ Paul captured this sense of memorial in the words he inherited from the Lord. Paul recognized Christ's body and his death as a sacrificial death: "this is my body which is for you" (1 Cor 11:24). Christ's death, for Paul, delivered the people of the new covenant from death (1 Cor 15:3). To celebrate the meal as a memorial would be to enter into or participate in the act of salvation that Jesus initiated on the cross in an analogous way that the Passover meal ritually remembers and makes present God's saving act to those who partake of the meal.¹²⁹ This Passover analogy is present in 1 Corinthians because Paul, earlier in the

¹²⁶ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 406. Pitre cites Exod 13:3, 6-9 and Deut 16:2-3 as biblical evidence for his claim.

¹²⁷ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 418. He highlights the ordination rite of Aaron in Exod 29:31 as well as the offerings of atonement in Num 15:8. The point he is making is that linguistic structure of "do this" (*poieseis houtos*) evokes ritual cultic actions in the OT.

¹²⁸ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 420. Kodell, *The Eucharist in the New Testament*, 80.

¹²⁹ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 420.

letter, identified Christ as ‘our Passover lamb’ and as a sacrificial victim (1 Cor 5:7). In chapter 11 of the letter, Paul is building on that earlier identification of Christ as the Passover lamb when he presents the Lord’s Supper as a memorial ritual meal for the Corinthians to celebrate. The Jewish Passover lamb was first sacrificed, then consumed with unleavened bread and wine, and its sacrifice was interpreted in light of what God has done for his people. Paul’s description of the Lord’s Supper evokes this Passover tradition: Christ the Paschal lamb is sacrificed in atonement and then offered to those for whom the sacrifice was made.¹³⁰ Paul’s description echoes the Jewish Passover feast as a ritual meal of remembrance.

Paul’s gloss on the Lord’s Supper emphasizes that the meal’s significance is to be found in the participation – in the eating and drinking – of what is offered. After handing on what he had received, Paul reveals how he understands the meal for his community: “for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26). This comment is Paul’s own gloss on the ritual meal.¹³¹ The focus is upon participation through consumption. For Paul, as Kodell argues, this v. 26 illumines vv. 23-25: to do this in remembrance of me, means to eat and drink – to consume – what is offered at the meal.¹³² To do the Lord’s Supper is to eat the Lord’s Supper for in this the death of the Lord is proclaimed, remembered, and entered into by the participants. This stands in analogous harmony with the Passover feast. As Pitre writes: “To keep the Passover is to eat the Passover.”¹³³ In the books of Exodus (12:6, 8-9), Deuteronomy (Deut 16:2-3), and Numbers (Num 9:11-13) there is a strong emphasis on eating of the Passover lamb and bread – it is a central command of the ritual. The

¹³⁰ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 420.

¹³¹ Kodell, *The Eucharist in the New Testament*, 77.

¹³² Kodell, *The Eucharist in the New Testament*, 77.

¹³³ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 410.

Passover was not complete until what had been offered had also been consumed.¹³⁴ Paul's gloss in v. 26 stands in ritual continuity with this Passover tradition, the remembrance of what has been done passes by way of consuming what has been sacrificed. Thus, the elements to be eaten begin to take on a sacred character in that they are wrapped up in the heart of the ritual act.

However, what must be noted is that Paul's description of the Lord's Supper is not identical with the Passover but echoes it and diverges from it in certain key respects. Most particularly, the Passover meal had a lamb that was sacrificed and was eaten along with the bread and the wine. In Paul's description, not only does there not seem to be any physical lamb meat, but Paul quotes Jesus as identifying the bread with the curious phrase "this is my body that is for you" and the cup "is the new covenant in my blood" which the participants are encouraged to eat and drink.¹³⁵ Thus, it's as if Jesus' body, symbolized by the bread, is identified as both bread, lamb, and sacrifice.¹³⁶ Pitre argues that this divergence of the two meals has roots in the Passover itself because the lamb and unleavened bread were always to be eaten together, even if each was a distinct reality in the original Jewish context compared to Paul's.¹³⁷ Regardless of the strength of this insight, the language and context of Paul's account echoes the Passover meal of the Jewish people, and Paul understands the Lord's Supper to stand in theological relationship to this meal. Paul's Passover echoes give way here to another echo – that of the Sinai Covenant – which further interprets his understanding of the 'Lord's Supper' as covenant making and sacrificial.

¹³⁴ Pitre, 410.

¹³⁵ Pitre, 413. Pitre notices an interesting connection between the color of red wine as an image of blood at the Passover. He quotes Jewish traditions that speak of the cup of wine at the Passover as the cup of blood. This of course is understood as an analogy in the Jewish context, but it highlights the connection between the sacrificial nature of the lamb of Passover and the meal itself.

¹³⁶ This would accord well with Paul's thought from earlier in the letter where he calls Jesus our Passover lamb. 1 Cor 5:7. Jesus is not, then, in Paul's mind, repeating the Passover, but giving it new meaning within his own context.

¹³⁷ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 408.

Paul describes the Lord's Supper as a covenant making ritual. Pitre writes: "as has long been acknowledged, the pairing of "blood" and "covenant" evokes the covenant ratification ceremony described in Exodus 24."¹³⁸ In this passage in Exodus, Moses seals a new covenant with the people by sprinkling the blood of the sacrificed animals both upon them and upon the altar of the Lord which seals both parties in covenant unity: "Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he dashed against the altar...Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people, and said, "See the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words" (Exod 24:6-8). The altar represents God for the Jewish people both in the context of Exodus and in the context of the temple. Paul's description of Jesus' words of blood, new covenant, remembrance, and proclamation, directly echo this Mosaic ritual action as well as the cultic aspects of Jewish temple worship. As Gorman highlights, "drinking the cup together is a corporate act of receiving, or ingesting, Jesus' death and thereby reaffirming the community's participation in the new covenant."¹³⁹ Paul's language in 1 Cor 11:25 highlights the ritual and sacrificial nature of the meal when covenant and blood are used. A covenant is made and sealed through the sacrificial death of something, and then the eating of what has been sacrificed as a means of ratifying what has been proclaimed.¹⁴⁰ Sacrifice and meal making were inherent to covenant ritual for the Jewish people and Paul directly evokes both in his description of the Lord's Supper.

An objection, at this point, could be raised that the double echoing of the Sinai Covenant and the Passover meal seems unjustified. Can Paul be echoing both for understanding the Lord's

¹³⁸ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 230.

¹³⁹ Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 321. The echo here exists in the pairing of blood and covenant and how these two words echo the Sinai covenant ratified by blood.

¹⁴⁰ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 235–36. There is an emphasis on the eating and consummation of what had been sacrificed which was essential to both the Passover context, and to covenant sealing rituals.

Supper given that the Passover meal was not a covenant making meal in Exodus? Patterson contends that in the Jewish religious consciousness “there was an intimate connection between the Passover and the covenant at Sinai.”¹⁴¹ They are not two unrelated events, but the Passover itself evokes not just God’s deliverance from slavery but of the new covenant he made with his people at Sinai. Paul, thus, echoes the rich symbolic context of both events and places the Lord’s supper within both – as a meal to mark Christian’s deliverance and a covenant ratifying sacrifice that brings communion, unity, and affirmation of the covenant when it is participated in, when it is eaten. The last echo in this section is to the prophet Jeremiah, which strengthens the covenant and cultic context of Paul’s thought as well as indicates that the Lord’s Supper is something new for God’s people.

The language of “new covenant” that Jesus says and Paul quotes in 1 Cor 11:23 echoes the prophet Jeremiah’s promise of a new covenant (Jer. 31:31).¹⁴² In what scholars call “the book of Restoration,” Jeremiah promises a “new covenant” that the Lord God will one day establish with his people, a covenant of restoration.¹⁴³ This new covenant will come at a time of salvation for the people of God and when God will forgive the sins of his people.¹⁴⁴ In addition to this context in Jeremiah, some commentators see the words of “new covenant” and “blood” brings together the Sinai covenant forged in blood, and the covenant of restoration promised by Jeremiah.¹⁴⁵ Thus, with the words that Paul quotes of Jesus there is a resonance with the notion of a “new exodus,” and the eschatological age with an inbreaking of a new covenant for God’s people at the time of salvation. That Paul sees the Lord’s Supper in an eschatological way is

¹⁴¹ Patterson, *Keeping the Feast*, 151.

¹⁴² Ciampa and Rosner, “1 Corinthians,” 736.

¹⁴³ Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021), 368.

¹⁴⁴ Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 453. An examination of 1 Corinthians reveals that Paul understands Jesus’ death as done for the forgiveness of sins and that the coming of Christ begins the time of salvation for God’s people, both align with this prophetic longing of Jeremiah.

¹⁴⁵ Ciampa and Rosner, “1 Corinthians,” 736.

clear from the gloss he gives the supper in v. 26 when he writes that the supper is a proclamation of this covenant until the coming of the Lord. Between the initiation of the supper and the new age that is to come, the Lord's Supper is a central act in the Christian community. The Lord's Supper stands at a central place in this new covenant in Paul's understanding. As a covenant meal, it would be the seal between God and God's people in this new covenant. The cultic, covenantal, and now eschatological notions of the meal that are emerging in light of the OT context which Paul utilizes will become stronger as we turn to chapter 10 where Paul mentions the same reality under a new name.

Echoes Present in 1 Cor 10

Paul's discussion of "the table of the Lord" (1 Cor 10:21) is referring to the same reality as "the Lord's Supper" (11:20). These two terms ought to be read as an identity, as referring to the same communal activity. The unity of these two images has long been recognized by commentators.¹⁴⁶ Within the text, the strongest point of unity is through Paul's language of cup linked with "blood" and bread linked with "body" that occurs in both passages. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor 10:16). This is the same language that Paul uses in 1 Cor 11:23-25 to describe the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper. As was discussed in chapter 1, I see a literary, rhetorical, and theological unity to Chapters 8-14, under the heading of chaos in worship. This literary unity of right worship grounds the unity of Paul's two terms in their common object of formal community ritual gatherings. I also think that when Paul urges his

¹⁴⁶ Orr and Walther, *I Corinthians*, 251. See also, Ciampa and Rosner, "1 Corinthians," 728. At the "table of the Lord" the unity occurs through the cup of blessing language which is a Passover image and ties in directly with Paul's image later of Christ's meal. Further, the linkage occurs around Paul's notion of communion, sacrifice, and a ritual meal. There is only one ritual meal describe in 1 Cor – the Lord's Supper – and the table of the Lord helps interpret that idea.

community to “keep the feast” there is another reference to the Lord’s supper and the “table of the Lord” (1 Cor 5:8).¹⁴⁷ While Paul’s discussion in Chapter 5 lies outside the bounds of our two selections, it gives further evidence that Paul is comfortable using difference phrases for the same reality which strengthens the argument here.

The terms “table” and “supper” link Paul’s discussion in 1 Cor 10:23 (table of the Lord) and 1 Cor 11:18 (Lord’s Supper) as being identical realities. Tables are where meals are eaten, and Paul only mentions one ecclesial meal in the whole letter, the Lord’s Supper. Paul writes that “you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons” (1 Cor 10:21). This “cup of the Lord” is found at the “table of the Lord” in Paul’s description. In 1 Cor 11:25 Paul speaks of Jesus passing on the “cup of the new covenant” at the Lord’s supper. Thus, this cup of the Lord links the table and the supper as one common place for Paul within the letter. A final unity is that both concepts refer to cultic moments of worship and sacrifice.¹⁴⁸ The “table of the Lord” ought not to be read as another kind of meal, but rather as another term for the Lord’s Supper that Paul mentions in 1 Cor 11. This will become clear as the OT echoes are explored in chapter 10 to see how they coincide with Paul’s understanding in chapter 11. Echoes in each passage mutually illuminate the other given the argument that both terms refer to the same communal practice. This union will become important for a fuller understanding of Paul’s view of the Lord’s Supper as cultic sacrifice.

At the beginning of Chapter 10, Paul thrusts the reader back into the OT with a few direct allusions to the Torah. This is clear rhetorical and literary evidence that the OT is the forefront of Paul’s mind as he addresses the issues of worship within his community. Paul echoes the story of

¹⁴⁷ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 237.

