Sacrifice and Worship After the Stoicheia[1]

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Let me begin with two starting points, too rapidly explained and defended. First: It is clear from the New Testament's handful of uses of the phrase that *ta stoicheia tou kosmou* are connected with the regulations of the Torah. During her childhood (Galatians 4:3), Paul says, Israel was enslaved to the *stoicheia* (v. 9), and to illustrate the danger he expresses his worries about the Galatian observance of days, months, and seasons (vv. 10-11). Observing Torah's festive calendar amounts to a reversion to stoicheic slavery. More broadly, Galatians as a whole is concerned with circumcision and table fellowship, and Paul considers those regulations also to be childish elementary things. In Colossians, Paul's great hymn to Christ ends in a hortatory "therefore": As in Galatians, Paul warns the Colossians not to adhere to shadowy and antiquated calendars (Colossians 2:16-17), and he exhorts them not to submit to the purity and holiness prohibitions of Torah. Having died with Christ to *ta stoicheia tou kosmou*, the Colossians should not be submitting to decrees (*dogmatizo*) such as "Do not taste, do not touch" (vv. 20-21).

A somewhat wider perspective comes into focus in Hebrews 5:12. The author is irritated that his readers have not grown up to be carnivorous teachers – mature, meat-eating adults. Instead, they still need the milk of *ta stoicheia*. This rebuke closes a chapter in which the writer contrasts the eschatological priesthood of Melchizedek with the old priesthood of Aaron. Fleshly priesthood is one item in the milky diet from which the author hopes to wean his readers, and elsewhere the letter binds together priesthood with sacrifice, purity, and other regulations of the Torah. Whether or not we can identify *ta stoicheia tou kosmou*

[1] I am grateful for the comments and suggestions of faculty and students of New Saint Andrews College, who attended the Graduate Forum where I presented an earlier draft of this paper.

with those ordinances, we can conclude that what I will call stoicheic religion includes adherence to purity codes, graded distinctions of holiness, feasts and appointed times, and sacrifice.

A second preliminary claim: Whatever *ta stoicheia tou kosmou* actually are, Jesus had them in His sights in His triumphant death on the cross. Children were in bondage to the guarding and managing *stoicheia* until the fullness of time when God sent forth His Son and then His Spirit, through whom minor heirs are growing up to full sonship (Galatians 4:6-7). Colossians makes the same point: Those who have died with Christ are delivered from the decrees associated with the *stoicheia* (Colossians 2:20-21). Christ's own circumcision brings to life those who are dead in the uncircumcision of flesh. Through participation in the circumcision of Christ, the decrees and regulations set against us are put away (Colossians 2:11-14). I do not have to untangle any of these dense passages to draw the simple conclusion that Christ's death delivers children from *ta stoicheia tou kosmou* as much as it liberates sinners from sin and death.

On the second point if not on the first, there is a wide consensus: Few Christians believe we are bound to observe Torah's purity and holiness regulations; very few Christians throughout the centuries have performed animal sacrifices. For most Christians it is self-evidence that Jesus ended all that. About the implications of that self-evident confession, there has been continuous and sometimes acrimonious conflict, not only in theology or New Testament scholarship but in practical questions about liturgical forms.

Consider, for instance, modern debates between Baptists and paedobaptists in the light of the New Testament's teaching about *ta stoicheia tou kosmou*. Simply put, the most common Reformed argument for infant baptism is this: (Male) children were included in Israel in the Old Testament and marked with circumcision; Israel and the church are the

same people, bearers of the same promise; therefore, just as (male) children were marked for inclusion by circumcision in the Old Covenant, so (male and female) children should be marked for inclusion by baptism in the New Covenant. The argument for the inclusion of young children in the Lord's Supper has the same structure: Children ate with their parents at the feasts of Israel;[2] Israel and the church are the same people; therefore, children should participate in the Christian feast.

These arguments – to which I give the shorthand designation "paedo-arguments" – assume answers to some basic hermeneutical problems, though the operative assumptions are rarely brought entirely to the surface. Among the hermeneutical assumptions that can be dredged up are the following:

1. The paedo-arguments treats Old Testament persons, institutions and events not only as types of Jesus Christ but as rules that regulate the life and worship of the church.[3] In medieval terms, the paedo-arguments assume that the Old Testament contains not only "allegories" of Christ but also moral and ritual "tropologies" applicable to Christ's body. In Augustinian terms, the Old Testament speaks of the *totus Christus*, the whole Christ, both head and body. Specifically, according to the paedo-arguments, circumcision foreshadows the "cutting of Jesus' flesh" on the

[2] For the purposes of this essay, I take it as proven that children participated in the feasts of Israel. In addition to other resources, especially Tim Gallant's *Feed My Lambs: Why the Lord's Supper Should Be Restore to Covenant Children* (Pactum Reformanda, 2002), I point to reader to my own contributions to this question: "A Reply to '1 Corinthians 11:17-34: The Lord's Supper'" in E. Calvin Beisner, ed., *The Auburn Avenue Theology: Pros and Cons* (Fort Lauderdale, FL: Knox Theological Seminary, 2004), pp. 297-304.

