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Aquinas on Israel and the Church: A Study of the Question of Supersessionism  
In the Theology of Thomas Aquinas

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Aquinas on Israel and the Church: A Study of the Question of Supersessionism  
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During the last decade, the discussion over whether Thomas Aquinas's theology is supersessionist—the idea that God abolishes Jewish observance of circumcision and Torah and replaces Israel with the Church—has elicited deep disagreement among scholars. With the exception of a few studies on Aquinas's commentary on Romans, scholars in the discussion over whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist have overlooked his commentaries on Paul's epistles to the Galatians, Hebrews, and Ephesians, which include some of Aquinas's most extended reflections on the subjects of Israel and the Gentile Church and on Jewish observance of the ceremonial Mosaic Law after the passion of Christ. The neglect of Aquinas's commentaries on Paul's epistles represents a significant gap in the current scholarship on the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology. This dissertation adjudicates conflicting claims in the discussion over whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist by examining Aquinas's view of the ceremonial Mosaic Law after the passion of Christ in his neglected commentaries on Paul's epistles. My dissertation

demonstrates that throughout Aquinas's commentaries on Paul's epistles there exist tensions and contradictions in his views of the theological status of the ceremonial Mosaic Law after the passion of Christ. In his Galatians *lectura* and in his Hebrews *lectura*, Aquinas argues that the observance of the ceremonial Mosaic Law after the passion of Christ is a mortal sin. Yet in Aquinas's lectures on Ephesians and Romans, Aquinas leaves this teaching out of his discussion of the ceremonial Mosaic Law after the passion of Christ. In his lectures on Galatians and Hebrews, Aquinas argues that circumcision is superfluous for all. Yet in the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas argues circumcision is a present spiritual benefit for the Jewish people after the passion of Christ. This dissertation illuminates the scholarly discussion over whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist by demonstrating that Aquinas's thought, as revealed in his commentaries on Paul's epistles, contains economically supersessionist views of the Jewish people alongside and in tension with significant post-supersessionist resources.

This dissertation by Matthew Anthony Tapie fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Moral Theology/Ethics approved by William C. Mattison, III, Ph.D., as Director, and by R. Kendall Soulen, Ph.D., and Rev. Frank Matera, Ph.D., and Joseph Capizzi, Ph.D., as readers.

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To Carolyn

When Paul says, “Do we therefore overthrow the law?” he excludes an objection. For someone might claim that he is overthrowing the aforementioned law; therefore, he asks: “Do we therefore overthrow the law by faith?” inasmuch as we say that men are justified without the works of the law? He answers “By no means!” in keeping with Matt 5:18, “Not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law.” Rather, he adds: “On the contrary, we uphold the law,” i.e., by faith we complete and fulfill the Law, as Matt 5:17 says, “I have come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it.” This is true as regards the ceremonial precepts because, being figures, they were upheld and fulfilled by the fact that the truth signified by them is shown forth in the faith of Christ.

Thomas Aquinas, *Ad Romanos* 3.4.321

What Paul sees happening in Christ and in the Christian Church, like what Jesus had said in Matthew, is the fulfillment and not the abolition of the meaning of Torah as covenant of grace. “Fulfillment” is a permanently open border between what went before and what comes next.

John Howard Yoder, *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*

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# CHAPTER ONE

## THE QUESTION OF SUPERSESSIONISM IN THE THEOLOGY OF THOMAS AQUINAS

During the last decade, the discussion over whether Thomas Aquinas's theology is supersessionist has elicited deep disagreement among scholars. Two divergent positions have emerged. One claims that Aquinas is the standard-bearer of a supersessionist church, and the other claims that Aquinas avoids supersessionism. Scholars on both sides of the debate agree that supersessionism is a theological problem and must be avoided. Yet the current discussion suffers from a lack of clarity about what supersessionism is, and why it is problematic.

My aim in this chapter is to clarify the discussion regarding whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist. I achieve this aim in two steps. First, I trace the usage of the term "supersessionism" to identify a working definition informed by systematic theological reflection. Then I will evaluate how the definition of supersessionism functions in each scholar's argument over whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist.

In the first section, I delineate the discussion over the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology from the broad body of scholarship on Aquinas's "social doctrine" of the Jewish people, or his policies concerning the treatment of the Jewish people in medieval society. In the second section, I trace the usage of the term supersessionism and establish a definition by drawing upon the work of the two scholars who have offered the most systematic treatment of the term to date: Terence L. Donaldson and R. Kendall Soulen. In the third section of the chapter, I identify what Michael Wyschogrod, Matthew Levering, Steven Boguslawski, and Mark Kinzer mean when they use the term "supersessionism," and discuss

whether their language of supersessionism is coherent. In section four, I demonstrate, by drawing upon the work of Bruce Marshall and Boguslawski, that the lack of precision with regard to the language of supersessionism and/or the failure to attend to Aquinas's most relevant works renders scholars' conclusions regarding Aquinas's susceptibility to the charge of supersessionism premature. My analysis will make clear that further study of this paramount question in the thought of Aquinas is necessary.

### 1. The Scholarship on Aquinas's Social Doctrine of the Jewish People

The discussion over the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology began eight years ago with the publication of Matthew Levering's dissertation, which was, in part, a response to Michael Wyschogrod's 1987 article, "A Jewish Reading of St. Thomas Aquinas."<sup>1</sup> However, this recent discussion over supersessionism emerged against the backdrop of an older conversation, which began at the turn of the twentieth century, regarding Aquinas's social doctrine of the Jewish people; that is, his policies concerning the treatment of Jewish people in medieval society, and whether these policies were antisemitic. Although this older conversation pursues a different question than this study, it is worth noting that the language of this prior debate has distracted a few scholars in the discussion over whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist, because scholars often confuse supersessionism with antisemitism. For this reason, it is necessary to outline the older

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading of St. Thomas Aquinas," in *Understanding Scripture: Explorations of Jewish and Christian Traditions of Interpretation*, ed. Clemens Thoma and Michael Wyschogrod (Paulist Press, 1987), 125-38. Matthew Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation According to Thomas Aquinas* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2002).

conversation in order to distinguish it from the more recent discussion over the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology.

The work of John Y. B. Hood reveals that at the turn of the twentieth century, and even after World War II, few scholars attended to Aquinas's attitude toward the Jews. Indeed, until the last quarter of the twentieth century, the scholarly conversation on Aquinas's social doctrine of the Jewish people was limited to a small number of articles.<sup>2</sup> Among the most influential were Jacob Guttman's *Das Verhältniss des Thomas von Aquino zum Judenthum und zur jüdischen Litteratur*, published in 1891, notable for its groundbreaking treatment of Maimonides's influence on Aquinas's thought.<sup>3</sup> Hanz Liebeschutz's 1961 article is also frequently cited, and its title reflects the dominant theme of most twentieth century literature on the topic of Aquinas's attitude toward the Jews of his day: "Judaism and Jewry in the Social Doctrine of Thomas Aquinas."<sup>4</sup> In 1976, the Institute of Medieval Studies expanded on this theme by publishing the proceedings of a colloquium,

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<sup>2</sup> John Y. B. Hood, *Aquinas and the Jews* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), x; 115. J. Guttman, *Das Verhältniss des Thomas von Aquino zum Judenthum und zur jüdischen Litteratur* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht's, 1891) in *Collected Papers of Jacob Guttman: An Original Anthology*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Arno Press, 1980), 13-60; B. S. Mailloux, *S. Thomas et les Juifs* (Montreal, 1935).

<sup>3</sup> See the reviews of Guttman's work by I. Abrahams, "Thomas Aquinas and Judaism," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 4, no. 1 (October 1891): 158-61; George G. Cameron, "Guttman's Verhältniss des Thomas von Aquino," in *The Critical review of theological & philosophical literature*, ed. S. D. F. Salmon, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1892), 185-8. In addition to Guttman's pioneering essay, Hood observes that two pamphlets were published in the aftermath of the Dreyfus affair: H. Gayraud, "L'antisemitisme de S. Thomas d'Aquin" (Paris 1896). S. Deploige, *S. Thomas et la question juive* (Paris: Libraire B. Bloud, 1897). The pamphlets defend against the charge of antisemitism but also concede that Aquinas's thought contains antisemitic elements in a qualified sense.

<sup>4</sup> Hanz Liebeschutz, "Judaism and Jewry in the Social Doctrine of Thomas Aquinas," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, no. 13 (1961): 57-81.

entitled *Aquinas and the Problems of His Time*.<sup>5</sup> Contributors to the volume endeavored to understand Aquinas's attitudes to what they perceived as thirteenth-century sociopolitical problems. The book included an entire section called "Aquinas on the Jews."<sup>6</sup>

From the turn of the century to the 1970s, the scholarship on Aquinas's attitude toward the Jews shares two characteristics. First, most scholars are largely concerned with what Liebeschutz referred to as Aquinas's social doctrine, or his policies concerning the Jews of his day and whether these policies were intolerant or anti-Semitic or both.<sup>7</sup> Second, the picture of Aquinas that emerges from a survey of the literature is largely an apologetic one.<sup>8</sup> Aquinas is seen as a theologian sympathetic to the Jews, supportive of their freedom to worship, and distinguished by his intellectual engagement with Maimonides. Yet at the same time, Aquinas is seen as essentially conservative in his view that Jews were the property of

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<sup>5</sup> G. Verbeke and D. Verhelst, *Aquinas and Problems of His Time* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1976).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 57-138.

<sup>7</sup> Commentary on his social doctrine has, for the most part, focused upon Aquinas's *Epistola ad ducissam Brabantiae* (also improperly called *De regimine Iudaeorum*), and the question of forced baptism and tolerance for Jewish worship in *Summa theologiae* Ia IIae q. 10.12 ad 4; IIa IIae q. 10.11. See Thomas Aquinas, "On the Government of the Jews," in *Aquinas: Selected Political Writings*, ed. A. P. D'Entreves, trans. J. G. Dawson (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1959), 85. All Latin citations of the *Summa theologiae* are from *Sancti Thomae de Aquino, Opera omnia*. vol. 4-12 Leonine edition (Rome, 1888-1906). English translations are from the Benziger edition unless otherwise noted. *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger, 1948).

<sup>8</sup> For example, Liebeschutz closes his article explaining how Aquinas's thought on the Jews had not the slightest impact on the "fate of Jewry." "The factors which brought about Jewish deterioration and catastrophe in the XIV century existed before Aquinas described some of them. His pleading for tolerance within the limits of a given situation, based on the common rules of humanity, gained no hearing." Liebeschutz, 81.

Christendom, and that they ought to be tolerated as unknowing witnesses to the truth of Christianity.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1990s, Hood and Jeremy Cohen broadened twentieth-century scholarship on Aquinas's social doctrine of the Jews through closer examinations of his theology. Hood's work represents the first book-length treatment of Aquinas's view of the Jews and the most comprehensive to date.<sup>10</sup> In *Aquinas and the Jews*, Hood claims to set Aquinas's view of the Jews in the context of the theological tradition of medieval Christian theologians as well as their patristic and biblical sources. Hood's book is, in part, a response to Jeremy Cohen's influential *The Friars and the Jews*, which implies that Aquinas's social policy emboldened the thirteenth century mendicant movement that undermined the religious freedom of medieval Jews.<sup>11</sup> Against Cohen, Hood argues that Aquinas's attitude toward Jews and

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<sup>9</sup> Aquinas adopts Augustine's "doctrine of Jewish witness." For a thorough treatment of the Augustinian doctrine, see Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1999), 59-65; Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (Doubleday Religion, 2008). S. Deploige argues that the antisemitic aspect of Aquinas's thought is the idea that Jews were ecclesiastical property. However, Cameron observes that Aquinas's attitude, when compared to his social and political setting, is rather exceptional: "While Thomas, in his teaching, accepted, and when called upon, defended the regulations from time to time issued by the Church with regard to the treatment of the Jews, personally he appears to have been entirely free from the hatred of the Jews which was a prominent feature of the history of his day." See Cameron, "Guttmann's Verhältniss des Thomas von Aquino," 187. Like Liebeschutz, Alexander Broadie argues that the Jews would have fared better if ecclesiastical authorities heeded Aquinas's tolerant views: "if anything at all is certain... it is that had the teaching of Aquinas been accorded, in those sad intervening centuries, the degree of respect now considered its due, many pages of history would not have been written that, much better for all of us, had not been." Alexander Broadie, "Medieval Jewry Through the Eyes of Aquinas," in *Aquinas and Problems of His Time*, ed. G. Verbeke and D. Verhelst (Cornell University Press, 1976), 58-61.

<sup>10</sup> Hood, *Aquinas and the Jews*, xi.

<sup>11</sup> Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Cornell University Press, 1984).



Judaism was essentially conservative and even banal.<sup>12</sup> Where there were innovations in Aquinas's thought, these innovations were, according to Hood, actually in the direction of tolerance. For Hood, Aquinas stands out as an exceptional representative of the tolerant Augustinian tradition and swims against the tide of mendicant thirteenth-century antisemitism.<sup>13</sup> Hood's findings confirm the earlier conclusions of Robert Chazan, Guttman, and Liebeschutz, who also highlight Aquinas's tolerant stance.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to Hood's work, Cohen's highly praised *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* also provides closer examination of Aquinas's theological interpretation of the Jews, especially his view of the literal sense of the ceremonial Mosaic Law.<sup>15</sup> In response to Hood's position that Aquinas's view of the Jews is conservative, Cohen attempts to make explicit the connection between Aquinas's view of Jewish unbelief and aggressive aspects of the mendicant movement. While Cohen agrees with Hood that Aquinas adopted a largely conservative posture, he strongly disagrees that Aquinas's position was banal, and argues that Aquinas's view that certain Jews remain

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<sup>12</sup> Hood, 111.

<sup>13</sup> Hood writes, "Aquinas was not part of a radical new trend; on the contrary, his attitude toward Judaism and the Jews was essentially conservative. Thomas's primary goal in this area was to clarify and systematize traditional theological and canonistic teaching on the Jews rather than break new ground." *Ibid.*, xi; See Steven C. Boguslawski, "Review of Aquinas and the Jews, by John Y. B. Hood," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 48, no. 2 (April 1, 1997): 346.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (University of California Press, 1989).

<sup>15</sup> Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*.

culpable for their rejection of Christianity departed significantly from the conservative Augustinian view that Jews continued to reject Christian salvation out of blind ignorance.<sup>16</sup>

Cohen and Hood stand apart from the twentieth-century scholarship on Aquinas's social doctrine of the Jews in their attempts to examine in detail aspects of Aquinas's theological interpretation of the Jewish people. Nevertheless, like most twentieth-century scholars of Aquinas's attitude toward Jews, Cohen and Hood are ultimately concerned with whether Aquinas's social doctrine can be linked to the increasing antisemitism of the fourteenth century.<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that this older conversation about antisemitism in Aquinas's social doctrine pursues a different question than the more theological question of

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<sup>16</sup> Cohen thinks Aquinas's view of the sin of Jewish unbelief in Christ in general and on Jewish complicity in the crucifixion in particular departs from Augustine: "[For Aquinas] the Jewish sages of the first century crucified Jesus even though they understood his role as messiah and son of God. Thomas Aquinas took the lead in developing the case for this conclusion on the basis of key New Testament passages, in striking contrast with their earlier Augustinian interpretation—reaffirmed by Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Abelard, and many others—that Jesus' murderers had acted in ignorance of his true character." Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 372. Cohen extends this argument in *Christ Killers: The Jews and the Passion from the Bible to the Big Screen* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> For a moderate perspective on Aquinas's connection to rising levels of antisemitism, see Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (University of California Press, 1989). The discussion on whether Aquinas's social doctrine contributed to rising levels of antisemitism continues in Pim Valkenberg and Henk Schoot's "Thomas Aquinas and Judaism," in *Aquinas in Dialogue: Thomas for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Jim Fodor and Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt (Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 49; See also Richard Schenk, "Views of the Two Covenants in Medieval Theology," *Nova et Vetera* 4, no. 4 (2006): 891-916; See also John F. X. Knasas, "Aquinas on Heretics and 'Jews'," *Soter: Religijos mokslo zurnalas (Journal of Religious Science)* 14, no. 42 (January 1, 2004): 165-174. For an excellent introduction to the historical background surrounding medieval Jewish-Christian relations see Chazan's "Christian-Jewish Interactions over the Ages" in Tikva Frymer-Kensky et al., eds., *Christianity In Jewish Terms* (Basic Books, 2002), 7-23.

supersessionism, and can be set aside in order to take up what Valkenberg and Schoot (following Cohen) have referred to as the “theological side” of Aquinas’s view of the Jews.<sup>18</sup>

Before I evaluate how the language of supersessionism functions in each scholar’s discussion of whether Aquinas’s theology is supersessionist, it is crucial to trace the usage of the term and clarify the particular relationship between Israel and the Church that the word is most often used to describe.

## 2. The Language of Supersessionism

The ultimate goal of this chapter is to identify what problem each scholar in the discussion intends to describe when they use the term supersessionism.<sup>19</sup> Though the term possesses a variety of associations, the word can function as an important analytical tool to describe *a particular relationship* between Israel and the Church. I rely upon Terence L. Donaldson’s typology of relations between Israel and Church, presented in his 2009

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<sup>18</sup> This is not to say that there exists no thematic overlap between this older conversation on antisemitism and the more recent discussion on supersessionism. For example, Cohen’s and Hood’s insights on Aquinas’s interpretation of the ceremonial law illuminate tensions in his interpretation of the prefigurative and literal reasons for the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae*. Their treatment of themes is useful only as such treatment helps clarify Aquinas’s theological interpretation of the relationship between Israel and the Church, which is a different aim altogether than asking whether his views of Jews were tolerant in medieval society. Valkenberg and Schoot’s brief study highlights two significant theological elements in Aquinas’s thought especially relevant to the question of supersessionism: Aquinas’s interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures in general, and especially his treatment of Christ’s circumcision. Valkenberg and Schoot’s article also treats the question of Aquinas’s view of Jewish “disbelief” and tolerance, and can thus be seen as part of the older conversation on whether Aquinas’s social doctrine was antisemitic. In my personal correspondence with Pim Valkenberg, he agreed that his article should be considered a part of this older conversation. Matthew Levering also sees the question of Aquinas’s view of the Jews in general as falling outside the scope of his more theological work that addresses salvation and, in part, question of supersessionism. See Matthew Levering, *Christ’s Fulfillment of Torah and Temple* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 152fn. 50.

<sup>19</sup> By “language of supersessionism” I mean the term “supersessionism,” “supersede,” “supersessionist,” and related words.

presidential address to the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies, to trace the usage of the term supersessionism in contemporary theology and then outline his typology.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout my presentation of Donaldson's typology, I also incorporate R. Kendall Soulen's influential treatment of supersessionism in his *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*.<sup>21</sup>

Lastly, I suggest a definition of supersessionism that clarifies various usages of the authors below. This definition should serve as a resource for clarifying scholars' use of the term on both sides of the debate over supersessionism in Aquinas's theology.

## 2.1 Tracing the Usage of the Term

The English term supersessionism is derived from the Latin, *supersedere*, meaning "to sit upon; to sit above."<sup>22</sup> Terrance Donaldson has recently observed that the use of *supersedere* and related words to describe Christianity's relationship to Judaism are not new developments. English words related to *supersedere* have been used to describe the relationship between Israel and the Church for over two hundred years. The earliest appearance of the word, according to Donaldson, is William Paley's use of "supersessionism" cited in the Oxford English Dictionary. Paley spoke of the "supersession" of the law that occurred with Christ in 1790.<sup>23</sup> Chapter III of Thelwall's 1870 translation of

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<sup>20</sup> Terence L. Donaldson, "Supersessionism in Early Christianity," 2009 Canadian Society of Biblical Studies Presidential Address, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario.

<sup>21</sup> R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> R. Kendall Soulen, "Supersessionism," ed. Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn, *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge University Press, July 14, 2008), 413-4.

<sup>23</sup> William Paley, *Horae Paulinae*, (London: Printed by J. Davis, for R. Faulder, 1790), 167. Cited in Donaldson, 4.

Tertullian's *An Answer to the Jews* is entitled "Of Circumcision and the Supercession [sic] of the Old Law."<sup>24</sup> The 1873 translation of F. C. Baur's *Paulus* states that "[that] the essence of true religion did not consist in outward ceremonials, connected with a temple service confined to an appointed spot, was the one great idea, through which, at that time, Judaism saw itself superseded by Christianity."<sup>25</sup> In each case, usage of the term supersession or supersede carries a positive connotation and seems to refer to a twofold movement where the law, or Old Law, is rendered obsolete by Christ with the result that Christianity becomes superior to Judaism.

However, according to Donaldson, the positive connotation surrounding the language of supersessionism is lost after the Second World War. After the horrors of the *Shoa*, Christian theologians were forced to ask how an "industry of genocide could have been conceived and carried out in the centre of Christian civilization," and scholars began to assess the degree to which the Christian tradition was responsible. The dominant categories, argues Donaldson, for this post-Holocaust examination of Christian theology have been "anti-Judaism" and "antisemitism."<sup>26</sup> As indicated by section one of this chapter, twentieth-

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<sup>24</sup> Vol. 4 in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Christian Library; Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1867). Cited in Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teachings* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 181. Cited in Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Donaldson points to Rosemary R. Ruether's *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Minneapolis: Seabury, 1974) as well as the following works: Gregory Baum, *Is the New Testament anti-Semitic?: A re-examination of the New Testament* (Paulist Press, 1965); George M. Smiga, *Pain and Polemic: Anti-Judaism in the Gospels* (Paulist Press, 1992); William R. Farmer, *Anti-Judaism and the Gospels*, 1st ed. (Trinity Press International, 1999). Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville, *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, 1st ed. (Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); Jules Isaac, *The teaching of contempt: Christian roots of anti-Semitism* (McGraw-Hill, 1965); Samuel Sandmel, *Anti-*

century scholarship on Aquinas's social doctrine of the Jews mirrored these concerns over the question of antisemitism in Christian theology.

Donaldson shows that in recent years the language of supersessionism has been drawn into this post-Holocaust examination of antisemitism in the Christian tradition and has lost its positive connotation. He believes the earliest use of the word supersessionism solely as a negative designation may be the 1971 English translation of Jules Isaac's *Jésus et Israël*. In Isaac's work, explains Donaldson, "we read that the Gospels were written in a period of increasing hostility between synagogue and Church, where Jewish law was declared to be superseded."<sup>27</sup> Since *Jésus et Israël*, the term has increasingly functioned to denote "Christian claims that the church has replaced Israel in the divine purposes and has inherited all that was positive in Israel's tradition."<sup>28</sup> In the years surrounding the publication of the second volume of *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity*, one finds more instances of "supersede" and "supersession."<sup>29</sup> Franklin H. Littell argued in his classic work *The Crucifixion of the Jews*, that "the superseding or displacement myth" was the "cornerstone of Christian Antisemitism."<sup>30</sup> In 1973, a group of Christian theologians convened by the Commission on

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*Semitism in the New Testament?* (Fortress Press, 1978); and John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1985).

<sup>27</sup> Donaldson, 9.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>29</sup> Donaldson points to Lloyed Gaston's discussion of Justin Martyr's argument with Judaism where Gaston explains how Justin believes "his group and its social and cultural worlds...supersede" those of Trypho and the Jews. See *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity*. Vol 2, 77. Cited in Ibid., 5.

<sup>30</sup> Littell's use of "displacement" seems synonymous with "replacement." Franklin H. Littell, *The Crucifixion of the Jews* (Mercer University Press, 2000), 135. Cited Ibid., 5.

Faith and Order of the National Council of Churches, in collaboration with the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and chaired by Littell, published “A Statement to Our Fellow Christians” which declared: “The singular grace of Jesus Christ does not abrogate the covenantal relationship of God with Israel. In Christ the Church shares in Israel’s election without superseding it.”<sup>31</sup> Numerous churches published formal documents similarly rejecting the belief that the Church has “replaced” the Jews in God’s divine plan.<sup>32</sup> An indicative example cited by Soulen is the declaration by the Presbyterian Church (USA):

We believe and testify that [the] theory of supersessionism or replacement is harmful and in need of reconsideration as the church seeks to proclaim God’s saving activity with humankind... God’s covenants are not broken. ‘God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew’ (Rom. 11:2). The church has not ‘replaced’ the Jewish people... Hence, when speaking with Jews about matters of faith, we must always acknowledge that Jews are already in a covenantal relationship with God.<sup>33</sup>

Donaldson shows how the language of supersessionism is now used in contemporary theology as a negative designation for the claim that the Church has superseded or replaced

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<sup>31</sup> Littell, *The Crucifixion of the Jews*, 135.

<sup>32</sup> For other examples of church documents Donaldson references the work of Michael J. Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel* (Peter Lang, 2009).

<sup>33</sup> Statement of the 1987 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Soulen also references the following sources on church documents that explicitly reject supersessionism: Allan Brockway et al., *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People: Statements by the World Council of Churches and Its Member Churches* (World Council of Churches, 1988), 111. Clark M. Williamson, *A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology*, 1st ed. (Presbyterian Publishing Corp., 1993), 37. Helga B. Croner, *Stepping stones to further Jewish-Christian relations* (Stimulus Books, 1977). Helga B. Croner, *More Stepping Stones to Jewish-Christian Relations: An Unabridged Collection of Christian Documents, 1975-1983* (Paulist Press, 1985); See also Mary C. Boys’s *Has God Only One Blessing*, which contains a helpful chart listing documents on Jewish-Christian Relations broken down according to Vatican statements, Papal statements, statements by bishops, and Protestant denominations. Mary C Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing?: Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 252-3. See Soulen, 178.

the Jews as God's elect people and that the covenant is now abrogated or obsolete.<sup>34</sup> Although the solely negative connotation surrounding the term is relatively new, the word has been in use for hundreds of years by Christians to describe the obsolescence and abrogation of the Old Law and the consequent replacement of Israel with the Church. Soulen refers to the contemporary repudiation of supersessionism as a sea change in the disposition of the church toward the Jewish people.<sup>35</sup>

Donaldson points out that over the last two decades of the twentieth-century, the language of supersessionism became pervasive in theological and biblical scholarship, and has even passed into popular usage.<sup>36</sup> The widespread usage of the term and its diverse meanings even qualifies it as an "ism," according to Donaldson. However, despite the variety of associations, the language of supersessionism should not simply be conflated with "negative views of Jews" and set aside as a loaded term.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Donaldson references the following sources: Donald G. Bloesch, "All Israel Will be Saved: Supersessionism and the Biblical Witness," *Interpretation* 43 (1989): 130-42; Robert R. Hann "Supersessionism, Engraftment, and Jewish-Christian Dialogue: Reflections on the Presbyterian Statement on Jewish-Christian Relations," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 27 (1990): 327-42; Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel in the Development of Christian Thought* (Rome: Istituto Biblico Evangelico Italiano, 2000), 31; John Howard Yoder, *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*, ed. Michael G. Cartwright and Peter Ochs (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 213-14, 278; Douglas Harink, *Paul Among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology Beyond Christendom and Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003), 23; Eugene B. Korn and John T. Pawlikowski, eds., *Two Faiths, One Covenant? Jewish and Christian Identity in the Presence of the Other* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 3; Vlach, "The Church as a Replacement of Israel." See Donaldson, 7. As far as I can tell, the only change is that the term supersede is now considered as wholly negative, where as before it was frequently used with positive and triumphalist notes to describe Christ and Christians replacing Torah and Jews.

<sup>35</sup> Peter Ochs's book *Another Reformation* seems to validate Soulen's comment about the significant shift that the reevaluation of the theory of supersessionism represents. Peter Ochs, *Another Reformation: Postliberal Christianity and the Jews* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

<sup>36</sup> Donaldson, 7.