¹⁴⁸ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, 227.

the Israelite people in the desert as told in Exodus, and Numbers in 1 Cor 10:1-10 in four ways.¹⁴⁹

Paul finds in these OT stories and contexts, lessons for his own contemporary community in Corinth. (1 Cor 10:11). The first two echoes present refer to the Israelites passing through the Red Sea and their journey in the wilderness there they were fed and given drink by the Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4

Our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea. And all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the same spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.

Exodus 14:19-21

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them...

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided.

Numbers 20:7-8

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and your brother Aaron, and command the rock before their eyes to yield its water. Thus, you shall bring water out of the rock for them; thus, you shall provide drink for the congregation and their livestock.

Paul's inferences from these ancient texts are totally unique. No interpreter prior to Paul read the Red Sea story as a baptism story.¹⁵⁰ Paul finds in this OT episode a prefiguring of baptism which was one of the central cultic rituals for his own community. Commentators like Pitre also argue that Paul is referring to the Lord's Supper as well. The spiritual food and drink in the OT context are mirrored in the spiritual food and drink of the table of the Lord.¹⁵¹ Eating and drinking were never used to speak of baptism in Paul, thus the spiritual food and drink must

¹⁴⁹ Ciampa and Rosner, "1 Corinthians," 723. Scholars are uncertain about which OT passage the destroyer reference is alluding to. Ciampa and Rosner give a good argument that it is probably meant to allude to any passage when God's angel punishes the people for their sins in light of the context in Paul.

¹⁵⁰ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 242. See also, Hays, *First Corinthians*, 160.

¹⁵¹ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 242. See also, Ciampa and Rosner, "1 Corinthians," 727.

apply to something else. The most theo-logical referent within the letter is to the bread and wine at the table of the Lord's Supper. Paul's logic seems to conclude that just as Christ was the source of spiritual food and drink for the Israelites in the desert, so too, is Christ the source of the Corinthian's spiritual food and drink. Paul has the spiritual realities of baptism and the Lord's Supper in mind because of the lesson he draws from this episode for his own community.

Paul is not just drawing an interesting theological conclusion from this typology, but more importantly, a warning to his own community

1 Corinthians 10:7-8

Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "the people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play. We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.

Numbers 25:1-3

While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people began to have sexual relations with the women of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. Thus, Israel yoked itself to the Baal of Peor, and the LORD's anger was kindled against Israel.

1 Corinthians 10:9-10

We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain as some of them did and were destroyed by the destroyer.

Numbers 21:5-6

The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food."⁶ Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.

Just as the Israelites had received "baptism" and "spiritual food" from the Lord in the past and yet also fell into idolatry, so too, Paul's community – having received baptism and spiritual food – were still at risk of falling into idolatry.¹⁵² These gifts from the Lord do not magically prevent one from turning to idolatry. Paul is concerned that his community avoid idolatry. Idolatry in the OT, like true worship, was often expressed through meal-making

¹⁵² Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 280–81. Gorman argues that a group causing division in Corinth were people who thought 'all things were lawful' because of their new 'status' in Christ. Paul is addressing this group to avoid presumption considering the story of their forefathers.

practices in the context of worship. The meals in the context that Paul describes were cultic moments where the Israelites worshipped other gods by participating in these meals (1 Cor 10:9-10). Paul refers to the OT episodes of meal making and idolatry to highlight that God's people of old were gifted with spiritual realities and yet still fell away and displeased the Lord. He uses this as a warning to his own community to not do the same, to not take for granted the spiritual realities they have been gifted and fall into idolatry through their wider pagan context. The next section of echoes continues the warning to avoid idolatry (1 Cor 10:14) as well as shed more light on how Paul understands the reality of the Corinthian's own sacred meal.

Paul's next echo evokes the Passover meal when he speaks of a cup of blessing. "The cup of blessing what we bless, is it not a *κοινωνία* in the blood of Christ? ... because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all *κοινωνία* of the one bread" (1 Cor 10:16-17). The cup of blessing refers to the final cup in the Jewish Passover feast.¹⁵³ Paul uses the language of the Passover feast, but applies it to the feast within the Christian community. As we saw in chapter 11, where he picks up this Passover reference, this is further evidence that Paul is thinking of the same reality in both chapters.

This "cup of blessing" is a sharing, a participation, a *κοινωνία* in the blood of Christ. This word is hard to translate into English. Gorman argues that it describes an intimate communion between two persons: "accordingly, words like fellowship, communion, sharing, partnership, companionship, solidarity, participation can all be used to indicate the nature of the "vertical" (people with God) and "horizontal" (people to people) relationships Paul seeks to foster."¹⁵⁴ Hauck argues that two things are significant for Paul here: first is that this *κοινωνία*, especially with God, ought to be exclusive because it is covenantal, secondly, *κοινωνία* results from meal

¹⁵³ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 148.

¹⁵⁴ Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 283.

making with either God or pagan demons.¹⁵⁵ Thus, Paul’s warning to avoid cultic meals at pagan feasts flows from his conception of *κοινωνία* that results from these meals and the exclusive character of the *κοινωνία* demanded by God.

Paul is clear in 1 Cor 10:16-17 that *κοινωνία* with God results from the cup of blessing and the one bread: “the cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a *κοινωνία* in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a *κοινωνία* in the body of Christ?” Some scholars have argued that Paul’s phrasing and language here places the emphasis on what actualizes the *κοινωνία* upon the partaking of the elements of the meal itself: “because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all have *κοινωνία* of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:16). Paul understands that the sharing of the bread at the Lord’s Supper effects a deeper incorporation into the body of Christ.¹⁵⁶ His causal language for the sharing of the bread heightens how Paul understands this *κοινωνία* to result: through ritual partaking of the meal.

Κοινωνία for Paul, in reference to Christ, manifests one being drawn into a “deeper personal relationship” with Christ, a sharing in Christ’s spiritual reality.¹⁵⁷ Paul’s language stresses an emphasis on the elements of the meal themselves as having a sacred role in the meal because through partaking of them the community is drawn into *κοινωνία* with God. This contrasts with readings of Paul here that argue the Lord’s Supper affirms the unity that is already present in the community but does not generate this unity. Such an argument misses both the linguistic emphasis that Paul places here upon the meal as well as the Passover contexts of Paul’s phrasing. At the Passover, one must partake of the meal itself to receive the benefits that one was

¹⁵⁵ Friedrich Hauck, “Κοινων,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament θ-K*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, vol. III (Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), 805.

¹⁵⁶ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 226.

¹⁵⁷ P.T. O’Brien, “Fellowship, Communion, Sharing,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P Martin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 294. It can also be used in the sense of a concrete form of generosity (2 Cor. 9:13) but this is not the sense Paul means it here.

remembering and proclaiming. Further, the referent for the bread and cup is not the local community – as it might appear in 1 Cor 11 – but refers to the body and blood of the Lord. In this section Paul’s warning is clear, *κοινωνία* results from meal making in the cultic rituals of either God or the pagans and thus one should not have *κοινωνία* with both for this would be an offense to God and a danger to the one who did this.

After explaining the *κοινωνία* that results from sharing in the table of the Lord (or demons), Paul again warns his community against idolatry, thus strengthening the notion that he understands the table of the Lord to involve cultic worship. Paul’s curious references to “provoking the Lord to jealousy” (1 Cor 10:22) finds its illumination in the OT as a direct echo to Deuteronomy. “They made him jealous with strange gods, with abhorrent things they provoked him” (Deut 32:16). In this passage, the biblical author reminds the people of a time when they sacrificed to strange gods and made the Lord jealous because they committed idolatry in their cultic practices and meals. Paul refers to this passage in 1 Cor 10:22 to warn the Corinthian church to avoid the same thing: idolatry. As Patterson writes concerning Paul’s thought in 1 Cor 10:22: “at issue is two different kinds of cultic meals” for Paul, and how these meals draw the participant into worship and communion with the object of the meal.¹⁵⁸ Paul is warning his community that they risk drawing into *κοινωνία* with strange gods which would bring them into covenant violation with their God. This deepens Paul’s thought that the Lord’s Supper is a covenant making meal and sacrifice and act of worship itself. It is a ritual of incorporation by which the people draw into *κοινωνία* with the Lord. The Lord’s Supper is a critical initiation of the Christian community into the mysteries of Christ.¹⁵⁹ Paul’s next echo

¹⁵⁸ Patterson, *Keeping the Feast*, 144.

¹⁵⁹ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 250.

deepens the cultic symbolism that he has developed here and makes a direct correlation between the Lord's Supper and the Jewish temple.

The final echo in this passage refers to the temple altar and the temple cult of the Jewish people, and to the effects of partaking of the temple cultic meals within the Jewish tradition. This echo is to the prophet Malachi¹⁶⁰ is worth quoting in full:

Oh, that someone among you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hands. For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place, incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table is polluted, and the food for it may be despised (Mal 1:10-12).

The phrase “table of the Lord” or “Lord's table” in Malachi refers to the altar of the temple. In fact, this phrase “table of the Lord” is the OT language for the altar of sacrifice in the Jewish temple.¹⁶¹ Paul's use of this symbolic biblical phrase cannot have been accidental, nor can the OT context be overlooked in understanding Paul's thoughts on the Lord's Supper. By evoking this biblical image, Paul indicates that he sees the “table of the Lord” at Corinth also as an altar of sacrifice, a cultic and ritual meal. Linguistically, this is true as well, for the word in Greek – *τραπέζα*– means both table and altar. In the original context of Malachi, the prophet is critiquing the people for their poor worship and expressing a longing for future worship that will be pure before the Lord.¹⁶² In Paul's context there is also a critique of idolatrous worship and a reminder to worship well before the Lord. Paul's language here of the ‘table of the Lord suggests the

¹⁶⁰ Ciampa and Rosner, “1 Corinthians,” 729.

¹⁶¹ Ciampa and Rosner, “1 Corinthians,” 729. See also Ezek. 41:22 for another reference to the altar in the temple.

¹⁶² Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 178–79. All commentators agree that this expression “table of the Lord” refers to the temple and to the altar of the Lord within the temple. Some argue its exclusive referent is to the altar of sacrifice alone and not referent to the ‘show-bread’ altar, whereas others think it represents both. I agree with Baldwin that it refers to both.

temple cult of sacrifice and acts of worship before the Lord. By applying this rich background to his own context, Paul reveals his own sacrificial understanding of the Lord's Supper.

Kincaid sees in Paul's language parallels to the Greek custom of claiming the host of a cult meal was the god whose cult it was and thus the table of the meal was that god's.¹⁶³ This parallel is historical and plausible. It adds to Paul's rhetoric here, that Christ hosts the Lord's Supper (his supper) and is present at the supper in some way. But in light of the OT context, it cannot be the primary parallel Paul is using because the imagery and language that he deploys is too saturated in OT metaphors to overlook the sacrificial and cultic referent present in his words. Further, the contexts of both the prophets and Paul are similar, their interest in right worship for their people. Paul thinks Christ is hosting the meal, but the reasons for this root within the Temple cultic context of his own Jewish thought primarily.

The identification by Paul of the Lord's Supper with the "table of the Lord" – the biblical name for the temple altar – throws open the meaning of the Lord's Supper itself as a sacrifice and cultic ritual.¹⁶⁴ Just as the worshippers at the temple altar are partakers of that altar, so too the Corinthian community who celebrates the Lord's Supper are partakers of it as an altar of sacrifice and thus with God. The cultic and sacrificial dimension of Paul's thought is hard to not hear considering the resonance to the prophet Malachi. Pitre pushes the link to Malachi by arguing for another echo to the prophet found in Paul's opening where he refers to "those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord" (1 Cor 1:2). This parallels Malachi's language: "in every place incense is offered to my name" (Mal 1:11), where the prophet is longing for a new kind of prayer and worship offered to the Lord, even by the gentiles. The "every place" in both Paul and Malachi evokes worship that takes place among the Gentiles to the honor of the Lord's

¹⁶³ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 227.

¹⁶⁴ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 234.

name.¹⁶⁵ Paul's language of 'call upon the name of the Lord' parallels with Malachi's language of incense offered. Both are descriptions of prayer and worship, and both are directed to the name of the Lord.¹⁶⁶ If this echo is present in the opening lines of Paul, then Paul is framing his letter from the start within the context of this prophetic author.¹⁶⁷ An overlooked echo between Malachi and Paul, however, highlights the eschatological aspect of the Lord's Supper which Paul clearly has in mind, and it strengthens the link between Malachi and Paul around cult, renewal, and salvation.

