

# **Law and Covenants in Hebrews**

An analysis

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# Abstract

Jeremiah's prophecy about a new covenant (Jer 31:31–34) has receive undeservedly little attention throughout history. This was the case in the Second Temple period when the Qumran sect gave it focus along with selected NT writers. Hebrews quotes Jer 31:31–34 in its entirety and it is the longest OT quotation in the whole NT. Still, almost no research had been made on the new covenant in Hebrews until thirty years ago.

In this thesis, I shall examine of the use of Jer 31:31–34 in Hebrews with regard to the argument about the law and covenants together with a similar text from Ps 40:6–8. I shall also relate Hebrews' view of the law as God's will to that of Paul in Romans. Not only has it been argued that there is no such thing as law in the new covenant, but also that it is essentially one and the same as the old covenant law. In my understanding, there is both continuity and discontinuity concerning the Sinai law in Hebrews. In the new covenant law, there is a place for commandments, but also a need for more dynamic instructions.

Keywords: *Old Covenant, New Covenant, Torah, Law, God's Will, Hebrews*

## Abbreviations

BDB	The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon
<i>CBC</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
<i>NA28</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> (28:th ed.)
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Although Hebrews contains the longest OT quotation in the whole NT – Jeremiah’s prophecy about a new covenant (Jer 31:31–34) – the notion of a new covenant in Hebrews had largely escaped scholarly attention until thirty years ago when Susanne Lehne devoted a monograph to the topic, *New Covenant in Hebrews*.<sup>1</sup> In her view the author of Hebrews proposes an authentic application of the New Covenant (hereafter abbreviated NC) in great detail, but fails largely to present the role and content of the law in the NC. Having correctly observed that most of the author’s references to the law are made in relation to the Levitical priesthood, Lehne concludes:

Thus the role of the Law in Heb. is a subtle one... By furnishing the (cultic) rubrics for the new covenant, the Law points the way to something better: “a better hope” (7.19), “a better covenant” (7.22), based on “better promises” (8.6); there is a heavenly Tent, which is purified with “better sacrifices” (9.23) and has been made accessible to all believers by “better blood” (speaking more graciously than that of Abel 12.24; see 11.4 and also 9.12–14). But nowhere do we hear of a “new” or “better” Law.<sup>2</sup>

Lehne later takes this argument to extremes when she states: “the NC is *not* perceived as a new Law and *nomos* ultimately belongs to the old order.”<sup>3</sup> This surprising conclusion that the law is absent from the NC overlooks what I take as a promise of an internalised law: “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts” (Jer 31:33), a promise which the author emphatically refers to twice in his letter (Heb 8:10; 10:16). As I shall argue, another citation of Ps 40:6–8 in Heb 10:5–7 also relates to the notion of an internalised law.

## 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of the law in the NC according to Hebrews by looking at the supposedly more positive aspects of the internalised law. I shall analyse the relevant passages in Hebrews in order to answer four questions: (1) How is Jer 31:33 and Ps 40:6–8 interpreted in Hebrews in regard to the internalised law?; (2) Why are there only two promises quoted in 10:16–17 out of the four in the longer citation in 8:8–12?; (3) Are there any correlations between the Old Covenant (hereafter abbreviated OC) law and the NC law in Hebrews?; (4) Is it possible to make any definition of the NC law in Hebrews?

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<sup>1</sup> Lehne 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Lehne 1990, 27.

<sup>3</sup> Lehne 1990, 99.

### 1.3 Material and Delimitation

My primary source is the book of Hebrews, with focus on the passages 8:8–12, 10:5–7, and 10:16–17. I shall explore how the author perceives the role of the law in the NC. I shall also pay attention to the largely negative aspects of the law in relation to the Levitical priesthood and the ceremonial law reflected in Heb 7 and 9. Three monographs, namely Susanne Lehne's *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, Barry C. Joslin's *Hebrews, Christ, and the Law: The Theology of the Mosaic Law in Hebrews 7:1–10:18*, and Georg A. Walser's *Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews: Studies in their Textual and Contextual Background* will represent my most important dialogue partners, but I shall also use other relevant sources including commentaries, monographs, articles, and dictionaries. Biblical citations in English are taken from the NIV unless otherwise is noted and biblical citations in Greek are taken from the NA28.

### 1.4 Method and Disposition

The method that I shall employ in this thesis is primarily a historical-critical method. After a brief overview of research below, I shall analyse how the sources in Jeremiah and the Psalms are applied in Hebrews. I shall start by analysing the source texts: Ps 40:6–8; Jer 31:31–34 (chapter 2). I shall then explore how these source texts suit the argumentation around law and covenants in Hebrews (chapter 3). In Romans, Paul also elaborates on the law and God's will and I shall compare his view with that found in Hebrews (chapter 4). Finally, I shall discuss my findings and answer the four questions that I raised earlier (chapter 5).

### 1.5 Research Overview

The place of the law in the NT context has been an issue of great debate ever since the time of the early Church.<sup>4</sup> In the Early Greek Church, Justin Martyr elaborated on the meaning of Jer 31:33. In his view, the law is not the Torah, but Christ. This was also the predominant interpretation of the Early Church.<sup>5</sup> Justin Martyr expresses that “that this is the new law (that is, the Christ), the New Covenant”<sup>6</sup> and therefore, it is possible for Gentiles to live a life according to God's will without observing the law.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> There are numerous examples where the most ardent Judaizers wanted to circumcise Gentiles in the first Church. For example, Rom 2:25 ff, Gal 5:1 ff and Phil 3:3–4.

<sup>5</sup> Walser 2013, 56–57.

<sup>6</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dial.* Chapter 6 in Brown, 1847, 42.

<sup>7</sup> Adeyemi 2006, 21–23.

For Augustine, the Torah remains the same in the OC and in the NC. The difference in the NC is that the Spirit enables the law to become internalised.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, for Augustine, the law in the NC is essentially synonymous with the Holy Spirit.<sup>9</sup> Augustine concludes: “What then is God’s law written by God Himself in the hearts of men, but the very presence of the Holy Spirit, who is ‘the finger of God’ and by whose presence is shed abroad in our hearts the love which is the fulfilling of the law, and the end of the commandment?”<sup>10</sup>

During the Reformation, Martin Luther taught that since there is a NC there will also be a new law. For Luther, Christ is the new prophet and teacher in the NC whose role corresponds to that of Moses in the OC.<sup>11</sup> Through the ministry of the word and the Spirit, the believers receive the new law into their heart which is: “the law of Christ, the law of the Spirit, the law of grace.”<sup>12</sup>

Contrary to Luther, John Calvin taught that the OC and NC are essentially one and the same covenant, but through Christ’s blood the NC has been sanctified and realised. With regard to the law, he continues:

By these words [I will put my Law in their inward parts] he confirms what we have said, that ... God does not say here, “I will give you another Law,” but *I will write my Law*, that is, the same Law, which had formally been delivered to the Fathers. He then does not promise anything different as to the essence of the doctrine, but he makes the difference to be in the form only.<sup>13</sup>

Calvin separated the ceremonial laws from the Torah so that essentially the Moral law becomes the new law in the NC.<sup>14</sup>

After this summary on how the law in the NC has been viewed by a few influential church fathers and theologians, I shall now continue with contemporary research. William L. Lane states that the Torah is still valid in the NC since “[t]he quality of newness intrinsic to the new covenant consists in the manner of presenting Torah, not in newness of content.”<sup>15</sup> F. F. Bruce takes a similar standpoint and concludes: “What was needed was a new nature, a heart liberated from its bondage to sin, a heart which not only spontaneously knew and loved the will of God but had the power to do it.”<sup>16</sup> In the same spirit, Philip E. Hughes clarifies that “it is the same law that is associated with both old and new covenants.”<sup>17</sup>

Many today would consider Susanne Lehne’s monograph *New Covenant in Hebrews*, published in 1990, a milestone in the discussion of the NC in Hebrews. With regard to the law in He-

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<sup>8</sup> Walser 2013, 82.

<sup>9</sup> Adeyemi 2006, 28–29.

<sup>10</sup> “On the Spirit and the Letter,” 43.

<sup>11</sup> Adeyemi 2006, 32–33.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*. Chapter 5–6 in Pelican, 1964, 234.

<sup>13</sup> John Calvin. *Comment*. Chapter 31 in Owen, 1850, 131–132.

<sup>14</sup> Adeyemi 2006, 33–35.

<sup>15</sup> Lane 1991, cxxxii.

<sup>16</sup> Bruce 1990, 190.

<sup>17</sup> Hughes 1977, 301.

brews, Lehne concludes that “the ultimate impression one gets after examining the various (and perhaps not altogether consistent) statements about the Law in Heb. is a negative one... [and] it has no place in the new covenantal order.”<sup>18</sup> She observes that the author of Hebrews mainly refers to the Levitical priestly order in chapter 7–10 and the ceremonial law when dealing with the law.<sup>19</sup>

She does not deal much with the nature of the law as reflected in Heb 8:10b, and 10:16b and does not develop this concept further, leaving it with: “the NC is *not* perceived as a new Law and *nomos* ultimately belongs to the old order. When the author means Torah in the inclusive sense, he speaks of the ‘Word’ that endures as Scripture and reached its pinnacle in the Son.”<sup>20</sup>

Barry C. Joslin observes that the law in Hebrews has hardly received any attention at all. He rectifies this silence in his monograph *Hebrews, Christ, and the Law: The Theology of the Mosaic Law in Hebrews 7:1–10:18* (2008) where he argues “that the epistle to the Hebrews has a voice on the important issue of the law.”<sup>21</sup> He challenges Lehne’s negative approach on the law in Hebrews and her view on its inconsistency.<sup>22</sup>

Joslin includes a useful survey of how a number of modern authors treat the Torah in Hebrews. He divides them into four categories: the non-view, the no-correspondence view, the direct-correspondence view, and the transformed view. As the label implies, authors in the first category have no outspoken view of the matter. The second category thinks the Torah belongs exclusively to the Hebrew Bible and has no part in the NT. The third views the Torah referred to as identical in both covenants. Finally, the fourth category implies that the Torah has undergone a transformation in Christ due to his teaching and achievements. Paul Ellingworth falls into the first category and Lehne into the second, whereas William L. Lane, Philip E. Hughes, and F. F. Bruce fall into the third. Joslin himself represents the fourth category.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, Joslin interprets the use of νόμος in the plural form in the LXX, as cited in Heb 8:10; 10:16, a detail which so far has received little or no attention. He concludes that this plural term simply refers to “[t]he many specific laws that had been broken by the people for generations [and which] would one day be kept due to their being inscribed on the hearts and minds of the people.”<sup>24</sup>

In his monograph *Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews: Studies in their Textual and Contextual Background*, published in 2013, Georg A. Walser analyses three crucial OT texts – Jer 31:33,

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<sup>18</sup> Lehne 1990, 26.