<sup>37</sup> In his engagement with David Novak, Levering describes the term "supersessionism" as a loaded word. I show below that despite a rather frequent use of the term over the last ten years, Matthew Levering



To the contrary, the language of supersessionism is a helpful tool because it specifies a particular theological description of the relationship between Israel and the Church. Supersessionism describes a theological aspect of what might be called “negative views of Jews.” The language of supersessionism helps distinguish particular Christian theological claims about the relationship between Israel and the Church, from the phenomenon of negative views of the Jews in general (e.g. negative views of Jews motivated by antisemitism). In Donaldson’s view, supersessionism is therefore different than antisemitism. “If anti-Semitism refers to hateful attitudes and actions directed toward the Jewish people per se,” writes Donaldson, “supersessionism refers [broadly] to the kind of Christian self-understanding that might be seen to undergird such anti-Judaic rhetoric.”<sup>38</sup> By “Christian self-understanding” I take Donaldson to mean “the church’s own self-

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ultimately sets the term aside in his latest work. Likewise, Holly Taylor Coolman recently argued in her article “Christological Torah” that supersessionism is “too simplistic a term” and that it is “actually most helpful to lay aside entirely the category of supersessionism, or replacement...” It seems Coolman’s argument is based on the following rationale: For Aquinas, Torah and Christ (both as Divine Law) are ultimately the same thing. Since Torah and Christ are the same thing, there can be no replacement of one entity with another. Since supersessionism is a word that assumes two entities with one replacing another, the term simply does not apply. One cannot say Christ replaces Torah. However, Coolman’s helpful reflection upon Torah takes place apart from the idea of the permanent election of the people of Israel. Coolman uses “replacement” to describe Christ replacing Law but that is not the only subject of the replacement that the term supersessionism describes, according to Soulen. The twofold claims of supersessionism, as I will show below, are that the Torah observance is declared obsolete, and that because of this new state of affairs, the Church replaces Jews (not just Torah) as God’s elect community. The consequences of Coolman’s choice to avoid the language of supersessionism is most clearly apparent in her lack of attention to the reason for why observance of Torah is significant. Coolman argues that Jewish Christians could continue to practice Torah (if they prescind from Aquinas’s teaching that such a practice is a mortal sin after Christ) but it is not clear why she thinks Jewish observance of Torah is important, other than that Wyschogrod has suggested it is. She fails to recognize the theological heart of the problem Wyschogrod intends to protect: the biblical claim that Israel is God’s elect unto the end of time. The language of supersessionism, and of replacement, especially as presented by Soulen and Donaldson, assists the contemporary discussion over whether Aquinas’s theology is supersessionist by highlighting this incredibly important biblical claim. See Holly Taylor Coolman, “Christological Torah,” *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 5, no. 1 (2010): 3.

<sup>38</sup> Donaldson, 8.

conception.”<sup>39</sup> Consequently, the language of supersessionism refers broadly to a particular set of claims about the Church’s self-conception as this self-conception *relates* to the status of Jews and Judaism. For this reason, Donaldson rightly views supersessionism as a “helpful analytical category that makes a positive contribution to the discussion and helps to move it forward.”

Yet Donaldson believes the language of supersessionism has its limits. The term is helpful as an analytical category *only* if Israel and the Church are considered *separate and fixed entities*. This is simply because the term “supersede” refers to a completed process of replacement of one separate and fixed entity over another separate and fixed entity:

Supersessionism describes a situation where one entity, by virtue of its supposed superiority, comes to occupy a position that previously belonged to another, the displaced group becoming outmoded or obsolete in the process. The term thus properly applies to a completed process of replacement. For this reason, it is most immediately applicable in a situation where “Christianity” and “Judaism” are—or are perceived to be—more or less separate entities and the church is recognizably non-Jewish.<sup>40</sup>

Donaldson offers Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* as representative of the sort of relationship among the fixed entity of Judaism and the fixed entity of Christianity assumed by the language of supersession: “the church exists separately from ‘you Jews’; the old law and covenant have become obsolete and replaced by a new law; the church has now become the *verus* Israel; the scriptures are no longer ‘yours, but ours.’” Donaldson understands supersessionism as a helpful term only when used to describe a relation between two separate

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

entities in general. In particular, the term is helpful for describing the claim that “the church has replaced the Jewish people as the people of God.”<sup>41</sup> That supersession refers simply to one entity “replacing” another is the reason why the language of “replacement theology” is often used interchangeably with supersessionism. Soulen points out that supersessionism is substantially equivalent to the term replacement theology since “both [terms] designate a theological perspective that interprets Christian faith generally and the status of the Church in particular so as to claim or imply the abrogation or obsolescence of God’s covenant with the Jewish people.”<sup>42</sup>

However, Donaldson points out that supersessionism, as a descriptive category, becomes less helpful as one moves closer to the first century, since the two entities of Israel and Church are not fixed during this period but are rather fluid. As Donaldson points out, recent study shows that the “parting of the ways” between Jewish, Christian, and Jewish Christian identities was by no means complete and definitive in the time of Justin.<sup>43</sup> “When we move behind Justin... into earlier transitional period and back towards the first generation of the movement, we encounter a situation where it is progressively less realistic to speak of two separated entities....”<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the language of supersessionism, which describes one

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<sup>41</sup> Donaldson, 13.

<sup>42</sup> R. Kendall Soulen, “Replacement theology,” in Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn, *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 375.

<sup>43</sup> Donaldson cites Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Fortress Press, 2007); and Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). See also Yoder in *Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*.

<sup>44</sup> Donaldson, 12.

Christian entity replacing another Jewish entity, simply does not work before the second century,<sup>45</sup> because the entities in question are not separate, but characterized by a great degree of continuity.<sup>46</sup> By tracing the usage of the term, therefore, Donaldson shows that 1) supersessionism is helpful for referring to one separate and fixed entity replacing

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<sup>45</sup> Outlining the history of supersessionism is unfortunately beyond the scope of this chapter. Michael J. Vlach argues that there is general agreement among church historians that supersessionism originated and developed early in the church's history yet there are differing opinions about the precise time of its appearance. Vlach writes "The precise time that supersessionism began... is difficult to ascertain. Some, for example, hold that it began with the teachings of Justin Martyr (c. 100-165) as the key figure in the origin and development of supersessionism." Vlach points out that Jeffrey S. Siker's *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham In Early Christian Controversy* shows that Adolf von Harnack viewed Justin as inaugurating a new era in how Christians perceived themselves in relation to Israel. "Justin is important," Vlach writes, "because he was the first church father to explicitly identify the church as 'the true spiritual Israel.'" Craig A. Blaising, on the other hand, asserts that supersessionism first arose after the suppression of the Bar Kochba revolt against Rome in A.D. 135. Others have argued for a later date for the emergence of the replacement view. Walter C. Kaiser, for instance, states that supersessionism has its origins in the 'political ecclesiastical alliance forged between Eusebius Pamphilus and the Emperor Constantine.' For Kaiser, a theology of replacement arose in the fourth century when 'the church began to adopt an anti-Jewish stance that had an enormous effect on its theological constructions.'" Vlach thinks supersessionism originated earlier with Justin Martyr. He sees Martyr as solidifying a process in formative Christianity that began some time in the first two centuries of the church. According to Vlach, "several political, historical, and cultural developments converged that contributed to the belief that the church had permanently superseded national Israel as the people of God." Vlach argues that three factors contributed to the acceptance of supersessionism in the early church: 1) the increasing Gentile composition of the early church; 2) the church's perception of the destructions of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and 135; and 3) a hermeneutical approach that allowed the church to appropriate Israel's promises to itself. Together, these factors contributed to a consensus among the early church fathers that the church had permanently replaced national Israel as God's people." Factors 2 and 3 in particular are especially relevant to the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology. I will return to Aquinas's relationship to factor 3 (the hermeneutical approach that allowed the church to appropriate Israel's promises to itself) toward the end of this chapter, when I examine the work of Boguslawski, since his view of Aquinas and factor 3 help set the stage for the question that guides this study. See Vlach, 41-43. Jeffrey S. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, 1st ed. (Westminster John Knox Press, 1991).

<sup>46</sup> The Pontifical Biblical Commission also recognizes that the complete separation of Israel and Church is dependent upon a certain historical perspective. For example, see the important document *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, which states: "In the past, the break between the Jewish people and the Church of Christ Jesus *might at times have seemed complete in certain periods and in certain places*. In the light of the Scriptures, this should never have happened, because a complete break between the Church and the Synagogue is in contradiction to Sacred Scripture." Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* IV Sec. 85. Available from [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb\\_documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20020212\\_popolo-ebraico\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20020212_popolo-ebraico_en.html) and accessed on March 7, 2011.

another and 2) that the language of supersessionism or replacement has now taken on a negative connotation.

From this section it should be clear that Donaldson helps clarify that supersessionism describes one entity replacing another and is now considered a negative term. However, as I stated above, Donaldson also shows that the term supersessionism has limits, as it makes little sense without proper historical contextualization. He supplies this contextualization by setting the language of supersessionism in a helpful typology of relations between Israel and the Church, which I outline next.

## 2.2 Terence Donaldson's Typology of Relations Between Israel and the Church and Kendall Soulen's Economic Supersessionism

In order to retain the positive analytical function of the term “supersessionism” to describe Christian claims that the Church replaces Israel and makes obsolete the law, Donaldson proposes a typology of relations between Israel and Church that reflects historical expressions of the relation between these two entities in Christian theology.<sup>47</sup> Donaldson sets his typology upon a continuum with discontinuity between Israel and Church at one pole, and continuity between the Israel and Church at the other. In between these two poles of discontinuity and continuity, a variety of ways of construing the relationship between Israel and Church are possible. The various ways of construing the relationship are determined by the status accorded to three different entities of the “early Christian formative period.” In the early Christian formative period there are not simply two fixed entities of “Israel and

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<sup>47</sup> Indeed the goal of Donaldson's essay is to “provide a more finely-drawn typology of the various ways in which groups of Christ-believers in the first formative century and a half conceived of their relationship to the phenomenon of Israel in its various dimensions.” Donaldson, 13.

Church” but rather “three sets of more fluid variables” which Donaldson refers to as: 1) Gentile Church; 2) biblical Israel; and 3) the Jewish people (or postbiblical Israel). The status accorded to each of these fluid variables determines whether there is a relation of continuity or a relation of discontinuity between Israel and the Church.

For example, supersessionism, which emphasizes discontinuity, is only one way of construing the relationship among these three variables.<sup>48</sup> According to supersessionist teaching, the Gentile Church, biblical Israel, and postbiblical Israel are defined in such a way as to result in the formation of two separate entities. The condition or status given to each entity is as follows:

- 1) the Christian church, essentially Gentile and completely separated from Judaism;
- 2) biblical Israel, the people at the center of the collection of writings considered as scripture by both church and synagogue; and 3) the Jewish people [or postbiblical Israel], considered by Christians as superseded by the church.<sup>49</sup>

Supersessionism is thus language helpful for referring to *one particular historical instantiation* of the relation between the entities of postbiblical Israel and the Gentile Church. Supersessionism refers to an understanding of postbiblical Israel and Gentile Church that is possible *only after the formative period* where the entity 1) Gentile Church, is increasingly

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<sup>48</sup> The distinction between biblical Israel and postbiblical Israel is first and foremost a historical and chronological distinction. To grasp Donaldson’s categories one must first grasp their historical nature. The context of Donaldson’s categories is “early church formative period” and at this period in time these entities were recognized as three distinct-yet-continuous entities: 1) During early church formative period Gentile Church is an emerging movement planted by Jewish followers of Jesus and thus it is a movement springing out of 2) the tradition and practices of biblical Israel (the Israel described in the Hebrew scriptures and cited in the preaching of the apostles) 3) The Jewish Christian and Jewish audience of the apostles’ preaching as well as other Judaisms that develop after the biblical period are considered Postbiblical Israel. These Judaisms viewed 2 (Biblical Israel) as their story. The point is that all three groups in the formative stage are fluid rather than two different “religions.” Theological distinctions that reduce fluidity and solidify Christians on the one hand from Jews on the other come at a later period.

<sup>49</sup> Donaldson, 13.

defined as distinct and replacing Israel. Because biblical Israel's role is fulfilled in the creation of the Gentile Church, biblical Israel is considered as a stage of salvation history that is now completed.

To understand Donaldson's typology it is important to grasp that there exists a spectrum of possible relations between Israel and the Church and that these forms of relationship fall between the poles of continuity or discontinuity. The degree of continuity or discontinuity characterized by the relation between postbiblical Israel and the Church will be determined by the status accorded each to the three fluid variables *of the early Christian formative period*: 1) Gentile Church, 2) biblical Israel, and the 3) Jewish people or postbiblical Israel. The status accorded to three fluid variables of Gentile Church, biblical Israel, and postbiblical Israel is determined by a variety of possible interpretations regarding each entity's status.<sup>50</sup> Each entity's relation to another entity is determined by:

- a) a range of conceptions concerning the place and status of Jewish and Gentile believers within groups of Christ-believers; b) a range of conceptions concerning the nature and purpose of scriptural Israel and its religion in relation to new beliefs about Christ and his significance; c) a range of conceptions concerning the place and status of continuing Jewish people and their religion.<sup>51</sup>

This wide variety or range of possible conceptions concerning the status of each entity (Gentile Church, biblical Israel, and the Jewish people), are then determined by how certain questions about each entity are answered. Donaldson argues that the range of conceptions

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<sup>50</sup> Aquinas also wrestles with these same variables and his conception of how these variables are set determines his view of the relationship between Israel and the Church.

<sup>51</sup> Donaldson, 13.

over each entity's nature and purpose are determined by the following sets of questions (though these questions are not exhaustive):

- 1) Gentile Church: With respect to groups of Christ-believers and their ethnic composition: On what terms were Gentiles included? Did Jew and Gentile continue to be significant categories, or were these identities thought to have been dissolved and transcended?
- 2) Biblical Israel: Did scriptural Israel have positive validity as the people of God in the past? If so, were the basic elements of Israel's self-understanding (covenant, *Torah*, temple, land, etc.) considered valid as these were understood by Jews themselves or valid only as they were reinterpreted in light of Christ belief?
- 3) Jewish people: With respect to continuing Jewish people, had Israel as a distinct entity been totally absorbed into the church, so that continuing Judaism was devoid of theological significance? Or was Judaism seen as a continuation of scriptural Israel in some way, but only in negative terms? Or was Judaism seen in some way as more positive ongoing embodiment of scriptural Israel?<sup>52</sup>

Donaldson argues that based on answers to these questions suggested and defended in the history of Christian theology one can construct five types of relations among Israel and the Church, or what might be referred to as "the five ways" of construing the relationship of Israel and Church.

### *1) Relationship of Binary Opposites*

The first type of relationship between Israel and the Church is: 1) Relationship of Binary Opposites.<sup>53</sup> Donaldson identifies two subsets of this type. The first subset, or 1.1, is the idea that *Israel is the opposite of the true people of God*. Here, there is no continuity between the religious institutions and people of Israel and the Gentile Church. "The two groups are not simply distinct," writes Donaldson, "but in their defining characteristics they

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 15.



are binary opposites of each other—or, to use the category that Marcion chose for the title of his major work (*Antithesis*), they are antithetical.”<sup>54</sup> The God of Israel is distinct from the Father God proclaimed by and revealed by Jesus Christ. Another subset of type one, which Donaldson labels 1.2, is *Polar Opposites from the beginning* or the idea that there were “true and false” opposites within biblical Israel itself. Within biblical Israel there existed a true set that believed in Christ, and a false set that did not believe in Christ, but rather put faith in God’s actual covenant with Israel. Ignatius of Antioch is a representative of this subset. Donaldson argues that 1.1 is *not* a supersessionist model, since no replacement is possible for two entities that have always been considered as polar opposites, completely distinct and unrelated. However, 1.2, in Donaldson’s view, is “a cover for an essentially supersessionist pattern of thought.”<sup>55</sup>

## 2) *A Relationship of Discontinuity and Supersession*

The second type of relationship between Israel and the Church, explains Donaldson, is a relation of discontinuity and supersession. In this type, “Israel is seen as an old entity that has been displaced and rendered obsolete by the church, a new entity in which any distinction between Jew and Gentile no longer has any fundamental significance.”<sup>56</sup> Under this construal of relationship, Donaldson identifies two subsets: 2.1 *Israel as a failed entity rejected by God and replaced with a church primarily drawn from the Gentiles*. Torah and

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 18.

Temple are given a preparatory role in this model, but ultimately, biblical Israel is ultimately a story of failure. Positive meaning is located only in symbolic christological meanings. The Church replaces Israel due to Israel's status as a failed entity. The focal point here is Israel's sinfulness, especially in its rejection of the messiah, though this sin is a culmination of a "legacy of sin and rebellion." Due to this legacy of failure, Israel's covenant with God is revoked. Donaldson notes that this form of supersessionism corresponds with a type identified by Soulen as "punitive supersessionism." "Revoking" language is usually associated with punitive supersessionism where the logic is that Israel's status as the elect people of God is removed or taken away on account of their rejection of Christ. Soulen defines punitive supersessionism as the idea that "God abrogates God's covenant with the Jews on account of Israel's rejection of Christ and the gospel."<sup>57</sup>

The second subset is 2.2, in which Biblical Israel is an entity of the past having had a certain preparatory role to play but is now superseded by a church in which ethnic distinction has no fundamental significance. According to subset 2.2, biblical Israel is ascribed a more positive role as a people not characterized by a legacy of sin. However, their role is understood only as a preparation for the new institution brought about through Christ whose fulfillment also abrogates their elect status and abolishes the old covenant. The old law is considered good but only for a time. The new covenant then takes the place of the old

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<sup>57</sup> Soulen, *God of Israel*, 30.

covenant, the old becoming obsolete.<sup>58</sup> As Donaldson points out, this model corresponds to the type already identified in detail by Soulen as “economic supersessionism.”

From Soulen’s perspective, economic supersessionism (2.2) is actually more of a theological problem than punitive supersessionism (2.1). Punitive supersessionism may initially appear more problematic than economic supersessionism because of its overt hostility toward both biblical Israel and postbiblical Israel (e.g. the idea that Israel is a “blind” and unfaithful entity). However, explains Soulen, economic supersessionism poses a far more difficult theological problem because of how it represents Jewish people in the present (or postbiblical Israel). Economic supersessionism entails the ontological, historical, and moral obsolescence of Israel’s existence after Christ.<sup>59</sup> This ontological, historical, and moral obsolescence is ultimately the result of a complete change in the theological status of Jewish flesh: “An essential element of this abrogation,” writes Donaldson, “is the eradication of any theological distinction between Jew and Gentile.”<sup>60</sup>

It is important to unpack the meaning of “theological distinction” to understand Donaldson’s and Soulen’s view of this form of supersessionism, as it will serve a key role in the definition of supersessionism I propose below. By “theological distinction” both Soulen

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<sup>58</sup> Donaldson notes that there is “no shortage of New Testament material that might be read in accordance with this sub-type.” Donaldson,” 20.

<sup>59</sup> That the ontological, historical, and moral obsolescence of Israel’s existence is a theological problem may not be immediately apparent. Soulen goes to great length to explain the facets of the problem in his *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*. Drawing upon the work of Soulen, this chapter’s treatment of Wyschogrod’s view of the election of Israel and supersessionism should clarify why the obsolescence of Israel’s existence is a Christian theological problem. See, *God of Israel*, 31.

<sup>60</sup> Donaldson, 19.

and Donaldson are referring to the *theological difference* between a Jew and a Gentile in light of God's election of Abraham's descendants. This theological difference is that Jew is different from Gentile because of the claim that God chose a particular people, the descendants of the seed of Abraham, as God's elect community. The theological distinction of the election of the descendants of Abraham is expressed in the practice of circumcision and observance of Torah.<sup>61</sup> The claim that the practices of circumcision and observance of Torah are either of no significance or constitute sinful acts is thus the equivalent of saying the flesh of the Jews is no longer theologically distinct. If Jews are not set apart from the nations then it follows the election of the Jews is obsolete. This is why Soulen explains that economic supersessionism undermines the "very existence of Jewish flesh or carnal Jewish existence." Economic supersessionism teaches that Jewish carnal existence is in contrast to a spiritual existence:

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<sup>61</sup> It is important to understand that this theological distinction between Jew and Gentile is not based on ethnicity but on theological claim of election and the practices that express election. Soulen writes, "God's election of Israel is indeed a carnal election, in Wyschogrod's language, but it does not coincide with any ethnic group (Ismael and Isaac are of the same ethnicity). Judaism is a tribe or family descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that reproduces itself from generation to generation through the practice of ceremonial law and matrilineal descent, which one may enter through ceremony of conversion. However, it is not an ethnicity or ethnic group, as this term is understood in contemporary English discourse, where it functions as a fuzzier and politer synonym of race. This remains true even if one cannot resign one's Jewish identity. A convert to Judaism becomes a Jew, a member of the tribe, but their ethnicity does not change. Again, children descended from one Gentile parent and one Jewish parent have the same ethnic relation to their parents, regardless of whether the mother or the father is the Jew, but only the one descended from a Jewish mother is a Jew. The State of Israel includes many Jews of different ethnicities, including some who are black and Asian.

When I speak of a 'theologically significant distinction' between Jew and gentile, I mean a distinction that matters to God and that God desires in the past, present, and future. Such a distinction is a reflex of the belief that God desires the Jewish people to exist as his covenant partner in past, present, and future, as a distinguishable people among the nations. A theologically significant distinction is to be distinguished from a distinction that is merely an antiquated legacy of the past (e.g. "my granddad was a Jew"), or purely a matter of cultural, ethnic, or linguistic differences (eating bagels and speaking Yiddish etc.). In short, it is a distinction that must be respected for theological reasons, and not merely on other grounds." Personal correspondence with Soulen, March 25, 2011.

Israel corresponds to Christ in a merely prefigurative and carnal way, whereas the church corresponds to Jesus Christ in a definitive and spiritual way. Hence Christ's advent brings about the obsolescence of carnal Israel and inaugurates the age of the spiritual church. Everything that characterized the economy of salvation in its Israelite form becomes obsolete and is replaced by its ecclesial equivalent. The written law of Moses is replaced by the spiritual law of Christ, circumcision by baptism, natural descent by faith as criterion of membership in the people of God, and so forth. As a result, carnal Israel becomes obsolete.<sup>62</sup>

Both punitive supersessionism (2.1) and economic (2.2) share similar conclusions about postbiblical Israel in that the elect are no longer elect. However, the logic for *why* the Jewish people are no longer elect is what is different. Punitive supersessionism stresses that moral failure is the cause of the revoking of the elect status of the Jewish community. Economic supersessionism stresses that the obsolescence of the elect status of the Jewish community is due to her role in God's economy of redemption as only a preparation for a future salvation in spiritual and universal form. Once this role is completed, the elect status of the Jews is put to rest. In Donaldson's view both of these two types are "the most clearly supersessionist."<sup>63</sup>

### *3) A Relationship of Continuity, Redefinition and Reconstitution*

The third construal of the relationship between Israel and the Church is a relationship of continuity, redefinition and reconstitution. Donaldson explains that type three overlaps considerably with the supersessionism of type two in its emphasis on the preparatory role of Torah and Temple.<sup>64</sup> The difference is that that the role of biblical Israel is believed to

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<sup>62</sup> Soulen, *God of Israel*, 29.

<sup>63</sup> Donaldson, 26.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

continue in the Gentile Church through what he refers to as a “reduced Jewish entity.” Three different forms of “reduced Jewish identity” exist under type three, each one serving to connect biblical Israel to the Gentile Church, and identified as subsets 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

Donaldson describes 3.1 as Israel as succeeded by Christ, who provides the sole point of continuity between Israel of the past and the church of the present. According to Donaldson this model emphasizes continuity between biblical Israel and the Gentile Church solely through Christ as Jewish entity. The Church is the *verus* Israel because it is an extension of Christ who is truly Jewish. Yet in this subset there is no continuity with the flesh of the people of biblical Israel in and of itself. Donaldson believes this subset overlaps greatly with the discontinuity and supersessionism of type two, and claims this type is also supersessionist:

For all intents and purposes sub-type 3.1, in which Christ functions as the sole point of continuity, is supersessionist as well. Any corporate representative defined in such a way as to exclude rank-and-file members of the represented group can hardly be seen as effecting continuity in any real sense of the term.<sup>65</sup>

By exclusion of “rank-and-file members,” Donaldson means that this model of relations between Israel and Gentile Church views Jewish flesh as obsolete since “no categorical distinction is made between Jewish and Gentile believers.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 21. Donaldson’s remarks about the discontinuity and supersessionism characterizing type 3.1 seem to blur the line between this subset and type two. It seems that the “continuity” claimed by this type redefines biblical Israel so completely (i.e. descent from Abraham loses theological significance) that it serves as a cover for what is ultimately a total supersession of one entity by another. Thus it would seem more appropriate to categorize this subset under type two, as 2.3—relationship of discontinuity and supersessionism. I will however, continue to refer to this type as 3.1 for purposes of clarity.

A second subset, 3.2, can be called *Israel as succeeded without remainder by a Jewish remnant, supplemented by Gentiles who come in to replace unbelieving Jews*. This subset emphasizes continuity between biblical Israel and the Church through another Jewish entity, that of a group of Jews who exist *within the Gentile Church* as Jewish Christ-believers. These Jewish Christ-believers “form a distinct core” to which Gentile believers are then added.<sup>67</sup> This model appeals to Paul’s olive tree analogy since the analogy can be taken to imply that God has replaced unbelieving Jews with believing Christians: “You will say ‘branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.’” Unbelieving Jews are understood to be broken off and replaced by wild olive shoots. The olive shoots are the Gentiles who are brought in to replace Jewish unbelievers “broken off” for failure to believe in Christ.<sup>68</sup> Biblical Israel continues but it is *only* a faithful remnant of Christ-believing Jews (or good branches) and unbelieving postbiblical Israel is rejected. The faithful remnant of Jewish apostles and believers is the core of the Gentile Church. The Gentile Church is thus a reconstitution and redefinition of biblical Israel, based on a reduced Jewish entity “thoroughly redefined around Christ.”<sup>69</sup>

Subset 3.3, is labeled *Israel as succeeded without remainder by a Jewish remnant, supplemented by Gentiles who are added to the Jewish core*. According to Donaldson, this subset stresses continuity between biblical Israel and the Church through a group of Jewish

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>68</sup> Donaldson does not think this is what Paul is saying in Romans 11:20.

<sup>69</sup> Donaldson, 20.

Christ-believers, however, Gentiles are *not perceived as replacing branches* of biblical Israel (Jewish unbelievers) but as “joining the company of Jewish believers and thus receiving a share in the blessings of Israel.”<sup>70</sup> There is no replacement of unbelieving Jews, but rather, Gentiles join Christ-believing Jews. Donaldson argues that Paul’s olive tree analogy is more aligned with 3.3 than 3.2, since 3.3 emphasizes inclusion of believing Gentiles *among* Jews and not in the place of Jews: “you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in *among* them”—that is, among the natural branches that remain—“and have become partners in the rich root of the olive tree.”

#### 4 ) *Relationship of Solidarity and Mission*

Like the last two subsets of type three, the fourth type centers around a remnant of Jewish-Christ believers that continues to be recognized as biblical Israel. Israel’s covenant identity has not been redefined because Temple and Torah are not redefined by Christ in any fundamental way.<sup>71</sup> Jewish Christ-believers are differentiated from Jewish compatriots by their belief that Jesus is the coming messiah and their belief that this is true for all Israel as well. Luke’s portrait of the Jerusalem church in Acts conforms to this type since he describes the church containing “many thousands” of Jewish believers, all of whom are “zealots for the law” (21:20). On the matter of Gentile inclusion there are differences between those who advocated circumcision and the apostolic decree promulgated by James in Acts 15.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 24.



### *5) Relationship of Co-Existence in Anticipation of the Final Redemption*

The defining characteristic of the last type of relation between Israel and the Church is that it affords a positive status to postbiblical Israel apart from belief in Christ. Because of their adherence to the Mosaic Law and tradition of Torah, the Jewish people remain God's covenant people. This validity exists alongside the theological status of the new community of Gentile Christ-believers. However, type five does not express any necessary conception of how this new community relates to biblical Israel or the status of Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ. This view emphasizes the holiness and prerogatives of postbiblical Israel as God's people but remains silent about the relation of Israel to the Gentile Church. Two subsets of this view include: 5.1 *Israel apart from the church as having some theological validity*. In this subset 'all Israel will be saved' through Christ. Central to this subset is Paul's statement that "all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26)." Salvation is an end-time occurrence that includes "all Israel" separate and apart from Christ. Because of this future salvation, the covenant people must have some continuing validity. In subset 5.2, *Israel and the Gentile church are co-existing peoples, relating to God through parallel covenants*. The defining characteristic of this final subset, explains Donaldson, is the belief that both Israel and the Gentile Church enjoy valid relationship with God but through separate means: Israel through the covenant with Moses and the Gentile Church through the covenant with Christ. This subset is found in the Pseudo-Clementine literature, which Donaldson says date back to the second century C.E. and represents the views of Jewish Christ-believers who have "given up" any attempt to convince Jews to accept Christ and Gentiles to accept the Law of Moses.