The prophecy of Malachi that is the context for Paul's use of the phrase "the table of Lord," is recognized by scholars such as Hill as Malachi referring to "the eschatological approach that anticipates the imminent conversion of the nations and the worldwide worship of Yahweh."¹⁶⁸ Thus, the prophet longs for the day when God's name is praised among the gentiles, and the worship of God's people is renewed and purified. It has long been established that Paul's thinking is thoroughly eschatological.¹⁶⁹ Like his Jewish contemporaries, Paul believed in the current age of tribulation and the eschatological age that is to come in light of the Messiah.¹⁷⁰ However, unlike his contemporaries, Paul believed that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, and with his death and Resurrection the eschatological age had begun.¹⁷¹ Paul recognized that the

¹⁶⁵ Hill, *Malachi*, 186.

¹⁶⁶ Ciampa and Rosner, "1 Corinthians," 696.

¹⁶⁷ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 233. The echo here is between 1 Cor 1:2 and Malachi 1:11. The link is between the prophet's depiction of a new kind of worship that is acceptable to God "among the nations" and Paul's description of his community as those who "call on the name of the Lord in every place." Whether this echo is discerned or not would only heighten the link with Malachi, it is not its main grounding.

¹⁶⁸ Hill, *Malachi*, 219. The church fathers read this prophecy as referring to the Mass as the fulfillment of the new worship longed for by Malachi. This typological reading is no longer in vogue among biblical scholars. While such a reading retains its value in an understanding of Malachi, the question here is Paul's use of Malachi. For a modern reading that recaptures the Father's insight, see (Mike Aquilina, *The Eucharist Foretold: The Lost Prophecy of Malachi* [Steubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Road, 2019]).

¹⁶⁹ L.J. Kreitzer, "Eschatology," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 256.

¹⁷⁰ Kreitzer, "Eschatology," 256–57.

¹⁷¹ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 72–73.

eschatological age was not yet fulfilled, and thus his communities lived between the in-breaking of the age with Christ's death and Resurrection and awaiting Christ's second coming.

1 Corinthians is not the letter that contains the strongest eschatological writings of Paul, but even in this letter this mindset is present. He writes that "the present form of this world is passing away" (1 Cor 7:31) and again when he speaks of the Corinthians awaiting the ἀποκάλυψις of Christ (1 Cor 1:7). The passing away of the world/age and ἀποκάλυψις that comes by way of Christ are apocalyptic and eschatological language in the letter indicating a link to Malachi's eschatological prophecy is plausible.¹⁷² As was explained above, Paul understands the Lord's Supper as being a central act of the people of God in this in-between age, it is an eschatological act that proclaims the reality of Christ's death and draws the believers more deeply into this cultic union with God. Given this thinking of Paul, the echo to the prophecy of Malachi becomes even more powerful because this prophecy describes worship and God's dealings with his people *in the new age*. The "table of the Lord" would be renewed in the age that was to come. Paul's evoking of this image heightens the connection of the Lord's Supper to a cultic and covenantal act of worship. These connections are deepened when the context of the Jewish temple that is evoked by Malachi is examined.

In the Jewish conception of God, God's presence was often associated intimately with and through material objects. At Sinai, Moses splashed blood on the altar, signifying the Lord's presence, and then on people to signify their covenant bond (Exod 24:4-8). The ark of the covenant is signified with the Lord's presence as they journeyed through the desert (Exod 25:22). As Gary Anderson writes, God is regularly identified with this "cultic furniture" of the Ark for the people of Israel, and God's "sacramental" mediated presence continues in the temple

¹⁷² It is also clearly seen in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "the old has passed away, behold the new has come."

cult.¹⁷³ He argues that both with the Ark and later with the temple, “God really dwelt [there] and that all the pieces of that structure shared in some fashion in his tangible and visible presence.”¹⁷⁴ God’s altar and sanctuary were places where the people might encounter and gaze upon the presence of the Lord. God was really and personally present in his temple to his people.¹⁷⁵

Normally, only the priests would be permitted to gaze upon the inner sanctuary, upon the inner altar of the Lord. However, as Anderson argues, sometimes it appears that the sacred furniture (like the Ark) or other sacred objects (like the bread of presence) would be brought out and shown to the people, and in this gesture, it was understood that God was being seen.¹⁷⁶ Further examples from Israelite history of this material and “sacramental” presence of God identified with objects is the bread of presence.¹⁷⁷ This bread was placed before the holy of holies and was a visible sign of God’s presence for the people, and of the people’s presence before God, and which the people would be periodically shown.¹⁷⁸ One scholar, De Boer, argues that through the bread of the presence God himself was “as the host who presents himself to his believers.”¹⁷⁹ Thus, for Paul as a first century Jew, to say that the cultic meal was ‘the table of Lord’ evokes both the altar of the temple and also the Lord’s presence at this altar in some kind of real yet mediated way through material things. This deepens the notion of the Lord being the host of the meal that the Corinthians offer. If he is the host, it is not just because of a ritual remembrance alone, but also because of his materially mediated presence at the feast.

¹⁷³ Gary A Anderson, “Towards a Theology of the Tabernacle and Its Furniture,” in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity*, vol. 84, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah, 2009, 164.

¹⁷⁴ Anderson, “Towards a Theology of the Tabernacle and Its Furniture,” 167, 172.

¹⁷⁵ Stubbs, *Table and Temple*, 113.

¹⁷⁶ Anderson, “Towards a Theology of the Tabernacle and Its Furniture,” 173.

¹⁷⁷ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 122–30.

¹⁷⁸ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 125.

¹⁷⁹ P.A.H. De Boer, “An Aspect of Sacrifice,” in *Studies in the Religion of Ancient Israel*, ed. G.W. Anderson et al., vol. 23, VTSup (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 35.

This symbolically “real presence” tied to material things in Jewish ritual and temple cult deserves one final comment stemming from the bread of presence. This bread was not just a material symbol of God’s presence in his sanctuary and before the people, it was also the premier sacrificial offering and cultic meal within the religious life of the people of Israel.¹⁸⁰ This bread of presence was offered and eaten by the priests in a sacrificial ritual, it was a memorial and sacrifice to be offered every sabbath as an everlasting covenant before the Lord on behalf of the people (Lev 24:5-9).¹⁸¹ The “table of the Lord” that Malachi is referring to is the biblical name for the altar of the Lord which includes the table of the bread of presence on/near the altar of the Lord.¹⁸² Thus, Paul’s reference to the “table of the Lord” evoked a central cultic and sacrificial bread that was covenantal in its nature and evoked the presence of God in its materiality. Further, this bread of presence itself was a sacred element in the temple cult and Paul’s evoking of it as analogous to the Corinthian Lord’s Supper grounds a reading of the bread and wine in 1 Cor 11 themselves as sacred realities.¹⁸³ This conclusion around the sacredness of the elements at the meal helps shed light on Paul’s language at the end of chapter 11 to which we will now turn.

At the end of his discussion of the Lord’s Supper, Paul makes two puzzling statements, “whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord” (v. 27) and one must ‘discern the body’ prior to entering into the meal (v. 29). What does this mean to be answerable for the “body and blood of the Lord” and to “discern the body”? Scholars tend to approach these lines with an either/or

¹⁸⁰ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 128. Pitre notes that this bread is to be offered every Sabbath by the priests (Lev 24:8) and thus was the most regular sacrifice of the Jewish cultic tradition. It also is the only offering called a sign of God’s everlasting covenant (Lev 24:5-9).

¹⁸¹ De Boer, “An Aspect of Sacrifice,” 35–40. He stresses the cultic and sacrificial nature of this bread as well as it being called the “bread of the face” of God (being in the presence of the face of God and bearing the face of God in some way).

¹⁸² Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 128.

¹⁸³ Mary Douglas, “The Eucharist: Its Continuity with the Bread Sacrifice of Leviticus,” *Modern Theology* 15, no. 2 (1999): 209–224.

hermeneutical lens. Either the referent is to Christ – understood sacramentally or historically – or to his ecclesial body. This either/or approach does not do justice to Paul’s language as it excludes a Christological referent. Nowhere in his corpus is the communal and ecclesial body referred to as the blood of Christ.¹⁸⁴ A reading that *only* posits a Christological meaning, such as that offered by Fee,¹⁸⁵ misses Paul’s ecclesial concern at the beginning and end of the pericope and the real incorporation into Christ that Baptism and the Lord’s Supper effects. However, considering the above echoes, a third possibility manifests itself, that there is a dual referent to Christ and the Church, the former grounded in the elements, and the latter grounded in what the elements effect in the partakers.

Paul Adaja argues that “to be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord” indicates that Paul is concerned with sacrilege at the meal in Corinth. Adaja argues that Paul’s meal of the Lord’s Supper is distinguished from the Greco-Roman meal primarily in that sacrilege was possible at Paul’s meal due to its sacred character.¹⁸⁶ He writes that, in the time of Paul: “sacrilege involves the theft, abuse, profanation, and misappropriation of things what belong personally to a god. The fact that it is the body of the Lord that is being abused in Corinth, qualifies as sacrilege, which is the accusation leveled by Paul against the Christ group in the city.”¹⁸⁷ Adaja understands the ‘body of the Lord’ (vv. 27-28) to refer primarily to the community, but also to the sacred character of the meal itself. He rules out that the “body of the Lord” could be referring to the elements themselves as having a symbolically real presence of

¹⁸⁴ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 225.

¹⁸⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 163.

¹⁸⁶ Paul Olatubosun Adaja, “The Genre of a Meal: The Prototypical Instantiation of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11: 17–34” (PhD diss, Loyola University of Chicago, ProQuest Dissertation Publishing, 2021), 210–12, ProQuest Dissertation Publishing.

¹⁸⁷ Adaja, 215. He argues from Paul’s language in v. 30 – “For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died” – that the *cause* of this illness and death is because of their sacrilegious behavior toward the divine as represented at the meal.

christ, especially as understood by subsequent systematic theologians. While I part ways with Adaja in dismissing the elements of the meal as one of Paul's referents, Adaja's highlighting of sacrilege and the sacred nature of the meal itself as elements which distinguish the Lord's Supper from other Greco-Roman meals is an important and insightful point.

An exclusively "ecclesial" referent for the "body and blood of the Lord" misses the Jewish context of Paul's discussion that we outlined above. In the book of Numbers (18:29, 31-32) there is clear precedent that the "profaning of holy things," can lead to punishment and death from the Lord.¹⁸⁸ The temple, sacred food offerings, and material objects of the Lord's presence like the Ark of the covenant, could all be mistreated and such mistreatment would have been taken very seriously within Jewish thought.¹⁸⁹ Further, in light of the sacramental nature of the bread of presence, the temple altar, Jesus' language about bread being his body, and Paul's language of the Lord's Supper as the "table of the Lord", there is theological and biblical hermeneutical space to argue that the elements themselves could plausibly be seen as having a sacred, divine, sacramental reality. Käsemann writes that in an ancient mindset "the representing dimension does actually bring about the presence of what is represented."¹⁹⁰

Gorman acknowledges that the meal itself ought to be read as a sacramental one which brings about divine grace.¹⁹¹ This is not to say that Paul's notion of the meal and the elements coincide with later sacramental theology and debates. Rather, it is to argue that Paul within his context and argument understands the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice, a covenant making meal, a meal that mediated the Lord's presence to the community, and thus he could also understand the elements themselves to have a sacred and divine aspect to them which could be mistreated and

¹⁸⁸ "But you shall not profane the holy gifts of the Israelites, on pain of death" (Num 18:32, NRSV).

¹⁸⁹ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 239.

¹⁹⁰ Käsemann, "The Pauline Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," 128.

¹⁹¹ Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 322.

abused. Paul's warning of death and illness would coincide both with a notion of sacrilege that Adaja notes and harmonize with a Jewish respect for sacred elements within cultic ceremonies as things of God.¹⁹² The elements themselves being sacred heighten the gravity of the Corinthians moral failings, they do not lessen it.