[3] For the purposes of this essay, I assume the legitimacy of a typological hermeneutic that sees all the Old Testament fulfilled in Jesus. I have defended some aspects of typological interpretation in the introductions to my *A House for My Name* (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2000), pp. 17-42, and *A Son To Me* (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2003). See also James B. Jordan, *Through New Eyes* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2000), and Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical TYPOS Structures* (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981).

cross, but also points to the baptismal rite of passage. Passover is fulfilled not only in the cross but also in the Eucharist.

2. More specifically, the paedo-arguments assume that Old Testament ritual patterns have regulatory authority over the church's worship. The requirement to circumcise male children on the eighth day and the rules of access to the Israel's feasts were *ritual* ordinances, governing the form of Israel's liturgical and sacramental ceremonies. If we appeal to those rituals to justify our own practice, we must assume that "ceremonial" regulations of the *stoicheia* continue to have "ceremonial" import after the *stoicheia*.[4] The paedo-arguments reason from ceremony to ceremony.

3. Paedo-arguments do not, of course, claim that there is total continuity between the institutions of Old and New. All Christians accept that the menu at Passover was different from that of the Supper, and baptism differs from circumcision because it does not involve a cut in the flesh and includes women. In the midst of these self-evident discontinuities, the paedo-arguments locate specific features of Old Testament rites that retain liturgical force. Paedo-arguments assume that we can determine *which* features are common to stoicheic rites and Christian rituals, and which are not.

For Baptists, I imagine, some of these assumptions look deeply suspect. From a Baptist perspective, it might well appear that paedo-arguments depend on adherence to *ta*

[4] For the sake of argument, I assume here that distinctions can readily be made between "moral" and "ceremonial" rules, though I am deeply skeptical about the usefulness of that distinction. Markus Bockmuehl is correct to insist that "the very distinction between moral, civil, and ceremonial laws, aside from being unknown to the Old and New Testaments and to Judaism, is legally unworkable and practically awkward. Who would confidently classify the laws about gleaning or the taking of a bird's nest, not to mention the Sabbath and the command about images?" (*Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000], p. 149, fn. 14). In this essay, "ceremonial" regulations have to do with liturgical forms and patterns, while "moral" covers all other spheres of life.

stoicheia tou kosmou from which Paul says we have been liberated. Baptists will want to ask, Why should Israel's regulations about access and inclusion regulate the church's liturgy and sacraments? Though Baptists are unusually too polite to express their disgust, paedobaptists can smell like Judaizers to a Baptist nose.

As a convinced paedobaptist, I do not believe I exude the aroma of a Judaizer, but I acknowledge that paedobaptists have been neither consistent nor clear about the hermeneutical logic of their liturgical and sacramental theology. In this paper I attempt to assess that logic in the light of the New Testament's own explicit appeals of stoicheic ceremonies. No doubt you will be relieved to know that I will not rehearse – once again! and inconclusively! – the debate about baptism. I raise the baptism issue only to highlight more general issues and to probe paedobaptist as well as Baptist hermeneutics. My paper focuses instead on sacrifice, and my question can be put this way: Paedo-arguments reason from the ceremonial regulations of the old to ceremonial regulations of the new. If that form of argument applies to Genesis 17, does it also apply to Leviticus? Can we pick out features of Levitical sacrificial and purity regulations that still regulate our worship? If "regulate" is too strong, does stoicheic worship *inform* worship after the *stoicheia*? If so, how so? Most importantly, does the New Testament justify such a procedure? Do the apostles ever reason this way?

The paper is stacked in several layers. First, I examine New Testament passages that employ Old Testament sacrificial texts in a "tropological" fashion – that is, texts that show stoicheic sacrifice fulfilled not only in Jesus' death on the cross but in the life of the New Testament church. This will lead into an examination of New Testament passages that apply Old Testament sacrificial texts and concepts specifically to Christian *worship*. Finally, I will examine texts that display something closer to the logic of the paedo-arguments, that is, texts

that appeal to Old Testament sacrificial rules and patterns to regulate or inform specific practices in Christian worship.

I. Sacrificial tropology.

Let me begin some distance from sacrifice, with a passage maps out a broader hermeneutical framework. The synoptic gospels all describe Jesus' baptism and temptation in terms of an exodus-wilderness typology,[5] but Paul recalls the exodus story to a quite different purpose. In 1 Corinthians 10, he explicitly states that the history of Israel is typological (*tupoi, tupikos*) for the Corinthian Christians (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11). He does find Christ in the story, but for Paul Jesus is not Israel but the Rock of Israel (v. 4), Yahweh Himself (Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18), the Holy Rock who flowed with water in the howling waste. This is fertile ground for a rich Christological allegory, for on Paul's reading the story of the wilderness is a Passion narrative that foreshadows Israel's rejection of her life-giving Rock, the God who gave her birth (Deuteronomy 32:15-18). Paul, however, does not pause to develop the Christological allegory but moves rapidly to an ecclesiological tropology. Israel foreshadows the Corinthian church, baptized and fed by the (rejected) Rock of Israel, but now in danger of being laid low because of her evil desires and idolatry (vv. 6-11). Israel's history serves as a cautionary tale for presumptuous Christians: Not baptism, not the Supper, not even the real presence of Christ the Rock guarantee the favor of God, for Israel had *all* those things yet fell in the wilderness.[6] Corinthian Christians who turn to idols and grumble against the Lord face the same grim future.