Donaldson's typology is a crucial aid for any study of supersessionism for a number of reasons. First, Donaldson's typology provides a way to assess varying degrees of discontinuity and continuity between Israel and the Church in theological interpretation of these two entities, including in the thought of Aquinas.<sup>72</sup> For this reason, Donaldson's typology can serve as a helpful tool to analyze complex theological positions on the relationship between Israel and the Church, especially if those positions contain elements of both discontinuity and continuity between Israel and Church.

Second, the typology is descriptive more so than it is evaluative and can therefore serve as an analytical tool. Placing the concept of supersessionism along a spectrum of discontinuity and continuity between Israel and the Church adds a historical contextualization to the language of supersessionism. Donaldson does not explicitly argue for why supersessionism is a theological problem. Rather, the typology describes sets of relations, only one of which describes the Church replacing Israel as God's elect people. Because the "five ways" of construing the relationship between Israel and the Church include *both* supersessionist and nonsupersessionist types—the typology offers a historically sensitive way of determining what is and is not supersessionism. Therefore, this typology of relations between Israel and Church can help clarify what sort of relation between Israel and

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<sup>72</sup> The capacity of the typology to account for both continuity and discontinuity between Israel and the Church will be especially helpful for the subsequent analysis of Aquinas's texts simply because, as I hope to show, Aquinas's view of Israel and the Church falls across multiple points on the spectrum of continuity and discontinuity. It is this complex and even contradictory dimension in Aquinas's thought which Donaldson's typology can help negotiate.

Church constitutes “supersessionism” for Wyschogrod, Levering, Kinzer, and Boguslawski, and help determine if these scholars actually use the term in a helpful way.<sup>73</sup>

### 2.3 A Definition of Economic Supersessionism

The two groups at the “extreme ends of the spectrum,” explains Donaldson, are clearly not supersessionist. For example, subset 1.1 does not assume a replacement of Israel with the Church since each entity is simply unrelated as polar opposites. Similarly, type five does not assume a replacement of Israel with the Church. Rather, type five understands Israel and Church as different paths to the same destination—both entities of Israel and Church are considered separate but parallel paths to God. In addition to subset 1.1 and type 5, subset 3.2, 3.3, and type four, are also *not* supersessionist because in each of these types there is *no replacement of one entity with another entity*. Rather, these types (3.2, 3.3, and 4) are characterized by continuity and similarity between the entities involved (the Gentile Christ-Believers and Jewish Christ-Believers exist together as branches of the same messianic tree).

The types Donaldson considers as supersessionist ways of construing the relationship between Israel and the Church are 1.2, 2.1, 2.2 and 3.1. Donaldson rightly sees these four types as supersessionist because each model assumes a completed process of replacement. Of these four supersessionist types, *only three are truly necessary for negotiating the ways scholars use the language of supersessionism in the discussion over whether or not Aquinas’s*

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<sup>73</sup> For example, David Novak’s term “soft supersessionism” (which Levering refers to as “mild”) according to Donaldson’s typology is an inaccurate use of the language of supersessionism. This is because Novak’s soft supersessionism does not mention anything like the Church replacing Israel’s as God’s elect community. It only has the Church “positively affirming God’s covenant with the Jews” and the Church “goes beyond” Judaism, but it is not at all clear what this “going beyond” means, and how it impacts the notion of Jewish election. I will say more about this below.

*theology is supersessionist*. This is because each scholar in the discussion views supersessionism in a way that correlates with one of the following supersessionist types: 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1. It will therefore help to label each of these three most relevant types of supersessionism as they will reappear below in my analysis of each scholar's view of Aquinas's theology.

The first type deserving of a helpful label is 2.1: *Israel as a failed entity rejected by God and replaced with a church primarily drawn from the Gentiles*. 2.1 is equivalent to Soulen's punitive supersessionism which uses the language of "revoking the covenant" to describe a twofold process of 1) Israel's failure to accept Christ (and also in killing Christ) followed by 2) punishment of Church replacing Israel as God's elect people. Therefore, I will rely upon Soulen's term, "punitive supersessionism," to refer to type 2.1.

The next types in need of labels are 2.2, and 3.1. These types are the most relevant for discussing Soulen's economic supersessionism. First, 2.2 refers to *Biblical Israel as an entity of the past having had a certain preparatory role to play but now superseded by a church in which ethnic distinction has no fundamental significance*. As stated above, in this form of supersessionism biblical Israel is ascribed a more positive role as a people not characterized by sin. However, their role is only as a preparation for the new institution brought about through Christ. The ceremonial law is considered good but only for a time, after which, a fulfillment of the law abrogates theological distinction. I will therefore refer to 2.2 as "economic supersessionism" since, as Donaldson explicitly states, this type correlates with Soulen's account. Second, 3.1 can also be labeled economic supersessionism as well because

it refers to *Israel as succeeded by Christ, who provides the sole point of continuity between Israel of the past and the church of the present*. This model emphasizes continuity between biblical Israel and the Gentile Church *solely* through Christ as Jewish entity. In this subset there is *no continuity with the flesh of the people of Israel in and of itself*. According to Donaldson, this articulation of the relation between Israel and the Church shows mostly discontinuity between the two groups since “Any corporate representative defined in such a way as to exclude rank-and-file members of the represented group can hardly be seen as effecting continuity in any real sense of the term.”<sup>74</sup> By exclusion of “rank-and-file members,” Donaldson means that this model of relations between Israel and Gentile Church views Jewish flesh as now obsolete since as he says, “no categorical distinction is made between Jewish and Gentile believers.”<sup>75</sup>

Though these three models (2.1: punitive supersessionism; 2.2 & 3.1: economic supersessionism) differ on *how* the process of replacement takes shape, the result of the process is the same. After the replacement process is complete, the separate and fixed entity of biblical Israel has been replaced by the separate and fixed entity of Gentile Church as God’s elect community. Specifying the *how* of the replacement is key since it allows one to distinguish properly between two different forms of supersessionism: punitive and economic. Both terms often include a twofold claim that results in a conclusion of replacement but also references a *how* of the replacement.

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<sup>74</sup> Donaldson, 26.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

The twofold claim of punitive supersessionism functions as follows: 1) Israel has rejected Christ and because of this particular violation 2) the covenant is revoked and given to the Gentile Church, the *verus* Israel. The twofold claim of economic supersessionism consists of the following: 1) The first claim is that God no longer wills that carnal Israel exist as carnal Israel because God no longer wills the practice of circumcision and Torah observance.<sup>76</sup> Without circumcision and Torah observance there is no longer a distinction between Jew and Gentile.<sup>77</sup> Because God no longer wills these rites it follows that God no longer desires carnal Israel, as Israel, to exist. 2) The second claim is that God elects another people to serve in the former's place as the elect community.

I hope to show below that it is *economic supersessionism and not punitive* that is ultimately at issue in the discussion over whether or not Aquinas's theology is supersessionist. Therefore, it will help to be especially precise about economic supersessionism. A definition of economic supersessionism should include these two claims: that 1) God no longer wills that carnal Israel maintain its elect status through the practices of circumcision and observance of Torah because these practices have been abrogated or made obsolete and 2) the Church has replaced the Jews as God's elect community.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> The term "carnal" is borrowed from Wyschogrod, which he uses to emphasize the importance of the corporeal and material existence of the elect people of Israel.

<sup>77</sup> All of Donaldson's supersessionist types assume this deconstruction of circumcision.

<sup>78</sup> It is necessary to be very clear on the difference between Soulen's categories of punitive and economic supersessionism in relation to my definition here. My definition can be considered an attempt at elaborating only upon Soulen's concept of economic supersessionism, which is Wyschogrod's primary concern in addressing Aquinas in his 1987 article. It is important to specify the difference between punitive supersessionism and economic because confusing these two forms plagues the discussion below, as I will make clear in my analysis of Levering's reply to Wyschogrod. As I said above, the twofold claim of economic

I now turn to what Matthew Levering has referred to as a theological question of “paramount” significance: the question of supersessionism in Aquinas’s theology. In particular, I aim to identify what problem Wyschogrod, Levering, and Kinzer, understand the term supersessionism to designate, and whether their use of such language in their argument against or in defense of Aquinas is successful.

### 3. Aquinas and the Paramount Question of Supersessionism

In this section I analyze what problem Wyschogrod, Levering, and Kinzer understand the term supersessionism to designate in Aquinas’s theology. My aim is to show whether the language of supersessionism functions successfully in each scholar’s argument against or in defense of Aquinas. I proceed by first treating Wyschogrod’s view of supersessionism by drawing upon the work of Soulen. I then consider Wyschogrod’s challenge to Aquinas. I then analyze Levering’s use of the language of supersessionism in his reply to Wyschogrod; his recent engagement with the thought of David Novak; and his subsequent engagement with Mark Kinzer.

#### 3.1 Michael Wyschogrod’s Jewish Reading of Aquinas

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supersessionism (as expressed by my definition) shares the same twofold structure with punitive supersessionism since it also consists of two key claims: 1) The Jewish people have rejected and killed Jesus Christ. 2) Therefore, God rejects this people and replaces them with the Church. The similarity between economic supersessionism and punitive is that these share agreement on the second of their claims: the claim that the Church has replaced the Jewish people. Economic supersessionism (which includes my definition) and punitive supersessionism are therefore only similar in that they share the conclusion that the Church replaces the Jews as God’s elect community. Punitive and economic supersessionism, however, *do not share the first claim or the “how” of the replacement*. Punitive and economic supersessionism can be considered two different “paths” to the same destination of replacement. Both result in the replacement of the people of Israel but they arrive at this destination via different routes. Economic supersessionist logic arrives at the destination of replacement through the premise that the covenant (and to be more specific, the ceremonial law) is now obsolete. Punitive supersessionist logic arrives at the destination or replacement through the premise that the Jews are no longer God’s elect because God is punishing them for rejecting Christ.

Michael Wyschogrod's 1987 article, "A Jewish Reading of St. Thomas Aquinas" represents one of the first strictly theological treatments of Aquinas's view of the Jews.<sup>79</sup> Before Wyschogrod's article, most scholars examining Aquinas's view of the Jewish people did so primarily for the purpose of evaluating his social policy.<sup>80</sup> After Wyschogrod's essay, however, the number of strictly theological treatments of Aquinas's interpretation of Judaism grew substantially.<sup>81</sup> Wyschogrod's essay can be said to mark the beginning of increased scholarly attention to Aquinas's theological reading of the Jews in the twentieth-century. To understand Wyschogrod's analysis of Aquinas, it is helpful to examine a few relevant aspects of his thought in two steps. First, I explain why this Jewish theologian takes the time to engage Aquinas. Second, I point out the importance of the election of the Jewish people in his theology.

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<sup>79</sup> Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading of St. Thomas Aquinas."

<sup>80</sup> Guttman's and Chenu's work preceded Wyschogrod's essay. J. Guttman, *Das Verhältniss des Thomas von Aquino zum Judenthum*; and Marie-Dominique Chenu, "La Théologie de la loi ancienne selon Saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* 16 (1961): 485-97. Two thirds of the Guttman's article is concerned with Aquinas's engagement with the theology of Maimonides.

<sup>81</sup> Marcel-Jacques Dubois, "Thomas Aquinas on the place of the Jews in the divine plan.," *Immanuel*, no. 24-25 (January 1, 1990): 241-266; Thomas Hibbs, "Divine Irony and the Natural Law: Speculation and Edification in Aquinas," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 30 (1990): 419-429; Richard Schenk, "Covenant Initiation: Thomas Aquinas and Robert Kilwardby on the Sacrament of Circumcision," in *Ordo Sapientiae Et Amoris: Image Et Message De Saint Thomas d'Aquin À Travers Les Récentes Études Historiques, Herméneutiques Et Doctrinales: Hommage Au Professeur Jean-Pierre Torrell OP À L'occasion De Son 65e Anniversaire*, ed. Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveira (Fribourg, Suisse: Editions universitaires, 1993).; Jean-Pierre Torrell, "Ecclesia Iudaeorum—Quelques jugements positifs de Saint Thomas d'Aquin à l'égard des Juifs et du Judaïsme," in *Les Philosophies Morales Et Politiques Au Moyen Âge: Actes Du IXe Congrès International De Philosophie Médiévale, Ottawa, 17-22 Août 1992*, ed. B. Carlos Bazán and Leonard G Sbocchi, vol. 3 (New York: Legas, 1995); Pamela M. Hall, *Narrative and the Natural Law: An Interpretation of Thomistic Ethics* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1999); "The Old Law and the New Law," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Georgetown University Press, 2002); Valkenberg and Schoot, "Thomas Aquinas and Judaism." Andrew Hofer, "The Circumcision of the Lord: Saving Mystery" unpublished dissertation (Washington D.C.: Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception of the Dominican House of Studies, 2003). The theological aspects of Cohen and Hood's work should also be included in this list. None of these works respond to Wyschogrod's criticism of Aquinas.



One way to appreciate Wyschogrod's critical engagement of Aquinas is to view it in light of a disagreement with his teacher, the Talmudist Joseph Soloveitchik (1903-1993). Wyschogrod disagreed with Soloveitchik on whether Jews should engage in dialogue with Christians on matters of faith.<sup>82</sup> Whereas Soloveitchik thought Jews and Christians ought to dialogue only on secular matters, Wyschogrod held that Soloveitchik's distinction between the sacred and secular was impossible. Wyschogrod thought Jews must not restrict dialogue with Christians to secular matters. Rather, Jews must engage Christians on "theological matters of first importance."<sup>83</sup>

For Wyschogrod, Jews and Christians must engage each other on theological matters of first importance because they share a significant theological common ground: the witness of scripture. Soulen explains that in Wyschogrod's view, theologically significant Jewish-Christian dialogue is possible because both traditions acknowledge the "movement of God toward humankind as witnessed in scripture."<sup>84</sup> For Wyschogrod, the common ground of Jewish-Christian dialogue is not a concept of universal morality or a commitment to dialogue, but the witness to God's movement that is divine revelation. Soulen elaborates on Wyschogrod's view of what Jews and Christians share:

To be sure, the two communities understand this movement in ways that unmistakably diverge, at least at certain points. Yet the gulf that results is not so wide that understanding is impossible. Indeed, Wyschogrod holds that because the two traditions share certain common premises, it is possible for 'each side to summon

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<sup>82</sup> Michael Wyschogrod and R. Kendall Soulen, *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 2-3.

<sup>83</sup> Wyschogrod and Soulen, 3.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

the other to a better understanding of its own tradition.’ For Wyschogrod, Jewish-Christian relations concern something more important than ‘dialogue.’ They concern a common search for truth in light of the Word of God.<sup>85</sup>

For Wyschogrod, a genuine Jewish-Christian dialogue is therefore more than dialogue. The common search for truth that Christians and Jews undertake together is grounded in the conviction that scripture is divine revelation, and, especially for Wyschogrod, what revelation says about God’s election of Israel.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, Wyschogrod understands the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in a way similar to Maimonides:

[I]t is true that the two circles of faith overlap to some degree which is why the dialogue between the two faiths is so interesting. Maimonides pointed out that Jews may teach Torah to Christians but not to Muslims because Christians accept the Hebrew Bible as divinely revealed. That puts them at least in part within the Jewish circle of faith.<sup>87</sup>

Wyschogrod’s engagement with Aquinas should therefore *not* be seen as dialogue on *scientia divina* or “divine knowledge” (on the same level as, say, a Muslim-Christian dialogue).

Rather, Wyschogrod’s engagement of Aquinas is a dialogue on *scientia dei* or “knowledge of God.” This knowledge of God is a science based on the God revelation of God’s self in scripture. Moreover, Wyschogrod’s engagement of Aquinas concerns theological matters of first importance, such as the doctrine of God, rather than universal moral principles common to Jews and Christians.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Michael Wyschogrod, “Response to the Respondents,” *Modern Theology* 11, no. 2 (1995): 229-41.

<sup>88</sup> I do not mean to suggest that Wyschogrod is not interested in dialogue with Christians on universal moral principles revealed in scripture. I am only arguing that these are of secondary concern.

Wyschogrod's criticism of Aquinas is ultimately a theological argument about the place scripture affords the permanent election of the Jewish people. "At the heart of Wyschogrod's theology," writes Soulen, "is his affirmation of God's free, irrevocable election of Israel as the people of God."<sup>89</sup> Indeed, for Wyschogrod, the central tenet of biblical faith is that God loves and elected the people of Israel "unto the end of time."<sup>90</sup> "By electing the seed of Abraham," explains Soulen, in his "Introduction to Michael Wyschogrod," "God has bound the world to God's self in a way that cannot be dissolved."<sup>91</sup>

Because God's election of Israel is a *carnal* election, members of the elect community cannot escape it. The descent from Abraham secures this carnal election and the Torah that sanctifies the Jews grows out of this carnal election. By "carnal" Wyschogrod intends to emphasize the importance of the corporeal and material existence of the elect people of Israel. In Wyschogrod's view, God's plan is to consummate creation through Israel's election, fulfilling God's word to Abraham that "in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:3)."<sup>92</sup> Israel and the nations have, at times, failed to accept the terms of this election.<sup>93</sup>

The Jewish people have failed to live out their election during certain periods, forgetting that their blessing is for service of the nations. And the nations, explains Soulen,

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<sup>89</sup> Soulen, *God of Israel*, 5.

<sup>90</sup> Wyschogrod and Soulen, 6.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

have resented the presence of carnal Israel since the existence of this people is a reminder they are not God's elect. Despite failures on both sides, God's love and free election of Israel is irrevocable and divinely intended for the service of the Gentile world—election is, for Wyschogrod, about the blessing of the nations. Because of his view of Jewish election, remarks Soulen, Wyschogrod understands the distinction between Jew and gentile as “a sign of hope, not a wall of separation.”<sup>94</sup>

For Wyschogrod, Judaism and Christianity converge not upon the morality of the Noachide law, but in the biblical conviction that God's presence and saving purpose in the world is concentrated in the flesh of Abraham's seed. The election of the seed of Abraham, on Wyschogrod's terms, can be seen as continuous with the flesh of Christ. The Christian doctrine of the incarnation, in Wyschogrod's view, can be understood as a development of the Bible's account of God's movement to bless creation through the people of Israel. Wyschogrod maintains that Christology ‘is the intensification of the teaching of the indwelling of God in Israel by concentrating that indwelling in one Jew rather than leaving it diffused in the people of Jesus as a whole.’” According to Wyschogrod, the incarnation, while a most difficult issue for Judaism, should not be considered an impasse because to do so would be to impose external constraints on God's freedom—a God that has previously chosen to dwell amidst Israel in other miraculous ways.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 15; 16.

In Wyschogrod's view, what *is* difficult for Judaism, is the claim that Christology entails or implies the repudiation of God's promises that Israel is God's elect community:

According to Wyschogrod, there is only one condition under which Israel would be entitled to reject the church's claims about Jesus out of hand, and that is if these claims were to imply that God had repudiated God's promises to Israel. For that is something that Israel can safely trust that God will never do, not because God is unable, but because God honors God's promises.<sup>96</sup>

Soulen explains that the Church, in Wyschogrod's view, should be approached by Jews with a hopeful respect. To the extent that Israel hopes the nations will join Israel in the praise of God's name, the Church "appears to fit into Israel's own pattern of expectations, since the Church has helped to spread the knowledge of God to the ends of the earth."<sup>97</sup> However, the difficulty with the Church, for Judaism, is displayed in its attitude toward the election of the Jews. Soulen explains that the

...question of whether Israel can see in the church a sign that is fundamentally congruent with God's plan of salvation for the world depends upon the church's attitude toward the Jewish people. Will the nations be content to receive God's blessings if these are attached to God's covenant with Israel? Or will they seek to do away with the beloved child in order to usurp the favored place in the Parent's affection?<sup>98</sup>

For Wyschogrod, the church's claim to be the *verus* Israel is a theological problem because it is discontinuous with the story that the God of Israel has promised that the Jews are his elect people unto the end of time. In order to understand Wyschogrod's position that

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

the church essentially teaches God has broken his promise to Israel, one must understand the nature of Israel's carnal election.

For Wyschogrod, God's election of the Jews is a covenant with Jewish flesh, and this covenant is maintained through the concrete practice of circumcision and observance of Torah. Indeed, Wyschogrod understands circumcision as "a searing of the covenant into the flesh of Israel and not only, or perhaps not even primarily, into its spirit."<sup>99</sup> For Wyschogrod, the idea that the covenant is obsolete or abrogated entails that circumcision as well as observance of Torah are no longer theologically significant acts of worship. If it is true that the people of Israel are not distinct then it follows that Jews are no different than the nations. For Wyschogrod, such a claim means God has not only broken his promise to Israel but has also aborted the mission to bless the nations.

Wyschogrod sees the Christian claim that circumcision and observance of Torah are no longer theologically significant expressed in the Church's attitude toward the distinction between Jew and Gentile within the Church. Soulen summarizes Wyschogrod view:

For Wyschogrod, the acid test of Christian supersessionism... appears in the church's conduct towards Jews in its own midst, i.e., towards Jews who are baptized. As Wyschogrod argues in his letter to Cardinal Jean Marie Lustiger, the Jewish-born archbishop of Paris, it is precisely at this point that the church demonstrates in an ultimate way whether it understands itself in terms of God's covenant with the Jewish people. If the church acknowledges the permanence and centrality of Israel's election as central to its own identity, it will expect baptized Jews to continue to affirm their Jewish identity and continue to observe Torah. But if the church truly believes that it has fundamentally superseded God's covenant with Israel, it will prohibit baptized Jews from obeying Torah and maintaining a distinct identity within the church.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Wyschogrod, *The Body of Faith: God and the People of Israel* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers), 66.

<sup>100</sup> Wyschogrod and Soulen, 17

It is important, however, to recognize that Wyschogrod is concerned not only that baptized Jews maintain a distinct identity as Jews within the Church. Wyschogrod thinks Jews must maintain a distinct identity outside of the church as well, and such distinction is expressed through Torah observance. In other words, to prohibit the observance of the Mosaic Law for Jews, whether baptized or not, means the distinction between Jew and Gentile is erased, and this threatens the biblical promise that the Jews are the distinct, elect people of God unto the end of time.<sup>101</sup>

Wyschogrod's twofold concern that both Jews and baptized Christians observe the ceremonial Mosaic Law is most clearly expressed in his "Jewish reading of Thomas' treatment of the Old Law."<sup>102</sup> In "A Jewish Reading of Thomas Aquinas," Wyschogrod analyzes Aquinas's claim that the observance of the ceremonial law is a mortal sin and Wyschogrod interprets this claim in Aquinas to apply to *both baptized Jews and Jews*. The majority of Wyschogrod's article consists of an analysis and criticism of Aquinas's view that observance of the ceremonial law is a mortal sin. In fact, Wyschogrod's treatment of the

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<sup>101</sup> For a Christian description of this concern see the work of Robert Jenson: "...identifiable Jewishness does not long survive within the gentile dominated church. To be sure, identifiable continuing descent from Abraham and Sarah is perhaps more likely within the church than among those assimilated into the secular world. But even so, if God is to have a people identified by descent from Abraham and Sarah, the church as it is will not provide it. I propose to my fellow Christians that God wills the Judaism of Torah-obedience as that which alone can and does hold the lineage of Abraham and Sarah together during the time of detour...By this time, the world is surely full of biological descendants of Abraham and Sarah who are not jointly part of any recognizable people. What holds some descendants of Abraham and Sarah together as a people is the religion of Torah-obedience, and this is true also of the many who do not themselves pay much attention to the *mitzvot*." Robert W. Jenson, "Toward a Christian Theology of Judaism," in *Jews and Christians: People of God*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 9.

<sup>102</sup> Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading," 126.

division of the Mosaic legislation into moral, ceremonial, and judicial, in the first third of the article, is only undertaken in order to analyze why Aquinas views the ceremonial law as abolished and sinful after Christ while the other two forms of law are preserved as legitimate specifications of the precepts of the natural law.<sup>103</sup>

After treating of Aquinas's tripartite structure of the Old Law, Wyschogrod turns to the topic of the duration of the ceremonial laws, or the reason why these laws are declared sinful. He interprets Aquinas's claim to turn on a particular point in history: the observance of the ceremonial law becomes sinful *for all* after Christ's Passion.<sup>104</sup> In Wyschogrod's interpretation of Aquinas, the idea that the ceremonial law is not sinful is ultimately based on what he refers to as the "hermeneutics of prefiguration."<sup>105</sup> Aquinas's reading of the Old Testament "must be read in two senses" and these senses correspond to the reason for the ceremonial laws: "they were ordained for the worship of God at that time, and for prefiguring Christ."<sup>106</sup> Of these two meanings, Wyschogrod interprets the prefiguration of Christ as

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<sup>103</sup> Wyschogrod writes, "Thomas knows very well that the Old Law is not going to prove permanent, that there will come a time, or a time has come, when the Old Law, or at least a portion of it, will have been abolished. If this is to be made intelligible, the Old Law must be divided into sharply defined categories so that one segment of it can be considered no longer binding while the another can remain in full force." Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading," 126.

<sup>104</sup> This is not the case for the judicial laws, which can be observed in Israel or any nation so long as they are no longer viewed as binding through enactment by God in the old law.

<sup>105</sup> Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading," 129.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 129-30. Wyschogrod writes, "Whatever meaning the narratives and precepts (laws) of the Old Testament may have had at the time they were given, they also had the probably more important function of prefiguring or foreshadowing the coming of Christ." I find it fascinating that Wyschogrod hesitates to describe the prefiguring function as more important than the literal meaning of the law (when he says that, for Aquinas, the prefiguring function was "probably" more important). Wyschogrod is right that Aquinas, although he shifted early in his thinking, indeed decides the literal ratio of the worship is of secondary importance to the prefiguring function. See Richard Schenk, "Views of the Two Covenants in Medieval Theology," *Nova et Vetera* Vol. 4 (2006): 891-916.



primary in Aquinas. Since, for Aquinas, ceremonies are professions of faith, to observe the ceremony primarily meant to prefigure Christ after Christ has already come is tantamount to a declaration that Christ has not come. Wyschogrod then cites Aquinas's explanation of this theory in *Summa theologiae* Ia-IIae 103.4 and concludes: "It is here that the transformation from faithful obedience of the *mizvoth* to mortal sin occurs."<sup>107</sup>

Wyschogrod then summarizes his exposition of Aquinas: "In turning into mortal sin after Christ, the Old Law did not turn from being a vehicle for justification into mortal sin but from being a vehicle that pointed to Christ—who justified—to a vehicle that denies Christ and is therefore the occasion of mortal sin."<sup>108</sup>

Wyschogrod sees Aquinas's judgment that observing the ceremonial law is a mortal sin to apply to both baptized Jews and Jews.<sup>109</sup> This is why he states that Aquinas's reading of the ceremonial law presents problems for "the Jewish reader" *and* "a believing Jew." This is also why Wyschogrod's criticism of Aquinas is that "the teaching that obedience to the

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 132. Wyschogrod's citations of the *Summa Theologiae* are all taken from the *Blackfriars* edition: "All ceremonies are professions of faith, in which the interior worship of God consists. Now man may profess his inner faith by acts, just as by words; and in either way, if he professes something false, he sins mortally. The faith we have of Christ and that which the ancient fathers had is the same; but since they preceded Christ, and we come after him, this same faith is signified by us and them in different words. They said, *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son* (Isaiah 7:14), using the future tense; we express the same by the past tense, saying that she *conceived and bore*. Likewise the ceremonies of the Old Law signified Christ as to be born and to suffer, whereas ours signify him as having been born and having suffered. Therefore, as a man would sin mortally who, in professing his faith, were to say that Christ was to be born, which the ancient fathers said devoutly and truthfully, so one would sin mortally who observed the ceremonies which those of old kept with devotion and fidelity." Ia-IIae q. 103.4 in *Summa theologiae* vol. 29 ed. Thomas Gilby (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

<sup>108</sup> Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading," 133.