<sup>19</sup> Lehne 1990, 26.

<sup>20</sup> Lehne 1990, 99–100.

<sup>21</sup> Joslin 2006, 6.

<sup>22</sup> Joslin 2006, 12–13.

<sup>23</sup> Joslin 2008, 209–222.

<sup>24</sup> Joslin 2008, 200.



Psalms 40:7b, and Genesis 47:31b – cited in this order by the author of Hebrews. In his comparative study of these texts in the MT and the LXX, Walser analyses the traditional Jewish and Christian interpretations. Concerning Jeremiah 31:33, cited in Hebrews 8:10 and 10:16, Walser criticises Joslin’s transformed view, which is based on the phrase νόμου μετάθεσις (Hebrews 7:12). In this connection, he questions Joslin’s interpretations of the expression as a “transformation of the law,” which would be a rare usage, and argues for the more common translation “transposition of the law” which fits the context better.<sup>25</sup> It is “no discussion of a change in priesthood, but of a new priest, which is not a ‘transformation’ but ‘transposition’ of the priesthood from the Levites to Jesus.”<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, based on his thorough investigation, Walser draws a different conclusion than Joslin – regarding the plural form of the Torah in Jeremiah 31:33 (νόμους in the LXX) – arguing that the common interpretation of the expression in the earliest Church as well as in Hebrews is that it refers to both the Torah (written and oral) and the teachings of Jesus.<sup>27</sup> Concerning Psalms 40:7b, cited in Hebrews 10:5, there is a major difference between the MT and the LXX. Whereas the MT reads, “but you have dug ears for me,” the LXX has, “but a body you have prepared for me.” Walser argues that the author of Hebrews draws on earlier interpretations of the Greek text and that it is not very likely that this was an invention of the author himself even though it serves his purposes perfectly to provide proof from the Hebrew Bible regarding Christ as the ultimate sacrifice.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Walser 2013, 39–43.

<sup>26</sup> Walser 2013, 42.

<sup>27</sup> Walser 2013, 88–89.

<sup>28</sup> Walser 2013, 91, 139–140.

## Chapter 2: Analysis of the Source Texts: Ps 40:6–8; Jer 31:31–34

In this chapter, I shall analyse the source texts of the relevant citations in Hebrews that concerns the internalised law and the NC: Ps 40:6–8 and Jer 31:31–34.

### 2.1 The Context of Ps 40:6–8[LXX 39:7–9]

Psalm 40 falls into three sections: a) The Waiting (40:1–3), one pericope; b) The New Song (40:4–11), three pericopes (40:4–5, 6–8, 9–11); c) The Renewed Prayer (40:12–17), three pericopes (40:12–13, 14–16, 17). In the first half of the Book of Psalms, most of the psalms are prayers for help, whereas in the second half, they mainly contain a thanksgiving theme. This psalm is unusual since it starts with thanksgiving and ends with a prayer for help.

In the first pericope (40:1–3), a testimony is given in the first person on how God has saved the psalmist from “the slimy pit” and instead provided him “a firm place to stand.” This has not occurred over a night but has involved a time of suffering where he has “waited patiently for the LORD” and finally, the answer to his prayer and “cry” comes. This, in due turn, gives rise to “a new song” which does not just imply that the arrangement of words is new, but that God “has filled him with a spirit of joy that overflows in a thankful *song of praise*.”<sup>29</sup> This song is expressed in 40:4–11. The last part of verse 3 points out that the psalmist’s testimony and song will cause “many” to believe and trust in the Lord.

In the second pericope (40:4–5), the song develops the theme of trusting in God in verse 3b. The two verses emphasise personal faith and trust in the God who is true and faithful in contrast to the “false gods,” who are “false” since they are liars. Having testified about God, the psalmist, in verse 6, turns directly to God in praise for the first time in the psalm. Here, he is not only speaking for himself, but through adding “us” includes his listeners. The psalmist praises God for the numerous wonders he has done for his people in the past, expresses trust in the Lord, and praises him for what he will do for them in the future.<sup>30</sup> Peter Craigie notes that the “wonders” recall the song of thanksgiving in Exod 15:14.<sup>31</sup> The next pericope is the one that is cited in Heb 10:5–7 and that is my main focus. Before I turn to this text, I shall first pay attention to the subsequent pericope that concludes the thanksgiving part of the psalm.

In pericope five (9–11), the psalmist announces publicly to “the great assembly” what the Lord has done for him and states once again that God is trustworthy by referring to some of his

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<sup>29</sup> Rogerson and McKay 1977, 192.

<sup>30</sup> Jacobson 2014, Psalms 40:4–5.

<sup>31</sup> Craigie 1983, 315.

character traits as well as using covenantal terms, such as, צדק, “righteousness”; אמת, “faithfulness”; חסד, “love”; and רחמים, “mercy.” As the psalm in verse 11 changes from being an act of thanksgiving to becoming an act of prayer for help, the psalmist reuses several of these traits and thus, holds on to the covenant with God, this time as a prayer for the future: “Do not withhold your mercy from me, LORD; may your love and faithfulness always protect me.”<sup>32</sup>

## 2.2 Ps 40:6[LXX 39:7]

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire — but my ears you have opened — burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.

As a thankful response to God’s earlier intervention in 40:1–3, the psalmist seems to have offered a number of various sacrifices; firstly, זבח, a communal meal; secondly, מנחה, a loyalty offering; thirdly, עולה, the whole burnt offering, which is the most prominent sacrifice; fourthly, חטא, a sin offering.<sup>33</sup> Even though it is spelled out that God does not desire “Sacrifice and offering,” this should rather be understood in terms that God is not so interested in the cult itself compared to obedience. The passage in 1 Sam 15:22–23, which the psalmist might have had in mind, provides a good example of this as Samuel confronts Saul with his disobedience and Saul tries to justify his actions by pointing to the fact that he has offered sacrifices.<sup>34</sup>

It is difficult to make any sense of a literal interpretation of the clause, אַזְנִים כָּרִית לִי, “but you have dug ears for me.”<sup>35</sup> Goldingay suggests that the expression might imply that God the Creator “has made the hole in the supplicant’s head where ears could be placed.”<sup>36</sup> Traditionally, the passage has been interpreted as if God is opening up the psalmist’s ears so that he can hear and obey what the Lord truly desires, which goes in line with NIV’s translation: “my ears you have opened.”<sup>37</sup> We will have reason to discuss this subject later when the author of Hebrews quotes the text in Heb 10:5–7. Noteworthy is also the different Greek rendering of the Hebrew word כָּרִית, meaning “dig,” to κατηρτίσω, meaning “prepare” which may indicate a different *Vorlage*.<sup>38</sup>

## 2.3 Ps 40:7[LXX 39:8]

Then I said, “Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll.

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<sup>32</sup> Jacobson 2014, Psalms 40:9–11.

<sup>33</sup> Jacobson 2014, Psalms 40:6–8. See also Lev 1–4.

<sup>34</sup> Goldingay 2006, 573.

<sup>35</sup> Walser 2013, 91.

<sup>36</sup> Goldingay 2006, 573.

<sup>37</sup> Goldingay 2006, 573.

<sup>38</sup> Walser 2013, 92.

Traditionally, the scroll refers to a passage from Deut 17:14–20 that deals with the king and the law: “When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests” (17:18). The terms scroll and law in Deut 17:18 would fit the context in Ps 40:6–8 and serve as a background for scroll (40:7) and law (40:8).<sup>39</sup> What makes this link less likely is that the psalmist is most probably not a king. Rolf A. Jacobson suggest that the “scroll” refers to the Psalm itself which is the interpretation that also appeals to me.<sup>40</sup>

## 2.4 Ps 40:8[LXX Ps 39:9]

I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.”

In a smooth fashion, the psalmist contrasts what God does not want in 40:6 with what he really wants in 40:8 by reusing the Hebrew word **נָפַח**, which in could be translated “to delight in.”<sup>41</sup> In 40:8, the object “to delight in” is God’s will. The word “will” in Hebrew is **רָצוֹן**, which also could mean “what is acceptable” and is commonly used in relation to different sacrifices in the Hebrew Bible. However, here the underlying idea is that the sacrifices in 40:6 are less acceptable in God’s eyes compared to what his acceptable will is in 40:8.<sup>42</sup>

Charles Briggs relates “the scroll” (40:7), “your will” and “your law” to one another: “The will of Yahweh is expressed in the *Law*, which is, as the previous context indicates, recorded in the book roll.”<sup>43</sup> If the scroll or “book roll” refers to the psalm as such, then the תורה is likely to be understood as “instruction” on a more personal level rather than a written and more general law.<sup>44</sup>

## 2.5 Conclusion

In my understanding, Ps 40 provides an example of a man living in obedience to God’s will and follows his instruction. The fact that God rescues him in 40:1–3 seems to be a direct outcome of this covenant relationship. Then follows a discussion of the true God in contrast to false gods and the benefit of trusting and serving the only true God. Furthermore, the psalmist offers the sacrifices prescribed by the law even though God asks him to submit to God’s will, which is the essence of the law.

## 2.6 The Context of Jer 31[LXX 38]:31–34

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<sup>39</sup> Craigie 1983, 315.

<sup>40</sup> Jacobson, Psalms 40:6–8.

<sup>41</sup> BDB s.v. **נָפַח**.

<sup>42</sup> Jacobson, Psalms 40:6–8.

<sup>43</sup> Briggs 1969, 355.

<sup>44</sup> Jacobson, Psalms 40:6–8; 1:2.