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[5] Virtually every commentator on the gospels recognizes this point, but one of the best expositions is Dale Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), pp. 137-172. N. T. Wright's insight into the "Israel Christology" of Paul and the gospels builds on similar exegetical observations.

[6] Richard Hays suggests that Paul bypasses Christological exegesis and makes a direct "tropological" move from Israel to the church because he sees the church as the same people as Israel, albeit in a new stage of

In other places, Paul applies this logic to sacrificial texts. Paul alludes to the Mosaic sequence from Passover to the Feast of Unleavened bread to exhort the Corinthians: "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:5b-8). Whether or not Paul uses the phrase "let us keep the feast" metaphorically or literally,[7] 1 Corinthians 5 shows us that Paul appeals to the Old Testament ceremonial and sacrificial system in support of practical moral exhortation. He applies stoicheic regulations to Christian life after the *stoicheia*.

In 1 Corinthians 5, the moral application is quite general: Leaven symbolizes the spreading influence of malice and wickedness, and Christians delivered by the blood of the last Passover Lamb must resolutely, continuously purge that leaven. 1 Corinthians 9:13-14

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history (the "ends of the ages"). The story of Israel is the story of the "fathers" of the Corinthian church, and this along with the fact that Paul says that the Corinthians "were Gentiles" shows that "Paul thinks of the Corinthian Christians as Gentiles no longer; they have been incorporated into Israel." According to Hays, "Paul's hermeneutic is not christocentric in this passage. He does not begin with the postulate that the rock is Christ and then infer a typological correspondence between Israel and the church. Rather, the Israel/church metaphor is the generative poetic insight from which the identification of the rock with Christ is an imaginative inference"(*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven: Yale, 1989], pp. 95-102). Hays's point is well taken, but in the larger context of the New Testament, Paul's argument seems to assume that the Corinthians are re-living exodus and wilderness in union with the Greater Moses who relived Israel's redemption before them. On either interpretation, though, Paul employs a narrative text of the Old Testament to draw moral conclusions about the life of the Christian church. Hays's interpretation of the passage supports the broad outline of the paedo-arguments, and I find this broad argument persuasive. But in this paper I am searching for texts that apply that logic specifically to the forms and orders of Christian worship.

[7] I believe that Paul is talking about the Lord's Supper. The word translated as "associate" (NASB) in verses 9 and 11 is συναναμίγνυσθαι [*synanamignusthai*], which, according to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, includes a notion of fellowship in a cultic meal: "In 1 C. 5:11 μηδὲ συνεσθίειν [*mede sunestheiein*, not to eat with] serves to give precision to the μὴ συναναμείγνυσθαι [*me sunanameigusthai*, not to associate with] of v. 9. Since both private and cultic table fellowship is included in intercourse as the broader term, μηδέ [*mede*] cannot be construed as the adding of something more. The translation "not even" would also be suitable only if we had here a surprisingly penetrating application even to the peripheral adiaphora of intercourse. Private table fellowship, however, could not be regarded as peripheral, let alone the Lord's Supper. As things stand, τῷ τοιούτῳ μηδὲ συνεσθίειν [*to toiouto mede sunesthiein*] is to be translated epexegetically to μὴ συναναμείγνυσθαι [*me sunanameigusthai*]: With such a one you ought not to celebrate the Lord's Supper" (volume 7, p. 855). See Exodus 5:1, 12:14; 1 Samuel 30:16; Nahum 1:15 [LXX 2:1] for uses of *heortazo* that refer to festive celebrations.

provides a more specific example example. Defending his right to make a living from his ministry in the gospel, Paul argues from the ceremonial regulations of Israel's priesthood: "Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel." Here Paul is referring to a variety of ordinances from Leviticus and Numbers, according to which the priest who performs the priestly portion of the animal offering receives perquisites, including grain, meat, and the leather skin of the bull (Leviticus 5:15-16; 6:26; 7:8; Numbers 18). Paul's use of these passages assumes an analogy between presiding at an altar and preaching the gospel, an analogy that Paul makes explicit in Romans 15:15-16. Proclamation of the gospel is sacrificial slaughter, in which Paul slays Gentiles by the living Word so that they can be translated and ascend as smoke well pleasing to God. He preaches so that the Gentiles will mingle with believing Israel as living sacrifices. Paul's application of the Mosaic rule is quite specific: As priestly preachers, Paul and other Christian ministers, like the Aaronic priests, have a right to receive a livelihood from his sacrificial service.

So much for the general hermeneutical point: Even after Jesus has liberated us from *ta stoicheia tou kosmou*, Paul applies the regulations of Levitical ceremony to the communal life of the church, in both general and specific ways.