<sup>109</sup> He writes, "What can a Jew say about the position that is now, at least in its essentials, before us?"

Mosaic ceremonial law after Christ is a mortal sin not only strains Christianity's contemporary relationship with Judaism but needlessly weakens Christianity's bond with the Old Testament." When Wyschogrod asks whether the observance of the ceremonial Mosaic Law ought to be interpreted more benevolently he uses the indefinite pronoun "someone," which seems to indicate he seems to have anyone who practices Judaism in mind:

When the Christian interpreter finds in the myriad details of the Jewish ceremonial law references to the birth, passion and resurrection of Jesus, the Jewish reader cannot help feeling uncomfortable. And most of all, when Thomas makes the prefigurement hermeneutics the foundation of his teaching of the annulment of the ceremonial law, the feeling of discomfort turns into one of positive distress. For even if there is, from the point of view of Christian faith, a large element of prefigurement of Christ in the Old Testament, does it have to follow that *someone* who refrains from eating pork or who fasts on the Day of Atonement is committing a mortal sin? Must his action be interpreted as saying that 'Christ was to be born' (103, 4, Reply) rather than that he had been born, thereby denying Christ? Could adherence to the Mosaic Law not be interpreted much more benevolently, as love of God and his commandments, as fidelity to a holy way of life out of which—for Christian faith—the Redeemer was born?<sup>110</sup>

Here, it is clear that Wyschogrod interprets Aquinas's prefigurement hermeneutics as undermining the ceremonial law in general.<sup>111</sup> But Wyschogrod sees this as a problem because of the central role of the election of the Jewish people unto the end of time in his theology. As shown above, Wyschogrod understands observance of circumcision and Torah as essential to maintaining the distinction of the Jewish people from the nations.

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<sup>110</sup> Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading," 136, (emphasis mine).

<sup>111</sup> Wyschogrod does not see natural law as the problem with Aquinas's reading of the old law. Rather, he thinks prefigurement hermeneutics that prevent the natural law from failing to support the ceremonial law as permanently valid is the problem. Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading," 135.

Consequently, the claim that observance of the ceremonial law is now deadly for all Jews makes the distinction between Jew and Gentile not only obsolete but also sinful.

To conclude this subsection on Wyschogrod's view of supersessionism and Aquinas, it will help to tie the discussion back into Donaldson and Soulen's typologies. Wyschogrod is concerned with economic supersessionism, or the type of relation between Israel and the Church that is equivalent to subsets 2.2, and 3.1, where the covenant is declared obsolete and the Church replaces the Jews as God's elect community.

However, Wyschogrod's work, particularly in his "A Jewish Reading of Thomas Aquinas," successfully adds a greater degree of precision to the discussion by identifying the problematic first premise regarding the covenant, or Mosaic Law, at the heart of supersessionist logic: the Christian claim that Jewish practices of circumcision and observance of Torah are useless or sinful."<sup>112</sup> For Wyschogrod, if God desires that circumcision and observance of Torah become useless or sinful, this implies God desires that the Jews disappear from the world. And if God desires that the Jews disappear from the world, then it follows that God has rescinded the promise that the Jews are elect unto the end of time.

Wyschogrod's view expresses well what is at stake over the question of supersessionism. He explains how a low view of Jewish distinction from the Gentiles

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<sup>112</sup> Boguslawski also views the claim that the ceremonial law is useless in and of itself as part of "supersessionist logic." I will treat Boguslawski below and it should become clear that a significant convergence in definition of supersessionism seems to appear between Wyschogrod and Boguslawski.

(promised in election and manifested in observance of Torah) goes hand in hand with the idea that the disappearance of Jews from the world is “no theological loss:”

Were all Jews to recognize the truth, they would cease their stubborn insistence on continuing to exist as an identifiable people and become an integral part of the new Israel—the Church—which is God’s new covenant partner in the world. The disappearance of the Jews from the world would be no theological loss because their place would have taken by the new people of God.<sup>113</sup>

Therefore, the declaration that the covenant (which Wyschogrod identifies as circumcision and Torah observance) is now obsolete and sinful negatively effects 1) Jewish election because it implies God no longer desires for there to be descendants of Abraham despite God’s promises; and consequently, 2) God’s character is impugned since an obsolete covenant implies that God may not keep God’s promises to the descendants of Abraham, the world, or the Gentile Church. Therefore, for Wyschogrod, supersessionism is a problem because it means God, contrary to his promise, no longer desires for Jews to exist in the world as Jews, and that, consequently, God’s promises cannot be trusted.<sup>114</sup> The question of supersessionism in Aquinas, from Wyschogrod’s perspective, is a moral theological question of paramount importance. It is the moral theological question of whether or not observance of the ceremonial law after the Passion of Christ constitutes a mortal sin or, as he asks at the

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<sup>113</sup> Wyschogrod and Soulen, 17.

<sup>114</sup> David Novak, explains the consequences of this point from the Christian perspective rather succinctly: “For Christians, the answer, paraphrasing Karl Barth, goes something like this: The promises God made through Jesus presuppose that God has already been keeping his promises to Israel. Indeed, for Christians, Jesus was sent to fulfill God’s ultimate promise to Israel of redemption and then to extend it to the world. Nevertheless, God’s initial promise to Israel is that she will not die but live, and live with duration as a covenanted people. The promises made through Jesus, which the Church accepts as normative, cannot be believed, therefore, if the Jewish people, who have a perpetual claim to be called Israel, are no longer present in the world.” David Novak, *Talking with Christians: Musings of a Jewish Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 11.

close of his challenge to Aquinas, whether observance of the ceremonial law after Christ be interpreted more benevolently.

### 3.2 Matthew Levering's Reply to Michael Wyschogrod

As Levering has observed, "A Jewish Reading of St. Thomas Aquinas" represents Wyschogrod's attempt to bring Aquinas into the contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue.<sup>115</sup> That Wyschogrod's attempt was successful is evidenced by Levering's extended responses to the problem of supersessionism in *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple*, and *Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Life of Wisdom*. The first goal of this sub section is to outline Levering's response to Wyschogrod's challenge to Aquinas with attention to Levering's usage of the language of supersessionism. After treating Levering's response to Wyschogrod, I will then analyze his recent attempt to appropriate David Novak's understanding of supersessionism.

In *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple* Levering responds to what he refers to as Wyschogrod's "nuanced rendering of a paramount question"—the question of supersessionism.<sup>116</sup> Wyschogrod views Aquinas as a representative of what he views as a theological discontinuity between Christianity and the Mosaic Law that strains Jewish-Christian relations. This discontinuity is manifested in the Aquinas's claim that the ceremonial Mosaic Law is dead after the Passion of Christ.

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<sup>115</sup> Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment*, 17.

<sup>116</sup> Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment*, 15.

Levering understands Wyschogrod's argument against Aquinas to include the following premises: 1) God commanded that the Law be observed forever. Yet Aquinas's tripartite division of the Mosaic Law into moral, judicial, and ceremonial, along with the claim that the latter two sets of precepts are either useless or sinful, neglects the permanence and unity ascribed to Torah by God. 2) The original Jewish Christians, as depicted in the book of Acts, either continued to follow the entire Mosaic Law or at least did not consider doing so to be a mortal sin. 3) Additionally, Wyschogrod cites *Nostra Aetate* 4, which affirms that God's covenant with Israel has "never been revoked" and concludes that, based on these three points, it follows that Torah-observing Jewish Christians should once more find a place in the Church.<sup>117</sup> The adoption of such a position, argues Wyschogrod, would amount to a "profound clarification of the Church's attitude to the Hebrew bible and its Jewish roots" as well as enable the Church to avoid contradicting the statement of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>118</sup>

Levering responds to Wyschogrod's critique by explaining the rationale behind Aquinas's view that Christ fulfills the Mosaic Law. For Aquinas, the purpose of Divine Law, which includes the Old Law, is to direct human beings to the supernatural end of friendship

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<sup>117</sup> Because of its emphasis on Jewish-Christians in the Jerusalem church as found in Acts, Wyschogrod's view of the relation between Israel and the Church corresponds well with type four—"a relationship of solidarity and mission"—of Donaldson's typology.

<sup>118</sup> Wyschogrod cited in Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment*, 16. Levering makes the helpful point that *Nostra Aetate* 4 is sometimes misread as denying that Jesus Christ fulfilled the covenants with Israel. "In fact," he writes, "*Nostra Aetate* is clear both that Christ fulfilled the covenants and that the covenants have never been revoked: 'the church believes that Christ our peace reconciled Jews and gentiles and made us both one in himself through the cross,' and yet 'the Jews still remain very dear to God, whose gift and call are without regret.'" Cf. *Lumen Gentium* #16. See 154fn. 4.

with God by means of knowing and loving. Yet the Old Law only partially achieves this goal by forbidding sinful acts and by restraining disordered desires opposed to the perfection of the rational creature. Only Christ perfectly fulfills the Mosaic Law and does so in order to “bring it to an end in His own self, so as to show that it was ordained to Him.”<sup>119</sup> Christ’s fulfillment of God’s covenant with biblical Israel means that the ceremonial and judicial precepts come to an end in “the positive (teleological) sense of attaining their ultimate end, in which they rest or last forever.”<sup>120</sup> Since Christ fulfilled the Mosaic Law perfectly, all those who are members of his Body can now share in Christ’s fulfillment of Mosaic Law. Levering explains that the ceremonial law is indeed a covenant that lasts forever (or that has not been revoked) but it is said to be forever only in regard to the “reality which the ceremonies foreshadowed.” By realities, Levering means the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Aquinas’s fundamental answer to Wyschogrod, according to Levering, is “that the Mosaic Law, in a real sense, *is still observed by Christians*.”<sup>121</sup> Since the prefigured aspect of the covenant reality is still observed by Christians, it has not been revoked, and Levering concludes that it is unfair to associate Aquinas with supersessionism.<sup>122</sup> “While it would be wrong to suggest that Aquinas’s thought is a model for contemporary Jewish-

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<sup>119</sup> Levering, *Christ’s Fulfillment*, 29.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

Christian relations,” writes Levering, “it is equally unfair to tar Aquinas theologically with the ‘supersessionist’ brush.”<sup>123</sup>

Levering seems to use supersessionism in three ways. His primary usage of the term is meant to refer to the view that “the fulfillment of Israel’s covenants means that they are now revoked.”<sup>124</sup> A secondary usage appears to refer to the practice of forced baptism, while a third usage refers to views held by Robert Grosseteste that Jews were heretics. Overall, each usage of the language of supersessionism requires more precision.

Regarding his second use of the term (i.e. the reference to forced baptism), it seems that Levering confuses antisemitism—especially as it is expressed in acts of violence—with supersessionism. Regarding the third usage, Levering claims that Aquinas “avoids the *kind* of supersessionism that mars Robert Grosseteste’s work.”<sup>125</sup> Here, Levering’s reference to a *kind*

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 152. It seems Levering may have changed his mind that it would be wrong to suggest Aquinas’s thought as a model for contemporary Jewish-Christian relations. In his most recent work, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Life of Wisdom*, both Levering and Novak look to Aquinas’s engagement with Maimonides’ theology as a model to be emulated. Matthew Levering, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Life of Wisdom: Engagements With the Theology of David Novak* (Continuum, 2010).

<sup>124</sup> Levering, *Christ’s Fulfillment*, 9.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. (emphasis mine). Levering links Grosseteste and supersessionism in two different places: 9; 152fn. 50. In the footnote, he implies that the “supersessionism” Aquinas avoids is forced baptism of Jews and the view promoted by Grosseteste and other medieval theologians that Jews were heretics. I cannot tell if Levering meant to contrast Aquinas and Grosseteste on forced baptism, but if he did, the point is moot since both theologians condemned forced baptism of Jews in agreement with ecclesiastical policy. Friedman explains, “[Grosseteste] repeats the condemnation by his Church of the prevailing political view that the Jews were to be maltreated or exterminated as a means of forcible conversion. He lays it down that the punishment which the Almighty had ordained that the Jews suffer should neither be increased nor diminished by Christians, and recognizes that the Jews should be afforded an opportunity to gain a livelihood by honest work.” Lee M. Friedman, *Robert Grosseteste and the Jews*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1934), 20 (emphasis mine). Likewise, Aquinas makes the argument that such coercion is against free will and the authority ascribed to parents by the natural law. Cf. IIa IIae, Q 10; 8; 12; III Q 68 a. 10. It is clear Levering means to contrast Aquinas and Grosseteste on the idea that Judaism is a form of heresy. Yet it is by no means a settled question that Aquinas avoided such a view. This is evidenced by the work of Cohen in *Living Letters of the Law* and *Christ Killers* on Aquinas’s view of postbiblical Israel. As Valkenberg has observed, according to both Cohen



of supersessionism hints at a nuanced view of supersessionism that seems to distinguish between various manifestations of the problem in Christian theology—such as the typology presented by Soulen.<sup>126</sup> However, he does not explain what type of supersessionism it is, exactly, that mars the work of Grosseteste, and this ultimately blurs similarities and differences between the two medieval theologians.<sup>127</sup>

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and Hood, “one can make a case for a conjectural interpretation of Aquinas as implicitly considering postbiblical Judaism as heretical.” See Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, p. 364-389; Hood, p. 108. Cited in Valkenberg and Schoot, 64. Aside from whether the comparison between Aquinas and Grosseteste is accurate, the more serious problem is Levering’s inaccurate usage of the term supersessionism to describe forced baptism. The conflation of supersessionism with antisemitic violence represents a confusion of terms. As I pointed out above, antisemitism and punitive supersessionism overlap in their characteristic hostility toward the Jewish people, but these two views of the Jews remain mutually exclusive because antisemitism is not grounded in theological claims (i.e. based on the theological descriptions of a punishment of the Jews for their rejection of Christ; or based on theological description of the obsolescence of the Law) about the Church’s replacement of the Jews as God’s elect, as are punitive and economic supersessionism. Levering seems to confuse the older twentieth-century conversation on whether Aquinas’s social doctrine was antisemitic or intolerant with the language of supersessionism. Since antisemitism is not supersessionism, Levering’s claim that Aquinas avoids “supersessionism” does not hold.

<sup>126</sup> Levering cites Soulen’s *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* in his bibliography but does not mention his extended treatment of the types of supersessionism. In *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology*, published two years after *Christ’s Fulfillment*, Levering relies upon Soulen’s account of supersessionism when he argues that “Aquinas avoids in his treatment of God’s essence the form of supersessionism that Soulen ascribes to the classical account.” Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 4, 56, 57, 68n67, 74. In his recent *Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Life of Wisdom*, Levering mentions Soulen’s typology of supersessionism, but he now rejects it as a view opposed to his position. In contrast, he favors Novak’s view of supersessionism. However, as I show below, Novak’s “harsh Christian supersessionism” and Soulen’s “economic” supersessionism overlap greatly, making Levering’s rejection of Soulen’s view of supersessionism problematic.

<sup>127</sup> The ambiguity created by Levering’s conflating of antisemitism and supersessionism distracts from how Aquinas’s theological interpretation of the Jewish people actually shares, at least in a few places in his thought, a particularly hostile form of supersessionism also present in Grosseteste’s work. This becomes clear when both theologians are viewed in light of subset 2.1 (*Israel as a failed entity*) of Donaldson’s typology and the corresponding type in Soulen, referred to as “punitive supersessionism.” According to Soulen, punitive supersessionism consists of the idea that God abrogates God’s covenant with the Jews on account of Israel’s rejection of Christ and the gospel. See Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, 30. It is precisely punitive supersessionism that is evidenced in Grosseteste’s letter to the Countess of Winchester: “[The Jews], being guilty of murder, in cruelly killing by crucifixion the Savior of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ, lest they might through his preaching [the gospel of] salvation lose standing and caste, because of this sin they did lose their standing unhappily at the hands of Titus and Vespasian, and having themselves entered into captivity, were scattered as captives through all lands and peoples, and they shall not be restored to freedom until the very end of the world. But in the last days, when all the multitude of nations, as is written, shall enter i.e. to faith, then

Nevertheless, the main problem with Levering's use of the term supersessionism is lack of precision. He defines supersessionism only as "the revoking of the covenant." However, "revoking," implies a punishment due to a violation of a law. The form of supersessionism that has to do with revoking the covenant as punishment is punitive supersessionism. This is *not* the form of supersessionism with which Wyschogrod is concerned in his reading of Aquinas. Levering's understanding of supersessionism as a revoking of the covenant therefore causes him to miss Wyschogrod's main concern with Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law. As demonstrated above, supersessionism concerns not only the punitive form that utilizes language of "revoking" God's covenant with the Jews due to the failure to accept Christ. Supersessionism also consists of the economic type.<sup>128</sup>

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all Israel, namely the people of the Jews, shall attain salvation through the same belief in Christ, and shall come again out of captivity into freedom. In the meantime, however, while the same people of the Jews persisting in their unbelief blaspheme Christ the Savior of the world, and mock at his suffering, they will be held captive under the rulers of the world to the just punishment of their sin." Again, see Friedman, *Robert Grosseteste and the Jews*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1934), 12-18. See also *Robert Grosseteste: De Cessatione Legalium*, ed. Richard C Dales and Edward B King (London: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1986). Although Aquinas avoids advocating violence against Jewish people, he does adopt, in a several places, a punitive supersessionist stance similar to that of Grosseteste. In his *Epistola ad ducissam Brabantiae*, Aquinas states, in his reply to the Duchess's inquiry on whether it is permissible to exact tribute of the Jews, that, "it is true, as the Law declares, that Jews *in consequence of their sin*, are or were destined to perpetual slavery; so that sovereigns of states may treat their goods as their own property; with the sole proviso that they do not deprive them of all that is necessary to sustain life." As Hood has already observed, Aquinas believes that the Jews have been cast into spiritual exile for their rejection of Christ and that their social status in Christendom is proof of this. Both Aquinas and Grosseteste view the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 by Titus, as well as Jewish expulsion from Palestine at the hands of Vespasian, as a divine punishment for the Crucifixion. See Hood, 75. The context of Aquinas's words in his letter to the Duchess indicates that such a view was not uncommon among thirteenth-century theologians. See Aquinas, "On the Government of the Jews," 85. Friedman observes that the sentiment of Grosseteste and Aquinas are so strikingly repeated "that one is tempted to believe that Grosseteste's letter was known to Aquinas until [one] recalls that both are only repetitions of the authoritative Church pronouncements on the Jews." See Friedman, 33. However, it should be noted that the places where punitive supersessionism does appear in Aquinas, the claim lacks the hostile and elaborate exegetical tapestry that Grosseteste attaches to it.

<sup>128</sup> "Israel corresponds to Christ in a merely prefigurative and carnal way, whereas the church corresponds to Jesus Christ in a definitive and spiritual way. Hence Christ's advent brings about the obsolescence of carnal Israel and inaugurates the age of the spiritual church. Everything that characterized the

Supersessionism also concerns the idea that the observance of the ceremonial law is obsolete and that the Church replaces the Jews as God's elect. Wyschogrod's critique of Aquinas is concerned precisely with the economic form of supersessionism and *not* punitive supersessionism, as Levering seems to think when he defines the term only as "revoking the covenant." Wyschogrod nowhere raises the issue of a punitive revoking of the covenant.

Moreover, Levering's claim that the covenant "continues" misses why Wyschogrod sees Aquinas's claim that observance of the ceremonial law is deadly to contradict the claim that God has elected the Jewish people unto the end of time. Wyschogrod's problem with Aquinas's claim is that the election of carnal Israel is visibly expressed precisely *through the observance of the ceremonial law*. It is this aspect of Wyschogrod's challenge to Aquinas that Levering seems to leave unanswered by arguing only that the covenant continues because it is now fulfilled.

It seems that the reason Levering misses the primary concern in Wyschogrod's critique of Aquinas is that Levering thinks Aquinas's claim that the practice of circumcision for Jews and observance of Torah is a mortal sin after Christ *only applies to baptized Jews*. In other words, Levering reads Aquinas's claim that observance of circumcision and Torah are a mortal sin to apply to Jewish Christians, *not Jews*. He thus seems to think that there is some form of covenant that continues in two senses: 1) a covenant is implied to continue between God and non-baptized Jews. But what this covenant is he does not specify. And 2) a covenant

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economy of salvation in its Israelite form becomes obsolete and is replaced by its ecclesial equivalent. The written law of Moses is replaced by the spiritual law of Christ, circumcision by baptism, natural descent by faith as criterion of membership in the people of God, and so forth. As a result, carnal Israel becomes obsolete." Soulen, 29.

is explicitly continued between God and Jews as they fulfill the Torah through the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Levering is clear about the positive content of the second covenant: it continues in and through the sacraments of the Catholic Church. But he is not clear on how the first covenant between God and non-baptized Jews can be said to “continue.” Rather, he denies—in a footnote—that Aquinas’s teaching that the observance of the ceremonial Mosaic Law after Christ is a sin. This claim seemed to need more attention in light of how much time Wyschogrod spends on pointing to it as *the* problem in Aquinas’s teaching. Moreover, even if Aquinas does not teach that the Jew who observes the ceremonial Mosaic Law after Christ is not in sin, as Levering claims, it is not clear what status that Jew maintains after the Passion—how does the covenant continue between God and Jews who are not baptized? In the words of Marianne Moyaert and Didier Pollefeyt: “...To affirm that the old covenant has never been revoked is of little value as long as no theological reason is provided for the existence of Judaism after the coming of Christ.”<sup>129</sup> For Wyschogrod, affirming that the covenant continues does not solve the problem of the erasure of the theological distinction between Jew and Gentile that is the consequence of the teaching that observance of the ceremonial law is obsolete or a mortal sin. For Wyschogrod, if the ceremonial law is declared obsolete for any Jew then the covenant cannot continue and the Jewish people can no longer remain God’s elect.

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<sup>129</sup> M. Moyaert and D. Pollefeyt, “Israel and the Church: Fulfillment Beyond Supersessionism,” in *Never Revoked: Nostra Aetate as Ongoing Challenge for Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, ed. M. Moyaert and D. Pollefeyt (Peeters Publishers, 2010), 165.

Levering seems aware of Wyschogrod's concern to protect the idea of a corporeal existence of the distinct Jewish people and senses a tension between this idea and his claim that the covenant continues.<sup>130</sup> This seems clear at two points in his reply to Wyschogrod. The first point is when he summarizes Wyschogrod's question to Aquinas as: "How... can the Church claim to recognize God's continuing covenant with Israel, which would quickly disappear as a visible reality if all Jews heeded the Church's evangelical call?"<sup>131</sup> The second point is when Levering qualifies his answer to Wyschogrod (which is, ultimately, that the Mosaic Law, in a real sense, *is still observed by Christians*) by stating that Wyschogrod would not recognize the "real sense" in which the covenant continues but in the form of Christian identity. He admits the claim that the covenant with the Jews is ongoing only in the sense that Christians now observe it is an "apparent paradox" that requires explanation. The continuing of the covenant is a paradox because "by sharing in Christ's Jewish fulfillment of Mosaic Law, Jewish Christians do not lose their identity but rather enter into the (supernatural) fullness of their identity."<sup>132</sup> It is not clear though, how such a Jewish Christian remains Jewish in any sense of the word. It seems to me that this view of Christ's

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<sup>130</sup> Again, the term "carnal" is borrowed from Wyschogrod. Wyschogrod uses the word to emphasize the importance of the corporeal and material existence of the elect people of Israel.

<sup>131</sup> Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment*, 16. I use "carnal" here, again, to highlight the corporeal existence of a people that Wyschogrod sees as so crucial to the doctrine of election.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

fulfillment of the Mosaic Law implies that Jewish identity, at the end of the day, must become Christian identity.<sup>133</sup>

Levering's interpretation of Aquinas, therefore, does not seem to avoid the problem of economic supersessionism. This is so despite Levering's language that the covenant continues. Although Levering argues the covenant continues, his view of the continuance of the covenant also demands *the obsolescence of the ceremonial law*. This aspect of Levering's view is significant because it renders a distinction between Jews and the nations as theologically irrelevant. The view that God wills the covenant to continue without observance of the ceremonial law seems to imply that God no longer wills the Jewish people to live as Jews but rather, to live as some other people. Or in other words, that God no longer wills the Jewish people as the distinct, elect community. Without the observance of the ceremonial law, the distinction between Jew and Gentile disappears. It is not clear how the covenant *with* the Jews can be ongoing if it also makes obsolete the identity of Jews as a distinct people.

Levering's interpretation of Aquinas's way of construing the relationship between Israel and Church thus corresponds to the economic supersessionism of subsets 2.2 (*Israel as entity of the past, now superseded*) and 3.1 (*Israel as succeeded by Christ*) of Donaldson's typology, both of which assume that God no longer wills that carnal Israel maintain its elect

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<sup>133</sup> If this is in fact Aquinas's view of the relation between Church and Israel, then his view is not unlike that of Karl Barth's. Soulen observes that Barth's theology is ultimately economically supersessionist because it holds that God's covenant with Israel is fulfilled in Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection. At that point Israel's distinctive role comes to an end in principle, and its place is taken by the church. In Barth's view, "God's work as Consummator is joined primordially not to the people of Israel as a whole but to the one Israelite Jesus Christ." Soulen, *God of Israel*, 90. Barth's view of the relation between Israel and Church falls into subset 3.1 of Donaldson's typology.

status through the practices of circumcision and observance of Torah because these practices have been abrogated or made obsolete and 2) the Church has replaced the Jews as God's elect community. Though the language of "revoking the covenant" *is not* in Aquinas, the means of maintaining the covenant—the ceremonial law—is declared obsolete.<sup>134</sup> The idea that Israel's observance of the cultic law no longer has positive theological significance entails economic supersessionism. Levering's ambiguity about the language of supersessionism causes him to miss this central concern of Wyschogrod's challenge to Aquinas.

### 3.3 Matthew Levering's Adaptation of David Novak's Language of Supersessionism

Levering engages the language of supersessionism more directly in his recent *Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Life of Wisdom*, published eight years after *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple*.<sup>135</sup> Although the overall aim of the project is to engage the work of Jewish theologian David Novak, the discussion over whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist emerges once again, this time in the context of Levering's reply to the work of Mark Kinzer, who, like Wyschogrod, views Aquinas's theology as supersessionist. In the

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<sup>134</sup> Again, punitive supersessionism and economic supersessionism are two ways of getting to the same destination: the conclusion is that the Church replaces the Jews as God's elect. Soulen explains: "The heart of economic supersessionism does not depend on the language of revocation or repudiation at all. It simply affirms a double movement of inward fulfillment and outer obsolescence, like a butterfly that casts off its chrysalis. The chrysalis is not 'revoked' or repudiated, nor is there any violation of the true organic continuity between caterpillar and butterfly. However, the chrysalis is rendered obsolete, and its retention would obviously be a serious mistake. The thought process is different from punitive supersessionism, but the destination is the same, insofar as both evacuate Israel's observance of the cultic law of positive theological significance." Correspondence with Soulen regarding the similarities and differences between punitive and economic supersessionism.

<sup>135</sup> Matthew Levering, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Life of Wisdom: Engagements With the Theology of David Novak* (Continuum, 2010).

context of Levering's engagement with these two thinkers, the language of supersessionism becomes rather complex. Therefore, the language of supersessionism employed here deserves close attention.

"Jewish-Christian dialogue," Levering writes, "begins with the question of 'supersessionism'" and he offers a modified definition of his view:

'Supersessionism' [is] what happens when Christian theologies leave no theological space for Judaism or Jewish theologies leave no theological space for Christianity—due to the Christian proclamation that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God incarnate who fulfills God's covenant with Israel and reconfigures Israel around himself.<sup>136</sup>

It is not at all clear what Levering means here by the phrase "no theological space" and as far as I can see this definition is not elaborated upon or mentioned in the work again. On this definition, Marcion could be said to avoid "supersessionism," since he indeed provided a theological space for Judaism, albeit an entirely negative one, completely discontinuous and opposite the Gentile Church.<sup>137</sup> This revised definition of "supersessionism" could be placed within subset 1.1 of Donaldson's typology since it considers Judaism and Christianity as two completely separate and fixed entities. The problem with the definition of supersessionism as "leaving no space" for Judaism is that it says nothing about the form of relationship between the two entities of Israel and Church—it seems to imply only that these entities are separate yet ought to relate to one another in some way. On this definition it seems supersessionism is what happens when Christian theologies are separate from Jewish theologies. Such a definition obviously evacuates the term of its meaning.