The following quotation from Brown's commentary on Jer 31:33 will smoothly bridge the gap between the previous section on Ps 40 and this:

On a practical level, this means that what the psalmist experienced on a temporary and individual level in Psalm 40 – delighting in God's will and having the Torah in his heart before being overwhelmed by the consciousness of his still-present sins – will become Israel's experience on a corporate and permanent level.<sup>45</sup>

Jeremiah was called to be “a prophet to the nations” (1:5) and to bring forth the word of God, primarily to Judah and Israel. He was “...to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant” (1:10). The first destructive part was to be the main theme throughout the whole Book of Jeremiah, but the so called “The Book of Consolation” (30:1–33:26), to which 31:31–34 belongs, is a main exception and displays the second constructive part.<sup>46</sup> Most commentators agree on the title and the grouping of the chapters.<sup>47</sup>

Before I start my analysis verse by verse, I shall first take a brief look at the preceding pericope (31:27–30) as well as two that follow (31:35–37 and 31:38–40). In verse 28b, there is a reference to verse 1:10: “‘Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down, and to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant,’ declares the Lord.” The first part is written in past tense whereas the last part in future. This underscores that the Book of Consolation is about construction and concerns the future. The theme of restoration from 1:10 will once more be pointed out in verse 40b: “The city will never again be uprooted or demolished.” Walter Brueggemann comments: “The long history of destructiveness evoked by Israel's disobedience has ended (cf. 31:27–28); now the counter-verbs from 1:10, ‘plant and build,’ can have full sway. It takes no great imagination ... to see a new future for Israel ...”<sup>48</sup> Then verses 35–37, by painting two impossible scenarios from nature, establish that God will by no means ever reject Israel.<sup>49</sup> This is further emphasised in verses 38–40 that describe the physical rebuilding of Jerusalem.<sup>50</sup>

## 2.7 Jer 31[LXX 38]:31

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord,  
“when I will make a new covenant  
with the people of Israel  
and with the people of Judah.

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<sup>45</sup> Brown 2010, 397.

<sup>46</sup> Brueggemann 1998, 265. Even though some commentators use a similar title namely “The Book of Comfort,” it contains essentially one and the same meaning.

<sup>47</sup> Brown 2010, 194.

<sup>48</sup> Brueggemann 1998, 299.

<sup>49</sup> Brown 2010, 404–405. See also Brueggemann 1998, 291–292.

<sup>50</sup> Brown 2010, 407.

The verse begins with an indication of time, namely “The days are coming”<sup>51</sup> (הנה ימים באים). There are two other commonly used time expressions in The Book of Consolation, namely “In those days”<sup>52</sup> (בימים ההם), used in the preceding verse 31:27 and “At that time”<sup>53</sup> (העת ההיא), used in the preceding verse 31:29.<sup>54</sup> According to Brown, all these three indications of time concern the future and, in most cases, “refers to a time of glorious restoration of messianic proportions, with Israel and Judah united together in the service of the Lord.”<sup>55</sup> This is certainly also the case with Jer 31:31–34 and it is indicated at the beginning of the pericope. At this stage, it is also pointed out that the recipients of the NC, which God will initiate in the messianic time, are “the house of Israel” and “the house of Judah.”

## 2.8 Jer 31[LXX 38]:32

It will not be like the covenant  
I made with their ancestors  
when I took them by the hand  
to lead them out of Egypt,  
because they broke my covenant,  
though I was a husband to them,”  
declares the Lord.

In Jeremiah’s prophecy, the NC will be a different covenant compared to the OC and the prophet goes on to explain why; the OC was inaugurated by God with Moses and Israel at Mount Sinai (Exod 19–24) and made in relation to the Exodus. From that time onwards, the Sinai covenant had been broken repeatedly. In Jeremiah’s time, Judah had already been warned about the consequences and the curses involved in breaking God’s covenant at Mount Sinai (Jer 11:1–8). Since they refused to listen, God can only announce a coming judgement in Jer 11:10–11 due to their godforsakenness: “They have returned to the sins of their ancestors, who refused to listen to my words. They have followed other gods to serve them. Both Israel and Judah have broken the covenant I made with their ancestors. Therefore this is what the Lord says: ‘I will bring on them a disaster they cannot escape...’” Brown observes that the theme of the covenant is introduced here for the first time, that the language resembles that of Jer 31:31–34 and serves as a contrast to and a background for the NC.<sup>56</sup>

Holladay presents the theory that Jer 31:31–34 initially was read out aloud at the Feast of Tabernacles in September/October of 587 BC, which is approximately two months after the de-

<sup>51</sup> “The days are coming” is also used in 31:38, 30:3, and 33:14.

<sup>52</sup> “In those days” is also used in 33:15 and 33:16.

<sup>53</sup> “At that time” is also used in 31:1, 33:15, and 33:16.

<sup>54</sup> In 33:14–16, the three expressions are used in one and the same pericope.

<sup>55</sup> Brown 2010, 112. See also Brown 2010, 310, and McKane 1996, 817–818.

<sup>56</sup> Brown 2010, 203.

struction of Jerusalem.<sup>57</sup> By then, the temple had been raised to the ground and people deported. In this miserable situation, the seed is sown for a new Exodus and a new covenant. Everything will be done in due cause, however, as described by Keown, Scalise and Smothers: “The new covenant will be cut with a later generation who will have undergone spiritual return and geographical removal from a different place of captivity (31:15–22; 50:4–5).”<sup>58</sup>

How does God respond to Israel’s breaking of the covenant? If we are to read verse 32b from NIV, which is based on the MT, then it is spelled out more passively: **בם בעלת ואנכי**, “though I was a husband to them.” However, if we are to read the same clause from LXX, then it is spelled out more actively: **καὶ ἐγὼ ἠμέλησα αὐτῶν**, “and I turned away from them.” Jesper Svartvik suggests that the LXX translator either misread or misheard the Hebrew term **בעל** “husband” for **געל**,<sup>59</sup> which means “abhor, loathe.”<sup>60</sup>

The MT is more consistent in describing the covenant relationship in marital terms where God is understood to be the husband and Israel implicitly to be the wife, so I agree with Keown, Scalise and Smothers that the MT is preferable here.<sup>61</sup>

## 2.9 Jer 31[LXX 38]:33

“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel  
after that time,” declares the Lord.  
“I will put my law in their minds  
and write it on their hearts.  
I will be their God,  
and they will be my people.

Jer 31:33 goes on to explain the features of the NC. If we compare this verse with verse 31, it is noteworthy that here “the house of Judah” is left out and only “the house of Israel” remains. This may be due to the fact that Israel is seen as an abbreviation that includes both Israel and Judah and refers to a future time when Israel and Judah will be reunited. Another interesting comparison to verse 31 is the indication of time, namely **אחרי הימים ההם**, “after that time,” which in turn must refer to a time after the return from the exile and after the inauguration of the messianic era referred to in verse 31.<sup>62</sup>

In the first promise of the NC, God declares: “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.” Regarding the law, Keown, Scalise and Smothers explain, “In the book of Jeremiah,

<sup>57</sup> Holladay 1989, 165.

<sup>58</sup> Keown, Scalise, and Smothers 1995, 131.

<sup>59</sup> Svartvik 2011, 81–83

<sup>60</sup> BDB, s.v. **געל**.

<sup>61</sup> Keown, Scalise, and Smothers 1995, 126.

<sup>62</sup> Holladay 1989, 198. Brown 2010, 396.

תורה, 'instruction, law,' usually refers to the revelation of God's will and way in form of commandments, statutes, and words that must be heeded..."<sup>63</sup> Brown comments that "the NIV's 'in their minds' is too interpretative" and that "in their midst/interior" is more correct.<sup>64</sup> This is not anything new that the prophet predicts; in connection to the Sinai covenant, there is a similar passage that centres around the heart and the internalised law: "The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live... You will again obey the Lord and follow all his commands I am giving you today" (Deut 30:6, 8). However, Israel apparently did not enter into this stage of the covenantal relationship since their hearts were not prepared and they had disobeyed God over and over again.

Moses received the Sinai law on two tablets of stone on which God had written the Ten Commandments with his finger (Exod 31:18). However, even before Moses had come down from Mount Sinai, the people had broken the covenant by making an idol and creating a golden calf (Exod 32). The prophet had come to realise that "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure" (Jer 17:9) and in this connection he prophesied the spiritual diagnosis of the people's heart condition: "Judah's sin is engraved with an iron tool, inscribed with a flint point, on the tablets of their hearts and on the horns of their altars" (Jer 17:1). This statement serves as a background and a contrast to the first promise of the NC. It takes a divine action to accomplish a change in the human heart so that God can write his laws inwardly with his finger.

In Jeremiah, the suggested treatment for a spiritual weak heart condition is surgery (Jer 4:4). A similar perspective is reflected in Ezekiel, where this surgery involves a transplantation of hearts according to God's promise to his people: "I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh" (Ezek 11:19b). Significantly, both Ezek 11:17–20 and 36:24–28 have much in common with Jer 31:31–34. When God's people return from their exile, God will deal with their disobedience, which is a heart issue. Brown explains: "Thus it will become Israel's very nature to keep the commandments of the Lord as their automatic, natural response..."<sup>65</sup> In Ezekiel, God promises that "I will cleanse you from all your impurities" (Ezek 36:25) and "I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws (Ezek 36:27). Similarly, in Jeremiah, God says, "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts" (Jer 31:33) and "I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (Jer 31:34)." Whereas Ezekiel does not mention a new covenant anywhere, Jeremiah does not explicitly connect the spirit of God to his treatment of the human heart.

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<sup>63</sup> Keown, Scalise and Smothers 1995, 134.

<sup>64</sup> Brown 2010, 396.

<sup>65</sup> Brown 2010, 397.



The second promise is a covenant formula: “I will be their God, and they will be my people” (Jer 31:33). Both passages from Ezekiel mentioned above include the same covenant formula. Keown, Scalise and Smothers conclude that a covenant formula “summarizes the substance of the relationship ... and reassures the people that the lord will not start over again with another.”<sup>66</sup> Once again, the marriage-like covenant will be restored, and their relation healed. Apart from the previously mentioned passages in Ezek 11:20 and 36:28, this covenant formula is found in a number of other passages in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>67</sup>

## 2.10 Jer 31[LXX 38]:34

No longer will they teach their neighbour,  
or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’  
because they will all know me,  
from the least of them to the greatest,”  
declares the Lord.  
“For I will forgive their wickedness  
and will remember their sins no more.”