II. Sacrificial Worship after the Stoicheia.

Does the New Testament apply Old Testament sacrificial texts to Christian worship? It does. Once again, let's begin broadly.

Ephesians 2 describes the church founded in the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile with a series of Levitically charges phrases. The church is a "holy temple" (v. 21) and a

"dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (v. 22), and also a priestly people with "access" (v. 18)[8] to God's dwelling. The Ephesians draw near because, even though they are naturally "strangers and aliens" (v. 19), they have been transformed into "saints/holy ones" (v. 19) and made members of "God's household" (*oikeioi tou theou*, v. 19). Though somewhat more ambiguous than Ephesians 2, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 also depicts the church as a temple. Paul describes himself as a Spirit-filled Bezalel busy in the work of "building" of the house of God (v. 10). If he wants his work to endure, he knows he must build on the foundation stone of Jesus and work with temple materials – gold, silver, and precious stones (vv. 11-12). Some laborers build with flammable materials that will be consumed by fire during building inspection. In *this* context, the clause "If any man destroys the temple of God" refers to false apostles and teachers engaged in deconstruction rather than construction. The "temple" is the community of believers that Paul strives to edify with his teaching and preaching.

If the church is a temple and a priesthood, we would expect its worship to be described as sacrifice, which of course it is. Though it is often assumed that Christian worship was molded by synagogue worship, the liturgical terminology of the New Testament is almost invariably drawn from the temple rather than the synagogue. We offer a *tamid* offering to God through Jesus, a continuous "sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess His name" (Hebrew 13:15). We are built into a spiritual house and a priesthood so that we can offer "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5) by proclaiming the excellencies of our God (v. 9). Of course, the New Testament often characterizes the whole Christian life as sacrifice: Not only in worship but

[8] Forms of Paul's word *prosagoge* is used for liturgical approach in the LXX at Exodus 28:1 (Aaron brought near for ordination); Leviticus 1:2 (bringing near an ascension offering); Leviticus 3:1, 7 (offering of peace offerings); Leviticus 7:16 (general term for "offering"); and Numbers 18:2 (the Levites brought near with Aaron).

every moment we offer our bodies as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). We walk in the way of love, which imitates Christ's loving sacrifice for us (Ephesians 5:2), and Paul describes his labors as a drink offering on the sacrifice that ascends from the faith of the Philippians (Philippians 2:17). In providing gifts for Paul through Epaphroditus, the Philippians have presented "an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18), and Hebrews tells us that doing good and sharing are forms of sacrifice with which God is pleased (Hebrews 13:16). To be a Christian is to be engaged in a life-wide communal liturgy.

Worship is not the only form of Christian sacrifice, but it is among the church's sacrificial activities. Jesus offers Himself as a sacrifice for sin, and in Him we offer our praises as sacrifices. The hermeneutical point is evident: The New Testament employs sacrificial texts, concepts, and terminology to Christian worship as well as to other aspects of Christian living.

III. Ceremony to Ceremony.

None of these passages contain an argument shaped like the paedo-arguments with which I began, an argument from an Old Testament ceremony that picks out a specific feature of a stoicheic ceremony and applies it to Christian liturgical or sacramental practice. None of the texts says, "Christians should worship *this* way because the Torah required Israel to worship things *that* way." Does the New Testament provide any examples of that form of argument?

Of the passages examined so far, 1 Corinthians 9 has come closest. There, Paul defends his right to receive compensation for his priestly work as an apostle by appealing to the rules governing payment of Aaronic priests. Under the Levitical system, distribution of sacrificial food was part of the sacrificial rite, not an extra-liturgical regulation. One might

press Paul's argument: Not only do ministers have a right to be paid from the sacrificial labor of preaching, but that payment should be a liturgical act, just as it was for Israel. Offering tithes is an act of worship under *ta stoicheia*, and it should be after *ta stoicheia* as well. Though not an implausible inference, that is not what Paul says.[9]

In two other New Testament passages, the reasoning comes closer to that of the paedo-arguments. First, let's return to 1 Corinthians 10. Following his typological tropology on the exodus story, Paul returns to the main theme of this section of the letter, meat sacrificed to idols. "Flee from idolatry," he begins (v. 14),[10] and then buttresses that exhortation with a piece of Eucharistic theology, which is itself supported with an argument from Torah. The highly compressed Eucharistic argument is that the blessed cup and broken bread is *koinonia* in the blood and body of Christ, a *koinonia* in the sacrifice of Jesus that is also a *koinonia* in the one body that the many become by sharing the one loaf. Paul supports the Eucharistic argument with an appeal to the practice of "Israel according to the flesh," and links the two stages of his argument by repeating the *koinon-* root: We share in the sacrifice of Jesus by eating and drinking *just as* Israel's priests became sharers (*koinonoi*) in the altar by eating sacrificial food. "Sharing in the altar" is, so far as I have found, unprecedented language in Scripture, and it is an unusual conception, albeit that Paul cites it as if it were common knowledge. It implies two things: First, that those who officiate at sacrifice eat meat from sacrificial victims, and, second, that sharing in the sacrificial meal binds the priest to Yahweh, whose altar it is. Those who eat the crumbs that fall from Yahweh's bread that is turned to smoke (presumably the priests) become table fellows with Yahweh. Paul teases out his Eucharistic theology from a principle drawn from the sacrificial

[9] This line of argument was suggested to me by my colleague Gordon Wilson.
[10] This is itself a liturgical prohibition from Torah, which Paul applies quite directly to the church. Thanks to my student Seth Toebben for pointing this out to me.

system of Israel. At least we can say this much: Post-stoicheic liturgical and sacramental *theology* is informed and shaped, fairly decisively, by stoicheic concepts and rituals.