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<sup>136</sup> Levering, *Jewish-Christian*, 12.

<sup>137</sup> Soulen pointed out to me how Marcion could be said to avoid this definition of supersessionism.



More important than Levering's revised definition of supersessionism is his view that Jewish-Christian dialogue still "begins with the question of supersessionism." Even eight years after his response to Wyschogrod, the question remains a paramount theological question for Levering. Unless the problem is overcome, in Levering's view, Jewish-Christian dialogue is not possible. In order to overcome the problem of supersessionism, Levering draws upon David Novak's understanding of supersessionism,<sup>138</sup> which he argues points the way forward for Jewish-Christian dialogue. For the remainder of this section I analyze Levering's adoption of Novak's view of supersessionism and then move on to evaluate Levering's argument against Kinzer's claim that Aquinas is the standard-bearer of a supersessionist church.

In Novak's view, supersessionism consists of two forms: mild and harsh.<sup>139</sup> The mild form holds the promise for moving forward in Jewish-Christian dialogue while the harsh prevents dialogue. The mild form of Christian supersessionism is characterized by two positive affirmations: 1) Jesus Christ is the Messiah and 2) the covenant with the Jews has not been revoked. Mild supersessionism, explains Levering, is the view that Christianity "solves the problems of Judaism better than Judaism can do without Christianity because Christianity provides the savior to whom Judaism has always looked."<sup>140</sup> Because of this

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<sup>138</sup> Levering, *Jewish-Christian*, 19. Regarding the question of supersessionism Novak points to Soulen's *God of Israel and Christian Theology* and refers to it as "the most thorough and theologically suggestive Christian treatment of supersessionism." Levering cites Soulen's "influential" categories in the Introduction to *Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Life of Wisdom* but does not engage his work. Novak, *Talking With Christians*, 8, fn. 1.

<sup>139</sup> Novak actually uses the terms "soft" and "hard." "Mild" and "harsh" are the terms Levering uses.

<sup>140</sup> Levering, *Jewish-Christian*, 14.

particular Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, “Christianity ‘supersedes’ Judaism in the sense of “going beyond it.”<sup>141</sup> According to both Novak and Levering, mild supersessionism is unavoidable for Christians because it involves the claim that Jesus Christ “goes beyond” Judaism. And yet, this mild form does not need to be “anti-Jewish” and does not require “condemnation of Judaism.” Mild supersessionism “goes beyond” Judaism yet affirms that “God has not annulled his everlasting covenant with the Jewish people, neither past nor present nor future.”<sup>142</sup> In this milder form of supersessionism the Jews are not rejected as God’s covenant people and the covenant is affirmed as an “ongoing reality” that possesses positive meaning.<sup>143</sup>

Harsh Christian supersessionism is more problematic in Novak’s view. Novak believes harsh supersessionism is more radical than mild because it has the Church replacing the Jewish people altogether in the covenant.<sup>144</sup> Harsh supersessionism is the view that “the

<sup>141</sup> As an example, Novak offers Edith Stein as one who “goes beyond” Judaism in her conversion to Christianity.

<sup>142</sup> Levering, *Jewish-Christian*, 16.

<sup>143</sup> The challenge of a post-supersessionist theology, as Bruce Marshall has pointed out, is to reconcile these two claims: 1) the universal saving mission of Christ and the Church, and 2) the permanent election of the people of Israel. But it is not at all clear based on even the most basic definition of “supersede” how one who holds to these two claims is a supersessionist in any way since though the claims are in tension, one entity is not at all described as replacing the other entity. There is no replacement or superseding taking place at all. Novak’s language of a “mild” supersessionism as “going beyond” is strange and rather idiosyncratic. “Mild supersessionism” would therefore be more accurately described by Donaldson’s typology as simply one “relation” among Israel and Church where the two entities are separate and opposite or have some sort of parallel existence. Subset 1.1 or 5.1 could describe such a relation *both of which are clearly not supersessionist* since no superseding of one entity over another takes place. Donaldson’s typology is therefore proven helpful in protecting “supersessionism” as an analytical category and shows that “mild supersessionism” is not really supersessionism.

<sup>144</sup> Novak, *Talking with Christians*, 41. Novak’s essay “Avoiding Charges of Legalism and Antinomianism in Jewish Christian-Dialogue,” which Levering cites here, served as a background paper for the

Jewish people are no longer special people in the eyes of God; they lose their covenantal prerogatives altogether, and fall back to the status of all other peoples.”<sup>145</sup> Here, I take Novak’s description of harsh supersessionism as “losing covenantal prerogatives” and falling back to status of Gentiles to be the equivalent of erasing the theological distinction between Jew and Gentile. Novak is concerned here to protect the elect status of carnal Israel, as is Wyschogrod. In Novak’s words, this form of harsh Christian supersessionism is the assertion “that God has rejected the Jews and replaced them with the Church....”<sup>146</sup> Novak’s “harsh supersessionism” therefore corresponds to subsets 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1 of Donaldson’s typology as well as Soulen’s definitions of punitive and economic supersessionism.

An essential aspect of the harsh form of supersessionism Novak rejects is the use of “teleological or casual logic” in the interpretation of the relationship between Israel’s covenants (the Old Testament) and Christ (the New Testament). The Old, for Novak, should not be seen as the earlier “potential” to the New or as prior “cause.”<sup>147</sup> In contrast to such logic, Novak proposes a parallel relation between Jews and Christians that avoids teleological arguments of one entity replacing the other:

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project, “A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity,” sponsored by the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies (Baltimore). The statement was signed by an interdenominational group of Jewish scholars, and was published in September 2000. The statement was then followed by Frymer-Kensky et al., *Christianity In Jewish Terms*.

<sup>145</sup> Levering comments that Novak recognizes that the Catholic Church has rejected this more radical supersessionism.

<sup>146</sup> Novak, *Talking with Christians*, 41. (emphasis mine)

<sup>147</sup> Levering, *Jewish-Christian*, 21.

...It is best, both historically and theologically, to look upon ourselves as two traditions, related to the same sources, which have developed, often in the same worldly locations, with a striking parallelism. *Being parallel* to one another our theological logic in talking with one another should be that of analogy rather than that of either causal inference or teleology.<sup>148</sup>

Novak argues that “analogy” shows how the New Testament can, for a Christian, illuminate the Old Testament so that the believer discovers the context in which salvation in Christ “makes sense.” Although Novak rejects the teleological logic that results in replacement as supersessionism, he also holds that neither Christian nor Jew could abandon proselytism, in the sense that they hope others will come to their respective Jewish or Christian faith. For Novak, the consequence of the renunciation of harsh supersessionism by Christians entails that “Christians have no more arguments for our conversion than we have arguments for their conversion.”<sup>149</sup> Novak reasons that due to this tenuous position, some Jews will become Christian and some Christians will accept Judaism. The risk of conversion in such parallelism is “the chance we take in mutual theological discourse.”<sup>150</sup>

Levering quotes approvingly of Novak’s rejection of harsh Christian supersessionism. He claims Novak’s term opens a path forward for Jewish-Christian dialogue and implies that

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<sup>148</sup> Novak, *Talking with Christians*, 24.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 25. I do not think Novak has in mind here “parallel covenants” that are both legitimate but separate ways to access the God of Israel. Such a view is represented by Rabbi Irving Greenberg, in “Judaism and Christianity: Covenants of Redemption” in Frymer-Kensky et al., *Christianity In Jewish Terms*, 141-158. See also Soulen’s response to Greenberg in the same volume, entitled, “Israel and the Church: A Christian Response to Irving Greenberg’s Covenantal Pluralism,” 167-174. Novak, rather, seems to view Judaism and Christianity as separate traditions that share common sources but are also fixed entities. Novak’s view of the relationship between Israel and Church might be included under 5.2 (*Relationship of Co-Existence*) of Donaldson’s typology. Although, I have my reservations about this since type 5 assumes a high degree of continuity that Novak seems to play down.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

he also rejects it. However, upon closer examination, it seems Levering backpedals on his approval of Novak's rejection of harsh supersessionism when he speculates about what *sort* of teleological logic Novak actually rejects. Novak does not mention "types" of teleological logic or specify any distinction in relation to the term whatsoever. Yet Levering attempts to create a distinction where Novak offers none. He writes, "I take it that [Novak] means to exclude a *mechanical teleology*, stripped of real final causality, that treats biblical Israel as a mere mechanism by which God brings about Jesus, and which has no value once Jesus arrives."<sup>151</sup> Here, Levering implies that a non-mechanical teleology that provides "real final causality" and that leaves the opposite of "no value" (some value?) for Israel would be acceptable to Novak. And Levering then describes what an acceptable (to Novak) teleological logic might look like:

Viewed in light of Christ, biblical Israel—and Judaism—find teleological fulfillment in Christ, but not the kind of fulfillment that can be seen to emerge necessarily from the operation of the mechanism, nor the kind of teleology that brings about its own fulfillment from within its own resources and that has value only in its end or goal. God's Word includes his good gifts to Israel. That these gifts are ordered to a further fulfillment is indeed teleological, but the gifts cannot be reduced to an immanent and mechanical teleology.<sup>152</sup>

Here, Levering proposes two forms of teleology, which I refer to as "mechanical" and "real final causality." The mechanical is identified as problematic because it somehow reduces God's "good gifts to Israel" to a mechanical teleology.

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<sup>151</sup> Levering, *Jewish-Christian*, 25 (emphasis mine).

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

It is vital to unravel Levering's terminology in order to try and understand what problem he understands the language of harsh supersessionism to identify. "Real final causality" is the form of teleological logic that is acceptable (to Levering) so long as it does not deny "realities" that Jews and Christians affirm together. Levering asks:

Once one allows for teleology, does one bring in supersessionism... through the back door? Assuming an appropriate time and setting, cannot Jews tell Christians to 'come home'? Yes, but neither Christians nor Jews can do so in a manner that denies or discards the *realities* that Christians and Jews affirm together."<sup>153</sup>

This qualification about an "acceptable form of teleology" that does not discard "realities" Christians and Jews affirm together seems as if it is a way of sidestepping Novak's harsh Christian supersessionism. Levering seems to say that teleological logic is acceptable to Novak so long as it does not discard or deny shared Jewish and Christian realities. Yet Levering does not say what Jewish "realities" must not be denied—the context clues offered are "good gifts to Israel," and "Sinai." From these terms, I take "realities" that Jews and Christians affirm and cannot be denied to mean God's gift of the law and covenant with the Jews. If this definition is accepted, the form of teleological logic of harsh Christian supersessionism (a distinction created by Levering and not Novak) that is "acceptable" must therefore positively "affirm" Jewish covenant realities that leaves Israel as somehow valuable. But if this is the case, why not refer to this form of acceptable teleological logic as mild supersessionism, since the mild form already positively affirms the covenant?<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 22 (emphasis mine).

<sup>154</sup> Again, "mild supersessionism" is defined as the idea that the Jews are not rejected as God's covenant people and the covenant is affirmed as an 'ongoing reality' that possesses positive meaning.

Levering's category of acceptable teleology, which he also refers to as "real final causality" ultimately says nothing positive about Israel. "Mechanical teleology" only identifies, in ambiguous terms, what cannot be said about biblical Israel: e.g. one may not reduce biblical Israel's realities; one may not say that biblical Israel has no value. Nothing is said about what exactly must be affirmed about Israel. The distinction between acceptable (real final causality) and unacceptable (mechanical) teleology ultimately seems like a device that allows Levering to step around Novak's rejection of harsh Christian supersessionism: the idea that the Church has replaced the Jewish people as God's elect community and that the covenant is obsolete, abrogated, or both. The distinction between an unacceptable and acceptable teleology essentially takes the teeth out of Novak's definition of "harsh Christian supersessionism"—a term Novak uses to describe what he refers to as "supersessionist logic." In order to notice Levering's move, one must take a closer look at Novak's definition of harsh Christian supersessionism.

Novak seems to think that the mark of harsh Christian supersessionist logic is the teleological logic that it assumes the *replacement* of the Jews as God's elect people with the Church. He writes, "Christian supersessionists assert that God has rejected the Jews *and replaced them with the Church...*"<sup>155</sup> Christian supersessionists think they are now "God's people exclusively."<sup>156</sup> In Novak's view "the heart" of supersessionism is the teleological

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<sup>155</sup> Novak, *Talking with Christians*, 9.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

logic that requires that the “Church replaces the Jewish people as Israel.”<sup>157</sup> He writes: “...if the New Testament replaces the Old Testament and the Church replaces the Jewish people as Israel, then the old has been overcome—that is, has been superseded—by the new.”<sup>158</sup> Novak’s main concern with the teleological logic of harsh Christian supersessionism concerns the Christian denial of exactly these realities: the perpetual covenant *and* the denial that carnal Israel remains God’s elect community.<sup>159</sup> Indeed, Novak’s whole purpose in calling for the renunciation of harsh Christian supersessionism is that the replacement of one entity by another prevents the sort of parallelism that he points toward as a solution for Jewish-Christian dialogue. Moving beyond harsh Christian supersessionism, especially its teleology that requires that the Church replace carnal Israel as God’s elect, is Novak’s aim, as the title of the article referenced by Levering indicates: “From Supersessionism to Parallelism in Jewish-Christian Dialogue.”<sup>160</sup> By sidestepping Novak’s renunciation of the claim that the Church replaces carnal Israel Levering seems to avoid the problem of replacement at the heart of the logic of harsh Christian supersessionism. Thus when Levering claims “Novak’s way of handling the loaded term of ‘supersessionism’ identifies a path for Jewish-Christian dialogue” he seems only to pay lip service to Novak’s understanding of the term.

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 10; 21.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 8.



For Novak, Wyschogrod, and Soulen, *the* problem with Christian supersessionism is the claim that the covenant with carnal Israel is abrogated or obsolete or both and that the Church has replaced the Jews as God's elect community. For both Novak and Wyschogrod, Christian supersessionism refers to something more precise than abstract notions of “discarding Jewish realities” or affirming that postbiblical Israel has “some value.” For Novak and these scholars, the problematic form of supersessionism (which for Novak is “harsh” and for Soulen is “economic”) “has the Church replacing the Jewish people altogether in the covenant.”<sup>161</sup>

In the same way that Levering defined supersessionism in abstract terms (“revoking the covenant”) in his reply to Wyschogrod, he seems to define supersessionism, once again, in abstract terms (as a denial of the “covenant realities”) in his engagement with Novak. In both engagements with these Jewish theologians, there is no statement about the positive role Israel now plays. Their main concern with the paramount question of supersessionism is bypassed—whether God intends carnal Israel to no longer exist as God’s elect community.

### 3.4 Matthew Levering’s Reply to Mark Kinzer

Levering’s attempt to adapt Novak’s view of supersessionism is followed by engagement of Mark Kinzer’s recent criticism of Aquinas.<sup>162</sup> Kinzer, building on the

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<sup>161</sup> Novak, *Talking with Christians*, 41. Novak’s essay “Avoiding Charges of Legalism and Antinomianism in Jewish Christian-Dialogue,” which Levering cites here, served as a background paper for the project, “A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity,” sponsored by the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies (Baltimore). The statement was signed by an interdenominational group of Jewish scholars, and was published in September 2000. The statement was then followed by Frymer-Kensky et al., *Christianity In Jewish Terms*.

<sup>162</sup> Mark Kinzer, *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People* (Brazos Press, 2005), 39.

argument of Wyschogrod's 1987 article, argues that Aquinas's claim that the observance of ceremonial Mosaic Law is a mortal sin represents the "unequivocal supersessionist theological and canonical legacy of the Church."<sup>163</sup> Kinzer views this teaching as supersessionist because he views the heart of the theory as the teaching that "the *ekklesia* replaces the Jewish people as the elect community in covenant with God... the church is the new and spiritual Israel, fulfilling the role formerly occupied by 'carnal' Israel."<sup>164</sup>

Kinzer argues that the New Testament does not support the claim that the ceremonial Mosaic Law is dead for Jewish Christians—a claim articulated by Augustine in his correspondence with Jerome, and later adopted by Aquinas.<sup>165</sup> For Kinzer, such a view is a development of ecclesiastical tradition that forces Aquinas to adopt the claim that the ceremonial law causes spiritual death for Jews. Kinzer concludes that, "Only a preexisting theological commitment to supersessionism could lead one to be satisfied with the explanation of the relevant biblical texts offered by Augustine and accepted by Aquinas."<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Kinzer does say that Aquinas cannot be held responsible for creating the Christian consensus on the *mortifera* character of the Mosaic Law since he is interpreting ecclesiastical tradition whose roots go back to the early second century and which became official at the second council of Nicaea in 787. Such a view seems to underestimate Aquinas's understanding of the relationship between scripture and *sacred doctrina*, not to mention ignore the possibility that original insights on relevant texts regarding the law may exist in Aquinas's works, especially his neglected biblical commentaries on the Pauline epistles. Both Kinzer and Wyschogrod employ a rather selective reading of Aquinas, a point I will return to below.

<sup>164</sup> Kinzer, 12.

<sup>165</sup> See also Carolinne White, *The correspondence (394-419), between Jerome and Augustine of Hippo* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1990).

<sup>166</sup> Kinzer, 39. Kinzer's view of Aquinas's "preexisting commitment" does not take into account the fact that Aquinas thinks that Paul teaches (in Galatians 5:2) that observance of the ceremonial law after Christ makes Christ no profit and thus must mean it is a mortal sin. Aquinas does not commit to theological positions first and then look for support in scripture. For example, Aquinas disagrees with Augustine based on his own readings of scripture. Aquinas's biblical commentaries represent a critical engagement with the text that accords

Levering takes issue with Kinzer's claim about Aquinas's "preexisting theological commitment" to supersessionism. He rejects Kinzer's exegesis based on a thorough review of several New Testament texts and argues that Aquinas's claim that the ceremonial Mosaic Law is dead after the Passion of Christ is an accurate expression of New Testament theology. In short, Levering argues that Christ has fulfilled and reconfigured Torah and Temple around himself and that scripture supports this view.

It is important to note that Levering does not claim Aquinas avoids supersessionism as he did in his original response to Wyschogrod. Indeed, in his reply to Kinzer's argument that Aquinas is the standard-bearer of a supersessionist church, Levering avoids the term supersessionism altogether. Instead, he argues that Aquinas's fulfillment theology expresses the view of the New Testament. It is not clear why, but in his engagement with Kinzer, he steps away from the language of supersessionism.

This shift in the unfolding discussion over whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist is significant because Levering's reply to Kinzer represents the most recent contribution to the debate. However, though Levering shifts away from the language of supersessionism, he does use the language of "replacement" which may indicate he may be more comfortable with the term "replacement theology." As Soulen has pointed out, "replacement theology" is a substantially equivalent term to supersessionism. In his engagement with Kinzer, Levering finally acknowledges the idea of replacement at the heart of the logic of supersessionism. After stating that Aquinas's fulfillment theology expresses

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with his official title of Master of the Sacred Page. His adoption of the Augustinian view of the law as dead and deadly is determinatively shaped by his reading of Hebrews and Galatians, as I shall demonstrate in chapter three, four, five, and seven.

the New Testament view, Levering attempts to describe a positive ongoing role for Jews in the present. He argues that the Jews in fact, do have “a place” in the world and explains how Aquinas’s view does not “negate” Judaism:

God gave his covenantal people the Torah, as the ‘place’ in which they would be formed in true worship of the one God, and Judaism and Jews continue to possess this covenantal ‘place’ even as Christians invite the Jewish people to discover the messianic fulfillment of this ‘place.’ The fact that in the new covenant Jews fulfill their covenantal obligations (Torah observance) sacramentally, in union with gentiles in the Body of the Messiah, does not take away the ‘place’ of Judaism and Jews, because this ‘place’ participates in the saving work of the Messiah.<sup>167</sup>

Here, Levering essentially restates his position outlined in his reply to Wyschogrod: By sharing in Christ’s fulfillment of Mosaic Law, “Jewish Christians do not lose their identity but rather enter into the (supernatural) fullness of their identity.”<sup>168</sup> The difference is that in his encounter with Kinzer, he states his position in terms of “place” as he argues more explicitly that the place of Torah observance is now completed in another place: the Church.

However, Levering’s argument that the Church and sacraments are the new place for the Jewish people to observe Torah is problematized by his approval of Novak’s renunciation of harsh Christian supersessionism, since Novak rejects replacement theology. Ironically, Novak uses the language of “replacement” as synonymous with supersessionism in the works that Levering draws upon for his appropriation of Novak’s views of supersessionism. Novak believes it is Levering’s sort of replacement theology in particular that must be overcome: “Christian supersessionism lends itself to an easy way to proselytize Jews. It simply tells

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<sup>167</sup> Levering, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, 39.

<sup>168</sup> Levering, *Christ’s Fulfillment*, 29.

Jews that they are living in an irretrievable past. It thus tells Jews to become ‘full Jews,’ that is, to become Christians and leave Judaism behind.”<sup>169</sup> The harsh Christian supersessionism that Novak requires Christians to reject is precisely the sort of teleological argument that invites Jews to become “full Jews” by fulfilling in Levering’s words “their covenantal obligations (Torah observance) sacramentally, in union with gentiles in the Body of the Messiah.”<sup>170</sup>

Overall, Levering’s use of the language of supersessionism functions ambiguously. In his reply to Wyschogrod he confuses the term with antisemitism and limits to only a punitive revocation. In his engagement with Novak, his emphasis on teleological fulfillment seems only to pay lip service to the call for the renunciation of harsh Christian supersessionism. And in his engagement with Kinzer on the question of whether Aquinas’s theology is supersessionist he seems to drop the language of supersessionism altogether. Levering’s approach seems to sidestep the paramount question posed to Aquinas by Wyschogrod: whether God wills the replacement of the Jewish people as the elect community.

#### 4. A Thomistic Engagement of Michael Wyschogrod’s Paramount Question

By addressing Kinzer’s exegesis instead of the question of whether Aquinas’s theology consists of harsh Christian supersessionism, Levering begs the paramount question put to Aquinas by Wyschogrod: “How... can the Church claim to recognize God’s

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<sup>169</sup> Novak, *Talking with Christians*, 24.

<sup>170</sup> Levering, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, 40.

continuing covenant with Israel, which would quickly disappear *as a visible reality* if all Jews heeded the Church's evangelical call?"<sup>171</sup>

The recent work of Bruce Marshall and Steven Boguslawski, however, directly acknowledges the problem that the language of supersessionism is most helpful for identifying. Therefore, the work of these Thomists enables the discussion with Wyschogrod to proceed upon a clearer path and represents a direction I attempt to follow. In this section, I treat Marshall and Boguslawski's view that the status of the observance of ceremonial law is the crux of the matter in the question over supersessionism in Aquinas's theology, and I then demonstrate the significance of both scholars' work for pursuing that question.

#### 4.1 Bruce Marshall on the Problem of Fulfillment Theology and the Need to Reexamine Aquinas's Claim that the Ceremonial Law is Deadly

Bruce Marshall's critical view of fulfillment theology represents a Thomistic engagement of supersessionism that takes the permanent election of Israel, and therefore, Wyschogrod's challenge to Aquinas, seriously. Marshall explains that arguments that claim the observance of Torah is fulfilled by observing the sacraments fail to acknowledge the theological problem that supersessionism is meant to identify.

According to Marshall, the claim that the Mosaic Law is fulfilled in Christ is not the solution to the problem of supersessionism. As an example, he offers the commonplace notion that circumcision is fulfilled in the act of baptism. This sort of fulfillment, argues Marshall,

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<sup>171</sup> Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment*, 16. [emphasis mine]

...seems to suggest, that what a Jew should do in order to observe God's command regarding his eight-day-old son is take him to church and get him baptized. It seems, in other words, that on this view the way for Jews to observe the law is to become Christians. Now the notion that the law of Moses finds its complete fulfillment in Christ and the Church is, I think, indispensable for Christianity. But this ancient idea is not the solution to the problem of supersessionism. It *is* the problem.<sup>172</sup>

According to Marshall, the theological problem with the idea that the Church is now the place of God's people, rather than that place being carnal Israel is that, if this were true, "no one could take the God of Israel seriously."<sup>173</sup> Christians believe that the God of Jesus Christ has promised salvation to all humanity and that this promise is irrevocable. Marshall explains that Christians believe God will not take this promise back, nor replace the promise with another. "In other words," writes Marshall, "God made the same sort of promise to Abraham as Christians believe he has made to all the world in Christ: a permanent and irrevocable one."<sup>174</sup> Yet, if the Church believes that the promise to carnal Israel has been reconfigured (to use Levering's language) to the degree that God no longer wills that Jews observe Torah as Jews, it means, as Wyschogrod also points out, that God has gone back on his promise that the Jews are the elect people unto the end of time.<sup>175</sup>

According to Marshall, this sort of fulfillment theology produces a second theological problem. If it is true that God has gone back on his promise that the Jews are the elect people

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<sup>172</sup> Bruce Marshall, "Quasi in Figura: A Brief Reflection on Jewish Election, after Thomas Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera* 7, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 480-481.

<sup>173</sup> Marshall, "Christ and the Cultures: the Jewish People and Christian Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, ed. Colin E. Gunton (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 88.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid..

<sup>175</sup> Levering views Christ's fulfillment as accomplishing "not an extension or renewal of Israel's signs, but an internal reconfiguration of those signs around himself." Levering, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, 39.

unto the end of time, it is not clear why the fulfillment of one promise cannot be superseded by yet another fulfillment:

If Christians suppose that this God has revoked his promise to Israel, then we suppose that when this God declares a promise permanent and irrevocable, he may be lying. So if Christians want to believe that God's promise of salvation to all the world in Jesus Christ is permanent, then we have to believe that the election of Israel is permanent. Or as it is sometimes put: if God's pledge of salvation to the world in Jesus Christ is unsurpassable, then the election of Israel is unsurpassable.<sup>176</sup>

Marshall understands that the challenge that must be faced in overcoming economic supersessionism is the positive affirmation of the permanent election of Israel and the positive affirmation of the election of Israel has to do with the question of the present theological status of the ceremonial law.

Any affirmation of the election of Israel immediately raises the question of *the status of observance of the ceremonial law*, since it is through the observance of the Torah that the covenant with the Jews remains a covenant with the Jews and, as Marshall says, "not some other people." Marshall argues, in a way that is clearly in line with Wyschogrod's view, that permanent election of carnal Israel entails that Jewish distinction from the Gentile nations be maintained through observance of Torah.<sup>177</sup> "The Jewish people," writes Marshall, "cannot be permanently elect unless they can be distinguished at all times from the nations, and the observance of traditional Jewish law seems to be the one mark by which this distinction can

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<sup>176</sup> Marshall, "Christ and the Cultures," 88.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 91.



be sustained *post Christum*.<sup>178</sup> Affirming Jewish election, for Marshall, must therefore also mean affirming Jewish existence in the world *as a visible reality*, through Torah observance.

For Marshall, Aquinas's teaching in the *Summa theologiae* that the observance of the ceremonial law after Christ is a mortal sin for all Jews is an obstacle to affirming the election of Israel. He writes,

Thomas clearly regards the continued observance of the Torah after Christ as fatal. That is, the vast bulk of Mosaic legislation, everything in the "old law" which Aquinas considers distinctively Jewish (everything, that is, except the ten commandments), has been set aside by the coming of Christ. More than that: everything which pertains to the worship of God in Israel, the totality of the Levitical cult—what Aquinas calls the "ceremonial law"—is now not only useless, but destructive. After Christ these laws are not simply dead (*mortua*), but deadly (*mortifera*); those who continue to observe them "now sin mortally."<sup>179</sup>

Marshall is not alone in recognizing Aquinas's teaching in the *Summa theologiae* as problematic for any theology that wishes to overcome supersessionism. Two scholars besides Marshall have recently attempted to reinterpret this teaching in a more favorable way. It is important to highlight their work in order to show how their approach to Aquinas's teaching differs from Marshall's.