The third promise reads: “‘No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,’ declares the Lord.” Twice the word “know” is mentioned here and it is the Hebrew word **יָדָע**, which could mean “to know by experience,” “to be acquainted with” and even “to know a person carnally.”<sup>68</sup> This is, for example, what a marriage relationship ought to be like and this will be an important ingredient in the marriage-like new covenant that are to be restored between God and his people. Keown, Scalise, and Smothers develop the concept further and what it more precisely means in this context:

In Jeremiah knowing God includes an awareness of God’s character and the nature of divine actions (9:23–24), the memory of what God has done for Israel (2:6–8), and the acceptance of God’s Rule by obeying the commands (9:3; 22:15–16; 24:7) ... In the promised new covenant, each person’s desires and decisions will embrace, without reservation, God’s self-revelation.<sup>69</sup>

In the OC, Moses first taught the Sinai law to the people of Israel and requested them to observe it diligently. Then the parents, in turn, were commanded to teach the law to their children as well as talk about and remember them on all occasions (Deut 6:1, 6–9). In the NC, no teaching will any longer be needed. Holladay explains: “If the law is external, teaching is a necessity; now that

<sup>66</sup> Keown, Scalise, and Smothers 1995, 132–133.

<sup>67</sup> See Exod 6:7; Lev 26:12; Hos. 2:25; Jer 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 31:1; 32:38; Ezek 14:11; 34:30–31; 37:23, 27. Keown, Scalise, and Smothers 1995, 132–134; Brown 2010, 396–397.

<sup>68</sup> BDB, s.v. **יָדָע**.

<sup>69</sup> Keown, Scalise, and Smothers 1995, 135.

Yahweh will make his law internal, teaching will be a thing of the past.”<sup>70</sup> This will be a reality for everybody: “from the least of them to the greatest,” which includes both different ages and social classes.<sup>71</sup>

The fourth and final promise reads: “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” The word “for” (כִּי) is tied to the preceding verses and becomes the fundament on which all the other promises rest upon. God will initiate the NC by the act of forgiving and forgetting Israel’s wickedness and their sins. Brueggemann explains “All the newness is possible *because* God has forgiven.”<sup>72</sup> This act will accomplish two things: 1) the sins committed in the past will be forgiven and forgotten 2) a permanent change in the heart, on which the internalised law will be written, will take place. Consequently, their inclination to sin will cease.<sup>73</sup> Due to the fourth promise, Holladay concludes “there will never be an impediment again to the free relationship between Yahweh and his people.”<sup>74</sup>

## 2.11 Conclusion

The promises of the NC can be divided into four parts. The first in v. 33b is about the law becoming internalised and written on people’s heart. When this has been brought to completion, there will no longer be any need for an external teaching of the law. This will cause their hearts to be “circumcised” which will enable the people to whole-heartedly love and obey God (Deut 30:6, 8). God’s people will naturally be inclined to do God’s will. The second in v. 33b is about the covenant formula: “I will be their God, and they will be my people.” The internalised law will bring God and his people closer to one another in a way that is unparalleled. The third in v. 34a is about knowing God in such a personal and intimate level that the external teaching of the law will be obsolete. This has been enabled by the law internalised in their hearts. The fourth and final in v. 34b is about God completely forgiving and forgetting his people’s sin. This is what brings about the permanent change in the heart and this is fundamental to the NC.

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<sup>70</sup> Holladay 1989, 198.

<sup>71</sup> Holladay 1989, 198–199.

<sup>72</sup> Brueggemann 1998, 294.

<sup>73</sup> Brown 2010, 397.

<sup>74</sup> Holladay 1989, 199.

## Chapter 3: Analysis of Law and Covenants in Hebrews

In this chapter, I shall analyse how Hebrews uses Ps 40:6–8 and Jer 31:31–34 and see how it suits the argument about the internalised law and the NC in the wider context of Heb 7–10:18.

### 3.1 Law and Covenants in Heb 7–8

The author of Hebrews starts a lengthy discussion about the law in chapter 7 which extends to chapter 10. The first time νόμος, “law” is used is in 7:5 where the author compares the relationship between Abraham and the priest Melchizedek mentioned in Gen 14:18–20 with the Levitical priesthood. Melchizedek’s priesthood becomes an archetype for Christ’s new priesthood just as the old Levitical priesthood is legitimated by the Sinai law. The reason for a new priesthood is that the old cannot achieve perfection even though it was sanctioned by the divine Sinai law *νενομοθέτηται*, “given to the people” (7:11). Since this *μετάθεσις*, “change of” priesthood is necessary, there also must be a *νόμου μετάθεσις γίνεται*, “change of the law” (7:12). This paradigm causes “[t]he former regulation [to be] set aside” (7:18), since the Sinai cultic law did not have the ability to achieve perfection and introduces “a better (*κρείττονος*) hope ... by which we draw near to God” (7:19).

Joslin suggests that “νόμου μετάθεσις is essential for ascertaining the writer’s view of the law.” He bases his whole concept of the “transformed view” on this phrase and devotes chapter four to investigate the meaning of the phrase.<sup>75</sup> Joslin describes how this view affects the way he perceives the internalised law: “the law has been transformed in Christ, and this transformation involves both its internalization and its fulfilment in the New Covenant.”<sup>76</sup> He further raises the question as to whether νόμου μετάθεσις means “an abrogation and full nullification of the law” or if the author of Hebrews might have had “transformation” or “transposition” in mind.<sup>77</sup> In this context, Joslin argues that νόμος and διαθήκη are related to one another, but not synonyms. Therefore, “though the OC has been superseded by the NC, there is the possibility of continuity between νόμος in both covenants.”<sup>78</sup>

Joslin continues to investigate the relation between νόμου μετάθεσις and ἐντολῆς, “commandment” or “regulation” (7:18). Since he sees a measure of continuity of the law between OC and NC, he argues that the author here implies “the cancellation of the particular legal requirement (ἐντολῇ) which governs bodily descent for priests.” Thus, the author of Hebrews does not have the

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<sup>75</sup> Joslin 2008, 132–133.

<sup>76</sup> Joslin 2008, 134–135.

<sup>77</sup> Joslin 2008, 159.

<sup>78</sup> Joslin 2008, 163.

whole law in mind, but only a particular set of regulations.<sup>79</sup> He then concludes that the word *μετάθεσις*, which can potentially mean “transformation, alteration, transposition,” in this context “involves a strong element of cancellation” but, “‘cancellation, abrogation’ is inadequate by itself” and “transformation” is a better alternative reflecting both “continuity and discontinuity.”<sup>80</sup>

Walser, in contrast, suggests that the more commonly meaning of *μετάθεσις* is “transposition” rather than “transformation” and that the former fits the context better. In the same way as the priesthood is transposed from the Levitical to that of Christ, the law is transposed from being external to become internal: “there seems to be no reason to apply a different meaning to *μετάθεσις* than to *μετατιθεμένης* at the beginning of the verse, especially since the ‘transposition’ of the law is such a central part of the Jeremiah-quotation in chapter eight and ten.”<sup>81</sup> Thus, parts of the Sinai law still remain in the NC to a greater extent than what Joslin indicates. I agree with Walser and interpret the meaning of *μετάθεσις* as “transposition.”

In 7:17, the author uses another OT quotation to argue for the change of priesthood and its need to be permanent and eternal: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek” (Ps 110:4). It is not until 7:22 that Jesus is identified as this new priest and he is “the guarantor (*ἔγγυος*) of a better (*κρείττονος*) covenant.” This is the first time that the new covenant is explicitly mentioned. The author then summarises his argument (7:1–25) and concludes that Christ is the kind of high priest that meets all requirements: “one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens” (7:26). He does not only offer the sacrifice for all the sins of humanity in toto, but also becomes the perfect sacrifice *ἐφάπαξ*, “once for all” (7:27), a statement that will be repeated in 9:12 as well as 10:10.

Chapter 8 starts with “[t]he point of what we are saying” (8:1) which underscores that this is *κεφάλαιον*, “the main point” of the long argument that started in 5:1. If the author concluded the preceding section by expressing what kind of high priest is needed, he now emphasises that we have “such a high priest” who meets these requirements. In 8:2, the term *tabernacle* is introduced for the first time and will become one of the main themes in chapter 9; Christ serves as high priest in the “true tabernacle.” Once again, the author distinguishes between the priestly service according to the Sinai law during the OC with the one according to Melchizedek that comes with the NC. Here the author uses a language which by some scholars has been deemed as middle-platonic, but could be understood as Jewish Apocalypticism instead, which I think suits the context better and also pre-

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<sup>79</sup> Joslin 2008, 164.

<sup>80</sup> Joslin 2008, 168.

<sup>81</sup> Walser 2013, 42–43.

vents the text from being interpreted as a supersessionistic reading.<sup>82</sup> This is reflected in the contrasts between heaven and earth and the terms ὑποδείγματι, “copy, model”<sup>83</sup> and σκιά, “shadow.”

In 8:13, it is stated that the new covenant will replace the old and “what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.” The term ἀφανισμοῦ, “soon disappear” could then be understood as occurring first at the second coming of Christ. The heavenly tabernacle was made by God and already Moses was given a glimpse of it when he was shown the τύπος, “pattern” for the earthly tabernacle and instructed how to build it (8:5). It is concluded in 8:6 that Jesus has received a διαφορωτέρας, “superior” ministry and that he is a μεσίτης, “mediator” of a κρείττονος, “superior” covenant than the priests of the OC “since the new covenant is established on better (κρείττονος) promises.” The author uses the Greek verb νενομοθέτηται, “established” when he explains that “the new covenant is *established* on better promises” (8:6). This is also the exact word used for the phrase “given the law” in 7:11 which concerns the OC.