But Paul takes a further step. He not only appeals to Torah to support Eucharistic theology but to draw a conclusion about liturgical practice. Having established that sharing in the altar binds one to the altar's god, he issues an exhortation, once again using the *koinon-* root. Priests share in the altar by eating from Yahweh's altar. Gentiles also become table fellows, but since they sacrifice to demons they become sharers in the table of demons. Paul warns, "I do not want you to become sharers (*koinonous*) in demons" (v. 20), and that leads to his climactic polarized exhortation: "You cannot partake (*metexo*) of the table of the Lord and the table of demons" (v. 21). One can see the practical force of Paul's argument if we imagine a skeptical response to Paul. An early Christian convert might reason: "Why can't I participate in sacrificial meals at the temple? I don't believe in the idols; my heart's not in it; I'm just going through the motions." Paul rules out that conclusion, and rules it out by citing a liturgical principle from the Torah. Paul's premise that meals establish bonds of partnership and communion is rooted in the sacrificial system, applied to the Christian Eucharist, and then applied, negatively, to Christian participation the sacrificial meals of paganism. Paul draws a negative conclusion about Christian liturgical *practice* from a stoicheic regulation concerning altar service.

One final passage gives additional, though more complicated and disruptive, support to the hermeneutical assumptions that I have been assessing, and also opens up a larger pattern for working through the implications of stoicheic sacrifice for Christian worship. Hebrews 13:10-13 applies details concerning the "sin offering" (or, "purification offering"; Heb. *hatta't*) to the church: "We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy

place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach." According to Leviticus, the flesh of any purification offering whose blood goes into the holy place has to be burned outside the camp (Leviticus 4:5-7, 11-12, 16-18, 20-21). The placement of the blood depends on the one making the offering: Blood of a priest's sin offering has to be placed on the golden altar of incense, as does the blood of an offering for the whole congregation of Israel (Leviticus 4:2, 13). In these cases, then, the sacrificial flesh is not eaten, but destroyed outside the sanctuary precincts.

AnyonebutPaul,[11] the author of Hebrews, sees Jesus' death as a sin offering, not generically but in specific detail. Jesus the Priest does not offer a sin offering for His own sins, since He has none (4:15; 9:7). Rather, he offers Himself to "sanctify the people" (13:12), and Torah prescribes that the blood for a *hatta't* for the whole congregation be taken into the sanctuary (Leviticus 4:13). That is just what Jesus does, ascending to the heavenly sanctuary to present His blood there. Because Jesus' blood has gone into the sanctuary (Hebrews 9:11-12), His "flesh" has to be taken outside the camp (13:11). Jesus' death outside the gates of Jerusalem, His ascension to heaven, His presentation of blood in the heavenly sanctuary – this entire sequence of events fulfills the ritual typology of the *hatta't*.

But the writer does not simply offer a Christological allegory on the *hatta't*. He also works out a liturgical tropology. The whole point of the exhortation is to speak of an "altar" from which we Christians "eat." That Hebrews is talking about an actual rather than a metaphorical meal has been questioned,[12] but several considerations indicate that it is to be

[11] I owe this quip, such as it is, to Jim Jordan.
[12] For a thoughtful but unconvincing non-sacramental interpretation, see Philip Edgecumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 574-578.

taken literally. Hebrews 13 as a whole summarizes the elements of Christian liturgy, the whole-life liturgy offered to the God who is a consuming fire. The writer refers to concrete practices – hospitality, visitation of prisoners, marital purity, submission to rulers, praise and thanksgiving, sharing goods. A metaphorical meal would be out of place in this setting. Verse 9, moreover, warns against "varied and strange teaching" that includes dietary concerns. Those obsessed with foods received no benefit from their preoccupation. Following immediately on this warning, the point of verse 10 is that Christians have their own food privileges and dietary regulations. This conforms to the logic of the entire letter: You want a priest, a sacrifice, a tabernacle – the church has all of these, better ones than the synagogue can boast. It has a better altar too, and a meal that none of the priests could eat. So, the text moves ceremony to Jesus, but then also from ceremony to ceremony – from the regulations of the Levitical offering to the Eucharistic feast.

As in 1 Corinthians 10, it is evident, at the very least, that the *theology* of the purification offering contributes to the Eucharistic *theology* of Hebrews. Though the Eucharist is a *hatta't* meal, the stoicheic restrictions of the Levitical ritual have been cancelled or transformed. Aaronic priests were excluded from this meal, but Christians eat from this altar, proving that they are priests whose access is even more intimate than that of the Aaronic priests. We could also draw out some implications for Eucharistic piety, Eucharistic discipleship: To participate in this meal is to share the reproach of Jesus, not only to receive the benefits of His death outside the gates but to commit ourselves to taking our cross and following Him there.