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 92. Marshall elaborates on this point in another essay: "...the Jewish people cannot continue to exist in the long run without Judaism.... The irrevocable election of the Jewish people evidently requires the permanence of their religion. ...without a substantial core of faithful Jews, who practice Judaism well and teach their children to do the same, it seems impossible that the Jewish people could endure in the long run. Without Judaism, the Jewish people would surely, if slowly, disappear from the earth, as other ancient people have done. They would cease to be a distinct people, and vanish into *gentilitas*, as medieval Christian theologians called the mass of us not descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." See "Elder Brothers: John Paul II's Teaching on the Jewish People as a Question to the Church," in *John Paul II and the Jewish People: A Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 122.

<sup>179</sup> Marshall, "Quasi in Figura," 479. Marshall has in mind Ia-IIae q. 103.4; q. 104.3.

Holly Taylor Coolman proposes departing from Aquinas's teaching, especially the prefiguring hermeneutics that underpin it.<sup>180</sup> William Goldin refers to Aquinas's teaching as "less than favorable" in light of the positive affirmation of the election

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<sup>180</sup> Coolman writes, "What about Aquinas's more controversial claim: that observance of the ceremonial law in fact constitutes mortal sin? What about the plea of Wyschogrod, the argument of Kinzer? Is it possible that Jewish Christians could, in fact, practice the ceremonial law as Christians? Is it possible that, even given radical similarity, distinction between Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian might exist? Here, we could remain completely consistent with Aquinas and say, 'No': no Christian may ever observe the ceremonial law. Jewish Christians who light the Sabbath candles or eat according to kosher dietary guidelines do so to their own damnation. Or, we could ask whether [my] Thomistically inspired account...could allow for a precisely Christian form of observance of the ceremonial law. For Aquinas, the ceremonial law can, by its nature, only point *forward* to Christ, and not *back*. But, if we prescind from Aquinas at this particular point, we might allow for such a thing." Coolman, *Christological Torah*, 10-11. Here, Coolman seems to understand along with Marshall, Boguslawski, and Wyschogrod, how the prefiguring hermeneutics are the crux of the matter in the teaching that observance of the ceremonial law becomes dead and deadly. As stated above, it should be noted that Coolman's treatment of Aquinas is somewhat hindered by the lack of attention to the theological motivations behind Wyschogrod's challenge to Aquinas and his ultimate concern to protect the corporeal election of Israel, and not only the idea that Jewish Christians be allowed to observe the law. As argued above, Wyschogrod is concerned with baptized Jews *and* with Jewish observance of the ceremonial Mosaic Law. Coolman seems to only address Wyschogrod's suggestion that baptized Jews be allowed to observe Torah in a Christ-honoring way (this is only possible only after one prescinds from Aquinas's teaching on the matter). In my view, it seems Coolman does not recognize Wyschogrod's concern because of the following reasons: her hesitancy about the language of supersessionism in general; her acceptance of Novak's confusing use of "soft supersessionism"; and a neglect of the work of Soulen, which explicitly shows how punitive and economic supersessionism are theological problems for Christian theology and for Wyschogrod but in different ways. Coolman's lack of attention to these themes is represented in her assumption about the nature of harsh Christian supersessionism: She writes, "As we try to tease these elements apart from others, however, the matter can become complicated indeed. This essay sets aside the question of classic supersessionism, or 'hard supersessionism,' *assuming it to be incompatible with Christian faith and unsupported by either Scripture or authoritative church teaching*. The questions pursued here are the nature of God's salvific work, asking whether and how what Novak has called 'soft supersessionism' is the stance that Christians should espouse." [emphasis mine] First, as I argued above, soft supersessionism is *not* supersessionism because *there is no replacement* of one entity with another (just a "going beyond"). Second, the position assumed by Coolman that economic or harsh supersessionism is incompatible with Christian faith is not true. In fact, that Christian faith and scripture have been interpreted in supersessionist ways is precisely the claim argued at length by Soulen and Donaldson. Additionally, Kinzer has shown that authoritative Church teaching does indeed support the idea that the law is a mortal sin. It seems Coolman is confusing harsh supersessionism with punitive supersessionism, which is only about revoking the covenant based on the rejection of Christ. Harsh supersessionism, though, is not only the idea of "revoking the covenant" (or punitive supersessionism) that *Nostra Aetate* repudiated (I am assuming Coolman's comment about authoritative church teaching to refer to this document). As I showed above, Novak's harsh supersessionism covers *both* the punitive form of revocation *and the form of economic supersessionism that requires Jews to become Christians in order to become full Jews*. Because Coolman is unclear on the language of supersessionism she sets aside the problem of "harsh supersessionism" which is precisely Wyschogrod's concern with Aquinas. Novak's view of harsh supersessionism targets the same problem that Wyschogrod's does: the teaching that the law is now obsolete (and at worst sinful) and that the Jews are replaced by the Church.

of Israel by the Second Vatican Council and the teaching of John Paul II.<sup>181</sup> Goldin rightly identifies a tension between the Council and John Paul II's positive affirmation of Jewish election and Aquinas's teaching that the law is now dead and deadly and asks a question similar to the one this study will pursue in the analysis of the commentaries on Paul: Whether there is "any intrinsic and enduring theological value to the practice of the so-called ceremonial 'sacraments' of the Mosaic Law after the coming of Christ?"<sup>182</sup> Goldin's concludes that there is a value to these sacraments in Aquinas's thought but *only* if the practicing Jew is invincibly ignorant of Christ or has implicit faith.<sup>183</sup>

These scholars respond to Wyschogrod's challenge to Aquinas's teaching on the *mortifera* character of the ceremonial Mosaic Law with helpful and original insights. For Coolman, the solution is to depart from what she sees as Aquinas's difficult teaching; for Goldin, the solution is to appeal to Aquinas's doctrine of invincible ignorance and how implicit faith mitigates its threat to the Jew who does not know of Christ. Both scholars assume Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law after Christ is straightforwardly negative.

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<sup>181</sup> William Goldin, *Supersessionism and the Saving Significance of Mosaic Covenant and Ritual: St. Thomas Aquinas and the Interpretation of Vatican II and the Post-Conciliar Magisterium*. M.A. thesis Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C., 2010. I am grateful to Mr. Goldin for kindly sharing his unpublished thesis with me.

<sup>182</sup> Goldin, 3.

<sup>183</sup> Goldin's position ultimately does not address the heart of the problem of supersessionism as understood by Wyschogrod and other Jews who are aware of Christian claims about Christ and would therefore be in mortal sin according to the traditional teaching. Goldin also proposes two other values but these are dissolved if the Jew practicing Torah is aware of Jesus Christ and continues to practice the Law: "I hold that this *objective* saving importance is individually *subjective*, in so far as the objective salvific significance of these rites hinges on the subjective invincible ignorance and implicit Christ-oriented faith of the Jews who continue to hold to such rites." Ibid., 96.

Each scholars' view of Aquinas's teaching is summed up well by Coolman's description of the teaching in the *Summa theologiae*: "Jewish Christians who light the Sabbath candles or eat according to kosher dietary guidelines do so to their own damnation."<sup>184</sup> Likewise, Wyschogrod and Kinzer view Aquinas's teaching that the observance of the ceremonial law is fatal after Christ as a fact. While the first two scholars seek creative ways of overcoming the tension between Aquinas's teaching and the need to repudiate supersessionism, the latter two scholars seem to view the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology as a rather open-and-shut case.

Yet all of these scholars assume Aquinas's position to be that Jewish observance of Torah, after Christ, confers spiritual death. If this were the only possible reading of Aquinas, it would seem that his theology is unavoidably supersessionist according to Novak, Wyschogrod, Donaldson, and Soulen. As Marshall has observed, it seems hard to see how Aquinas's view can be compatible with the thought that God "continues to select the Jewish people, to will their existence, precisely as Jews."<sup>185</sup>

However, what is most distinctive and promising regarding Marshall's handling of this teaching in Aquinas is his attentiveness to tensions in Aquinas's position on the matter. Marshall argues that there are suggestions of an "unofficial view" in Aquinas "alongside of, and perhaps in striking opposition to, his official view."<sup>186</sup> Marshall points to tensions within

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<sup>184</sup> Coolman, *Christological Torah*, 11.

<sup>185</sup> Marshall, "*Quasi in Figura*," 482.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 482.

the *Summa theologiae*. He finds support in a few texts in the *Secunda Secundae* for the idea that the ceremonial law might continue to figure Christ in a way, or *quasi in figura*. Moreover, Marshall argues that there is a positive view of Israel in the Romans *lectura* and argues that Aquinas affirms the carnal election of Israel in a way that repudiates supersessionism.<sup>187</sup> Marshall's interpretations of Aquinas's thought reveal a tension between the Romans *lectura* and the teaching that the ceremonial law is dead and deadly in the *Summa theologiae*. His discovery of this tension between the official and unofficial teaching suggests that contemporary Thomistic scholarship lacks a complete picture of Aquinas's thought on the subject of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ.<sup>188</sup> Marshall's work therefore advances the discussion over supersessionism in Aquinas's theology by pointing to the necessity for filling-out the complexity of Aquinas's thought on Israel and Church.<sup>189</sup> The same could be said of the work of Steven Boguslawski, who also finds a positive view of Israel in the Romans *lectura* but who, unlike Marshall, argues that Aquinas completely avoids supersessionism. The work of these two scholars indicates the Pauline commentaries may contain texts that could help provide a more complete picture of Aquinas's thought.

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<sup>187</sup> Marshall, "Postscript and Prospect," *Nova Et Vetera* 7, no. 2 (2009): 523–4.

<sup>188</sup> In his reply to Marshall, Emmanuel Perrier commented, "If it happens that Aquinas does not achieve a homogeneous doctrine on a given subject, it is always a good method to verify beforehand that one is truly faced with such a situation." Marshall responded with his Postscript and Prospect, which identifies the positive vision in the Romans *lectura* showing that Aquinas may not have achieved a homogeneous doctrine on this subject.

<sup>189</sup> Emmanuel Perrier, "The Election of Israel Today: Supersessionism, Post-supersessionism, and Fulfillment," *Nova et Vetera* 7, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 485-503. I am aware of Perrier's criticism of the dialectic of supersessionism. Perrier does not see how deep the theological problem of neglecting the election of Israel is. He asserts only that fulfillment is the way to understand the election. But this leaves the Jews, once again, in an ambiguous role that fails to attend to Wyschogrod's challenge to Thomistic studies that God wills there be Jews in the world.

Next, I turn my attention to Boguslawski's helpful use of the language of supersessionism and whether his argument that Aquinas avoids this supersessionism is successful.

#### 4.2 Steven Boguslawski on Supersessionism as the Deconstruction of Israel's Prerogatives to Christological Prefigurements

Like Marshall, Boguslawski's *Aquinas on the Jews: Insights into his Commentary on Romans* significantly advances the discussion over the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology. If Wyschogrod, Levering, and Kinzer's analysis of Aquinas treats the paramount question of supersessionism in Aquinas as an open-and-shut case, Boguslawski's work reopens it with force. Boguslawski's work advances the discussion in two significant ways. First, his use of the term supersessionism assists in translating the problem into Thomistic language, a point I explain below. Second, Boguslawski's focus on Aquinas's commentary on Romans points the discussion forward toward a more sophisticated treatment of Aquinas's thought, a treatment that includes his biblical commentaries. Boguslawski's work on the Romans commentary points the discussion toward what are some of Aquinas's most relevant works on the Jewish people. Here, I explain Boguslawski's understanding of the term supersessionism. Next, I evaluate his usage of the term in his argument that Aquinas avoids supersessionism.

The term supersessionism appears nine times throughout Boguslawski's work and features prominently in his main argument that Aquinas's commentary on Romans represents

a correction and development of Augustine.<sup>190</sup> Boguslawski views supersessionism as a “deconstruction” of the historical practices of circumcision and Torah to “prefigurements” of Christ, so that after Christ’s Passion, such practices become obsolete. Supersessionism is “relegating Israel’s divinely ordained prerogatives to prefigurements of the Christian dispensation.”<sup>191</sup> His view shares much in common with Marshall’s emphasis on Torah and it corresponds to the first of the twofold claim of economic supersessionism as explained above.<sup>192</sup> Boguslawski uses the term supersessionism mostly in the context of a comparison he draws between Aquinas and Augustine and that unfolds throughout the book as he shows how Aquinas presents a “more positive theological view” of the Jews than

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<sup>190</sup> Steven C. Boguslawski, *Thomas Aquinas on the Jews: Insights into His Commentary on Romans 9-11* (Paulist Press, 2008). Boguslawski’s work is, in part, a response to John Y. B. Hood’s *Aquinas and the Jews*. Hood mentions the problem of supersessionism only in passing and sees supersessionism as a “given” of the medieval theological tradition, which he believes Aquinas inherits. Hood’s Aquinas adopts what he refers to as the “supersession theory,” which he defines as “the belief that the Old Testament was rife with prefigurative ‘types’ of Christ and the Church, and the notion that the Jews in toto were guilty for killing Jesus.” His description of the term lacks specificity and makes Aquinas guilty by association with the medieval theological tradition. The theological problem of supersessionism is not at a primary feature of his argument. For appearances of the term “supersessionism” in Boguslawski, see xv; xvi; 4; 29; 97; 127; 133; 134; 135. Michael J. Vlach adopts Hood’s view of Aquinas. In what is a very brief statement that cites only one text from Aquinas’s commentary on Romans, he says that Aquinas accepted the established supersessionist view of the medieval period. Relying on Hood, Vlach writes, “Aquinas viewed the Jews and Judaism like the majority of Christians of his era. He did not alter the traditional understanding of the Jews and Israel in any significant way.” Hood and Vlach support the side of the discussion that rather straightforwardly sees Aquinas’s theology as supersessionist. See Vlach, 58-59.

<sup>191</sup> Boguslawski, xv.

<sup>192</sup> Again, The idea that the Church has “replaced” or superseded the Jews as God’s elect community is built upon two claims. The first claim is 1) that God no longer wills that carnal Israel exist as carnal Israel because God no longer wills the practice of circumcision and Torah observance. Without circumcision and Torah observance there is no longer a distinction between Jew and Gentile. Because God no longer wills such practices it follows that God no longer desires carnal Israel, as Israel, to exist. The second claim is 2) that God then elects another people to serve in the former’s place as the elect community. A definition of supersessionism should therefore seek to summarize these these claims: Supersessionism refers to the twofold claim that the Church has replaced the Jews as God’s elect community, and that God no longer wills that carnal Israel maintain its elect status through the practices of circumcision and observance of Torah because these practices have been abrogated or made obsolete.

Augustine.<sup>193</sup> Boguslawski views supersessionism as synonymous with what he refers to as a “problematic Augustinian supersessionism”<sup>194</sup> which he understands “to relegate Israel’s divinely ordained prerogatives to prefigurements of the Christian dispensation.”<sup>195</sup> In another place, Boguslawski equates supersessionism with the idea that “Christian believers supersede Jews as the *verus Israel*,” which is, as I argued above, the second of the two claims of supersessionism.<sup>196</sup> Taken together, these two components of Boguslawski’s view of supersessionism share the twofold structure identified in my own definition of economic supersessionism.

In order to evaluate Boguslawski’s usage of the language of supersessionism in his argument that Aquinas avoids supersessionism it is crucial to first understand what Boguslawski means by “Israel’s divinely ordained prerogatives.” By “Israel’s divinely ordained prerogatives,” Boguslawski means the covenant and law<sup>197</sup> where “covenant” corresponds to “the pact of circumcision given to Abraham” and law means the Mosaic

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<sup>193</sup> Supersessionism for Boguslawski is defined in somewhat of a vacuum with little to no reference of previous theological discussions of the term. However, although Boguslawski does not reference scholarly theological discussion of supersessionism he does consider biblical theological discussions of the problem. He approvingly cites Mary Ann Getty, “Paul and the Salvation of Israel: A Perspective on Rom 9-11,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1988): 456-69; “Paul on the Covenants and the Future of Israel,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17 (1987): 92-99; and J. Louis Martyn, “Paul and His Jewish-Interpreters,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 42 (1988): 9.

<sup>194</sup> Boguslawski, 4.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi; 108, fn8.



legislation.<sup>198</sup> Boguslawski therefore sees supersessionism as the view that relegates Israel's practices of circumcision and observance of Mosaic legislation to mere "prefigurements." By "prefigurements," I take Boguslawski to mean what Paula Fredriksen has referred to as Augustine's "typologies that correlate fleshly sacrifices with a fleshy Christ (that is, with a Christ who was truly incarnate)."<sup>199</sup> Aquinas, according to Boguslawski, provides a "positive understanding" of the Jews that goes beyond this Augustinian reading of Jews as "chest keepers."<sup>200</sup> For Boguslawski, Aquinas avoids supersessionism by maintaining the historical *realia* of Israel's prerogatives of law and covenant. Aquinas is unlike Augustine, according to Boguslawski, because he does not resort to "deconstructing the Jews' historical, covenantal privileges." Rather, Aquinas advances "his own distinctive exegetical contribution to the commentary tradition without deconstructing the Jewish people's historical prerogatives or resorting to theological supersessionism."<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 108, fn8. Interestingly, Novak uses the language of "prerogatives" of Israel to describe that which is relegated and therefore marks a significant convergence of language between a contemporary Jewish theologian and Aquinas. As I shall demonstrate, Boguslawski's view of supersessionism also shares much with Wyschogrod's view of the problem.

<sup>199</sup> Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, 262.

<sup>200</sup> "Chest keepers" refers to the teaching that the Jews perform a unique service to the church by preserving the revelation of the Old Testament, especially their prefiguring of Christ, combined with their diaspora position. Boguslawski cites Augustine: "We see and know that it is in order to bear this witness—which they involuntarily supply on our behalf by possessing and preserving these same books—that they themselves are scattered among all peoples, in whatever direction the Church of Christ expands." Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 18.46, ed. George E. McCracken et al.; 7 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957-60), 6:50-51. See also Paula Fredriksen's explanation of the testamentary doctrine: "Scattered throughout the empire the Jews exist as a *scriniaria* or "guarding of the books for the sake of the church, bearing the Law and the Prophets, and testifying to the doctrine of the church, so that we honor in the sacrament what they disclose in the letter." See also Ibid., 276-77.

<sup>201</sup> Boguslawski, 29.

Here, Boguslawski seems to identify the “deconstruction” of Israel’s prerogatives and their status as God’s elect people, with supersessionism, which is essentially the same move that Donaldson, Soulen, Wyschogrod, Novak, and Kinzer all make.<sup>202</sup> In fact, what is ultimately at issue in Wyschogrod’s challenge to Aquinas is *the status of the prerogatives of postbiblical Israel after the Passion of Christ* (or in the age of the *ekklesia*) and whether observance of those prerogatives must confer the status of spiritual death. As stated above, in Wyschogrod’s view, Aquinas “makes the prefigurement hermeneutics the foundation of his teaching of the annulment of the ceremonial law.”<sup>203</sup> Oddly enough, Boguslawski does not reference Wyschogrod’s 1987 article, which also considers prefigurement hermeneutics in Aquinas problematic. Nevertheless, Boguslawski’s identification of the prefigurement underpinning of supersessionist reading of the ceremonial law is in complete agreement with Wyschogrod’s argument against Aquinas. This represents a profound agreement between a Thomist and Wyschogrod on the heart of the problem that supersessionism is meant to describe. Boguslawski’s identification of supersessionism with the “deconstruction” of the literal Mosaic Law and circumcision moves the discussion closer to the question at the crux of the matter: *What sort of theological status does Aquinas attribute to circumcision and the ceremonial law?* Boguslawski’s usage of the language of supersessionism is incredibly helpful because it synthesizes Aquinas’s own terminology of “prefigurement” and “Israel’s prerogatives,” with the problem of economic supersessionism

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<sup>202</sup> Harsh supersessionism shares major premises of economic supersessionism since it is the view that “the Jewish people are no longer special people in the eyes of God; they lose their covenantal prerogatives altogether, and fall back to the status of all other peoples.”

<sup>203</sup> Wyschogrod, 136.

as identified above: the idea that God no longer wills that carnal Israel maintain its elect status through the practices of circumcision and observance of Torah because these practices have been abrogated or made obsolete. Along with Marshall's work, Boguslawski's view successfully clarifies the discussion over the question of supersessionism in Aquinas.

However, when Boguslawski finally does state precisely how Aquinas differs from Augustine on whether the Jewish prerogatives are relegated to prefigurements he does not successfully show, in my view, how Aquinas "develops and corrects" Augustine.

Boguslawski claims that Aquinas differs from Augustine in that Aquinas avoids the first premise of economic supersessionism: that circumcision and ceremonial Mosaic Law are obsolete because these were only prefigurements of Christ. Boguslawski explains that, for Augustine, Jewish prerogatives are only allegorical "foreshadowings" of Christian realities.<sup>204</sup> Aquinas, however, strives to preserve Jewish prerogatives as grounded in literal, historical *realia*. Aquinas, Boguslawski holds, "corrects and develops Augustine." However, one page before Boguslawski lists the literal, historical meaning of the prerogatives of Israel as a question upon which Aquinas and Augustine *differ*, he states that these theologians actually agree on the claim that Israel's prerogatives only have a prefigurative meaning. Boguslawski writes: "While Aquinas is far more concerned than Augustine to ground Israel's prerogatives in historical *realia*, both Christian theologians see the fullness of these privileges realized in Christianity. Law circumcision, cult, and other divine gifts were entitlements possessed by

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<sup>204</sup> Boguslawski, 106.

the Jews *in figura*.”<sup>205</sup> He then quickly qualifies this similarity in their views with what appears to be a distinction without a difference in their positions on how Israel’s prerogatives are fulfilled once Christ comes: “Thomas *sublates* the prerogatives of Israel, while Augustine views them as superseded once Christ comes.”<sup>206</sup> It is not clear what the difference between Aquinas’s “sublation” of the literal meaning of the Mosaic Law and Augustine’s “supersession” of the literal meaning of the Mosaic Law. Boguslawski offers no explanation. The footnote to the term “sublate” references a naked quote from Bernard Lonergan’s *Method in Theology*:

What sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context.”<sup>207</sup>

The meaning of the Lonergan quote is hardly self-evident and does not explain the difference between the terms supersede and sublate in the context of the prefiguring function of the Mosaic Law and its status after the Passion of Christ.

Recall that the main feature of Boguslawski’s argument, stated at the beginning of his work, is that Aquinas avoids Augustinian supersessionism, which he defined as relegating the prerogatives of Israel to prefigurements of the Christian dispensation. Yet it is not at all clear, based on Boguslawski’s analysis, that Aquinas avoids this move. A more fundamental problem with Boguslawski’s argument is that nowhere does he address Aquinas’s position

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Cited in Boguslawski, 121. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), 241.

that the observance of the Mosaic Law is a mortal sin because it amounts to a declaration of unbelief in Christ's Passion.<sup>208</sup> As Wyschogrod pointed out decades ago, the ground of Aquinas's claim that the observance of the ceremonial law is a mortal sin is "prefiguration hermeneutics."<sup>209</sup> Boguslawski avoids the negative teaching that observance of the law now brings mortal sin and his claim that Aquinas avoids deconstructing the literal meaning of circumcision and Mosaic Law to Christological prefigurations does not hold.

Nevertheless, Boguslawski's work makes a most critical contribution to the discussion because it clarifies the problem that the language of supersessionism helps identify. Boguslawski's association of supersessionism with the twofold idea of "historical deconstruction" of Israel's prerogatives (namely circumcision and the ceremonial Mosaic Law) and "Christian believers superseding Jews as the *verus Israel*"<sup>210</sup> moves the discussion over the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology closer to the real crux of the matter that the theological problem of supersessionism seeks to identify. As Wyschogrod pointed out years ago, "the ceremonial law is undermined by its nature as a prefiguration of Christ"<sup>211</sup> The claim that the law is only a prefiguration is the root of Aquinas's view that circumcision and observance of Mosaic law become dead and deadly after Christ. For

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<sup>208</sup> This is despite the fact that Boguslawski's *Thomas Aquinas on the Jews* includes a section on the *Summa theologiae*. Boguslawski did not address Ia-IIae q. 101.2 "Are the ceremonial precepts figurative?" and 103.4 "Since the Passion of Christ is it possible to observe the ceremonies of the Law without mortal sin?" In the *Summa theologiae* Aquinas answers the latter question in the negative because the *ratio* of the ceremonial law is primarily a prefiguration of Christ.

<sup>209</sup> Wyschogrod, *A Jewish Reading of Thomas Aquinas*, 136.

<sup>210</sup> Boguslawski, 127.

<sup>211</sup> Wyschogrod, *A Jewish Reading of Thomas Aquinas*, 135.

Boguslawski and Michael Wyschogrod, prefiguring hermeneutics “undermines” (in Wyschogrod’s words) or “deconstructs” (in Boguslawski’s words) circumcision and Torah observance. Both scholars view this deconstruction as supersessionism. Boguslawski’s work helps establish greater clarity for how the language of supersessionism might function in the discussion over Aquinas and supersessionism.

#### 5. The Task Ahead: Examining Aquinas’s View of the Theological Status of the Ceremonial Law After the Passion of Christ in His Commentaries on Paul’s Epistles

Based on the texts of the *Summa theologiae* examined by Wyschogrod, Levering, and Kinzer, it seems that Aquinas’s claim that the practice of the ceremonial Mosaic Law is a mortal sin requires that Jewish identity must be reconfigured and replaced as Christian identity. If this is an accurate picture of Aquinas’s position on Jewish observance of Torah then such a view represents economic supersessionism.

However, I would argue that such a conclusion is premature for two reasons. First, such a conclusion overlooks the incomplete picture of Aquinas’s thought on the ceremonial law after Christ.<sup>212</sup> With the exception of Marshall and Boguslawski, the discussion over whether Aquinas’s theology is supersessionist has completely neglected Aquinas’s biblical commentaries. Marshall and Boguslawski’s work broadens the discussion on whether

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<sup>212</sup> Overall, I would say there are three inadequacies in the discussion over the question of supersessionism in the theology of Aquinas. The first is the problem of the lack of clarity over the language of supersessionism, which I hope his chapter helps alleviate. The next inadequacy is the neglect of biblical commentaries in general. The third inadequacy, with the exception of Marshall, is the lack of attention to tensions.

Aquinas's theology is supersessionist—a discussion formerly limited to the *Summa theologiae*—to include Aquinas's Romans *lectura*.<sup>213</sup> Their work signals that the scope of inquiry must be broadened to the Pauline commentaries. Nevertheless, these scholars do not attend to Aquinas's other relevant Pauline commentaries. All scholars in the discussion over whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist have overlooked Aquinas's extended reflections on some of the most relevant texts on the subject of the Jewish people: his commentaries on Paul's epistles to the Galatians, Hebrews, and Ephesians. In these texts, Aquinas comments extensively on Jewish observance of the ceremonial Mosaic Law before and after Christ's Passion. The neglect of the commentaries represents a significant gap in the discussion that obscures important dimensions of Aquinas's thought.

Second, the selectivity and lack of attention to relevant texts in the current discussion obscures important dimensions in Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ. The work of Marshall and Boguslawski on the Romans *lectura* demonstrates, in quite different ways, that Aquinas's thought contains complexities that require further investigation. Drawing mostly upon the Romans *lectura*, Boguslawski claims that Aquinas, avoids deconstructing Israel's prerogatives to Christological prefigurements and presents a positive theological view of the Jews.<sup>214</sup> Wyschogrod, on the other hand, focusing on the *Summa theologiae*, claims that Aquinas's teaching that observance of the ceremonial Mosaic Law is a mortal sin strains Christianity's relation with Judaism. Wyschogrod and

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<sup>213</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura*, Ed. 8, revisa. (Taurini: Marietti, 1953).

<sup>214</sup> Boguslawski, xvi.

Boguslawski's conflicting interpretations of how Aquinas's prefiguring hermeneutics affect Israel's prerogatives indicates there exist tensions between Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial Mosaic Law in these works.