So, what are the “better promises”? Johnson argues that the author primarily has in mind the oath previously cited in 7:20 “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek” (Ps 110:4) and, in addition, might also include the promises from Jer 31[LXX 38]:31–34 that he is about to cite.<sup>84</sup> Lane and Bruce unreservedly suggest the promises of Jeremiah.<sup>85</sup> Lehne also notes the correlation between νενομοθέτηται in 7:11 and 8:6 and she refers to the Greek verb as, “one of the author’s *hapax legomena* ...,” which she concludes is something that the recipients must have known and taken for granted.<sup>86</sup>

Elsewhere, she compares the use of the rare verb νενομοθέτηται in the OC to that of the NC and states, “Even the NC is enacted/promulgated legally (νομοθετέομαι) on the basis of superior promises (8.6). Therefore, one might be tempted to think that the NC ‘can be represented as a new species of legislation’.”<sup>87</sup> Apparently, Lehne resists the “temptation” by dismissing the whole argument because in Hebrews “the NC is *not* perceived as a new Law and *nomos* ultimately belongs to the old order.”<sup>88</sup> Unfortunately, Lehne does not even attempt to investigate what νενομοθέτηται

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<sup>82</sup> Kenneth A. Vandergriff argues in his article “New Covenant as Jewish Apocalypticism in Hebrews 8” that the passage should be read through a “Jewish apocalyptic lens” rather than a “Middle Platonic lens” since this will do more justice to the text and avoid a supersessionist interpretation (Vandergriff 2017, 97). He defines Platonism as “[a] dualism between the earthly, material things and the realities of the heavenly realm” (Vandergriff 2017, 98). So, here we are indeed dealing with middle-platonic terms, but the philosophy behind them is Jewish rather than Platonic: “When read through a Jewish apocalyptic lens, Hebrews 8 gives credence to the idea that the audience is living in the end-times and that the fullness of the blessings will be revealed when the old covenant passes away and the [new] is fulfilled” (Vandergriff 2017, 110).

<sup>83</sup> Schlier, TDNT s.v. ὑπόδειγμα.

<sup>84</sup> Johnson 2006, 203.

<sup>85</sup> Lane 1991, 201–202. Bruce 1990, 186.

<sup>86</sup> Lehne 90, 26.

<sup>87</sup> Lehne 90, 99.

<sup>88</sup> Lehne 1990, 99.

might mean in a NC context. She correctly concludes that “the role of the Law in Heb. is a subtle one,” but then leaves it at that.<sup>89</sup>

In my understanding, the difference here between the Sinai law of the OC and the promises of the NC lies in the requirements of the respective covenant. As for the OC, the people of Israel had to observe the law and obey its commandments in order to keep the covenant. Due to their human sinful nature, they “did not remain faithful to [God’s] covenant,” as the author concludes in 8:9, there is a need for a better covenant. In the NC, Jesus Christ becomes the active covenant partner on behalf of humankind since he is the μεσίτης, “mediator” (8:6) between God and man. In 9:15, the author once again points to Christ as the μεσίτης, “mediator” so that the believer “may receive the promised eternal inheritance.”

Overall, Lehne does not pay much attention to Heb 8:10, 10:16 and even less to the author’s quotation of Ps 40:6–8 in Heb 10:7–9, which I consider crucial to a proper understanding of the nature of the internalised law; it all boils down to “God’s action in transforming the heart of NC members.”<sup>90</sup> An analysis of the author’s use of Ps 40:6–8 is lacking altogether.<sup>91</sup> This neglect has been noticed by several reviewers.<sup>92</sup>

### 3.2 The Use of Jer 31[LXX 38]:31–34 in Heb 8:8–12

Just before the quotation of Jer 31:31–34, the author of Hebrews concludes that “God found fault (μεμφόμενος) with the people” (8:8). This statement has been preceded by implying that even the first covenant was faulty (8:9). So how are we to understand the two statements? Lane takes it literally to mean that both the people and the OC are faulty.<sup>93</sup> Johnson, in contrast, views the author’s argument as “illogical” and assumes that the author is thinking the opposite: since there is fault with the people, the OC becomes insufficient which harmonises with the wider context.<sup>94</sup> This is also the view that makes most sense since God never does anything imperfect as far as I am concerned.

In view of the exegesis of 31[LXX 38]:31–34 (chapter 2), we shall now look at how the author of Hebrews applies the quotation. Even though he follows the LXX in great detail, the author of Hebrews, as far as we know, makes some notable changes. Firstly, φησίν, “declares” is changed

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<sup>89</sup> Lehne 1990, 27.

<sup>90</sup> Lehne 1990, 115.

<sup>91</sup> Her only reference is to the larger passage in 10:5–10 as an example of how the author points his recipients to Jesus “as a model of what it means to do God’s will” (Lehne, 1990, 116).

<sup>92</sup> In his review of Lehne’s monograph, Arnold S. Browne approves of Lehne’s conclusion that the law belongs to the old covenant. However, with regard to “the Law to be written on the heart,” he suggests that it “operates at a much deeper level than that of the arbitrary proof text suggested by Lehne. Her failure even to look at this passage seriously flaws this study” (Browne 1991, 690).

<sup>93</sup> Lane 1991, 209.

<sup>94</sup> Johnson 2006, 205.

to λέγει, “declares” in verses 8, 9, and 10 and this is likely since λέγει is also being used in the clause preceding the quotation.<sup>95</sup>

Secondly, διαθήσομαι in Jer 38:32 (LXX), which refers to διαθήκην in the same verse, is changed to συντελέσω in Heb 8:8 whereas διεθέμην in Jer 38:33 (LXX), which refers to διαθήκην in the same verse, is changed to ἐποίησα in Heb 8:9. Gareth Lee Cockerill argues that this is deliberately done by the author of Hebrews to underscore that God will fulfil the NC by using the stronger συντελέσω whereas the weaker ἐποίησα just means that God made the OC.<sup>96</sup>

Thirdly, LXX:s γράψω, “I will write” (Jer 38:33) is in Heb changed to ἐπιγράψω, “I will inscribe” (8:10),<sup>97</sup> which in Ellingworth’s view most likely puts emphasis on “the permanence of the ‘inscription’ of the new covenant on the hearts of God’s people.”<sup>98</sup> Fourthly, Albert Vanhoye notes that the omission of δώσω (8:10; future tense) in quoting LXX:s διδοὺς δώσω νόμους, “I will put my laws” (Jer 38:33) separates the phrase from what is to follow. He also observes that “[the] present tense of the participle διδοὺς expresses ongoing activity.”<sup>99</sup>

Fifthly, there is an addition to Heb 8:12 in some manuscripts that reads, καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν, “and lawless acts” and is added after ὅτι ἔτι ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν, “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” This is an assimilation to Heb 10:17.<sup>100</sup>

The Jeremiah quotation is used in a negative context to emphasise the insufficient OC (8:7–8) and to explain that it is becoming obsolete (8:13). At the same time the “better promises” (8:6) are set forth in 8:10–12 even though they will not be elaborated on until 10:16–17 and then only the first and the last will be emphasised. The focus is on the word καινὴν (new).<sup>101</sup>

Based on the ongoing activity reflected in the present participle διδοὺς and how it relates to νόμους (8:10; without the article), Vanhoye develops a theory that the author does not primarily have the “old law” in mind, but “God is presented as continually ‘giving’ new laws, laws that are *his*.”<sup>102</sup> To strengthen his argument for a continuing process further, he provides parallels in the NT that express this dynamic feature, such as John 6:45 and 1 Joh 2:27 in regard to God’s continual instructing; and Rom 12:2 and Heb 10:36 in regard to the believer’s discerning of God’s will.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Ellingworth 1993, 416.

<sup>96</sup> Cockerill 2012, Heb 8:9.

<sup>97</sup> Bruce 1990, 187.  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$  B  $\Psi$  0285\*<sup>vid</sup> has γράψω, which may be a scribal harmonisation to the LXX.

<sup>98</sup> Ellingworth 1993, 417.

<sup>99</sup> Vanhoye 2018, 174.

<sup>100</sup> Ellingworth 1993, 417.  $\kappa^2$  A D K L P 0285\*<sup>vid</sup>.

<sup>101</sup> Lane 1991, 208, 210. Bruce 1990, 186.

<sup>102</sup> Vanhoye 2018, 174.

<sup>103</sup> Vanhoye 2018, 174.

Noting that modern commentators in general say little concerning the use of plural, νόμους, “laws” in Jer 38:33 (LXX) as well as in Heb 8:10 and 10:16 (whereas the MT has the singular), Joslin refers to two authors who have suggested that “... the plural form likely refers to specific laws of the covenant.”<sup>104</sup>

Walser, in contrast, devotes a great part of his study to survey how the law in singular and plural, respectively, was interpreted in the early Christian and Jewish communities until the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. He concludes that “[at] the time when Hebrews was composed there existed two distinctly different versions of Jer 31:33 one with the singular תורה, and one with the laws in the plural, νόμους.”<sup>105</sup> The author of Hebrews made use of the latter. Walser also postulates in his study “that the *vorlage* of νόμους, found in the Greek translation, had תורה in the plural” even though no Hebrew manuscript with this reading has been found so far.<sup>106</sup> Walser concludes his discussion on Jer 31[LXX 38]:31–34 in Hebrews by stating that “any interpretation of the plural of תורה as the written and oral Torah, especially in combination with the interpretation of Jesus as the promised prophet of Deut 18:15, would most likely have promoted the interpretation found in the earliest Church.”<sup>107</sup> This seems also to have been the case with the author of Hebrews.

### 3.3 The Intermediate Chapter: Heb 9

Heb 9:1–10 develops the concept that the “sanctuary is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven” from 8:5 by describing the interior of the tabernacle and the ministry of the high priest in the OC. The old arrangements are by no means sufficient “to clear the conscience of the worshiper” (9:9). This notion serves as a background for the “greater and more perfect tabernacle” (9:11) and the high-priestly ministry of “the new order” (9:10). From now onwards, blood becomes an important aspect and the perfect sacrifice of Christ the main theme. At this stage, the negative undertone that has prevailed since 8:1 as the focus primarily has been on the OC changes and becomes a positive undertone as the NC is being unveiled. Again, ἐφάπαξ, “once for all,” is articulated in 9:12 and emphasis is being put on the eternal and perfect sacrifice of Christ, as it will completely “cleanse our consciences” and enable us to “serve the living God” (9:14) and do his will. In other words, the first (8:10b) and the last promises (8:12) of the previously cited Jer 31[LXX 38]:31–34 in reversed order are clearly being underscored.

Heb 9:15 repeats the term μεσίτης, “mediator” from 8:6, and explains further Christ’s function as “the mediator of a new covenant Hebrews”: “that those who are called may receive the

<sup>104</sup> Joslin 2008, 187, 199.

<sup>105</sup> Walser 2013, 88–89.

<sup>106</sup> Walser 2013, 89.