We could spin out the theological import of the typology at greater length, but my question is, Do the stoicheic rules that govern the purification offering regulate the liturgical form of the Eucharist? Does the writer of Hebrews use the analogy of the meal of the

purification offering and Eucharist to draw a conclusion of the "Do the Eucharist this way" type? What exactly does Hebrews 13 tell us about how we "do this" in obedience to the command of Jesus?

Essentially, it tells us who is permitted to share in this meal. In the context of Hebrews, the phrase "those who serve at the tabernacle" refers not only to the priests of ancient, Mosaic Israel, but to first-century Jews and Judaizing Christians who prefer the "tent" of Judaism to Christ. To "go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach" is to leave Judaism behind, and to follow Jesus into the unknown extramural world, dominated by a cross. Only those who make that risky move have access to the "altar" from which Christians eat. Those who fearfully cling to stoicheic ceremonies thus have no place at this altar; they cannot share the sacred food with the holy Christian priesthood. At the same time, *all* those who follow Jesus out of the gates may eat from the altar. Leaving aside the paedo-arguments, any Eucharistic practice that excludes disciples of Jesus from the "altar" violates the rules of the transformed *hatta't*, our *hatta't* after the *stoicheia*. If we think that this rule – *all* disciples of Jesus are welcome at the Eucharistic *hatta't* meal – is too obvious to make a difference in the church's liturgical practice, we need only recall the restrictions on access that arose during the Middle Ages and are still evident in some Christian communions. Hebrews 13 thus helps us see how stoicheic ceremonies regulate access to the Lord's table, but only we have duly noted that stoicheic regulations are turned inside out by the cross of Jesus.

We can get a deeper grasp of how the purification offering regulates Christian liturgical practice by looking in somewhat more depth at the purification offering. Here my comments are more speculative, and rely on the provocative and controversial recent work

of Nobuyoshi Kuichi on sin (*hata*) and the *hatta't* or purification offering.[13] Kiuchi's primary claims are a) that *hata* does not refer to evil acts but to the condition of the whole person who has violated God's commandments, b) that the verb means "to hide oneself," a hiding not of the act itself but of the person from the presence of God, and c) that the stoicheic *hatta't* offering reverses the offerer's hiding and brings him out into the open, into the presence of God.[14]

Jeremiah 3:25 illustrates the plausibility of Kiuchi's argument about the meaning of "sin" (*hata*). After scolding Israel as an unfaithful son and bride (3:19-23), Jeremiah concludes, "But the shameful thing has consumed the labor of our fathers since our youth, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. Let us lie down in our shame, and let our humiliation cover us; for we have sinned (*hata*) against Yahweh our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day. And we have not obeyed the voice of Yahweh our God" (3:24-25). The first sentence of verse 25 ("Let us") indicates that *hatta't* is the *cause* of Israel's shame and humiliation, and the final sentence of verse 25 distinguishes between not hearing (*shama*) the voice of Yahweh and *hata*. From these observations, Kiuchi concludes that *hata* refers to a continuing state, rather than a series of repeated actions. The association of *hata* with shame, humiliation, and covering is also a key theme in Kiuchi's interpretation. Israel has refused to live out her confession of the *Shema*; in this refusal, Israel has *hata*ed, and as a result she is in a state of humiliation and shame.

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[13] Kiuchi's first publication on the Purification Offering was *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature: Its Meaning and Function* (JSOT Supplement #56; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987). His more recent work is *A Study of Hata and Hatta't in Leviticus 4-5* (Tubingen: Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 2003). Kiuchi has recently published a full commentary on Leviticus that builds on his work on *hata* and *hatta't*.: *Leviticus* (Apollos Old Testament Commentary; David Baker and Gordon J. Wenham, editors; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007). These last two sources are the most relevant here, and they will be cited parenthetically in the text of this article as *Hata* and *Leviticus* , respectively.

[14] One of the terminological complexities is that *hatta't* is translated as both "purification offering" and "sin." In the remainder of this essay, *hatta't* by itself will refer to "sin," but when I wish to refer to the purification offering I will use the phrase "*hatta't* offering." Despite the awkwardness involved, I also will use *hata* as if it were an English verb, since translating it as "sin" would make Kiuchi's arguments impossible to follow.

Further light can be shed on Jeremiah 3 when we recognize the multiple verbal and conceptual links with Genesis 3. In both Genesis 3 and Jeremiah 3, those who violate God's commands suffer "shame" (Genesis 3:7 with 2:25). In both situations, the wrong is described as not hearing Yahweh's voice (Genesis 3:17), and in both situations, human beings respond wrongly to the voice of Yahweh (Genesis 3:8, 10). Both texts refer to "covering" (Genesis 3:7). Wrong-doing leads to estrangement from God in both, and in Genesis 3 this estrangement from Adam's side is described as "hiding from the face of God" (Genesis 3:8, 10; cf. *Hata*, pp. 67-68). In Genesis 3, Adam "hides" from God immediately after violating God's commandments, and insofar as refusing to listen to Yahweh involves "hiding" from his Word or hiding his word from one's consciousness, hiding is of the essence of Adam's original sin. Though neither *hata* nor *hatta't* is used in Genesis 3, yet when we put Genesis and Jeremiah 3 side by side, we find that what Jeremiah labels *hata* and *hatta't*, Genesis labels "hiding."