The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to effect *κοινωνία* between God and believers and between believers and one another. If the elements and the meal itself are sacred, cultic, and covenantal, they will have a transforming effect upon the communities that participate in them, thus incorporating them into Christ's body. Paul believes in a realism to this *κοινωνία* in that God incorporates believers, through the new covenant, into part of Christ's body in some spiritual and mystical way. We hear this language explicitly in the Corinthian correspondence: "now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (1 Cor 12:27). Paul acknowledges that this incorporation into Christ's body happens through baptism: "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Cor 12:12-13) and in his understanding of the Lord's Supper this incorporation is deepened, "because there is one bread, we who are many are one body" (1 Cor 10:17).

Further, if God's presence is both real and personal in the Jewish temple, it is plausible that it is both real and personal at the Pauline "table of the Lord." It makes "theo-logical" sense that Christ's presence can be real and personal within his body, within the new temple, the people of God (1 Cor 3:16).¹⁹³ Following from this, if sacrilege is possible for the sacred elements of the meal – due to these mediating and belonging to God – it certainly follows that so too can sacrilege also be committed against the ecclesial body which also mediates and belong to God. Paul is jointly criticizing the people for failure to discern Christ's body in the people

¹⁹² Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul: A New Covenant Jew*, 240.

¹⁹³ Stubbs, *Table and Temple*, 113–15.

themselves and in their own moral conduct and, also, for their failure to discern the body and blood of the Lord in the cultic ritual itself. I agree with Collins' reading, then, that there is a eucharistic referent in Paul's warning as well as an ecclesial one: the Lord's presence is mediated in elements and community together.¹⁹⁴

We have argued for the recovery of Paul's Jewish worldview as a necessary and constitutive aspect of understanding his thought. In particular, through the method of intertextuality, we have argued for the presence of a number of OT echoes which underpin Paul's understanding about the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 10-11. This OT context opened up Paul's thought on the Lord's Supper to include an understanding of it as an altar of sacrifice, a sacred meal with sacred elements which mediates the divine, and a covenant making meal which actualizes and effects *κοινωνία* between God and others. In 1 Corinthians, Paul's conception of the Lord's Supper is essentially cultic and as such the elements of the meal itself – the bread and wine – might be understood to have a sacred character to them. This is not to shade toward any one denominational reading of this sacred character, but rather it is to recognize that, while debates about the precise notion of “real presence” in a sacramental sense will continue, Paul himself would not have been opposed to this usage in describing the Lord's Supper and the elements of the meal contained therein.

¹⁹⁴ Collins, *Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians*, 439.

Chapter 3: Cultic Theosis and the Lord's Supper

Hays's method of intertextuality is predicated upon the idea that there is an analogy between what a text meant to its original community or author and what it means for a contemporary reader or any age.¹⁹⁵ Our reading of Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper argues, through this intertextual method, is that there is a real analogy between our exegesis and Paul's meaning: that in the text itself there is a real understanding of the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice and worship offered to God, and that the elements of the meal – the bread and wine – possess a sacred character. These elements mediate the divine presence in some way: they have a symbolic realism for Paul. By this we mean that the bread and wine are not just symbolic – representing the historical past body Christ – nor is the bread and wine identical with Christ himself, but rather that the bread and wine mediate Christ's present in a real way through the symbols of the elements of the meal.

A danger to be avoided with this conclusion around the Lord's Supper is an eisegetical reading of Paul, especially of later thinkers' sacramental theology not known during Paul's time. In chapters one and two, we tried to argue that the echoes distilled from Paul justify a reading of the Lord's Supper in the above-mentioned way that avoided both eisegesis and anachronistic distortions of Paul's thought. Hays's method was the vehicle that grounded our approach to distilling echoes which sought to follow his stated criteria which, while allowing for intertextual conversation between texts, still argued for claims which were historically and critically valid of the texts as well.¹⁹⁶ Our exegesis of Paul was thus offered with the goal of avoiding eisegetical readings. Whether we were successful or not depends upon Hays's final category: satisfaction.

¹⁹⁵ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 27.

¹⁹⁶ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 30. His seven criteria for judging if an echo is present within the text and not just in the mind of the reader himself are: availability, volume, recurrence, thematic coherence, historical plausibility, history of interpretation and satisfaction. The first six help the modern interpreter avoid

Hays acknowledges that, ultimately, the method of intertextuality will be dependent upon the category of satisfaction: does the proposed reading make sense, and does it produce for the reader a satisfying account of the surrounding discourse?¹⁹⁷ Hays's intertextual method does not rest its argumentation upon syllogistic necessity but flows from a notion of narrative or theological fittingness: is this reading of Paul theologically fitting in light of Paul's context and thought overall.¹⁹⁸ We have tried to argue that it is fitting within 1 Corinthians and Paul's context that the Lord's Supper be understood as a sacrifice and that the elements of the meal be understood as mediating God's presence. Within the cultic logic of the letter and Paul's Jewish religious mindset this reading is fitting and ought not be rejected or discarded as some commentators in chapter one has done. To bolster the criteria of satisfaction, in this chapter, we will argue three things: first, how our reading is strengthened by recent anthropological insights; second, how our understanding of Paul's interpretation of the Lord's Supper fits within 1 Corinthians as a whole; finally, we will conclude our chapter by responding to a few major objections to our reading mostly based on eisegetical concerns. These responses will have as a goal to increase the satisfaction criteria of this reading in the mind of the contemporary reader.

eisegesis, especially the more categories one's echo fits into. We did not trace all echoes explicitly through each category that Hays outlines, but his criteria did guide our investigation albeit implicitly.

¹⁹⁷ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 31. "This criterion is difficult to articulate precisely without falling into the affective fallacy, but it is finally the most important test: it is in fact another way of asking whether the proposed reading offers a good account of the experience of a contemporary community of competent readers."

¹⁹⁸ Aquinas was famous for arguments from fittingness in his writings. See for example: Aquinas, ST III, q. 5, a. 1, co. Aquinas used arguments from fittingness (*ex convenientia*) to explore the rationality of God's action in the world as being both necessary, and yet, free, and gratuitous. Fittingness is a means of argument from a logical necessity that flows from within a certain narrative or conditions, but which is not absolutely necessary. Thus, Christ's incarnation was fitting given salvation history but not necessary strictly speaking. For a fuller treatment of Aquinas's arguments from fittingness see, Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, *Thomas Aquinas: Faith, Reason, and Following Christ* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013). The key point, in reference to intertextuality, is that arguments from echoes and intertextuality make connections that need not be strictly necessary but which flow from a certain narrative fittingness between two texts.

Lord's Supper as Sacrifice

The intertextual reading of the Lord's Supper as sacrifice with the elements of the meal as sacred in themselves is strengthened when put into conversation with the sociological insights on meal making developed in chapter 1. The more heterogenous meal making picture of the Greco-Roman Banquet (GRB) argued for by Smith and others strengthens the argument for a thematic unity of chapters 8-14 in 1 Corinthians and reveals a sacrificial structure that was culturally embedded into first century gatherings.

Smith makes the argument that 1 Cor 12-14 occur within the same meal as the Lord's Supper in chapter 11 through Paul's use of the word *συνέρχομαι* and its derivatives.¹⁹⁹ *Συνέρχομαι* means "a gathering together," and in 1 Corinthians, is deployed by Paul to indicated times of formal gatherings of the Corinthian church. The primary time the Corinthian church "comes together" (*συνέρχομαι*) is for times of worship in chapters 11-14.²⁰⁰ In chapter 11, *συνέρχομαι* occurs multiple times to indicate the gathering of the church for worship at the Lord's Supper (11:17-18, 20, 33-34). In chapters 12-13, Paul discusses spiritual gifts given to individuals for the good of the community and envisions the community as a body united to Christ. In chapter 14, Paul intimates that these gifts are utilized at the formal gatherings of the community at worship. The same word *συνέρχομαι* indicates a formal act as church, especially with regard to worship, and grounds Paul's discussion in chapter 14: "when you come together (*συνέρχομαι*) each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all

¹⁹⁹ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 200.

²⁰⁰ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 202. 1 Cor 5:4: ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ. Smith argues that this gathering in chapter 5 need not include a meal or worship setting, but still reflects a formal time of gathering for the Church. Paul doesn't say what else the Church might be doing, but he does think that the Church should carry out its judgement against the man in question at the formal times of gathering. This could mean that it happens at the Lord's Supper, before or after, or it could mean another kind of gathering was normal for the church in Corinth.

things be done for building up” (1 Cor 14:26, NRSV).²⁰¹ This συνέρχομαι has one primary focal point in 1 Corinthians – the times of eating and worship at the Lord’s Supper. Chapter 14 is the culmination of what has been discussed in chapter 12-13 for Paul and indicates that the gifts and tongues discussed in those chapters would be displayed for the community at the formal gatherings as a church. Thus, Smith concludes that, “the worship activities described in chapters 12 and 14 take place at table,” the same table discussed in chapter 11.²⁰² Thus, worship and unity in the times of worship are a focal point for Paul in chapters 11-14. For Smith, this argument is not only rooted in the grammar of Paul’s argument, but also in the GRB structure.

The GRB had two main parts, the supper and the symposium. The symposium was a time of post-supper entertainment, discussion, speeches, songs, or prayers. 1 Cor 12-14, according to Smith, can be read as fitting into the symposium aspect of GRB with the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11) can be equated with the supper portion of the banquet.²⁰³ Paul’s excursus on love and his counsels to uses one’s gifts properly for the building up of the community (1 Cor 12-13) would fit perfectly into a symposium portion of a banquet according to the GRB structure. In ANE meal making, “religious activities were common” and liturgical moments often occurred at table or just after for both pagans, Jews, and Christians. Considering the GRB banquet structure, 1 Cor 11-14 can be read as all occurring within the formal time of gathering at table as a community in worship, prayer, and discussion. Not only, then, do these sociological insights help ground a thematic unity in Paul’s letter for chapters 11-14 around worship in the community, but they strengthen the case for the Lord’s Supper being understood as a liturgical ritual in Paul’s understanding as well as an act of sacrifice.

²⁰¹ Τί οὖν ἐστίν, ἀδελφοί; ὅταν συνέρχησθε, ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει, διδαχὴν ἔχει, ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει, γλῶσσαν ἔχει, ἑρμηνεῖαν ἔχει· πάντα πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν γινέσθω (NA28 Greek).

²⁰² Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 200.

²⁰³ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 201.

In first century ANE meal making, the notion of religion, and often sacrifice itself, permeated their experience of meals. Smith writes “all banquets could be assumed to have a religious component. This can be seen by the many references to libations and hymns that accompanied the various parts of the meal.”²⁰⁴ There was no one “orthodox” sacrificial meal, according to Smith, but the notion of sacrifice was present within meal-making practices of the ANE and the GRB contained a structure that included a sacrifice in its normal proceeding. In sacrifices (θυσία) that took place in temples, feasts often followed these where participants enjoyed a meal in honor of the temple god. Further, meat from more formal temple θυσία could be taken home and eaten as an extension of the temple worship. Finally, θυσία could be performed at home with a feast following it.²⁰⁵ In a GRB meal, the religious and sacrificial aspect of the meal was most commonly indicated by a libation being poured out in honor of the gods as a transition from the supper to the symposium.²⁰⁶ Feasts and sacrifices were intimately connected in the ANE that all meals tended to be imbued with some kind of sacred or sacrificial component.²⁰⁷ Thus, to describe Paul’s account of the Lord’s Supper as sacrificial would be normative within the GRB meal-making culture, whether this meant the sacrifice was a modest offering to Paul’s god as the pivot between supper and symposium, or if the Lord’s Supper itself was a formal sacrificial meal of worship that was emphasized in a unique way.²⁰⁸ This sociological insight around the sacrificial component of ANE meal making strengthens an understanding of the Lord’s Supper as being sacrificial within Paul’s letter and culture.

²⁰⁴ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 79.

²⁰⁵ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 78.

²⁰⁶ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 28.

²⁰⁷ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 69.

²⁰⁸ Andrew Brian McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship*, 32. Given Paul’s language of “after supper” when discussing the lord’s supper, the liturgical aspect of the meal most probably fit into the libation structure of the GRB.