<sup>107</sup> Walser 2013, 89.



promised eternal inheritance.” The Hebrew word for covenant is ברית and has a more limited meaning of “covenant” or the similar word “alliance”<sup>108</sup> whereas the Greek word for covenant, διαθήκη, is richer and encompasses not only the meaning “covenant” but also the quite different “testament, will.”<sup>109</sup> The author of Hebrews does not limit himself to the Hebrew meaning, but improvises and presents a wordplay on “testament, will” in 9:16–17 and uses this meaning to make a theological point: “This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood” (9:18). He thus reverts to speaking about the OC and this time emphasises the need for cleansing everything in the tabernacle by blood (9:19–22) “since without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (9:22).

It is worth noting that the author of Hebrews here uses an OC principle to explain what also needs to take place in the NC; consequently, the heavenly tabernacle also needs to be cleansed by “the shedding of blood,” but with “better (κρείττοσιν) sacrifices” (9:23). He figuratively enters “the Most Holy Place” (9:25) and “appear[s] for us in God’s presence” (9:24). When the author announces ἅπαξ (a synonym to ἐφάπαξ), “once for all,” he does this somewhat dramatically by pronouncing “at the culmination (συντέλεια) of the ages” and “do away (ἀθέτησις, “to declare it invalid”<sup>110</sup>) with sin by the sacrifice of himself” (9:26). The chapter concludes with a unique reference to Christ’s second coming and an explanation that salvation and the NC together with Jeremiah’s four promises of the NC will not be a complete experience until this stage for “those who are waiting for him” (9:28).

### 3.4 Law and Covenants in Heb 10:1–18

Heb 10:1–18 delivers the final part of the argument about Christ’s ministry as high priest in the heavenly sanctuary. It is time to summarise the exposition and draw a conclusion. In what I regard as a theological crescendo, Heb 7–10 interacts with both Ps 40:6–8[LXX 39:7–9] and parts of Jer 31[LXX 38]:31–34. Having concluded in 8:5 that both the tabernacle and the priestly service in the OC is just “a copy and shadow of shadow of what is in heaven,” the author now goes on to state that it is the same with the law: “The law is only a shadow of the *good things that are coming*—not the realities themselves” (10:1; my italics). He thus connects the heavenly realities with the second coming of Christ and the completion of the NC. Once again, the inefficiency of the OC is articulated while the perfection of the NC is underscored. Still, the OC points to the NC by making the “worshipers” aware of “their sins” and causing them to feel “guilty” (10:2) as the “sacrifices” prescribed in the law serves as “an annual reminder of sins” (10:3). Before quoting Ps 40:6–8[LXX

<sup>108</sup> BDB s.v. ברית.

<sup>109</sup> Behm, TDNT s.v. διαθήκη.

<sup>110</sup> Maurer, TDNT s.v. ἀθέτησις.

39:7–9], Hebrews connects the setting with Christ’s incarnation: “Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said” (10:5). The subject of Christ’s incarnation was already introduced in 2:14–18 and here the author takes up the thread again.

With the quotation of Ps 40:6–8[LXX 39:7–9] in mind, the author of Hebrews prepares for his last OT quotation to support his lengthy discussion of the law (Heb 7:1–10:18). Once again, he compares the inefficient OC, “which can never take away sins” (10:11) with the superior NC, whose “priest ha[s] offered for all time one sacrifice for sins” (10:12). The author of Hebrews once again alludes to Ps 110:1 when he concludes that Christ “sat down at the right hand of God” where he is now waiting “for his enemies to be made his footstool” (10:12–13) before the eschaton at Christ’s second coming (9:28) when Jeremiah’s prophecy will be completely fulfilled.

### 3.5 The Use of Ps 40:6–8[LXX 39:7–9] in Heb 10:5–7

The author of Hebrews makes use of LXX in his quotation which suits his Christological interpretation and MT would not have been an option here.<sup>111</sup> He quotes Ps 39:7aβ (LXX) as, *σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι*, “but a *body* you have prepared for me” (Heb 10:5; my italics). However, in Rahlfs’s edition of LXX, commonly used today, the Hebrew expression in Ps 40:7aβ (לִי אָזְנוֹת כְּרִיתָ לִי) is translated as, *ὠτία δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι*, “but *ears* you have prepared for me” (39:8 aβ (LXX); my italics). In Ralfs’s opinion, the author of Hebrews had independently replaced ὠτία, “ears” with σῶμα, “body” so that it would fit his Christological application. Therefore, Rahlfs changed σῶμα back to ὠτία. He suspected that the text of Hebrews even had influenced the three major manuscripts, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus (pandects that also contain the text of Hebrews). Rahlfs’s edition was written before the discoveries of the *Dead Sea Scrolls*. Today, there is a consensus among the scholars and stronger arguments for the existence of an earlier *Vorlage* of LXX with σῶμα, which the author of Hebrews himself most likely made use of.<sup>112</sup>

The author’s use of σῶμα, “body,” suits his Christological application perfect and points not only to Christ’s sacrificial act on the cross but also to his birth and incarnation. The option ὠτία, “ears” emphasises the the psalmist’s attentive listening and careful obedience to God’s will. Since ὠτία are part of the σῶμα, this line of thought also applies to the first application with σῶμα; Christ’s mission on earth from his birth until his death was fulfilled in full submission to God’s will.

The author of Hebrews skilfully moves the focus from the psalmist to Christ, so that he becomes the subject, by altering a few words in his quotation compared to LXX. Thus, the LXX as,

<sup>111</sup> Walser 2013, 136.

<sup>112</sup> Walser 2013, 91-92; 96; 102. ὠτία agrees the Hebrew אָזְנוֹתֵי.

ἦκω ... τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου, ὁ θεός μου, “I have come – ... I desire to do your will, my God” (Ps 39:8–9), is, in Hebrews, changed to ἦκω ... τοῦ ποιῆσαι ὁ θεὸς τὸ θέλημά σου, “I have – ... come to do your will, my God” (10:6–7). First, the change increases the emphasis on θέλημά σου and, as a consequence, creates a sharp contrast to οὐκ ἠθέλησας, “you did not desire,” in verse 6a. Secondly, the author shows that Christ not only desired to do God’s will, but also that the reason why he came to earth in his incarnated body was to do God’s will.<sup>113</sup>

It is noteworthy that the author of Hebrews omits the last part of the verse: “your law is within my heart” (MT 40:9b / LXX 39:9). The two clauses could be seen as a synonymous parallelism where one clause conveys the same meaning as the other and is thus repeated. Ellingworth concludes that it “is omitted [in Hebrews] as distracting.”<sup>114</sup> The internalised law has already been emphasised in Heb 8:10 with the quotation from Jer 31:33 and the same quotation will soon be cited again in Heb 10:16. Luke Timothy Johnson implies that it might have to do with the author’s wish to focus on “obedience to God’s will in all circumstances, and to avoid the possible misunderstanding that the ‘law in the heart’ should be identified with the Sinai covenant.”<sup>115</sup> David M. Moffitt notes that there is a link between God’s will in Ps 40:8 and the law being internalised in Jer 31, which together with the author’s following discussion and “his direct exhortation to do God’s will in Heb 10:36 all suggest that he has not ignored this element of the psalm.”<sup>116</sup>

In a midrash-like commentary of the quoted Psalm, the author of Hebrews then goes on to clarify his point in 10:8–10 and concludes that even though the sacrifices and offerings were prescribed by the law there is here once more a question of a change of the law – a second order (τὸ δεύτερον) is established – just as the change in the priesthood corresponded to a change in the law (νόμου μετάθεσις) as argued in 7:12. Not only is the law in the NC changed in regard to priesthood, but also in regard to the sacrificial system due to one person: Jesus Christ, the eternal high priest and the ultimate sacrifice. Instead of emphasising the law, the focus is now on God’s will: “And by that will, we have been made holy...” (10:10) and this has been done ἐφάπαξ, “once for all.” This verse is then further developed: “...those who are being made holy” (10:14). So, on one hand the addressed recipients already “have been made holy” due to Christ’s fulfilment of Jeremiah’s last promise: perfect forgiveness, but on the other hand they continually “are being made holy” due to Christ’s fulfilment of Jeremiah’s first promise: the perfectly internalised law.

### 3.6 The Use of Jer 31[LXX 38]:31–34 in Heb 10:16–17

<sup>113</sup> Ellingworth 1993, 500–501.

<sup>114</sup> Ellingworth 1993, 501.

<sup>115</sup> Johnson 2006, 251.

<sup>116</sup> Moffitt 2011, 245.

Only parts of the original quotations of Jer 31[LXX 38]:31–34 in Heb 8:8–12 are being repeated here and in somewhat rearranged form. Instead of using τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ, “the people of Israel” (8:10), the pronoun αὐτούς, “them” is used here in reference to Israel. Just as in 8:10, λέγει substitutes φησὶν (LXX 38:33) and ἐπιγράψω, “I will inscribe” substitutes γράψω (LXX 38:33) in v. 16.

It is notable that καρδίας, “hearts” and διάνοιαν, “mind” are transposed in comparison with 8:10 and διδοὺς νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς, “I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts” with 10:16 and διδοὺς νόμους μου ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς, “I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” Ellingworth assumes that “the more common word [καρδίας] occurs to the author first.”<sup>117</sup> Whatever the reason is, the fact remains that the author of Hebrews views καρδίας, “hearts” and διάνοιαν, “mind” as synonyms.

Finally, the author of Hebrews adds καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν, “and [their] lawless acts” (10:17) after τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν, “Their sins” (10:17). Ellingworth suggests that this possibly “recalls the breakdown of a covenant based on legal regulations.” I find this argument somewhat far-fetched and consider the answer to be closer at hand. In my opinion, “their lawless acts” might have to do with Jeremiah’s last promise of complete forgiveness which is a prerequisite for the first promise of the internalised law.<sup>118</sup> Only when “their lawless deeds” have been completely forgiven, the process of inscribing the law on their hearts and minds can begin; in the same way, the fact that they have become holy, which entirely rests on Christ’s sacrifice (10:10), enables them to enter into the continuing process of “being made holy” (10:14). Joslin hits the nail on the head when he expresses: “Forgiveness of sins is granted to the individual, putting the person in a right relation with God; internalization of the laws produces obedience so that the person may *remain* in right relation with God.”<sup>119</sup>

The argument has revolved around the last promise of complete forgiveness. Since this promise is the foundation, the author concludes his lengthy discussion about the law: “And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary” (10:18). The NC was inaugurated with the blood of Christ (cf. 9:18–26) which opened a way into the heavenly sanctuary. The intended recipients are now invited to enter into the most holy place or with the words of Lane: “The people of the new covenant enjoy unhindered access to God in worship (10:19–22). The only sacrifice required of them is a ‘a sacrifice of praise’ (13:15).”<sup>120</sup> This must have been mind-boggling for the

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<sup>117</sup> Ellingworth 1993, 513.