On strictly linguistic grounds, Kiuchi's proposal is not altogether convincing.[15] Yet, as a theological (or psycho-theological) perspective on the nature of sin, Kiuchi's work is profound. On Kiuchi's proposal, sin is not on the surface of human life but at its depth. As Kiuchi points out, it is the person (*nephesh*) that *hata*s, and many texts locate the source of *hata* in the heart. One can violate a commandment of God and yet be unaware of the fact because "the person asserts his own will by justifying himself somehow."[16] In short, *hata* describes a person whose "whole existence" is "hypocrisy . . . A person who *hata* could be termed an unconscious hypocrite" (*Hata*, p. 29). There is, further, a deep *self*-alienation

[15] In some passages, it is not clear that his definition of *hata* gains anything over traditional translations of the term, and Kiuchi's proposal also makes for very awkward phrasing in some passages (e.g., Kiuchi translates Leviticus 5:15 as "he hides himself inadvertently from the Lord's holy things," *Hata*, p. 26). For further detailed criticisms, see the review by Reinhard Achenbach in *Review of Biblical Literature*, January 2006, available online at www.bookreviews.org.

[16] This self-justification may, of course, take the Satanic form of accusation of others. Insert everything ever written by Rene Girard here, and stir vigorously.

involved in our sinful turning from God, a self-alienation that Kiuchi finds in passages that speak of "*hata* against one's own *nephesh*" (Proverbs 8:36; 20:2).

Most importantly, Kiuchi insists the essence of sin is not acts of wrongdoing, but in our hostile, distrusting withdrawal from God's presence. We all recognize estrangement from God is the *result* of sin, but Kiuchi shows that deliberate, willful estrangement – hiding oneself from God, hiding from His Word and its application to us, withdrawal from God's presence – is already happening *with and in* every act of disobedience. Leaving the presence of God is not only a punishment for doing wrong; it is the depth-dimension of wrongdoing. That is why Yahweh's characteristic response to sin is to hide Himself from them (*Hata*, p. 58; cf. Deuteronomy 31:17-20; Psalm 13:1; 27:9; Isaiah 64:7; Micah 3:4). When Yahweh excludes Adam and Eve from Eden, he is in one sense turning them over to their own *hatta't*, their own withdrawal from Him. They hid from Him, so He goes into hiding and casts them into hiddenness. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, withdrawal for withdrawal.

Kiuchi's understanding of sin does much to explain the form of stoicheic religion. After Adam, humanity was an outcast from Yahweh's glorious presence, excluded from His house. Even Israel knew Yahweh only from a distance. Israel heard His voice, but saw no form on the mountain. Yahweh commanded Israel to build His tent in the midst of the camp and a house in the midst of the land, but only a few were invited in. From Eden to the incarnation, God hid from those who hid from Him, hid Himself behind veils and coverings and in a thick cloud. The entire Old Covenant was a covenant of exclusion, and stoicheic ordinances of holiness, purity, and sacrifice were designed as much to maintain distance between the thrice holy God and His unclean people as to bring them close.

Under *ta stoicheia*, *hatta't* offerings brought human beings out of hiding and reconciled the hidden God with the hiding sinner, but these mutual revelations and reunions were

partial and temporary. Given to a people already estranged from God, the Torah did not and could not bring them back into His presence. Instead, as Paul says, the law increased "sin," exacerbated the self-hiding and estrangement from God that is the root, accompaniment, and result of breaking God's commandments. Torah was good; but it could not finally deliver from *hatta't*, with human self-hiding.[17]

Regulations about food and feasting illustrate the dynamics of stoicheic religion. Sharing a sacrificial meat is, Paul says, *koinonia* in the altar and with Yahweh. Under the Levitical system, the common Israelite's table fellowship with Yahweh was real but very limited. They ate portions of the peace offerings, but no more. Priests ate the flesh of some *hatta't* offerings, but even they were kept at arm's length, excluded from the flesh of *hatta't* offerings whose blood was taken into the sanctuary. The altar from which even the priests could not eat was a standing sign of the covenant of exclusion, a stoicheic symbol of the fact that *hatta't* cannot be overcome with the *hatta't* of a bull or a goat.