The logic of sacrifice, both in the Bible and in the ANE, dictated that what was sacrificed and offered in worship was also consumed and eaten in the corresponding feast. The primary form of sacrifice in the Greco-Roman world was called a θυσία or a slaughter-sacrifice.²⁰⁹ Thus, the practice of sacrificial worship entailed meal-making and feasting what is sacrificed is then consumed. In Jewish cultic practices, as Patterson notes, the dominant peace offering also included a ritual feast by priest and people alike.²¹⁰ This logic of sacrifice as an offering and then a feast of what has been offered, that makes intelligible Paul's rhetoric that the Corinthians are sharing in the body and blood of the Lord through their meal. Christ, for Paul, was the paschal lamb who was sacrificed (1 Cor 5:7) and the Lord's Supper was the feast connected to this sacrifice, thus for Paul to understand that what is shared at this meal is Christ's body and blood is intelligible within ANE cultic logic. However, this does not mean such an idea is easy to comprehend. There is no cultural analogate for the Lord's Supper on this point because, prior to Christ, no god had been that which was sacrificed as the act of worship for the community. There is something new going on at the meal of the Lord's Supper because there is something new going on through Christ, but it is something that flows from the cultic logic of Paul's time and the cultic logic of Paul's letter itself.

Cultic Imagery, Covenant Logic, and Eschatological Meal

Scholars such as Gupta, Patterson, and Hogeterp have drawn attention to the importance of Paul's cultic imagery in Paul's writings.²¹¹ They emphasize the centrality of Paul's cultic

²⁰⁹ Patterson, *Keeping the Feast*, 36. See also, Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 68. There was another kind of sacrifice where the entire animal was offered to the god and no feast followed, but this was less common.

²¹⁰ Patterson, *Keeping the Feast*, 46–47. This is true of the ordinary peace/bread offerings, as well as of the Passover sacrifice as well.

²¹¹ Nijay K Gupta, *Worship That Makes Sense to Paul: A New Approach to the Theology and Ethics of Paul's Cultic Metaphors* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2010).

images and metaphor for understanding his theological message, especially in his language of temple, sacrifice, and atonement, and participation.²¹² In particular, these scholars argue against reading Paul's temple language through a lens which spiritualizes the cultic practices over and against the normal sacrificial temple system in Jerusalem, or that sees Paul's language of Church as temple which supersedes or substitutes for the temple in Jerusalem.²¹³ Rather, as Hogeterp argues, Paul's temple and cultic language are used as positive parallels for his own life, ministry, mission, and the common life of his communities. Focusing on the Lord's Supper as an expression of cultic language in 1 Corinthians, Hogeterp writes: "the new covenant in Christ, expressed through the Lord's Supper does not constitute the abrogation of or the substitution for the old covenant, but serves as its renewal and fulfillment in Paul's theology."²¹⁴ Paul's cultic and temple imagery – of which the Lord's Supper is a part – is a key theme in 1 Corinthians. It is precisely this cultic imagery and theme within the letter that strengthens a reading of the Lord's Supper as a cultic act and the elements as having a sacred character to them.

The opening of 1 Corinthians has strong echoes to cultic images, prayer, and worship. Paul begins his letter by addressing the Corinthians "those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, (ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) called to be saints (κλητοῖς ἁγίοις), together with all those who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:2). Ἅγιος refers to being set apart and consecrated to God and by God in a cultic sense. This term gets its theological context from God's covenant with his people as well as God's cult and temple.²¹⁵ That which is ἁγιός is associated with the cult of the Jewish people and the temple as well as the people themselves,

²¹² Albert L.A. Hogeterp, *Paul and God's Temple: A Historical Interpretation of Cultic Imagery in the Corinthian Correspondence*, vol. 2, Biblical Tools and Studies (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006), 296.

²¹³ Hogeterp, *Paul and God's Temple*, 2:2–3.

²¹⁴ Hogeterp, *Paul and God's Temple*, 2:384.

²¹⁵ Gupta, *Worship That Makes Sense to Paul*, 61.

made ἅγιος by God's covenant with them. The Corinthians are ἅγιος in Christ and are called to be ἅγιος by Christ. This echoes God's language with the Jewish people in Exodus and indicates Paul's vision for the Corinthian Church is as incorporated into this Jewish notion of holiness, cult, and covenant (Exod 19:5-6).²¹⁶ Further, the holiness of the church is placed within a vision of others who are holy (other Christian communities) because all "call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:2).

As was discussed in chapter two, this phrase echoes the prophet Malachi, and the prophet Joel, where calling on the Lord's name has a salvific and cultic dimension for the nations and for God's people.²¹⁷ Further, "calling on the Lord's name" also resonates as a phrase which indicates one is in a place for making an offering or a sacrifice to God.²¹⁸ To "call on the Lord's name" is not only an act of prayer, but it has a cultic dimension in its Jewish and OT background.²¹⁹ Gupta concludes from this background that Paul's reference here in 1 Cor is "to the notion of the dislocated-relocated temple presence of the Lord" now to be found in the Christian community.²²⁰ Paul's temple imagery develops the Corinthian identity as a people set apart which will be his impetus for his moral counsel in the letter: act as the ἅγιος ones which you are. Paul continually deploys this cultic and temple imagery throughout his letter.²²¹

Paul identifies the community at Corinth as God's temple: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and the God's Spirit dwells within you...for God's temple is holy, and you are that

²¹⁶ Gupta, *Worship That Makes Sense to Paul*, 62. See Exodus 19:5-6.

²¹⁷ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew*, 233. Gupta, *Worship That Makes Sense to Paul*, 62. Ciampa and Rosner, "1 Corinthians," 698.

²¹⁸ Gupta, *Worship That Makes Sense to Paul*, 62.

²¹⁹ Michael Barber and John Kincaid, "Cultic Theosis in Paul and Second Temple Judaism," 248.

²²⁰ Gupta, *Worship That Makes Sense to Paul*, 63.

²²¹ We will highlight three instances of this for the purpose of this thesis, but other scholars have worked out comprehensive charts and analysis of Paul's usage of temple imagery. Hogeterp, *Paul and God's Temple*.; Gupta, *Worship That Makes Sense to Paul*.; David A Renwick, *Paul, the Temple, and the Presence of God* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991).

temple (1 Cor 3:16-17). This image is Paul's most explicit cultic imagery in the whole letter, one which he deploys again later in the letter when talking about moral issues: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you" (1 Cor 6:19). Lexically, it is important to note that Paul's use of the plural (ὑμῶν): the Corinthians as a people are God's temple. God dwells within each of them, but their identity as a temple is a collective within which the individual shares. This usage of the community as temple within which each person receives their own identity as a temple of God is consistent with Paul's use of the term in 1 Cor 6:19: the individual is God's temple through incorporation into the body as a whole.²²² The rhetorical impact of this cultic metaphor within the letter is that Paul understands the Corinthian church as standing in an analogous relationship to God as was the temple in Jerusalem.²²³ Given Paul's Jewish background and the sacredness of the temple, his utilization of this metaphor cannot be overemphasized enough.²²⁴

For Paul to speak of God dwelling within the Corinthian community was to directly reference the Jewish understanding of God's presence which had a unique locus in the temple. As Renwick has demonstrated, the presence of God dwelling with his people was a special marker for the Jewish people and their identity among the nations throughout their history. God's divine dwelling among Israel came to be centralized within the temple in Jerusalem.²²⁵ The temple itself, and the worship of the temple cult, was seen both as a source of participation in

²²² Hogeterp, *Paul and God's Temple*, 2:73-75. At issue is how to translate Paul's phrase: ὅτι τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐστίν. Should it be your body, individually, or corporately understood? In Greek, there is a plural pronoun used, so some scholars argue Paul should be translated "the body of you all" instead of "your body." Others see Paul here applying a corporate metaphor to each individual person. I think both readings should be kept together. A collective singular usage gives "an individual understanding of body-as-temple within a larger framework of cooperation among such distinguishable units that make up a collective temple."

²²³ Gupta, *Worship That Makes Sense to Paul*, 66.

²²⁴ Hogeterp, *Paul and God's Temple*, 2:66.

²²⁵ Renwick, *Paul, the Temple, and the Presence of God*, 28–30.

heavenly realities.²²⁶ God's dwelling within the temple, his absence from the temple when it was destroyed, and the prophetic longing for God to come back and dwell with his people in the renewed temple in the post exilic period was a strong theme in the OT. Paul uses temple language as an identity creating metaphor.²²⁷ The Corinthian Church was God's holy dwelling due to the presence of Christ and Christ's spirit among them. This new reality called them to a new way of living and of worshipping.²²⁸ Paul's temple language is constitutive for his theological understanding of what incorporation into Christ accomplishes for his people and what this new people are called to be, act, and live like.

There is a cultic logic present in Paul's use of this metaphor: Christ comes to dwell within the people. Christ draws the people into himself, which makes the people into the temple – the dwelling place of God – and calls them into a new way of living and acting. N.T. Wright has noted: “if the spirit of the living God dwells within his people, constituting them as the renewed tabernacle (or new temple...), then the work of this transforming spirit can and must be spoken of in terms, ultimately, of *theosis*, ‘divinization.’”²²⁹ Paul's language of temple imagery and God's dwelling within the Corinthian church, and the believer, grounds his moral counsel and his concern for unity. Further, Paul's temple imagery argues that the Corinthian Church is being divinized through the presence of God. How this presence comes to dwell in the Corinthian church is not yet clear. As we will develop a bit later, the Lord's Supper is one of the paradigmatic ways that Christ comes to dwell in his people, thus constituting them as the temple

²²⁶ Barber and Kincaid, “Cultic Theosis in Paul and Second Temple Judaism,” 242.

²²⁷ Gupta, *Worship That Makes Sense to Paul*, 64.

²²⁸ Hogeterp, *Paul and God's Temple*, 2:323. We will not address questions in the literature around if Paul is being supersessionist in his temple language, as that takes us too far afield from the topic of our thesis.

²²⁹ N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 1021.

of God and as members of his body. A bridge to this conclusion passes by way of another cultic metaphor in Paul.

Paul, in a key passage, describes Christ and his death within the temple cult imagery of the Passover lamb: “for our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor 5:7-8). Three things are worthy of comment. First, Paul identifies Christ with the Passover lamb. This makes Christ’s death an atoning death for Paul, and raises the question whether Christ, like the Passover lamb, would need to be ingested in order to receive the benefits of this atoning death. Paul doesn’t explicitly answer that here. Secondly, Paul calls his community to a proper celebration “of the feast.” Hogeterp argues that this “feast” that Paul mentions is the Lord’s Supper which he will discuss in chapters 10-11.²³⁰ This position is a strong one especially since, within the letter, there is only one feast/meal of worship described – that of the Lord’s Supper – and the imagery of Christ’s atoning death is used in both.

Thirdly, Paul’s cultic imagery is charged with a demand for right moral conduct. God’s holiness is meant to be transformative, changing how one lives and acts. Paul’s cultic images often frame some moral counsel that he is calling his community to live out. When reminding the community to abstain from sexually immoral behavior he says: Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you (1 Cor 6:19). And later in the letter Paul warns his community against idolatry because they like the Israelites are “partners in the altar” with God (1 Cor 10:18). The holiness that the Corinthians have because of their life in Christ – as his temple and body – call them to act differently. Life with Christ is meant to change how one lives. The moral counsel that is coupled with Paul’s discussion of The Lord’s Supper, with its cultic

²³⁰ Hogeterp, *Paul and God’s Temple*, 2:334. Patterson, *Keeping the Feast*, 156–57.

imagery, is not an isolated reference with the Corinthian correspondence, but rather builds on Paul's cultic language within the whole text.

Cultic Theosis and *κοινωνία* with Christ Crucified and Resurrected

A key theme that is at the heart of Paul's theology is participation, *κοινωνία*, or union with Christ.²³¹ Gorman argues that participation is a key aspect of Paul's soteriology.²³² This participation, for Paul, is described as a believer's participation in Christ, his conformity to Christ: in Christ's salvific life, death, and resurrection. In Paul, union with Christ can be expressed in several ways. The most common is when Paul speaks of someone or something being "in Christ."²³³ Another way is when Paul speaks of sharing in Christ's suffering (Phil 3:10). Finally, Paul might refer to being in *κοινωνία* with Christ as in 1 Cor 10:16: "the cup of blessing which we bless is it not a *κοινωνία* in the blood of Christ." Regardless of how Paul expresses it, *κοινωνία* with Christ is key for him. This theme of union with Christ is a dominant one in 1 Corinthians. Paul speaks of the Corinthians being called into *κοινωνία* with Christ (1 Cor 1:9). He speaks, at the end of the letter, that those who are found to "belong to Christ" will be made "alive in Christ" themselves (1 Cor 15:20). And at the "table of the Lord" Paul speaks of the *κοινωνία* that occurs which forms the community into the body of Christ (1 Cor 10:16).