Marshall's work in particular stands out as the most promising path forward in the discussion over the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology. This is because Marshall perceives a dimension in Aquinas that Wyschogrod, Kinzer, Boguslawski, and Levering all seem to miss: contradictions between positive and negative elements exist in Aquinas's interpretation of the ceremonial law.<sup>215</sup> As Marshall has recently pointed out, "to say there is ambiguity in Aquinas's position may be something of an understatement."<sup>216</sup> Yet even Marshall's brief analysis of the Romans *lectura* does not attend to precisely how Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law in this commentary relates to Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae*, not to mention the other Pauline commentaries.

The work of Marshall and Boguslawski points to the need to broaden the examination of relevant data to the Pauline commentaries. And the work of Marshall and Boguslawski also signals that the scope of inquiry must be broadened with an eye toward tensions in Aquinas's thought. Without a more thorough analysis of Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law in the commentaries on Paul's letters, Thomistic studies seems ill-equipped to tackle the paramount question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology. This study

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<sup>215</sup> To my knowledge, one other study besides this dissertation notices the tension in Aquinas's thought: Holly Taylor Coolman's unpublished paper. However, Coolman does not identify the tension most relevant to the problem of supersessionism: Aquinas's contradictory understandings of the literal meaning of the practice of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ. Holly Taylor Coolman, "Rereading Aquinas on the Jews," *Unpublished article*. I discuss this point again in chapter four.

<sup>216</sup> Marshall, "Quasi in Figura," 483.



therefore seeks to illuminate the contemporary discussion over whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist by answering whether he consistently holds that the observance of the ceremonial Mosaic Law is *mortua et mortifera* after the passion of Christ in his neglected commentaries on Paul's epistles. In the chapters that follow I argue that Aquinas's thought, as revealed in his commentaries on Paul's epistles, contains economically supersessionist views of the Jewish people alongside and in tension with significant post-supersessionist resources.

## CHAPTER TWO

### APPROACHING AQUINAS'S COMMENTARIES ON PAUL'S EPISTLES

The commentaries that St. Thomas wrote on the books of the Old and of the New Testament, and especially on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle, reflect such authority, such keen insight and such diligence that they can be counted among his greatest theological works....

- Pope Pius XII<sup>1</sup>

This study can be considered as one part of a broader trend of growing attention to the significance of Aquinas's biblical commentaries for understanding his theology, particularly his theology of Israel. As I argued in the last chapter, the work of Marshall and Boguslawski indicates that a fuller picture of Aquinas's views on the ceremonial law is necessary for adjudicating claims that Aquinas's theology is or is not supersessionist. This study attempts to contribute to the emerging subfield of Thomistic scholarship on the theological teachings of the commentaries by utilizing insights from some of the commentaries on Paul's epistles to illuminate the recent discussion on supersessionism in Aquinas's theology. A fuller understanding of Aquinas's commentaries should provide a more comprehensive picture of Aquinas's views of the ceremonial law in general and the status of the prerogatives of Israel in the context of the Mystical Body of Christ in particular. As Jean-Pierre Torrell has observed, "If we wish...to get a slightly less one-sided idea of the whole theologian and his method, it is imperative to read and use in a much deeper fashion these biblical commentaries in parallel with the great systematic works."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pius XII, "An Address to the Faculty and Students of the Roman Athenaeum Angelicum," (January 14, 1958) *The Pope Speaks* 5 (1958): 91-95, cited in Christopher T Baglow, "*Modus Et Forma*": A New Approach to the Exegesis of Saint Thomas Aquinas with an Application to the *Lectura Super Epistolam Ad Ephesios*, *Analecta Biblica* 149 (Roma: Pontificio Istituto biblico, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas, Vol. 1. The Person and His Work*, Revised. (Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 55. It seems to me that the growing interest in the commentaries is also due to a variety of important historical factors such as Pope Leo XIII's famous encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), which declared Aquinas *the* teacher of the church and patron of all Catholic schools. Van der Ploeg opens his 1947 article appealing to Pope Leo XIII who stated in the Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* that Thomas

Indeed, Aquinas's commentaries on Paul's epistles contain a considerable amount of relevant material on Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law. My study will focus on the four commentaries on Paul's epistles that contain the most material on this subject: Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Hebrews. My aim is to uncover Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in these commentaries with attention to questions at the heart of the problem of supersessionism that were raised by both Marshall and Boguslawski's work. Namely, is there an "unofficial teaching" in Aquinas's commentaries that differs from the "official teaching" that the ceremonial law is dead and deadly after the passion of Christ?

However, before proceeding to individually analyze Aquinas's commentaries it is first necessary to introduce the reader to their relevance as an organic theological unit. Therefore, in this chapter I aim to set the stage for an examination of Aquinas's view of the observance of the ceremonial law in what Pope Pius XII has referred to as "some of his greatest theological works," the commentaries on Paul's epistles. I proceed in four steps, each of which corresponds to one of four chapter sections below.

In the first section I highlight reasons for the renewed scholarly attention to Aquinas's biblical commentaries as a source for understanding his theology and distinguish this renewed interest from twentieth-century research on Aquinas's exegetical techniques. In

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Aquinas was the leading exegete of Holy scripture among the theologians of the Scholastic age. See Van Der Ploeg, 398. The editors of *Aquinas On Scripture* state that they offer their volume "in the conviction that, in the words of the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, 'the study of the sacred page...is the soul of sacred theology.'" The editors go on to tie this conviction to its patristic source: "Together with Jerome we acknowledge that 'ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.' In keeping with the entire patristic heritage, and with the witness of the medieval commentators – among whom Thomas Aquinas was preeminent – we recognize that the Christian faithful must ever be about the business of 'searching the Scriptures' (Jn 5:39), for it is they that bear witness to Christ." See John P. Yocum and Daniel A. Keating, *Aquinas On Scripture: An Introduction To His Biblical Commentaries* (T. & T. Clark Publishers, 2005), xii. This list of reasons for the rising levels of interest in Aquinas's commentaries is by no means exhaustive.

section two I outline four contemporary scholarly approaches to Aquinas's biblical commentaries and compare them to the "thematic correlation method" utilized in this study. In section three I show how Aquinas's commentaries on Paul's epistles were produced during some of the most mature years of his career as *magister in sacra pagina* or master of the sacred page. This section also includes a treatment of both the genre and historical setting of the commentaries. By drawing upon Aquinas's first inaugural sermon at the university of Paris, and the Prologue he attaches to the beginning of his commentaries on Paul's epistles, I argue in the fourth section that Aquinas interprets Paul's epistles according to what might be referred to as a theological structure of grace. In this last section my goal is to outline how the individual commentaries relate to this theological structure, as well as which of these commentaries treat of the prerogatives of Israel in general, and the observance of the ceremonial law after Christ in particular.

### 1. Renewed Scholarly Attention to Thomas Aquinas's Commentaries on Scripture as a Source for Understanding His Theology

In this first section I highlight reasons for the renewed contemporary scholarly attention to what Thomas Weinandy recently referred to as "the forgotten corpus of the Angelic Doctor" and attempt to show why this renewal is significant for my examination of Aquinas's commentaries on Paul's epistles.<sup>3</sup>

The twentieth century experienced the scholarly recovery of an understanding of St. Thomas Aquinas as biblical theologian. Christopher Baglow points out that the major shift of this century in our comprehensive understanding of Aquinas is a "new awareness of the pervading presence and influence of Scripture on this thought." Baglow observes, "One need

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<sup>3</sup> Yocum and Keating, *Aquinas On Scripture*, x.

only survey the works of such pioneering Thomistic scholars as M.D. Chenu, Yves Congar, and J.P. Torrell to see that the relationship between Thomas and the Bible is at the cutting edge of development in this field.”<sup>4</sup> This shift in perception of Aquinas as biblical theologian has changed the way scholars view Aquinas. It is now common to read introductions of Aquinas that emphasize his role as a biblical theologian and teacher of Scripture.<sup>5</sup>

However, this new picture of Aquinas has only begun to affect how scholars approach the study of Aquinas’s theology. Indeed, scholars have spent little time on Aquinas’s biblical commentaries, and this is especially the case when it comes to treating these commentaries as sources for understanding his theology.<sup>6</sup> Weinandy points out several obstacles that stand in

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<sup>4</sup> Baglow, *Modus et Forma*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas M. Healy, *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian of the Christian Life* (Ashgate Pub Ltd, 2003). Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas, Vol. 2: Spiritual Master* (Catholic Univ of Amer Pr, 2003). Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Aquinas and His Role in Theology*, illustrated ed. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2002). Fergus Kerr, *Thomas Aquinas: A Very Short Introduction*, 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2009). Fergus Kerr, “Thomas Aquinas,” in *The Medieval Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Medieval Period*, ed. G. R. Evans, 1st ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> The exception to the lack of attention to the commentaries is twentieth-century scholarship on Aquinas’s exegetical methods. “Looking back on it from the vantage point of its dawning,” writes Baglow, “one discerns a steady stream of treatises over the past 100 years, beginning in the 1890s and taking a first major turn into English speaking territory with the contribution of Hugh Pope in the early 1920s.” See Hugh Pope’s *St. Thomas as Interpreter of Holy Scripture* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1924). According to Baglow, much of the scholarship on Aquinas’s exegetical methods followed Pope’s main insights. This scholarship, until very recently, often offered positive conclusions about Aquinas’s exegetical principles but negative conclusions about his actual exegetical practices. Baglow concludes that this praise for Aquinas’s exegetical principles was rather baseless. Despite praise for Aquinas’s exegetical work, it is “disconcerting to search for the basis of this high praise, for the proof of this enthusiasm...the disparity is so radical that one almost feels deceived, the victim of theological pillow talk.” See Baglow, 22. Baglow argues that it is only recently that scholars demonstrated the theological value of Aquinas’s methods. Valkenberg in particular showed that, for Aquinas, the use of Scripture is not merely a critical or grounding maneuver but a broadening one: “Thomas’ ‘theological horizon’ begins with Scripture, not self-consciously, but rather in the saturating context of liturgy, *lectio divina* and meditation; therefore, it gives rise to the very way he formulates his attempts to seek understanding of faith. It also finds Scripture at its mid-point, where Thomas consciously focuses his critical faculties on it in his attempts to understand it. Finally, it finds Scripture at its apex where it confirms, refutes or refines theological conceptions and begins the process anew.” See Baglow, “Sacred Scripture and Sacred Doctrine,” in *Aquinas on Scripture*, 11. See Pim Valkenberg, *Words of the Living God: Place and Function of Holy Scripture in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Publications of the Thomas Instituut Te Utrecht new ser., v. 6 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000).

the way of the modern reader and Aquinas's commentaries: the lack of critical editions for almost all the texts;<sup>7</sup> the few available English translations of these texts are out of print;<sup>8</sup> Aquinas's scholastic method of commenting is rather tedious since, as Weinandy has observed, it lacks the rhetorical expository like that of the Tractates on John by Augustine or the Homilies on Paul's Epistles by Chrysostom. Aquinas's commentaries are "straightforward explanations of biblical text designed for the medieval classroom."<sup>9</sup>

The discussion over whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist is therefore not the only scholarly conversation that has failed to adequately attend to Aquinas's biblical commentaries. The lack of attention is a part of a broader trend affecting Thomistic studies—

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Healy does not directly treat twentieth-century scholarly attention to Thomistic exegesis, or its negative conclusions about Aquinas. But Healy does mention what he views as unfavorable perceptions of Aquinas that seem as if they may have been influenced by the negative conclusions in the scholarship on Aquinas's exegesis. The twentieth-century criticism he reports seems to resemble the critical remarks about Aquinas made by scholars treated in Baglow's *Modus et Forma*. Healy writes, "Some perceive Thomas to be the prime example of that form of traditional Catholic theological inquiry which emphasizes philosophical reasoning, in contradistinction to the Scripture-based tradition of the Reformers and their heirs." Healy's comment is reminiscent of a critique of Aquinas argued by T.F. Torrance, who, according to Baglow, thought Aquinas's philosophy controlled his reading of Paul. Based on Healy's remark and Baglow's careful engagement of twentieth-century critics of Aquinas's exegesis, it seems safe to conclude that one reason Aquinas's biblical commentaries have not received attention is that his style and method of exegesis may have been judged too philosophical when compared to historical critical methods. Baglow's study is concerned with refuting Torrance's claim that Aquinas's method was inevitably "schematized to the philosophical-thought forms brought to its understanding." His survey of Aquinas's critics is illuminating as is his response to Torrance. Baglow argues that Aquinas's citations of Aristotle and Plato in the commentaries are drastically less frequent than in his speculative theological works (3,777 times in the *Summa theologiae* and in the commentary on Ephesians he cites these only four times). He also shows that the few times the philosophers are cited in the commentaries on Paul's epistles, their insights are employed to explain Paul's theology. Baglow concludes: "Torrance has jumped the gun in characterization of Thomas as a philosopher in theological clothing." Baglow also addresses significant criticisms of Aquinas's exegesis made by C. Clifton Black and O.H. Pesch. See Baglow's chapter two of *Modus et Forma*: "Contemporary Criticism of Thomas' Exegesis: A Call for a New Approach?" 55-57.

<sup>7</sup> I discuss this challenge in a footnote in this section below.

<sup>8</sup> Nicolas Healy points out that while almost all of the commentaries on Aristotle's philosophical works have been translated into English, only half of the biblical commentaries have been translated and most of these are out of print.

<sup>9</sup> This straightforward scholastic style is evidence of Aquinas's role as a lecturer during his academic career, a role I return to below when I explain the historical setting of the commentaries in more detail. Weinandy, *Aquinas on Scripture*, x.

and the trend is rather ironic given increasing scholarly awareness of the nature of Aquinas's teaching career:

For some time now, commentators have studied Aquinas primarily for his philosophical contributions, and when his theology comes up for examination, it is the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and especially the *Summa Theologiae* that are consulted. Thomas's vast output of biblical commentary is little known and even more rarely studied. The great irony in all this is that, though Aquinas never publicly taught either of the *Summae*, he never ceased commenting on the Sacred Scriptures."<sup>10</sup>

The number of biblical commentaries produced by Aquinas supports Weinandy's assertion that this scholastic Doctor of the Church "never ceased commenting on the Sacred Scriptures." Indeed, Aquinas wrote commentaries on five Old Testament books: Psalms, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Lamentations. He wrote two on the Gospels: Matthew and John. And he wrote fourteen commentaries on all the Pauline epistles: Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews.<sup>11</sup>

Despite this "vast output,"<sup>12</sup> the *commentaria biblica* are, unfortunately, among the last of his works to receive critical revision by the Leonine commission.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the

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<sup>10</sup> Weinandy, "Preface," Yocum and Keating, *Aquinas On Scripture*. Weinandy also seems to leave out Baglow's research, which clearly shows that Aquinas's exegetical method as displayed in the commentaries has been the subject of critical reflection for the greater part of the twentieth century. However, it should also be said that Weinandy is rightly concerned with lack of theological attention to the commentaries and is right that there exists a lack of scholarly attention here.

<sup>11</sup> Eleonore Stump observes that the early catalogues of Aquinas's works also list a commentary on the Song of Songs but no such commentary has been found. As I explain below, my study will focus only on the commentaries on Paul's epistles that treat the theme of the ceremonial law. This will include sections from seven of the commentaries: Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Hebrews. Aquinas, of course, thinks Paul wrote Hebrews. Eleonore Stump, "Biblical Commentary and Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Weinandy, Preface Yocum and Keating, *Aquinas On Scripture*.

<sup>13</sup> So called because commissioned and funded by Pope Leo XIII. Critical editions of two of the commentaries were first published around forty years ago. *Expositio super Iob ad litteram* in 1965, and

lack of critical editions for most of the commentaries has not prevented a growing number of scholars from beginning to mine a combination of Latin editions and their English translations for insights into what are increasingly viewed as some of Aquinas's greatest

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*Expositio super Isaia ad litteram* in 1974. See Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio super Iob ad litteram*, vol. 26, Leonine. Only some fragments of the commentary on Matthew have been published. Torrell, *Aquinas: The Person and Work*, vol. I, 56-7. These published fragments are part of a manuscript just discovered about forty years ago. The new manuscript contains the complete text of Thomas's commentary, which is significant given the fact that the older manuscripts were considered incomplete and erroneous. For references to the scholarly treatment of the Matthew fragments see Torrell, *Aquinas: The Person and Work*, vol. I, 339. Although no critical editions are currently available, Father Gilles de Grandpré of the Canadian section of the Leonine commission is preparing critical editions of the commentaries on Paul's epistles. See Torrell, *Aquinas: The Person and Work*, vol. I, 250. Currently, only the commentary on the epistle to the Romans is undergoing critical revision. A word on the edition of the *Commentaria super Epistolis Pauli Apostoli* and available English translations is in order here. As Mark Jordan has pointed out, the Leonine critical edition of the Pauline corpus is likely to remain incomplete for some time. See Jordan, *Rewritten Theology: Aquinas After His Readers*, xi. Until the Leonine edition of all the biblical commentaries is published, however, the best *complete* resource of Aquinas's works is Roberto Busa's edition designed as a supplement to his computer-generated lexical analysis and concordance, the *Index Thomisticus*. See Robert Busa, ed., *Busa Opera Omnia: Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia* (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Fromman-Holzboog, 1980). Enrique Alarcón, "Corpus Thomisticum," *Www.corpusthomicum.org*, 2000. For the Pauline epistles in particular, I use the Marietti edition, which Busa lists as the best edition of the text published thus far. Marietti was published throughout the twentieth-century, beginning in 1953, and is a revision by Raphael Cai of the *Editio Piana*, a text published in 1570. See S. Thomae Aquinatis *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Rome: Marietti, 1953) 2 vols. The Marietti is therefore a more recent edition than the Parma edition of 1862. See Parmae Editio, t. XIII, A.D. 1862, Typis P. Fisscadori. The Marietti editions reproduce texts from earlier printed versions and add to these versions not only notes of varying quality, but also a system of incredibly helpful paragraph numbers, known as "Marietti numbers." Throughout the study I cite the Marietti chapter number, lectio number in that chapter, and the Marietti paragraph number (for example, Ad Ephesios 1.1.3). The Marietti editions are the most frequently cited for studies on Aquinas's commentaries on both Paul and the commentary on John. Both the out-of-print English translations of the Pauline commentaries and the most recent studies of the commentary on John published by CUA Press utilize the Marietti edition. My citations of the commentaries will follow the numbering provided by the Marietti edition. In each citation of the lectures I provide the Marietti citation as well as the Latin text despite the fact that I am working mostly from English translations of the commentaries. This form of citation was necessary, in my view, because of problems with consistency and availability of English translations. The Marietti numbering system for the lectures is uniform and consistent whereas the English translations are out of print (except Hebrews by St. Augustine Press). Online versions often lack page numbers or, at times, the links become inactive. If I were to only cite the page number of the English translation of the commentary then the chances are likely that a reader would face more difficulty in being able to find the exact location of a text. This study will rely upon Fabian Larcher's translation of Romans available at [http://nvjournal.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=62](http://nvjournal.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=62) and Galatians, available at the website of the Pontifical Theological Faculty of the Immaculate Conception: <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/SSEph.htm>. In addition to Fabian Larcher's translation of Romans and Galatians, this study will rely upon Chrysostom Baer's translation of the commentary on the epistle to the Hebrews and Matthew Lamb's translation of the commentary on Ephesians available at <http://nvjournal.net/files/Aquinas%20Ephesians%20Complete.pdf> on the Nova et Vetera website. For the most recent listing of English translations see the site maintained and last updated in March of 2010 by Jonathan Hall at the University of Virginia: "Christian Biblical Exegesis in English Translation, 1200–1515", <http://people.virginia.edu/~jph8r/transbib2.html>.



theological works. Scholars are now asking how the theology of the commentaries illuminates Aquinas's more speculative works.<sup>14</sup>

Nicholas Healy observes that there has been a definite increase in interest in Aquinas's biblical commentaries in the last couple of decades. Healy attributes the rising level of interest to the following reasons. First, scholars have recognized, although rather belatedly, that the commentaries are part and parcel of Aquinas's theological work.<sup>15</sup> Second, these commentaries provide greater understanding of Aquinas's teaching in the *Summa theologiae*. As Weinandy has observed, "If we are to gain a rounded and thorough understanding of his theology, the biblical commentaries need to be brought into the discussion and studied once again."<sup>16</sup> Third, the commentaries have significant exegetical value in and of themselves, a point made clear by Eugene Rogers's important study of sacred doctrine and the natural knowledge of God in the first chapter of Aquinas's commentary on Romans. Fourth, the commentaries are a model of premodern exegesis, or what is often referred to in contemporary theological scholarship as the theological reading of scripture.<sup>17</sup> Drawing upon the work of Christopher Baglow, I will now sketch an overview of four approaches to the commentaries and then explain my method of approach against the backdrop of this contemporary scholarship.

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<sup>14</sup> These scholars will be listed and categorized in the next section on contemporary approaches to the biblical commentaries.

<sup>15</sup> Healy, "Introduction," *Aquinas on Scripture*, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Weinandy, Preface, *Aquinas On Scripture*.

<sup>17</sup> For more on the theological interpretation of scripture see Stephen E. Fowl, *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 1st ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 1997).

## 2. Contemporary Approaches to Aquinas's Biblical Commentaries

Although scholars have paid little attention to the theological content of Aquinas's commentaries, this is not the case when it comes to his exegetical techniques and presuppositions. In fact, a steady stream of scholarship on Aquinas's biblical exegesis appeared over the course of the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> Much of this scholarship focused on Aquinas's exegetical techniques and presuppositions, especially his heightened attention to the literal sense of scripture.<sup>19</sup> It is only recently that scholarly attention to the biblical

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<sup>18</sup> As I pointed out in a footnote above, the stream begins in English theology with Hugh Pope, *St. Thomas as Interpreter of Holy Scripture* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1924). We are indebted to Baglow's dissertation for collecting and distilling this stream of work and pointing out that research in this area of Thomistic studies actually began in 1894. Baglow reports that Pope's work was preceded by a handful of French and German scholars who wrote in the late nineteenth century but that their work was limited in scope and brevity. Of particular significance among these predecessors, however, is Heinrich Denifle who discovered in 1894 that the Bible was Aquinas's official textbook in his positions as a teacher. Since this time, Baglow observes, "it has become commonplace for scholars to recognize certain facts considered essential to Thomas's study of the Bible, such as his theory of interpretation, his understanding of the senses, and the nature of his masterpiece, the *Summa Theologiae*, as being intrinsically and even primarily biblical." Baglow, *Modus et Forma*, 5. Heinrich Denifle, "Quel livre servait de à l'enseignement des Maîtres en Théologie dans l'Université de Paris?," *Revue Thomiste* 2 (1894): 129-161. The fact that Thomistic studies discovered that Aquinas's textbook was the Bible in 1894 makes the lack of critical editions of these works in 2011 rather glaring.

<sup>19</sup> See the helpful introduction by Matthew Lamb in Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, trans. Matthew Lamb (Albany, N.Y: Magi Books, 1966). Baglow relies on Lamb for these terms. Lamb defines "exegetical techniques" as easy to identify because they pertain to "the entire array of hermeneutical methods and sciences aimed at disclosing the human author's intended meaning. Their range embraces everything from ancient history and comparative religion down to philology and lexicography." Exegetical presuppositions, on the other hand, are harder to identify because these "lie so close to the origins of meaning and expression in man, thus requiring greater self-understanding. In the context of biblical exegesis, presuppositions have to do with what it *means* for the Bible to be both the Word of God and the words of men. This twofold meaning of the Bible corresponds to two fundamental presuppositions." A full treatment of Aquinas's exegetical methods is beyond the scope of this study, though key insights from this scholarship will guide my reading of Aquinas in subsequent chapters.

I would argue that the place to begin for scholarship on Aquinas's exegesis, especially his heightened view of the literal sense is Baglow's *Modus Et Forma*, especially chapter two. See also his more recent essay "Sacred Scripture and Sacred Doctrine" in *Aquinas on Doctrine*; Thomas Prügl, "Thomas Aquinas as Interpreter of Scripture," in *The Theology Of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow, 1st ed. (University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 386-415; See especially Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 1st ed. (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964); Beryl Smalley, *The Gospels in the Schools, C. 1100-C. 1280* (London, U.K: Hambledon Press, 1985); Of interest is also J. van der Ploeg, "The Place of Holy Scripture in the Theology of St. Thomas," *The Thomist* 10 (1947): 398-422; See Matthew Lamb's rather in depth treatment in the introduction to Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, trans. Matthew Lamb (Albany, N.Y: Magi Books, 1966); Per Erik Persson,

commentaries has begun to expand beyond study of Aquinas's exegetical techniques and presuppositions and to cover the theology of the commentaries. In this section I will draw upon Baglow's *Modus et Forma* and outline four approaches to Aquinas's commentaries that include exegetical as well as the more recent theological studies.<sup>20</sup>

The first category (1), which might be referred to as "primarily thematic studies," includes studies of Aquinas's biblical commentaries that are oriented thematically in a primary way, without a specific focus on any one biblical commentary. Scholars in this first category include Romanus Cessario, Lawrence Boadt, and Pim Valkenberg.<sup>21</sup> For example, some of these scholars consider Aquinas's commentaries for what these texts reveal about Aquinas's theology of the Church or scripture.

The second and largest category (2), which I refer to as "thematic with limited scope," includes works that are primarily thematic, but that limit their scope to specific works (or parts thereof) within the corpus of the commentaries. In this second category, Baglow places the work of Mary Daly, Wacław Swierżawski, Pesch, Ti-Ti Chen, Michel Corbin, Miguel Ponce Cuellar, Bertrand De Margerie, Clifton C. Black and Denis Billy.<sup>22</sup>

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*Sacra Doctrina; Reason and Revelation in Aquinas* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970); John P. Yocum and Daniel A. Keating, *Aquinas On Scripture: An Introduction To His Biblical Commentaries* (T. & T. Clark Publishers, 2005). The most recent work is the essay by John F. Boyle, "Authorial Intention and the *Divisio textus*," in *Reading John With St. Thomas Aquinas: Theological Exegesis and Speculative Theology*, editors, Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering (Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Baglow has identified four approaches to Aquinas's biblical commentaries, which he refers to as a sub-field of Thomistic studies still in its formative stages. Below I add a sub-category to Baglow's second group.

<sup>21</sup> Romanus Cessario, *The Godly Image: Christ and Salvation in Catholic Thought from St. Anselm to Aquinas* (Petersham, Mass: St. Bede's Publications, 1990). Lawrence Boadt, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Biblical Wisdom Tradition," *The Thomist* 49 (1985): 575-611. Valkenberg, *Words of the Living God*.

<sup>22</sup> Baglow cites the following: Mary Daly, "The Notion of Justification in the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas on the Epistle to the Romans" Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 1971; Wacław

This second category is rapidly expanding. The recent publication of Catholic University of America Press's *Reading John with St. Thomas Aquinas*, falls into this second category since it consists of an examination of a variety of theological themes in Aquinas's lectures with a *limited focus* only on the Gospel of John.<sup>23</sup> In the same year, Thomas Weinandy, Daniel A. Keating, and John P. Yocum edited the volume *Aquinas on Scripture: An Introduction to his Biblical Commentaries*. The edited volume contains essays that treat themes limited to individual books and sections of Aquinas's biblical commentaries. The volume includes treatments of Aquinas's commentaries on Job, Isaiah, Matthew, John, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians and Colossians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philippians. Boguslawski's *Aquinas on the Jews: Insights into his Commentary on Romans 9-11*, published in 2009, fits in this second category as well, since the volume focuses on the broad theme of the Jewish people, namely how the doctrine of election and predestination provides what he describes as a positive theological view of the Jews, yet it employs a limited in scope

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Swierzawski, "God and the Mystery of his Wisdom in the Pauline Commentaries of St. Thomas Aquinas," *Divus Thomas* 74 (1971): 466-500; Waclaw Swierzawski, "Faith and Worship in the Pauline Commentaries of St. Thomas Aquinas," *Divus Thomas* 75 (1972): 389-412; Otto Hermann Pesch, "Paul as Professor of Theology: The Image of the Apostle in St. Thomas's Theology," *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 584-605; J. Ti Ti Chen, "La unidad de la Iglesia segun el Comentario de Santo Tomas a la Epistola a los Efesios," *Scripta Theologica* 8 (1976): 111-230; Corbin, Michel. "Le Pain de Vie. La Lecture de Jn 6 par S. Thomas d'Aquin." *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 65 (1977): 107-138; Margerie, Bertrand de, "Mort sacrificielle du Christ et peine de mort chez Thomas d'Aquin, commentateur de Saint Paul." *Revue Thomiste* 83 (1983): 394-417; Miguel Ponce Cuellar, *La naturaleza de la iglesia segun Santo Tomas: Estudio del tema en el comentario al "Corpus Paulinum"* (Coleccion teologica) (Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1979); Dennis Billy, "Grace and Natural Law in the Super epistola ad Romanos lectura: A Study in Thomas' Commentary on Romans 2:14-16," *Studia Moralia*, no. 26 (1988): 15-37; Clifton C. Black, "St. Thomas' Commentary on the Johannine Prologue: Some Reflections on Its Character and Implications," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, no. 48 (1986): 681-98.