<sup>118</sup> Joslin 2008, 152.

<sup>119</sup> Joslin 2008, 207.

<sup>120</sup> Lane 1991, 269.

Jews addressed, who were strictly forbidden to enter the holy of holies, a duty only assigned the high-priest once a year.

## Chapter 4: The Law and God's Will in Romans vs Hebrews

Walser, referring to the author of Hebrews' interpretation of Ps 40:6–8[LXX 39:7–9] in Heb 10:5–7, assumes that he “did not compose his Letter in a vacuum, and that the context in which he worked abounded in Biblical interpretations, hence some of them might have influenced his interpretation.”<sup>121</sup> Even though there is no such interpretation preserved today, there are still good reasons to believe that those interpretations were in use both before and after Hebrews was written. Further, Walser points to the similar interpretation of Ps 40:7 in Rom 12 used by, for example, Didymus, Theodoret and Petrus Chrysologus. Since that is a non-Christological interpretation of LXX with σῶμα, “body,” it could even have existed in the Jewish community.<sup>122</sup> Here, I intend first to compare Rom 12:1–2 with Ps 40:6–8 and identify common features and then, to see how Rom 12:1–2 suits the wider context of the Romans. Bearing Rom 12:1–2 in mind, we will then turn to Hebrews and make some observations.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom 12:1–2)

Rom 12:1–2 and Ps 40:6–8[LXX 39:7–9] have the following three words in common: θυσίαν, “sacrifice,” σῶμα, “body” and θέλημα “will.” In Romans 12:1–2, the believers are to offer their *bodies* “as a living *sacrifice*” as a response to Christ's death and the offering of his body. Moreover, they are to “be transformed by the renewing of [their] mind” so that they can “approve what God's *will* is.” The believers here could identify themselves with the psalmist as he exclaims: “I desire to do your *will*, my God” (Ps 40:8a, my italics). However, there is no direct indication of the second part “your *law* is within my heart (Ps 40:8b, my italics) since νόμος, “law” is not mentioned in the passage, but in Rom 2:17–18, we find both νόμος, “law” and θέλημα, “will.”<sup>123</sup> Just as the author of Hebrews chooses to omit the second part “your *law* is within my heart” in Heb 10:7, and still implicitly refers to the internalised law by emphasising God's will, I suggest that there is an implicit reference to an internalised law in relation to God's will in Rom 12:2. If we then compare Rom 12:1–2 with Rom 2:17–23, we will find they both have δοκιμάζειν, “approve” and θέλημα, “will” in common.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Walser 2013, 137.

<sup>122</sup> Walser 2013, 137.

<sup>123</sup> In my research I have found that in LXX, Ps. 39:8 is the only occurrence of θέλημά and νόμον together and in NA28, Rom. 2:18 is the only occurrence of θέλημά and νόμον together.

<sup>124</sup> In my research I have found that the noun θέλημα and the verb δοκιμάζω is only used four time in Romans respectively and they are never used together with the exception of these two cases.

Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and boast in God; if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law? (Rom 2:17–23)

In this context, Paul somewhat ironically calls the imagined Jew that he addresses for “guide,” “instructor,” and “teacher” (Rom. 2:19–20) which are key concepts for what the law essentially is about, namely to guide, to give instructions, and to teach how to live a life according to God’s will. However, the problem is that the imagined Jew falls short of the commandments that he tries to teach and then fails to obey them. Consequently, it is not enough for a Jew just to observe the law. In chapter three, Paul concludes that the gospel is the answer for the Jew as well as for the Gentile and that “a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law” (Rom. 3:28). Furthermore, in Rom 10:4, Paul explains that Christ has fulfilled the law in the place of humankind living his life in perfect obedience to God’s will. In terms of the OC and the NC, Rom 2:17–23 speaks of the conditions of the OC whereas Rom 12:1–2 reflects life in the NC.

Furthermore, in Rom 8:2, the “law of sin and death” refers to the OC and “the law of the Spirit who gives life” to the NC. Bruce concludes that this passage is the best description on the meaning of the internalised law in the NT where “the work of the indwelling Spirit of God in the believer” is emphasised.<sup>125</sup> In Rom 2:17–23, the imagined Jew tries to keep the external law and live according to God’s will but fails since this is the “law of sin and death” (Rom 8:2) at work. In contrast, in Rom 12:2, as the believers submit their bodies to God and allow him to transform their minds, the internalised law, which is “the law of the Spirit who gives life” (Rom 8:2), is at work in their hearts. In Rom 13:8–10, there is a similar list of commandments from the Decalogue as in Rom 2:21–23:

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no harm to a neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law. (Rom 13:8–10)

In Rom 2:17–23, the imagined Jew breaks the law whereas here a possibility is given to fulfil the law by loving “your neighbour.” This fulfilment of the law, however, can never be accomplished unless the submission and transformation in Rom 12:1–2 has taken place. Still, the believer is supposed to keep the commandments from the Decalogue, exemplified here by the seventh, the eighth, and the tenth commandment, but with love as the higher law. Here, we see an example of the Sinai

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<sup>125</sup> Bruce 1990, 189

law that was part of the OC and still remains in the NC. The Greek noun that is used for love is “ἀγάπη” and it is the same word that Paul uses in Rom. 5:6 when he speaks about “God’s love.” It is God’s love that enables the believer to love his fellow man in a way that pleases God, since it is God who has given the internalised prerequisite as his love “has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” to help the believer to keep and hold on to the internalised law.

The Greek word “ἀγάπη” is also attested in two instances in Heb. The first occurrence of ἀγάπη is in Heb 6:10: “God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.” The second occurrence of ἀγάπη is in Heb 10:24: “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds ....” The author of Hebrews also touches on the same two commandments from the Decalogue that Rom 2:22–23 and Rom 13:9 have in common. He places the seventh (13:4) and the eighth commandment (13:5a) after each another and in the correct order according to the Decalogue (Ex 20:14–15, Deut 5:1–19). This was a common pattern among Jewish writers at that time and both commandments were attacking the same sin, namely selfishness.<sup>126</sup> Heb 13:4 reads: “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.” This relates to “You shall not commit adultery” (Exod 20:14). Heb 13:5a reads: “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have.” The expression “free from the love of money” is a translation of the Greek word “ἄφιλόργυρος” that could also be translated “without greed.”<sup>127</sup> The eighth commandment reads: “You shall not steal (Exod 20:15)” and greed is the main motive behind theft.<sup>128</sup> We can conclude that the double commandment of love as well as the Decalogue relate to the recipients of Romans, consisting of both Gentiles and Jews, and the Jewish believers addressed in Hebrews.

Still, I argue that there is one commandment in the Decalogue that exclusively relates the Hebrews and that is the Sabbath.<sup>129</sup> Heb 4:9 describes “a Sabbath-rest for the people of God.” The fourth commandment was given to the people of Israel as a sign of the OC and meant that they were to set apart one day of the week to rest from their own work. In this context, Johnson highlights two things. First, the rare expression “people of God,” used in 4:9 but also in 11:25, connects the present to the past and stresses that there is no division in Hebrews between Jews and Gentiles and no suggestion of one people having replaced another. Secondly, the Greek word σαββατισμός means rest and is related to the seventh day of the week of creation when God rested from his own work (Gen 2:2). The reason why the author changes the word for rest from the verb κατέπαυσεν, previously

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<sup>126</sup> Lane 1991, 516

<sup>127</sup> Johnson 2006, 342

<sup>128</sup> Johnson 2006, 342

<sup>129</sup> Larsson 1999, 242–243.



used in chapter 3 and 4, to the noun σαββατισμός is to transcend the focus of observing the weekly Sabbath.<sup>130</sup> Larsson describes the Jewish Sabbath in terms of “days of hope” and “a foretaste of the final Sabbath rest still to come” (Heb 4:9).<sup>131</sup> The author’s use of “people of God” indicates that this rest not only concerns Jewish believers, but also Gentile believers. So, for Jews whom Hebrews addresses, the Sabbath observation from the OC still remains, but at the same time, they share the NC perspective of a “greater Sabbath-rest” together with the Gentile believers. This “rest” also relates to the heavenly tabernacle and the Hebrews are already now encouraged to “approach God’s throne of grace” (Heb 4:16).<sup>132</sup>

I shall now continue my comparison of Romans versus Hebrews. Rom 12:1–2 bridges the teaching part and the exhortation part in Romans whereas Heb 13:20–21 sums up the whole message of Heb: “Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal *covenant* brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything *good* for doing his *will*, and may he work in us what is *pleasing* to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (my italics). This verse has been preceded by: “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a *sacrifice* of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such *sacrifices* God is *pleased*” (13:15–16, my italics). The passages 13:15–16 and 13:20–21 have four Greek words in common with Rom 12:1–2. These are θυσίαν, “sacrifice” (both in 13:15 and 13:16), θέλημα, “will,” ἀγαθός/ἀγαθῶ, “good” and εὐάρεστος/εὐαρεστέω, “pleasing” (both in 13:16 and 13:21). The first two is also found in Ps 40:6–8[LXX 39:7–9]. In both Rom 12 and Heb 13, the believers are requested to offer unbloody sacrifices as a worship to God and as followers of Christ, who has offered himself as a sacrifice for their sins (Rom 3:25, Heb 10:5–14).

Finally, in Hebrews, God’s will is emphasised on four occasions: in 10:7 and 10:9 in regard to Christ and 10:36 and 13:21 in regard to the believer. Christ had to learn “obedience from what he suffered” (5:8) and “he became source of eternal salvation for all who obey him” (5:9). Obedience for the Jew is generally to obey the law. Bruce notes that Christ’s obedience here refers to him fulfilling God’s will and that his sufferings “were the necessary price.”<sup>133</sup> There is connection between Christ’s obedience to God and his will (5:8), and “by that will, we have been made holy” (10:10) as well as between the believer’s obedience to Christ in (5:9) and “those who are being made holy” (10:10). Everything centres around what Christ has done in obedience to God’s will and therefore the believer can live a life that pleases God.