One way of understanding Paul's meaning of participation or *κοινωνία* in Christ is as divinization or theosis. Gorman argues that participation in Paul is about becoming conformed and unified to Christ and thus to become unified to God. Thus, Gorman speaks of theosis as the

²³¹ Michael Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 3. Gorman notes that this is the consensus scholarly opinion. For a study that looks at the breadth of meaning for this term in Paul. (Michael J. Thate, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Constantine R. Campbell, eds., "*In Christ*" in *Paul: Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation*, WUNT 2/384 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014]).

²³² Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 4. E.P. Sanders, Richard Hays, N.T. Wright, and Michael Gorman, among others, have all noted that participation is a key feature of Paul's soteriology and that these two concepts need further study in Paul.

²³³ Thate, Vanhoozer, and Campbell, "*In Christ*" in *Paul*, 25.

best term to describe Paul's notion of participation and *κοινωνία* with Christ. He defines theosis, not as becoming God oneself, but "as becoming *like* God," or a sharing in the divine life of God.²³⁴ This sharing in the divine life makes one holy. Thus, holiness is a result of conformity to Christ in one's life because holiness is a sharing in God's divine reality. Conformity to Christ, becoming one with him, is at the heart of Paul's theology according to Gorman. Gorman argues for this notion of participation understood as theosis from Paul's description of the resurrected life in 1 Corinthians: "just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Cor 15:49). Further, in 1 Corinthians, Paul is concerned with the Corinthians having the holiness that comes from Christ Jesus (1 Cor 1:2) and he consistently uses the metaphor of being "the body of Christ." This image indicates that the Christian life is about incorporation into Christ's life so much to become his body. Thus, at least in 1 Corinthians, *κοινωνία* with Christ is a kind of theosis, a sharing in the divine life of God which makes one holy, makes one like Christ. How then does one become joined to Christ in 1 Corinthians?

A central way, for Paul, that believers have *κοινωνία* with Christ is through ritual and cultic practices. One of these practices in 1 Corinthians is baptism. Paul writes: "for in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Cor 10:13). In chapter 15, Paul argues that all who belong to Christ will be raised, and one belongs to Christ by being baptized into him (1 Cor 15:23). Baptism was one of the key ritual and cultic events by which Christians enter into *κοινωνία* with Christ. Baptism into Christ makes one a temple of the spirit of God, makes one holy, and incorporates one into Christ's body. Thus, scholars like Barber and Kinkaid claim that

²³⁴ Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 5.

in 1 Corinthians Paul manifests a cultic theosis in his theological understanding of *κοινωνία* with Christ.²³⁵

The Lord's Supper along with Baptism is a means of effecting *κοινωνία* with the Lord. In fact, Paul speaks of both baptism and the Lord's Supper when he writes: "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to *drink of one Spirit*" (1 Cor 12:13 my emphasis). Pitre's has argued that the phrase "drink of the one spirit" ought to be understood as a reference to the Lord's Supper. Two primary reasons for this are that baptism was never spoken of as a "drinking of the spirit" and that Paul has spoken of drinking as a means of having *κοινωνία* with the Lord and that is at the Lord's Supper.²³⁶ Since Paul describes Christ himself as "a life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor 15:45) the metaphor of drinking of the spirit can be read through the Lord's Supper and the cup of blessing which effects *κοινωνία* with Christ. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are primary ways that Paul understands *κοινωνία* to be brought about for the Corinthians. As Kincaid and Barber argue, for Paul, "being in Christ is realized cultically."²³⁷ A chief cultic expression of this was the Lord's Supper.

Paul's cultic understanding of the meal itself is communicated primarily in his language of "remembrance." As Ådna has noted, the presence of Paul's insistence that *both* the bread and the cup be offered as a remembrance is unique to Paul.²³⁸ The emphasis in Paul highlights his understanding of the meal itself through this term. In the OT remembrance was not a mental activity *per se* but rather a ritual to be done, like the Passover.²³⁹ The ritual activity served the

²³⁵ Barber and Kincaid, "Cultic Theosis in Paul and Second Temple Judaism," 240.

²³⁶ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew*, 245.

²³⁷ Barber and Kincaid, "Cultic Theosis in Paul and Second Temple Judaism," 254.

²³⁸ Jostein Ådna, "The Eucharist in the Letters of Paul and in Hebrews," in *Institutions of the Emerging Church*, ed. Sven-Olav Back and Erkki Koskenniemi (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 100. He notes that remembrances are absent in both Mark and Matthew, and Luke only preserves it after the bread offering. Paul notes it after both bread and cup.

²³⁹ Ådna, "The Eucharist in the Letters of Paul and in Hebrews," 102.

purpose not just of recalling what happened in the past, but of personally identifying with what happened in the past as if it happened to the one at the ritual. In a sense, the ritual remembering “bridges the time gap” between the event and future generations which remember the event in their ritual.²⁴⁰ Thus, at the Lord’s Supper, the Corinthians regard themselves as participants of the meal that *Christ* celebrated with his disciples and brings Christ’s presence into the Lord’s Supper in “as real a way as he was present” at his own Last Supper.²⁴¹ Paul’s emphasis on the “remembrance” function of the Lord’s Supper reveals his understanding of the meal as cultic. The Lord’s Supper as celebrated by the Corinthians brings them into the presence of Jesus’ redemptive death and gives them a share of what Christ offered to his disciples on that night, which was a union with him through a sharing in the new covenant meal.

Paul understands Christ’s meal, and thus the Lord’s Supper, to be a sacrificial and covenantal meal. The language of blood and the echoes to the OT root Paul’s description of the Lord’s Supper in the language of a sacrificial and covenantal offering. Earlier in the letter, Christ was identified as the Passover lamb as well. The importance of these two statements grounds the theo-logical conclusion that what is offered must also be consumed in order for the participants of the ritual meal to have a share in the covenantal promises.²⁴² For Christ to offer his body to be eaten, and the cup “in his blood” to be drunk flows naturally from this cultic logic of sacrifice, covenant, and meal. Just as the Israelites of old, who ate what was sacrificed and became in *κοινωνία* with divine realities (1 Cor 10:16-17), so too, for Paul the Corinthians who eat of the Lord’s Supper are brought into *κοινωνία* with the divine in Christ Jesus.²⁴³ As Ådna writes, the

²⁴⁰ Ådna, “The Eucharist in the Letters of Paul and in Hebrews,” 102.

²⁴¹ Ådna, “The Eucharist in the Letters of Paul and in Hebrews,” 103.

²⁴² Barber and Kincaid, “Cultic Theosis in Paul and Second Temple Judaism,” 253.

²⁴³ Barber and Kincaid, “Cultic Theosis in Paul and Second Temple Judaism,” 254.

Lord's Supper "renews the believer's share in the salvific fruits of Christ's death as well as his participation in the one "body of Christ."²⁴⁴

The cultic and covenantal logic of Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper makes intelligible an understanding of the elements of the meal as being communicative of Christ's body and blood. Paul identifies Christ as the paschal lamb who has been sacrificed for believers (1 Cor 5:7; 11:24; 15:3). In sacrificial rites, what has been sacrificed must be consumed at the subsequent feast. The Lord's Supper is the cultic feast which was a ritual remembrance of "the Lord's death." Thus, Christ's invitation to eat his body and drink the cup in his blood – while unheard of in ancient cultures – is consistent with the covenant and cultic logic of the OT and Paul's rhetoric in 1 Corinthians. To argue that Paul understands the elements of the meal – the bread and the wine – to communicate the presence of Christ to the believer and thus to effect *κοινωνία* with Christ through the cultic consumption of the meal is to understand Paul's cultic imagery and theology with a realism that his rhetoric demands. Christ's offering of himself at the feast flows from the cultic logic of his sacrifice upon the Cross. Christ chooses to offer himself through the means of bread and wine not as mere metaphor but as a real communication – through the elements – of that which has been sacrificed. As Pitre writes: "this is no mundane food and mundane drink."²⁴⁵ What makes Christ able to offer his body to his believers through the elements of bread and wine is because, unlike ordinary sacrifices which remain dead, he is Resurrected and alive in the spirit of God.

The importance of the Resurrection within Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper and theosis cannot be overlooked. At the end of his letter to the Corinthians, Paul reminds the Corinthians that the core of his message is the proclamation of Christ who died, Christ who was

²⁴⁴ Ådna, "The Eucharist in the Letters of Paul and in Hebrews," 105.

²⁴⁵ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew*, 247.

buried, and Christ *who was resurrected* (1 Cor 15:3-4, my emphasis). Paul goes on to say that “if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain, and your faith has been in vain” (1 Cor 15:14). Christ’s death, without the Resurrection, is meaningless for Paul. To be incorporated into Christ’s body, into Christ’s death, is worthless if there is not a promise of also being incorporated into Christ’s Resurrection: “if the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?” (1 Cor 15:29). In light of chapter 15, we can reread the letter and understand that when Paul says he is proclaiming Christ crucified he is *also* proclaiming Christ who is resurrected. Thus, when Paul says that we proclaim the Lord’s death at the Lord’s Supper, we must include a notion of proclaiming the Resurrection as well. As Kodell highlights “Lord is Paul’s favorite title for the risen Jesus.”²⁴⁶ The Lord’s Supper is not in honor of him who is dead but is an encounter with him who is alive. When Paul writes that we must remember the Lord by this ritual proclamation, this is a remembrance of the living Christ who died for us and has come back to life.²⁴⁷

The body and blood that is being offered at the Lord’s Supper is that of the Resurrected and living Lord.²⁴⁸ Paul writes that “anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him” (1 Cor 6:17). This unity and this spirit received is of the resurrected spirit, the resurrected person of Christ: “the last Adam became a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45). This Resurrected Lord offers his life-giving spirit to his followers: “for in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor 12:13). It is the spiritual existence of Christ in his Resurrected self (1 Cor 15:44) that empowers the spiritual realities of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper to communicate a share in Christ’s Resurrected life. As Miller writes: “The Eucharistic

²⁴⁶ Kodell, *The Eucharist in the New Testament*, 77.

²⁴⁷ Ådna, “The Eucharist in the Letters of Paul and in Hebrews,” 101.

²⁴⁸ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew*, 246.

meal consists of pneumatic bread and pneumatic cup because Christ's resurrected body is pneumatic, and the meal is for consumption of and communion with Christ himself."²⁴⁹ At the Lord's Supper, when Christ offers his body and blood, this ought to be understood as the body and blood of the Resurrected Lord, the Lord who lives and reigns in the spirit. What is being consumed is not the body and blood of a dead person, but rather the body and blood of the Resurrected Christ.

There is a Christological realism to Paul's language of transformation for the Corinthians, as well as of the transformation of the elements of the Lord's Supper.²⁵⁰ Pitre labels the elements of bread and wine at the meal "pneumatic realities" invested with the power of the Spirit. "Through the working of the Spirit, the bread and the wine become 'spiritual food' and 'spiritual drink' (1 Cor 10:3-4), uniting the believers to the body and blood of the risen Lord."²⁵¹ This makes rhetorical sense within the letter as a whole because the image that the Corinthians are being transformed into, the cultic theosis to be attained, is the image of the Resurrected Christ: "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Cor 15:49). There is a real *κοινωνία* possible with the Risen Lord through the meal because the Risen Lord is spiritually given to those at the feast through the consumption of the elements themselves.²⁵² The Lord's Supper is a cultic act of remembrance that gives participants a share in the spiritual fruits of Christ's redemptive death and Resurrection. The community is incorporated into Christ's body more deeply through this cultic meal and is incorporated more

²⁴⁹ Colin Douglas Miller, *The Practice of the Body of Christ: Human Agency in Pauline Theology after MacIntyre* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2014), 150.

²⁵⁰ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew*, 247.

²⁵¹ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew*, 246.