What Torah could not do, God did. In Christ, in the fullness of time, God showed Himself. He came out of hiding to be heard, seen, touched, handled (1 John 1:1-4). In Jesus, the indwelling Father has made Himself visible, so that those who see Jesus see the Father (John 14:9; cf. John 6:46). We all see Jesus through the Spirit, and the Father in His face (2 Corinthians 3:12-18; 4:3-6). The veil is torn, and we all with unveiled face can enter into the house, gaze at the glory, and be transformed into its image. Jesus is God's self-unveiling, and besides, He gives Himself as the final, and fully adequate *hatta't* offering, which brings us out of hiding into the light of God's presence. Jesus comes in the "likeness

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[17] At a basic level, moreover, Israel turned Torah into its opposite. Israel worshiped idols, the idols serving as a screen between Israel and Yahweh: How much easier, after all, to stand in the presence of a lifeless statue than to come out from the trees to stand before the Spirit of Yahweh? Israel even turned Torah to idolatrous uses. Pharisaic hypocrisy was nothing more than a sophisticated, pious form of *hatta't* – self-hiding. Pharisees hoped to protect themselves by weaving Torah into fig leaves (Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, p. 108).

of sinful flesh and as a sin-offering" to condemn sin and by this makes it possible for the requirements of the law to be fulfilled in those who walk by the Spirit (Romans 8:3-4).[18] As a purification offering, the cross reverses both human *hatta't* and God's punitive withdrawal. Jesus on the cross is Adam come out of hiding, and God showing His face. In Jesus, God and man come face to face.[19]

Since the estrangement between God and man has been healed in Christ, the exclusions of the stoicheic system are now removed, burst open into rules of access. With Kiuchi's paradigm of the *hatta't* in mind, we can see that the writer to Hebrews appeals to the ceremonial regulations of Leviticus 4, transformed by their fulfillment in Jesus, to determine who is permitted to "eat" from the altar. Now that the final purification offering has been offered and blood sprinkled in the heavenly sanctuary, we are finally brought out of hiding and given food that was denied even to the priests. The writer of Hebrews moves tropologically from Israel's ceremony to the church's ceremony: Stoicheic exclusions yield to post-stoicheic access. The offering that once was a sign of estrangement has become an invitation to a sacrificial feast.

Again, if we think this an innocuous conclusion, we should think again. Throughout the centuries and in many branches of the church, Christians have kept their distance from God, purportedly out of a healthy fear of His wrath against sin. Medieval Catholics were terrified to receive the host, lest a crumb drop down for a mouse to eat, and they were kept

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[18] The phrase *peri hamartias* in Romans 8:3 should be taken as a reference to the *hatta't* offering. See N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), pp. 220-225.

[19] This is true partly because in the cross God has shown His heart to the world. He has displayed the glory of His humility, and has come out of hiding to display Himself for all to see. It is also true because in the cross Jesus, who knew no sin, became *hatta't*/*hamartia* for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). On the cross, the Father hid His face as Jesus suffered all the alienation of His people. Yet also on the cross the self-estrangement of man from God was exposed and transformed into its opposite. *Hatta't* was displayed, and borne away. The cross lifts Jesus up to connect heaven and earth, and the blood of the cross runs down from heaven to earth, forming a pathway along which God and man may meet face-to-face.

from the cup because the wine-blood of Jesus might sacrilegiously dribble down their chin. In some Protestant churches, earnest Christians refrain from the Lord's table, sometimes for long periods of their lives, considering themselves unworthy to approach His altar. If Kiuchi is correct, sin involves hiding, and this form of self-hiding is the very essence of our fallen condition. When we turn away from *koinonia* of the new altar, the *open* altar, we are like Adam hiding in the trees, hiding in the shadowy world of *ta stoicheia tou kosmou*. And so, in the name of extreme piety, many Christians have fallen into extreme sin – and their pastors, who train the sheep to hide among the trees, even more so. In the name of pious fear, many have reverted to stoicheic self-exclusion rather than accepting the invitation of Hebrews, who appeals to stoicheic restrictions to reinforce the grace of table fellowship offered at the altar after the *stoicheia*.

IV. Conclusion.

Two rapid conclusions. First, Hebrews 13 demonstrates that stoicheic regulations do not simply transfer to Christian worship after the *stoicheia*, but that passage also clarifies the character of the discontinuity. The Christian altar is not *absolutely* open. Those who refuse to leave the gates of the city have no share in the feast. But the difference between stoicheic and post-stoicheic religion is essentially a difference between exclusion and an inclusion, between a closed and an open gate, between a partial fast and a feast, between a divine No (with echoes of Yes) and an undiluted divine Yes.

Second, for heuristic purposes, I have focused on texts that explicitly appeal to sacrificial texts, but a great deal of New Testament liturgical theology is *implicitly* dependent on stoicheic regulations and patterns. At the Last Supper, for instance, Jesus separates the bread/body from the wine/blood, just as all the Levitical sacrifices required, and Jesus calls

the meal His "memorial," alluding to the memorial portions of the tribute offering that were turned to smoke on the altar (Leviticus 2). Revelation describes a heavenly liturgy, and is stuffed with stoicheic liturgical equipment and actions – trumpets and libation bowls, prostrations and responsive hymns, incense and altars, smoke and fire and poured blood. Unraveling the theology of worship embedded in Revelation is a large task in itself, and explaining how it all informs the order and practices of our worship is at least equal in size. Getting in step with the New Testament's transpositions of stoicheic melodies is only the beginning of our labors.