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<sup>130</sup> Johnson 2006, 129.

<sup>131</sup> Larsson 1999, 3.

<sup>132</sup> Larsson 1999, 244.

<sup>133</sup> Bruce 1990, 131.

In conclusion, I have shown that both Rom 12:1–2 and Heb 10:5–7 draws on Ps 10:6–8. Furthermore, Rom 12:1–2 and Heb 10:5–7 seems to follow a similar line of thought with an implicit internalised law, which mainly comes out as the will of God and is expressed in ἀγάπη, “love,” and the double commandment of love. On this foundation, the believer still has to keep the commandments of the Decalogue apart from the Sabbath commandment, which I argue exclusively applies to the Jews. The Sabbath commandment, however, will finally be transposed into a Sabbath-rest that will encompass both Jewish and Gentiles believers. This is another example of transposition apart from the change from the Levitical priesthood to that of Christ.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

Having made all the analysis I intended to do, I shall now continue to discuss my findings and address the four questions raised at the beginning of this paper in due turn.

First concerning the use and the interpretation of Jer 31:33 and Ps 40:6–8 in Hebrews with regard to the internalised law. In my analysis of Jer 31:33, I concluded that the passage relates back to Deut 30:6–8, which speaks about “circumcised” hearts, which will enable the people to love and obey God whole-heartedly. In Heb 8:10, the author of Hebrews modified slightly his quotation to emphasise that the law is permanently inscribed on the heart of the people as well as it is an ongoing activity. In Heb 10:7, God’s will in Ps 40:8a is emphasised while the phrase from Ps 40:8b, “your law is within my heart,” is omitted. In my view, these changes stress that God’s will primarily corresponds to the internalised law. By obeying God’s will and sacrificing himself, Christ has already made the believers holy (10:10) and at the same time, he is making them holy (10:14). The believers in turn are to follow and obey Christ and present sacrifices of praise (13:15–16) and pursue the will of God (10:36; 13:20–21).

Secondly, to answer the question why there are only two promises quoted in 10:16–17 out of the four in the longer citation in 8:8–12, I shall first briefly follow the authors line of argument between the two quotations. The author pays some attention to the first promise of the internalised law, the statement in 9:14, that the blood of Jesus will “cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death” relates to the last promise; the result, “so that we may serve the living God,” relates to the first promise. Later on, his statement that “by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (10:10) relates to the last promise, and “[f]or by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy” (10:14) relates to the first promise. In my understanding, the reason why there are only two promises quoted in 10:16–17 has to do with the author’s purpose, which is to emphasise Christ’s superior ministry as a high-priest and his superior sacrifice once and for all in contrast to the insufficient Levitical priesthood and its inefficient sacrificial cult. Thus, the focus is mainly on the last promise of forgiving and forgetting sins (Jer 31:34b). This is probably why he ends his discussion with, “And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary” (Heb 10:18).

As a consequence, the promise of forgiving and forgetting sins then enables the ongoing process of writing and engraving the law on people’s hearts, which is the first promise. This phase will continue until Christ’s second coming (9:28) when Jeremiah’s prophecy will be completely fulfilled. Then there will be no need to “teach [the law to] their neighbour ... because they will all know me” (Heb 8:11), which is the third promise. The author of Hebrews has noticed that the Hebrews are in danger of sliding back into Judaism and abandoning their faith in Christ (Heb 6:4-6,

10:26-31) and therefore rebukes them “In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again” (Heb 5:12).” The congregation addressed in 1 John has come a bit further and the author gives them the following remark: “As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you.” (1 John 2:27a). Still, if there would not have been any need for external teaching, the writer had not written the letter in the first place. With regard to the second promise (the covenant formula) “I will be their God, and they will be my people” (Heb 8:10b), it can be seen in several verses in Hebrews.<sup>134</sup> This covenant formula is not anything exclusive for the NC and I have already shown a number examples from the OC in my analysis of Jer 31:33. The difference lies with its capability to “being filled with fresh meaning to a point where it can be described as a *new* covenant.”<sup>135</sup>

Thirdly, there are some instances of correlation between the OC law and the NC law in Hebrews: (a) There is the obvious transposition of priesthood when Christ takes over the ministry as high-priest and he himself becomes the sacrifice. In this way he replaces the Levitical priesthood and ministry; (b) The double commandment of love found in 6:10 and in 10:24; (c) The two commandments from the Decalogue; the seventh commandment “You shall not commit adultery” (Exod 20:14) found in Heb 13:4 and the eighth commandment, “You shall not steal (Ex. 20:15),” found in 13:5a; (d) The Jewish sabbath that is to be transposed into a sabbath rest for all humankind.

Fourthly, before I shall present my view of the NC law in Hebrews, I will first summon up the contributions from my three most important dialogue partners. As far as Lehne is concerned, the Sinai law does not have anything to do with the way the internalised law is understood in Hebrews. For her, it indicates God’s continual transformation of the heart. Joslin, also notes “[the] absence of any discussion on νόμος in 8:10 and 10:16” and connects this to her “earlier verdict that νόμος plays no role in the NC.”<sup>136</sup> She has already made up her mind that “the rubric of Law itself is not transferable from the old covenant to the new one.”<sup>137</sup>

Joslin likewise has difficulties coming to terms with the Sinai law in the NC, but for him it is still transferable from the OC to the NC. On one hand, he does not want to see a complete “cancellation” or an “abrogation” of the Sinai law, but still wish to maintain “a strong element of cancellation.”<sup>138</sup> On the other hand, he points out that “God’s will is not distinct from his written com-

<sup>134</sup> See i.e., Heb 2:11; 4:9; 5:3; 6:10; 10:30.

<sup>135</sup> Fee 1990, 190.

<sup>136</sup> Joslin 2008, 212.

<sup>137</sup> Lehne 90, 100.

<sup>138</sup> Joslin 2008, 168.

mandments in the law”<sup>139</sup> and seems to shun any “generic or spiritualized idea of ‘God’s will’ without correspondence to the Mosaic laws.”<sup>140</sup>

Walser convincingly argues for an understanding of μετάθεσις in terms of “transposition” rather than Joslin’s “transformation.”<sup>141</sup> If this is the case, we must revise Joslin’s survey which divides the theological positions of the Sinai law in the NC into four categories: the non-view, the no-correspondence view, the direct-correspondence view and the transformed view. The transformed view no longer makes sense. Overall, the division between the direct-correspondence view and the transformed view is superficial; Walser notes that “since Joslin is only giving a very broad outline, it is difficult to see how he differs from the third group.”<sup>142</sup>

In my understanding, the Sinai law, according to Hebrews, is not to be replaced, but gradually to be transposed, like a seed that becomes a plant and grows to become a flower. The law is essentially God’s will, but it is gradually changing shape through salvation history. Thus, the author of Hebrews describes how a transposition in the law took place when Jesus became an eternal high-priest and replaced the Levitical priesthood. At this stage, the law changed, but God’s will was more clearly revealed. In the same way, Hebrews anticipates Jewish observance of the Sabbath, but the Sabbath commandment will one day be transposed to something greater: an eternal Sabbath-rest for all humankind. In this way, God’s ultimate will is revealed and fulfilled. In the NC, the double commandment of love and the Decalogue in the sense of a universal law remains together with Jesus’ interpretation of the law and the teachings of the apostles. The dynamic internalised law that relates to God’s continual instructing and the believer’s change of heart to discern God’s will does not substitute the more static commandments but completes the concept of the internalised law in the NC.

Finally, I would like to address what in my opinion are two misconceptions. Joshlin represents the first “...if the readers of Hebrews were Jewish Christians, then it is logical that they would have had to know the law on some level, and to have embraced it as authoritative (at least on some level and at some point) *prior* to their turning to Christ.”<sup>143</sup> In other words, in Joshlin understanding, they seem to have left their Jewish heritage behind after they embraced Christ. Lehne represents the second and in her final word, she says: “Paradoxically enough, it is the writer of Heb. who – while passionately arguing along Jewish lines – moves furthest in the direction of the breach with

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<sup>139</sup> Joslin 2008, 198–199.

<sup>140</sup> Joslin 2008, 209.

<sup>141</sup> Walser 2013, 42–43.

<sup>142</sup> Walser 2013, 44.

<sup>143</sup> Joslin 2008, 212

Judaism that later was to take place.<sup>144</sup> In other words, Lehne regards the author of Hebrews to embrace a supersessionist theology.

Richard B. Hays once articulated a supersessionist interpretation of Hebrews. Subsequently, however, he has re-evaluated his position as reflected in his article, “‘Here We Have No Lasting City.’ New Covenantalism in Hebrews,” where he argues that the letter was written in a time when there was no clear distinction between Christianity and Judaism. Hays continues:

[W]e notice that the Letter to the Hebrews nowhere speaks of Jews and Gentiles, nowhere gives evidence of controversies over circumcision or food laws, criticizes nothing in the Mosaic Torah except for the Levitical sacrificial cult, and contains no polemic against Jews or Jewish leaders ... Nowhere does Hebrew suggest that the Jewish people have been replaced by a new and different people of God. Indeed, it appears that the addressees of the letter are considered part of God’s ‘house,’ the same house over which Moses was faithful – that is, ‘the house of Israel’.<sup>145</sup>

As far as Hays is concerned, the author is a Jew, and he is addressing a Jewish congregation. They have all accepted Christ as their Messiah, and this has changed their religious views. Still, in regard to the place of the Torah in Hebrews, Hays leaves no room for misunderstanding: “the author of Hebrews is not interested in a blanket abolition of the Mosaic Torah. Rather, his concern focuses narrowly on the cultic practice of offering sacrifices under the first covenant...”<sup>146</sup>

On the basis of the NC, the Hebrews have entered “the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus” (Heb 10:19). As they now are approaching God’s presence, the law is being written on their hearts while their “lawless deeds” (Heb 10:17) have been completely forgiven and forgotten. In the consummation of times, when they once for all reach “the throne of grace” (Heb 4:16), the law will have been fully inscribed on their hearts and there will be no further need for them to “teach [the law to] their neighbour ... because they will all know me” (Heb 8:11). The covenant formula will have reached its fullest and truest sense since “God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev 21:3).

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<sup>144</sup> Lehne 90, 124.

<sup>145</sup> Hays 2009, 154.

<sup>146</sup> Hays 2009, 161.

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