²⁵² Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew*, 248.

deeply into *κοινωνία* with Christ. Thus, the Lord's Supper might be spoken of as bringing about a theosis through cultic sacrifice and participation.²⁵³

Replies to Various Objections

Arguing for the meal as cultic and sacrificial with the elements themselves as communicating the presence of Christ could be criticized as a reading back into the letter of Paul later categories of the Eucharist developed by Christian thinkers. It can be a historical mistake, then, to assume that what is known and practiced as the Eucharist or Lord's Supper in the third and fourth centuries and onward was identical to the Lord's Supper of Paul's time. Further, to assume that Paul's account of the Lord's Supper refers to *the* exclusive experience of Christian meal-making and worship, would be to read backward from our more modern and formularized liturgical structures to Paul's own time.²⁵⁴ What Paul describes for us, then, in 1 Corinthians is *an* experience of Christian worship, *an* experience grounded in both the cultural meal making practices of GRB culture and the theology of the OT. This thesis does not seek to flatten out the diversity and organic development of Christian liturgical practices in the first few centuries of the Church. Rather, what is central to our claims is that Paul's account of the Lord's Supper does contain an understanding of the elements at the meal to be sacred, sacral, and communicating the presence of the Lord beyond what is intelligible within the ANE religious context. We will turn now to address some criticisms of this reading of Paul, especially those that argue a symbolic realism for the elements is more eisegesis than exegesis. We hope to strengthen our reading by replying to these objections.

²⁵³ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew*, 246.

²⁵⁴ McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship*, 33. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 286.

From a sociological reading of Paul’s account of the Lord’s Supper, any notion of the elements at the meal – the bread and wine – communicating the presence of the divine is often excluded. As Smith highlights, there is no clear archetype within the wider ANE culture where theophagy took place.²⁵⁵ In fact, Smith notes that research has cast serious doubts on the existence of theophagy in the wider Greco-Roman culture, not even for Dionysiac traditions. Occasionally, there are references to such rites in fictional narratives, but its ritual practice in history, outside of Christianity, is scant to non-existent.²⁵⁶ Thus, scholars like Smith, that ground their interpretation of the Lord’s Supper exclusively on sociological insights conclude that the Lord’s Supper ought to be understood as a memorial of Christ or, if Christ is present at the meal, it is as a host rather than within the elements.²⁵⁷

This line of argumentation is valid as long as one remains exclusively within the framework of the wider Greco-Roman culture. However, if the echoes to the OT are allowed to resonate from Paul’s description of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Cor 10-11, the notion of divine presence that is mediated through elemental realities becomes biblically intelligible. As we argued in chapter 2, Jewish theology and Jewish notions of God, sacrifice, and the divine presence that can be mediated through material things (like the temple, the ark of the covenant, and the bread of presence) does include the possibility of the Lord’s presence at the Pauline

²⁵⁵ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 78–79.

²⁵⁶ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 79.

²⁵⁷ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, 191. He understands the Lord’s presence through the analogate of the Sarapis cult, where meals eaten in his honor were described as a meal hosted by “Lord Serapis.” (McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship*, 32). The honor thesis is promoted in Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 864. Fee writes that “it lies quite beyond both Jesus’ intent and the framework within which he and the disciples lived to imagine that some actual change took place...in the bread itself. Such a view could only have arisen in the church at a much later stage when Greek modes of thinking had rather thoroughly replaced semitic ones.” (Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 550). Fee’s conclusion, which we disagree with, seems to confuse two things. Whether the semitic worldview was open to physical realities mediating the divine presence – this is clearly in the affirmative in the Jewish worldview – and how the Church’s dogmatic language comes to express the mediated presence of Christ in the elements using Greek philosophy. Paul is not developing a how or a ‘why’ of Christ’s presence but affirming that his presence is mediated in the elements as well as in the Church community.

Lord's Supper beyond those imagined by sociology. The echoes to the OT contained in Paul's thought strongly argue for such a conclusion when Paul speaks of the bread and wine as the Lord's body and blood. This is not to assert *how* this is possible but rather to argue that a notion of the divine presence in material things is not only possible within a Jewish mind like Paul's, but that Paul's rhetoric and OT background in 1 Corinthians pushes a reading of the Lord's Supper that includes a sacredness surrounding the elements at the meal.

There are two prominent grammatical arguments that are mounted to reject any notion that Paul understands the bread and wine as communicating the divine presence in a symbolically real way. The first centers around Paul's usage of the demonstrative pronoun in vv.23-24: Ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ παρεδίδοτο ἔλαβεν ἄρτον ²⁴ καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν· **Τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν.** The grammatical problem occurs around the neuter demonstrative τοῦτό (this) and what its referent is in the sentence. If τοῦτό is understood as referring to the bread, then the meaning of the sentence is clear "this (bread) is my body." However, scholars have rightly noted that this poses a grammatical problem because (τοῦτό) is neuter in Greek, while bread (ἄρτος) is masculine.²⁵⁸ If τοῦτό in the sentence was meant to be identified with ἄρτος then Paul misuses the Greek to communicate that.

Three solutions have been proposed to explain this grammatical error. Orr and Walther argue that τοῦτό, as a neuter, does refer to bread but is declined grammatically with the neuter for body (τὸ σῶμα) which appears in the sentence.²⁵⁹ This, however, merely replaces one grammatical problem for another.²⁶⁰ McGowan proposes a second solution in that the referent of

²⁵⁸ McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship*, 29. See also, Orr and Walther, *I Corinthians*, 272.

²⁵⁹ Orr and Walther, *I Corinthians*, 272.

²⁶⁰ In the Pauline corpus such a grammatical mixing does not occur – using a neuter case to replace a masculine noun, Orr and Walther, 272.

τοῦτό for Paul is the whole ritual action of Jesus (the ritual meal itself). Since Paul uses τοῦτό in v. 24b to refer to the ritual itself “do τοῦτό in remembrance of me” it seems plausible that he means it in the same way in v. 24a.²⁶¹ The bread is no longer a referent at all or is included in the τοῦτό only insofar as it is part of the ritual meal itself but not in any singular or specific way. This reading is plausible but does not account for the plain sense of the text where τοῦτό need not refer to the same thing each time it is used.

Finally, a third reading is proposed by Thiselton where τοῦτό refers to Jesus’ historical death on the cross.²⁶² This position builds off the position of Orr and Walther, but instead of arguing that τοῦτό refers to “bread” but declined according to “body,” Thiselton argues that τοῦτό refers to body understood as Jesus’ historical body offered on the cross. This reading is strengthened, in the thesis of Thiselton, by understanding the Passover and its ritual remembrance in Jewish theology. Ritual remembrance, like the Passover, is predicated upon the personal identification between the present-day worshippers and the historical action of God in the past through the ritual meal.²⁶³ Thiselton argues that Jesus invited his community into a personal and ritual identification with his saving action through the Lord’s Supper in an analogous way that the Jewish people identified with the Passover, historically and eschatologically, through their ritual remembrance.²⁶⁴ Thiselton concludes that for Paul, then, τοῦτό refers to Jesus’ redemptive act (the offering of his body) which his community identifies with by using personal language such as “my body.” Theologically, this is an excellent interpretation of the significance of Jesus’ death on the cross, but it stops just short of the full

²⁶¹ McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship*, 29.

²⁶² Orr and Walther, *I Corinthians*, 273.; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 551.; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 877.

²⁶³ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 877.

²⁶⁴ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 878.

connection that Paul is making in the text. Thiselton's Passover connection stops short of the importance of consuming the lamb which was sacrificed as a central act in the ritual remembrance of the Passover.

If Jesus is identifying his body as the new Passover sacrifice, then ritually this sacrifice would need to be consumed considering the Jewish ritual of Passover. Within the narrative of Paul's account, the only elements offered to the disciples for consummation were the bread and wine. Could, then, Jesus' use of τοῦτό be referring to himself as sacrifice and to the bread and wine as that which is to be consumed precisely because these elements mediate his death in some way? Thiselton's reading heightens the importance of the bread at the meal as a necessary component of entering Jesus' salvific action. His reading is a strong theological reading of Paul and Christ's words but needs to be related more directly to the narrative gestures of Jesus within Paul's account as referring to the bread and with the importance of consumption of the Passover sacrifice in the Jewish consciousness. If the bread is understood to mediate Christ's body than Thiselton's theologically reading and the Passover necessity of consuming what is offered can be brought together.

All three of these readings seek to grapple with the grammatical discrepancy apparent in Paul's syntax. From Paul's "poor grammar," readings of his meaning are sought which explain away any reference by Paul or Christ of the bread to being associated with his body.²⁶⁵ However, scholars such as Wallace and Smyth, argue that Paul's language appears far more normative in his use of τοῦτό. The Greek language has some allowance for unattached neuters, where gender

²⁶⁵ Daniel B Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), 334. The second τοῦτό refers to the ritual action which is explained as the eating of the bread which is the direct antecedent in the narrative to which τοῦτό refers. Smyth argues that "an unattached neuter is common, especially in definitions where the pronoun in the predicate." (Herbert Weir Smyth and Gordon M Messing, *Greek Grammar* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956], 307).

discrepancy is possible as long as the direct antecedent is clearly understood. In Paul's usage 1 Cor, the direct antecedent of the neuter τοῦτό can, grammatically, be the masculine bread. It is possible that Paul's usage here is not grammatically incorrect at all. Thus, Wallace and Smyth both argue that the simplest understanding of Paul's sense for τοῦτό, grammatically speaking, is that Paul is referring to the bread with his pronoun use.

Whether Paul's usage is correct Greek or not, an excellent explanation for Paul's usage is as a fixed liturgical formula. Paul's linguistic discrepancy can be explained from the fact that he is inheriting a fixed ritual or liturgical formula that he passes on as he received even if grammatically it is not polished. In Paul's introduction to the words of institution which we are discussing, he says that he has received from the Lord what he is handing down or passing on to the Corinthians (1 Cor 11:23). This language of "handing down" (παραδίδωμι) signifies in Jewish tradition "the transmission of important traditions."²⁶⁶ Paul is indicating that what will follow comes, not from his own creation, but is something that he received. This fixed ritual formula theory is bolstered by identical language and usage of the neuter τοῦτό in place of the masculine ἄρτος in the synoptic accounts (Mt 26:26; Luke 22:19; Mark 14:22).²⁶⁷ The three Gospel writers and Paul all make the same grammatical "mistake" in describing the Lord's words. Given Paul's language of formal handing of a tradition just prior to his account of the Lord's words, *and* the presence of the same linguistic "error" in the works of contemporary authors describing similar words of Jesus, this strengthens the argument that what is being described by Paul is a structured saying or ritual whose grammatical language is fixed by

²⁶⁶ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 867.

²⁶⁷ Ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἄρτον καὶ εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ δὸς τοῖς μαθηταῖς εἶπεν· Λάβετε φάγετε, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου. Mt 26:26. Luke 22:19: καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· Τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου [τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν; Mark, 14:22: "Καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπεν· Λάβετε, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου"

something beyond the author's control. The action that Paul highlights, prior to quoting this ritual phrase, is Jesus' taking, praying over, and breaking the *bread*. The bread is the noun that is missing and replaced by τοῦτό which Paul inserts. This is the simplest and most likely explanation for the meaning of τοῦτό understood as a ritual formula.

It is also possible that the ritual formula is referring to just a piece of bread instead of the loaf itself. In Greek, the neuter τὸ ψωμίον is the word used to describe a piece or a morsal of bread. The Gospel of John uses this phrase when referring to the pieces of bread Jesus passed out during his final supper (Jn 13:26).²⁶⁸ In Paul's account, Jesus is described as, taking, praying, and then *breaking* the loaf of bread before giving it to his disciples to eat. Considering this, τοῦτό might be the grammatical word chosen because what is being referenced is a piece, or morsal, of bread, and morsal (τὸ ψωμίον) is a neuter noun in Greek. This argument is not to imply that Paul knew the text of John or that there was any historical or literary dependence between them. Rather, the appeal to John shows that there is a neuter noun which refers to bread that might explain the grammatical oddity in Paul's usage given that he is handing on a formula which he did not create and the narrative context of Jesus' words in Paul comes after breaking apart the loaf of bread. For these reasons, the grammatical arguments that try and read τοῦτό of v. 24a as not referring to the bread are unconvincing.²⁶⁹

The second grammatical instance of an ambiguous referent between bread and body comes in vv. 27-28. At issue is Paul's language of "being answerable for the body and blood of the Lord" and his phrase "discerning the body" and how both lines explain and relate to the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup in Paul's understanding. Scholars, such as Fee or

²⁶⁸ Ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ὃ ἐγὼ βάρψω τὸ ψωμίον καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ. Jn 13:26.

²⁶⁹ Paul's second use of τοῦτό in v. 24 – do **this** in remembrance of me – is not referring to the bread but to the action of the meal.

Hays, argue for a reading of “discerning the body” as having an exclusive ecclesial referent as when Paul’s uses the “body of Christ” to refer to the church.²⁷⁰ Paul is calling his followers to be ethically mindful of their brothers and sisters in their celebration of the Lord’s supper. While it is undisputed that Paul does refer to the church as the “body of Christ” in many places in his corpus (e.g., 1 Cor 12:27), and he certainly refers the ecclesial community here in his phrase “discerning the body,” meaning the community gathered at meal together. However, is this reference inclusive also of the elements at the meal and might Paul mean more by this phrase than the community alone? Further how ought one to understand Paul’s unusual usage of “body *and* blood of the Lord” in v. 27? Can the ecclesial community alone be indicated by Paul with his unusual reference to the “blood” of the Lord? ²⁷¹ Thiselton argues that “body and blood” in v. 27 refers to the historical Jesus and thus the Corinthians are damaging either Christ’s memory or are falsely identifying with Christ by their lives.²⁷² Others acknowledge the interpretive dilemma but insist that v. 28 is the primary meaning of “body” for Paul and use this to read “body and blood” for the ecclesial community.

None of these readings give a good account of the unique insertion of “body and blood” here in Paul. Nowhere in Paul’s writing does “blood of the Lord” refer to the ecclesial community. When the historical Jesus is mentioned in terms of his atoning sacrifice eating and drinking is not mentioned in Paul. Thus, in v. 27 Paul, in his usage of “body and blood of the Lord” cannot have the ecclesial community in mind. Paul’s direct couplet of “bread and wine” with “body and blood” juxtaposed in the same pericope within the same meal context argues, instead, for these two terms to be identified with the other in Paul’s argument. Such an

²⁷⁰ Hays, *First Corinthians*, 200.

²⁷¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 561.

²⁷² Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 887.

interpretation incorporates a reading, like that of Thiselton, which argues that “the body and blood” ought to be read as referring to the historical sacrifice of Christ, but it also includes the mediated presence of Christ in the elements themselves.²⁷³ How, then, to understand Paul’s phrase in v. 29 when he says: “for all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgement upon themselves?” (1 Cor 11:29). “Discerning the body,” in our reading, is inclusive of both the ecclesial community and the elements of the meal. This follows from Paul’s language of eating and drinking prior to his usage of discerning the body. Eating and drinking can refer both, to the meal itself as discussed by Paul in vv. 20-21 where the community is not acting right between each other. However, given Paul’s understanding that at the Lord’s Supper the bread and wine are to be eaten and drunk and that these elements are sacred realities, and given that in v. 27 Paul’s usage of the “body and blood of the Lord” is tied to the elements of the meal, then it theo-logically follows that Paul’s caution to his community to “discern the body” can be read as referring to the elements at the meal themselves. Thus, to “discern the body” for Paul has a double meaning of proper discernment of Christ’s body manifested both in the community or in the ritual meal itself.

The final major objection to a reading which argues that Paul’s language regarding the Lord’s Supper is open to an understanding the divine presence as mediated through the elements of the meal is mounted from the perspective of avoiding eisegesis. This is a justified concern, as it is very easy for a modern reader to find in an ancient text what he also believes in the present. As Andrew McGowan has argued from his historical research, by the second century A.D. and onward Christian writers used a “startling realism” when talking about the bread and wine being the body and blood of Christ.²⁷⁴ None of the authors of these centuries developed a careful

²⁷³ Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul, a New Covenant Jew*, 255.

²⁷⁴ McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship*, 47.

Eucharistic theology around how this could be, but they regularly affirmed the realism of the eucharistic elements as being Christ's body and blood. Paul's language is slightly less direct, he is no less real in his identification of the elements with Christ's body and blood. Just such a claim avoids eisegesis in several ways.²⁷⁵

First, the symbolic realism of the elements of the meal theologically harmonizes with Paul's rhetoric and thought on the Lord's Supper. Paul's concern at the Lord's Supper is with the disunity that is manifesting in the community even at their gatherings for worship. Paul is clear in 1 Corinthians that table fellowship in worship is about communion with one another and communion with the divine. The realism of the elements as material mediating the divine presence would only serve to strengthen Paul's understanding of the communion achieved at the table as well as his distress at how the Corinthians were acting towards one another in the presence of the Lord in their worship. The realism of the elements accounts for Paul's strange language around body and blood in v. 27 which, as many scholars acknowledge, cannot have an ecclesial referent given the presence of the blood language.²⁷⁶ The realism of the elements is not a forced reading of the passage but flows outward from Paul's language within the pericope and the OT contexts that he communicates through his allusions.

Second, my exegesis has argued that within Paul's Jewish theological worldview, a realism of the divine being communicated through material things is possible and likely. A common claim against a symbolic realism of the elements is that such a view is unintelligible within a first century worldview, either pagan or Jewish.²⁷⁷ Yet, as we argued in chapter 2, the

²⁷⁵ C. Kavin Rowe "Confecting Evidence" *First Things*, July 2011, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2011/07/confecting-evidence> While his article does not address Paul specifically, he does disagree with Pitre's reading of Scripture in reference to Christ and the Eucharist on the grounds that Pitre is committing eisegesis. Such a critique might be levied against the thesis here in reference to Paul which will be presently address.

²⁷⁶ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 890.

²⁷⁷ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 550.

Jewish theological worldview of the first century was open to the divine presence being mediated and encountered through material realities. From the Jewish temple cult, the divine presence could even be understood to be mediated through food, like the showbread in the temple.²⁷⁸ While divine theophagy is a unique claim of the Christian communities and has no clear analogue in pagan or Jewish culture, yet this does not mean that it was unintelligible for first century peoples. Failure to find analogous practices just means that the practice was new within the religious horizon of the day. The same could be said for Paul's teaching on the cross in Corinth or of the Resurrection: intelligible, yet challenging, realities which were new within the religious horizon of his communities.

Finally, my exegesis of Paul avoids later categories when describing the Paul's view of the elements. Often, in the scholarship, symbolic realism for the eucharistic elements is denied because Paul would not have understood categories of "real presence" or "transubstantiation" or "consubstantiation" that are developed in later theological circles.²⁷⁹ I agree wholeheartedly. However, this criticism misses the point. This thesis is not arguing that Paul would understand the Lord's Supper *through* the language of modern theological concepts, but rather that Paul's actual language manifests an understanding of the elements at the Lord's Supper as having a quality of Christ's presence. Scholars, from all Christian denominations, have come to the same conclusion while still affirming real disagreement and difference in contemporary debates regarding Eucharistic theology.²⁸⁰ In the words of Käsemann: "whatever objections may be raised against the term "real presence" it expresses exactly what Paul wants to say."²⁸¹ Paul's

²⁷⁸ Stubbs, *Table and Temple*, 64.

²⁷⁹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 550.

²⁸⁰ Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 322. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 538. Henry Leighton Goudge, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Methuen & Co., 1903), 101.

²⁸¹ Käsemann, "The Pauline Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," 128. See also, Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 322. He argues that the Lord's Supper ought to be understood as a sacrament – meaning a sign of grace and divine benefice.

understanding is not the sole authority or conclusive proof for eucharistic debates, but neither is his understanding closed off to an understanding of the Lord's Supper and the elements at the heart of that supper as communicating the divine presence in some way.

The criticism of eisegesis is a two-edged sword. One can retroject backwards a denial of a realism just as much as when one argues for its presence.²⁸² In the history of interpretation, the dominant reading of Paul's passage was open to a reading of the elements of the meal having special significance even if how precisely to define the significance was debated. Contemporary scholars find this notion implausible if not impossible. To argue against a symbolic realism of the elements based on its impossibility is to commit an eisegetical reading of Paul in light of the Jewish background that we have attempted to explicate. Whether it is plausible that Paul meant it or whether this reading illuminates the text in a helpful way will always be up for debate. But our hope is that we have shown it is "theo-logically" and rhetorically plausible, likely, and reasonable to affirm a notion of symbolic realism for the elements of the meal the Lord's Supper as described by Paul.

²⁸² Hays, *First Corinthians*, 200.

Conclusion

As N.T. Wright has said: “if the spirit of the living God dwells within his people, constituting them as the renewed tabernacle (or new temple...), then the work of this transforming spirit can and must be spoken of in terms, ultimately, of *theosis*, ‘divinization.’”²⁸³ We have argued for the centrality of the Lord’s Supper as a central ritual in the cultic theosis of 1 Corinthians that Paul offers to his community. Scholars like Stubbs and Pitre, Hogeterp, have given greater attention to the Jewish and cultic elements of Paul’s thought in recent decades. Further avenues of research ought to be continued in this vein. For example, Benjamin Lappenga has recently argued that, through an analysis of Paul’s usage of ζελος in 2 Corinthians, Paul can be shown to understand himself to hold the role of a priest within the Corinthian community.²⁸⁴ Given the importance of cultic metaphors within 1 Corinthians, tracing Paul’s cultic rhetoric across both Corinthian letters could result in interesting connections between Paul’s cultic theosis in 1 Corinthians and his temple and priestly metaphors in 2 Corinthians.

The symbolic realism which Paul discusses the ritual of Baptism in his letter to the Romans could be explored in conversation with the intertextual symbolic realism of Paul’s discussion of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians to distil commonalities and differences in how Paul conceives of these rituals in the life of his communities. Finally, an intertextual comparison could be made between the Gospels and Paul in their accounts of the Lord’s Supper, examining overlapping and unique echoes within each narrative. Perhaps similar symbolic realism might be heard echoing from the Gospel accounts as was distilled from the Pauline account, or, if not, perhaps these intertextual echoes in the Gospel accounts would open new avenues for thinking

²⁸³ N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1021.

²⁸⁴ Benjamin J. Lappenga, *Paul’s Language of [Zelos]: Monosemy and the Rhetoric of Identity and Practice* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2015), 148–83.

about the Lord's Supper within the narratives of these writers. Our thesis did not take up these questions but the insights here are the grounds for future investigation along these or similar lines.

This thesis sought to “decode” Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper using a method of intertextuality. At the core of the argument is that there is more going on in Paul's account of the Lord's Supper than either the sociological readings tend to focus upon or the readings that do not account for Paul's temple and cult language in his theology. This is not to deny the strength of either of these readings for understanding Paul, rather it was an inspiration to dig deeper into Paul's language and thought in search of the insights contained within his Jewish context. Our decoding prioritized Paul's Jewish theological thought, especially the OT, as the primary source from which to distill his meaning.

This intertextual reading has been made possible due to recent trends in Pauline scholarship that recovered the centrality of Paul's Jewish background in understanding his thought. Paul's Jewish background ought to be the primary referent in understanding his thought given that Paul never ceased being a Jew, but rather, became a Jew who believed in Christ as Messiah. Thus, he understood his mission and his communities to be in creative union with God's redemptive mission and people of the OT and he used these inspired texts to generate his own theology in his letters. Considering the Old Testament echoes argued for in 1 Corinthians, the Lord's Supper was understood as an act of worship, a covenantal and sacrificial meal for Paul. As a cultic act and meal, it effects *κοινωνία* with Christ and with other believers. This meal effects *κοινωνία* through a partaking of the elements – the bread and wine – which communicate the spiritual and Resurrected body and spirit of Christ to the believer which brings about a theosis through *κοινωνία* with Christ as a sharing of his divine and spiritual life.

The Lord's Supper was both a fellowship meal and a ritual sacrifice which made present the sacrifice of Christ, the paschal lamb of Christians. The Lord's Supper took place upon a *τράπεζα*, an altar and table, a site of worship and feasting. The Lord's Supper was a table of sacrifice and an altar of fellowship, effecting *κοινωνία* within the community. This supper was a central act of ritual remembrance for the Christian community to share in the redemptive act of Christ's sacrifice and through which the Corinthians were being more and more conformed to the image of the "man of heaven" (1 Cor 15:47).

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