<sup>23</sup> The text of the commentary on John, like most of the commentaries on Paul's epistles, is frequently referred to in this volume, is, as the editors point out, actually a *reportatio*. The themes investigated are rather comprehensive in scope: Aquinas's method as it relates to exegesis of the literal sense of the text and his use of the church fathers; the triune God; the action of the Holy Spirit; mission and obedience; the theology of creation; eternity and time; God's providence and human freedom; moral theology, including moral life and education, and formation of the virtues; Christology; human nature; the resurrection of Christ; the Church; the Eucharist; and the doctrine of revelation.

in its examination of these themes as it draws only upon chapters 9-11 of the Romans *lectura*.<sup>24</sup>

I would argue that these last three works, all published after Baglow's 2002 study, seem to require a sub category (2.1). I refer to this sub category as "thematic correlation." Thematic correlation studies seem to deserve a sub category because each one *explicitly* adopts—in addition to thematic focus with a limited scope—a third methodological task: the correlation of themes in a given commentary with the *Summa theologiae*. Thematic correlation therefore refers to the task of attempting to correlate the themes of the commentaries with Aquinas's speculative theology. It appears that the pioneer of this method of correlation may be Eugene Rogers who first utilized thematic correlation in a dissertation that emerged from an Aquinas seminar taught by George Lindbeck.<sup>25</sup> Rogers's *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth* set out to examine the theme of sacred doctrine and the natural knowledge of God in both question 1 of the *Summa theologiae* and in chapter 1 of the Romans *lectura*. The recent studies of the commentaries produced by Levering, Dauphinais, Weinandy, and Boguslawski, all emulate the method of thematic correlation between commentaries and speculative theology pioneered by Rogers in 1995. Each scholar in this sub category explicitly attempts to study a theme or themes within a limited scope—a section of a lecture or one or two commentaries—while explicitly remaining attentive to the need to

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<sup>24</sup> The book also contains a chapter on the *Summa theologiae*.

<sup>25</sup> Eugene F. Rogers, *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1999). Rogers writes, "This book began in George Lindbeck's Aquinas seminar at Yale University. When it had become a programmatic essay, I shared it with a short lived group organized by Joe Mangina called the Theological Irregulars, where Serene Jones and Kendall Soulen offered early advice. Rogers lists other helpful advisors and critics for his study, including Thomistic scholars Alasdair MacIntyre, Otto Hermann Pesch, Bill Werpehowski, and Greg Jones. Rogers, xii.

correlate the theme with texts in Aquinas's more speculative works, especially the *Summa theologiae*. Weinandy's description of the method encouraged of each contributor to the *Aquinas on Scripture* volume is representative of this sort of methodology: "The contributors of this volume were each given the challenging task of introducing readers to the individual commentaries, opening up for us Aquinas's approach to the scriptural text, highlighting key theological themes he draws from the biblical book, and relating the commentary in some fashion to his systematic works, especially the *Summa theologiae*."<sup>26</sup> Again, this category is closely related to the second (thematic category with a limited scope), but the difference is the explicit recognition and sustained attempt at the difficult task of correlation with Aquinas's speculative works.

The third category (3) identified by Baglow consists of works that do not limit themselves to particular themes, but focus strictly on the commentaries *as individual works* with their own organic unity. Baglow lists here the work of Matthew Lamb, who translated the commentary on Ephesians into English with extensive endnotes as well as wrote a sophisticated treatment of Aquinas's exegetical technique in the introduction. The book appeared as volume two of the *Aquinas Scripture Series* published by Magi Books.<sup>27</sup> Other scholars Baglow includes are James Weisheipl, Torrell, and Bouthillier.<sup>28</sup> I would also add to

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<sup>26</sup> Weinandy, x.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Weisheipl, together with Larcher, produced translations of the commentary on John in 1980 and 1988. See Thomas Aquinas. *Commentary on the Gospel of John, Part I*. Translated by James A. Weisheipl, OP. Vol. 4, *Aquinas Scripture Series*. (Albany: Magi Books, 1980). Reprint, (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 2000); *Commentary on the Gospel of John, Part II*. Translated by Fabian R. Larcher, OP. Vol. 4, *Aquinas Scripture Series*. (Albany: Magi Books, 1988). Reprint, (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 2000). Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John, Chapters 1-5* (Catholic University of America

this category, the introduction to the recently published commentary on John written by Matthew Levering and Daniel A. Keating.<sup>29</sup>

The fourth category (4) that Baglow proposes includes only Martin D. Yaffe's 1989 interpretive essay on Aquinas's literal exposition of Job.<sup>30</sup> Baglow argues Yaffe is difficult to categorize since his work seems to fuse the aims of the second category (thematic with limited scope) with the third category (focus on individual work). Baglow states that Yaffe treats "themes that are native to Aquinas" and within an individual work.<sup>31</sup> Baglow models

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Press, 2010); Jean-Pierre Torrell and D. Bouthillier, "Quand saint Thomas méditait sur le prophète Isaïe," *Revue Thomiste* 90 (1990): 5-47.

<sup>29</sup> As indicated by the note above, the first version of the commentary on John, translated by Weisheipl and Larcher appeared in 1980 as a two-part volume four of the *Aquinas Scripture Series*. This revised commentary is one fruit of the extensive translation work of Fabian R. Larcher. Larcher translated into English more of Aquinas's commentaries on Paul's epistles than any other scholar. His work includes translations of Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Hebrews. Larcher has translated all but Ephesians and Philemon, and is currently working on a translation of the Pastoral Epistles. His translation of the commentary on Galatians appeared as volume one of the series, and the brief introduction to that volume, written by Richard Murphy, fits into this category as well. See Thomas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, trans. Fabian Larcher (Albany, N.Y: Magi Books, 1966). Most of Larcher's translations are available online from the website of the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C.. See "Thomas Aquinas' Works in English," available at [www.dhspritory.org/thomas](http://www.dhspritory.org/thomas) and accessed on July 29, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Martin D. Yaffe, "Interpretive Essay," Thomas Aquinas, *The Literal Exposition on Job: A Scriptural Commentary Concerning Providence* (An American Academy of Religion Book, 1989).

<sup>31</sup> The attentive reader will notice immediately that the "native themes" element of category four seems to blur the line between Baglow's fourth category (native theme and limited scope of an individual commentary) and category two (thematic with limited scope). This language of "native themes" used in Baglow's fourth category (with its limited focused on the individual work of Ephesians) differs from category two (primarily thematic/not limited to a work) and is therefore a confusing addition. I think Baglow would have been better off limiting himself to three categories and placing Yaffe's study and his own in the third category (focus on individual commentaries). It seems to me that what primarily distinguishes Yaffe and Baglow from the other scholarly approaches, namely categories 1-2, is their focus on individual commentaries. The attentive reader may also notice the similarity between Baglow's genre-identification approach, which calls for (in its first stage, entitled, Pre-Analysis stage) the consideration of the relation between texts in the commentaries and Aquinas's other works, and the sub-category 2.1, which I propose, and which is defined primarily by the commitment to thematically correlate the commentaries with the *Summa Theologiae*. Although Baglow's approach does call for a preliminary step that requires consideration of other texts in Aquinas, it seems to assume that these other texts can be isolated from Aquinas's corpus and also deserve a certain priority. Boguslawski actually takes issue with Baglow's methodological assumptions about the relation between the commentaries and the *Summa theologiae* in his review of *Modus et Forma*: "at times, Baglow seems to be on a 'search and rescue mission' at the expense of a more comprehensive and systematic analysis; the result is a

his study, *Modus et Forma*, the second half of which includes a study of the Ephesians commentary, on Yaffe's method. However, Baglow seeks to elaborate and expand upon this model by adding to a rather sophisticated methodological apparatus that can serve as a template for other scholars, and which he refers to as the "Genre-Identification Approach." Baglow's aim in formulating this comprehensive approach is to provide a template for those who would attempt to consider other Thomistic biblical commentaries in the same fashion. The genre-identification approach refers to "what immediately distinguishes it from the bulk of scholarship in this field; namely, the importance we attribute to the recognition of the genre of the biblical text under analysis."<sup>32</sup>

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leveling effect, which reference to the *Summa Theologiae* would have precluded. It is not that the author is unaware of the resource; indeed, Thomas's comments on Ephesians 4:25-28 'bear the mark of *Summa theologiae* 1.75-102, which Thomas composed during the period in his career in which he lectured on Ephesians (213).'" Boguslawski then cites Baglow's hesitancy to correlate the commentaries with the *Summa theologiae*: ". . . one must beware the tendency to use synthetic works (i.e. the *Summae*) as primary interpretive guides—these are not necessarily the best works for this activity, especially in the case of the Pauline commentaries. In all cases, the commentary itself must be given pride-of-place, it is the work under analysis, and no other' (107)." Boguslawski concludes that such a methodological principle is rooted in a misunderstanding of textual genres as well as the nature of *sacra doctrina*." Steven C. Boguslawski, "Modus et forma: a new approach to the exegesis of Saint Thomas Aquinas with an application to the 'Lectura super Epistolam ad Ephesios,'" *Thomist* 67, no. 3 (July 1, 2003): 502.

<sup>32</sup> Due to the expanded scope of this study, which attempts a reading of multiple biblical commentaries on Paul's epistles, I simply lack the sort of space necessary to employ all the methodological steps of Baglow's method. His approach is rather systematic and detailed and can be found in chapter 3 of his helpful study. Baglow's Genre-Identification approach has three major subdivisions: I) The first is Pre-analysis. Pre-analysis includes a) consideration of the biblical text itself (p. 93-100); b) consideration of Thomas's exegetical framework, which requires "understanding in the most comprehensive possible terms how Thomas understood the biblical text he has under comment; and c) consideration of *auctoritates*, which involves accounting for the biblical and extra biblical citations in the text. II) The second step is Thomas's Analysis of the Parts of the Text. This step includes a) accounting for minor divisions of the text according to Aquinas; b) analysis of significant words and phrases; c) consideration of Aquinas's interpretive conclusions on the literal and spiritual senses, as well as questions arising from the text. The third step is III) Overall Evaluation. This step includes a) accounting for similarities/differences in Thomas's other works; b) and in *lectura, expositio, postilla* as theological models; and c) considering miscellaneous data. Baglow explains that the word 'approach' in the title is of importance as this is not meant to be an "infallible or even inalterable way to analyze Thomas' exegetical works, but rather a helpful guide that incorporates the insights and techniques of the best inquiries which have preceded it." For the three sub-divisions of the genre-identification approach see Baglow, 91-112.



## 2.1 Thematic Correlation of the Commentaries with Attention to the Organic Theological Unity of Aquinas's Pauline Commentaries

The methodology of this study will, at certain points, utilize Baglow's helpful genre-identification approach to the commentaries. However, my methodology more closely resembles that of Boguslawski's thematic correlation study of election and predestination in Romans 9 through 11 in three ways. First, Boguslawski's study directly addresses the theological problem of supersessionism, which he identifies as the deconstruction of circumcision and ceremonial law into Christological prefigurements. Second, like Boguslawski's study, this study analyzes a particular theme (the ceremonial law) in the commentaries with attention to the theological problem of supersessionism. Third, this study also attempts to correlate Aquinas's view of a theme in the commentaries with his view of that same theme in the *Summa theologiae*.<sup>33</sup>

However, this study also differs from Boguslawski's thematic correlation analysis in three ways. The first difference pertains to the theme of the study. I attempt to trace Aquinas's view of the observance of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ rather than the concepts of predestination and election. As Boguslawski's thematic correlation study of the commentary on Romans 9 through 11 has shown, the themes of predestination and election in Aquinas are crucial for understanding positive aspects of Aquinas's theological interpretation of the Jewish people. However, as I attempted to make clear in the first chapter, the crucial question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology turns on the status of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ. While chapters 9 through 11 are fundamental for understanding Aquinas's view of the Jewish people, the content of these chapters alone

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<sup>33</sup> As explained in footnote above on Boguslawski's critique of Baglow, it seems that Baglow does not place a high importance on correlation with the *Summa theologiae*.

does not provide a complete picture of Aquinas's views on Israel and the Church, not to mention the crucial question of the status of the ceremonial law. In the chapters that follow, I intend to complement Boguslawski's study of the theme of election in Romans 9 through 11 by uncovering texts in Aquinas's commentaries where he treats the important theme of observance of the ceremonial law.

The second difference pertains to the scope of my study, which will attempt a treatment of several relevant sections of the commentaries on Paul's epistles. A twofold rationale drives this concern for a broader scope. The first rationale for utilizing a broader scope is rather pragmatic: Aquinas discusses Israel and the Church and the theme of the ceremonial law in texts outside of the Romans commentary, such as the commentaries on Galatians and Ephesians.<sup>34</sup> My study will therefore utilize a broader scope in order to examine Aquinas's extended commentary on texts on the ceremonial law in relevant chapters of the commentaries on Paul's epistles.<sup>35</sup> The second rationale for utilizing a broader scope is driven by a theological concern for examining these themes in the context of the

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<sup>34</sup> In these other commentaries, Aquinas comments extensively on Jewish observance of the ceremonial law after Christ's passion; the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the church; the "Antioch Incident" (the dispute between Paul and Peter over the observance of Torah); and God's will after the passion of Christ regarding what Aquinas calls the "Church of the Jewish Believers."

<sup>35</sup> I will outline which commentaries the study will examine in the last section of this chapter. My attempt at utilizing a broader scope should not be mistaken for an attempt at a comprehensive treatment of the biblical commentaries on the ceremonial law. Indeed, a comprehensive reading of Aquinas on any theme in the commentaries would require volumes, as it would demand a treatment of all his biblical commentaries on the Old Testament (Jeremiah, Isaiah, Lamentations, Job, and the Psalms), the two commentaries on the New Testament Gospels (Matthew, John), not to mention commentaries on all the epistles of Paul. Due to obvious limitations of space I am unable to give proper attention to Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the commentary on Matthew and John, each of which contain relevant materials. Such a task is a project for another day. Additionally, the scope of my study must even submit to limiting itself even to select chapters within the Pauline commentaries. The scope will be limited to texts that contain relevant material on Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law. For example, this means that my study will not examine Aquinas's commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles, Corinthians I and II, Thessalonians, Colossians, and Philippians.

commentaries as an organic theological unit, rather than individual works. Aquinas's commentaries are a unified theological work, a fact that is often overlooked.<sup>36</sup> As Ralph McInerny has pointed out, Aquinas conceived of the Pauline commentaries as a unit, not as individual books.<sup>37</sup> My study, therefore, attempts a broader treatment of the commentaries for the purpose of treating the texts according to Aquinas's systematic theological view of Paul and the epistles. Viewing the commentaries as individual works, rather than as a systematic teaching on the grace of Christ as it exists in the Mystical Body, seems to betray Aquinas's own understanding of the interdependency of these important texts.<sup>38</sup> My study attempts a broader view of a theme in the commentaries in order to remain more attentive to their theological organic unity as understood by Aquinas himself.<sup>39</sup> A reading of Aquinas's commentaries on Paul's epistles ought to respect how Aquinas views the epistles as the

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<sup>36</sup> I do not have space to treat Aquinas's view of *sacra scriptura* and *sacra doctrina*. I view the commentaries as theological constructions and am under no pretense that Aquinas drew a sharp separation between scripture and theology where exegesis is separate and distinct from theology. I assume Pim Valkenberg's view of the relationship between *sacra doctrina* and *sacra scriptura* in Aquinas, whose study is a partial motivation for seeking to include a chapter on correlation of themes in the commentaries with the *Summa theologiae*.

<sup>37</sup> This is most clear in the prologues Aquinas included to the beginning of each *lectura* and *expositio* which we will examine below.

<sup>38</sup> More will be said below about this below through a treatment of Aquinas's inaugural sermon on scripture and the prologue he attaches to the beginning of each of the Pauline epistles. I hope to show that reading these two works together helps avoid the temptation to treat Aquinas's commentaries that can be pulled apart as individual works. A similar move is made in studies of Aquinas's teaching on the virtues and the natural law in the *Summa theologiae* that ignore or discount the interdependency of these ideas on other areas of his thought, such as the Treatise on Happiness.

<sup>39</sup> My concern for reading Aquinas in context of the theological structure is informed by a warning from Baglow: "...[A]s the searching of Scripture for specific teachings can easily degenerate into the damaging of those specific teachings by the violence with which they are wrenched from their context, so too does Thomas' exegesis lose its specific character when it is mined for themes without regard for its organic unity." Baglow, 70. Baglow's statement actually refers to the organic unity of *individual commentaries* and not the entire body of Paul's epistles. I think his statement should be amended to apply to the theological whole of the commentaries. A concern for "organic unity" of the texts should apply both to individual commentaries but more to the relationship between each of the commentaries and the theological structure of Christ's grace that Aquinas uses to organize the commentaries.

Apostle's teaching on grace. My study attempts to maintain attentiveness to this organic unity primarily through its ordering of subsequent chapters according to the theological structure of grace in the commentaries.

The third difference pertains to the conclusion of this study, where I attempt to uncover the relationship between two rather broad areas of Aquinas's thought that Boguslawski did not seem to adequately address. First, I ask whether Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the commentaries is coherent and consistent as it stands within his Pauline corpus.<sup>40</sup> Second, I correlate these findings with Aquinas's teaching on the status of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ in the *Summa theologiae*. One question in particular will guide this second task of correlation as my examination of the commentaries unfolds: In what ways are Aquinas's extended comments on the ceremonial law in his commentaries on Paul's epistles in agreement with what Marshall refers to as his "official" teaching in the *Summa theologiae* that the observance of the ceremonial law is dead and deadly after the passion of the Christ? I will now turn to the genre, production, and status of these commentaries as authentic and mature theological works.

### 3. *Magister in sacra pagina*: The Historical Context for the Production of Aquinas's Pauline Commentaries

In this section I will show how Aquinas's commentaries on Paul's epistles are not only authentic works but also represent some of his most advanced engagements with scripture. I hope to achieve this goal by presenting an overview of Aquinas's life and work as a biblical bachelor, bachelor of sentences, and as *magister in sacra pagina*.

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<sup>40</sup> For example, is Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the Hebrews *lectura* similar or dissimilar to his view in the Romans *lectura*?

For the majority of his academic career, Thomas Aquinas was *magister in sacra pagina*, or “Master of the Sacred Page.”<sup>41</sup> Of the functions of the master, *legere*, the reading and commenting upon scripture verse by verse, was the primary duty.<sup>42</sup> Torrell remarks that although Aquinas’s teaching on scripture has been long overlooked in favor of the *Sentences* or the *Summa*, this kind of biblical teaching was nevertheless “Thomas’s ordinary labor.” “[I]t was in this way,” writes Torrell, “that he commented on a little more than half of the New Testament and several books of the Old.”<sup>43</sup> In order to grasp the advanced level from which Aquinas engaged the Pauline epistles in particular it is necessary to briefly survey the stages in Aquinas’s teaching career that led up to his inauguration as *magister*.

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<sup>41</sup> The office of the *magister in sacra pagina* in the twelfth-century consisted of a threefold function: *legere* (to read scripture and comment on it verse by verse); *disputare* (to teach through objections and responses on a given theme); and *praedicare* (to preach). Aquinas was aware of these three tasks as they correspond directly to three qualities he says doctors in sacred scripture must possess in order to carry out the triple function of the office. Aquinas lists these qualities in his *principium*, or first inaugural lecture, which he presented as part of the ceremony for his installment as *magister in sacra pagina* at the university of Paris. The title of the lecture is *Rigans montes de superioribus*, taken from the verse which Aquinas puts at the beginning of the lecture: “Thou waterest the hills from thy upper rooms,” a quotation of Psalm 103:13. For *Rigans montes* see S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Opuscula theologica, t. 1: Breve principium fratris Thomae de commendatione Sacrae Scripturae*. Ed. R. A. Verardo (Marietti, Taurini-Romae, 1954) p. 441-43.

Torrell uses *magister in sacra pagina* and *doctors sacrae scripturae* as if they are interchangeable terms. The newer title *doctor of sacrae scripture* would eventually replace the title *magister in sacra pagina*. In Aquinas’s view, doctors of sacred scripture “must be ‘elevated’ (*alti*) by the eminence of their lives to be able to preach effectively; ‘enlightened’ (*illuminati*), in order to teach in an appropriate way; and ‘fortified’ (*muniti*), in order to refute errors in disputation.” Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas, Vol. 1*, 54.

<sup>42</sup> Torrell, *Aquinas, Vol. 1. The Person and His Work*, 55.

<sup>43</sup> Torrell, *Aquinas, Vol. 1, The Person and His Work*, 55. Eugene Rogers claims that Aquinas was a “professor of Bible” and that he did not lecture on theology but on the books of the Bible. Rogers’s claim that Aquinas did not teach theology seems overstated. First, this point assumes a relationship between *sacra doctrina* and *sacra scripturas* as a false dichotomy read into Aquinas’s thought. And, aside from this problematic dichotomy between scripture and theology in Aquinas’s thought, the claim is still overstated since Aquinas used the commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard at the University of Paris (1252-1259). However, it is true that Aquinas taught scripture and also used it while he taught theology through the method of the disputed question. Valkenberg’s study is instructive on this point. For Roger’s claim see Stephen E Fowl, ed., “Selections from Thomas Aquinas’s Commentary on Romans,” in *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, trans. Eugene F. Rogers, Blackwell readings in modern theology (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1997), 320.

The first stage of Aquinas's academic career consisted of his discipleship under the Aristotelian master Albertus Magnus, which lasted from 1245 to 1252, at the newly founded Dominican *studium generale* in Cologne.<sup>44</sup> During these years, according to Torrell and Weisheipl, Aquinas seems to have been given teaching duties as a biblical bachelor.<sup>45</sup> As part of these teaching duties, it is thought that Aquinas produced the first of his biblical commentaries—known as “cursory lectures”—on scripture. This function was referred to as *cursor biblicus*. A cursor, according to Weisheipl, “runs lightly” over the text by reading and paraphrasing difficult passages as well as rendering superficial glosses on the text.<sup>46</sup> In a cursory lecture on scripture a biblical bachelor does not “enter into the details of all the different interpretations.”<sup>47</sup> Rather, the aim of the cursory lecture is to “make the literal sense of the text understood.” The cursory lectures, also often referred to as “literal expositions”

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<sup>44</sup> In Cologne, Aquinas served as an assistant to Albert, and tasked with ordering his notes from courses taught by Albert on Dionysius's *Divine Names* and Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 27.

<sup>45</sup> Aquinas, of course, was no blank slate before arriving in Cologne: “Upon his arrival in Cologne, after Naples and Paris (and whatever may have been the details about his years of study), Thomas already had seven or eight years of formation behind him, even without counting what he learned on his own during the imprisonment by his family. Some scholars (De Groot, Berthier, Pelster) even think that he was already a lecturer in theology and probably the biblical bachelor for Albert (Scheeben, Eschmann).” Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 25; 27.

<sup>46</sup> “The basic purpose of the cursor,” writes Weisheipl, “was to familiarize himself and the students with the text of scripture.” James A Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: his life, thought, and work*, 1st ed. (Doubleday, 1974), 45.

<sup>47</sup> Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 27. A *magister of sacra pagina*, as I explain below, was “allowed...to give a much more searching commentary” than the cursory style exemplified in *Super Isaiam*. Torrell identifies these commentaries as “the first theological work by Saint Thomas.” Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 28. Wawrykow writes that the master of the sacred page was required to not only offer a detailed exposition of the biblical text, but also to engage the various problems and questions that emerge from the text, especially as these problems are identified by “the mediating exegetical and scholarly traditions.” Joseph Wawrykow, “Aquinas on Isaiah,” in *Aquinas on Scripture*, 44. For Torrell on the cursor see Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 55. Torrell offers as examples of this more searching commentary, *Super Job* and the *In Ioannem*. Yet, oddly, in another place Torrell suggests that *Super Job* is only a cursory lecture. Cf. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 55.

include commentaries on Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Lamentations.<sup>48</sup> Although scholars are certain Aquinas commented upon these books in Cologne, determining the dating of the other biblical commentaries becomes increasingly difficult as one moves away from the early years of his cursory lectures.<sup>49</sup>

Aquinas's appointment at the Dominican *studium* in Cologne would come to an end around 1251 or 1252. The second stage of Aquinas's academic career came in September of 1252 with his appointment as a bachelor at the one of the intellectual centers of Christendom, the university of Paris.<sup>50</sup> Aquinas was sent to Paris at the recommendation of Albert, to

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<sup>48</sup> The most well-known and best example of Aquinas's cursory lectures is the *Expositio super Isaiam ad litteram*. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, chapter 2; 337. The *Super Isaiam* is a good example of this more basic form of early, cursory lecture. However, Joseph Wawrykow has recently argued that *Super Isaiam* is not entirely cursory: "While Thomas can move briskly at times, especially as the commentary gets into the last chapters, the commentary on the first eleven chapters of Isaiah is exceptionally detailed. Here at least the exegesis can be subtle and rich and well developed, more typical of the magisterial exposition." There is now a consensus that this work was written during Aquinas's stay in Cologne. Torrell also points out that this text deserves more attention than it usually gets. It confirms Aquinas's early taste for exegesis that gives preference to the literal sense. A fascinating point on this matter is Aquinas's interpretation of the boy in Isaiah 8:4, which remains close to the Jewish reading of the text. Aquinas "thinks that the *puer* announced there was the son of the prophet and his wife. This explanation, because of its closeness to the Jewish reading, which refused to see in this verse a prediction of Christ's birth, was enough to make Nicholas de Lyre doubt in 1326 the Thomist authorship of the commentary. Sixtus of Siena found it, in addition, unworthy of Thomas for its lack of erudition (*ob eruditionis inopiam*). Now, there is no doubt at all about the authenticity of this work. Not only is it listed in the catalogues of Thomas's work dating back to the end of the thirteenth century, but we have a large part of the manuscript in his well-known *illegibilis* handwriting." Torrell, 28. Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio super Iob ad litteram*, vol. 26, Leonine. (Rome, 1965).

Torrell follows Weisheipl's theory, which places the *Super Isaiam* in the Cologne years under Albert and as the earliest theological work of Aquinas. Weisheipl's view is apparently missed by the Leonine editors of the *Super Isaiam*, who puts its first year of composition after the stay in Cologne in the first year of teaching in Paris, 1252-53. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 28. For Jeremiah and Lamentations, Torrell recommends the Parma edition: Thomas, *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Doctoris Angelici, Ordinis Praedicatorum Opera Omnia: Ad Fidem Optimarum Editionum Accurate Recognita*, vol. 14 (Parmae: Typis Petri Fiaccadori, 1852), p. 577-667; 668-85.

<sup>49</sup> The exception is the commentary on Job, which I discuss below.

<sup>50</sup> It is unclear when Aquinas was declared a bachelor. Torrell thinks that Aquinas's teaching duties under Albert indicate that it is probable he was given this title earlier than usual.

comment upon the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.<sup>51</sup> It is clear that Aquinas's time in this period was devoted to teaching on the *Sentences*. However, it is not clear whether Aquinas would continue to devote himself to commenting upon the scriptures during his time as bachelor of the *Sentences*.<sup>52</sup> As Torrell observes, "scholars find themselves in difficulties when they try to identify the biblical books that relate to this first period of teaching in Paris."<sup>53</sup> Most scholars believe Aquinas lectured on Paul some after his installation as *magister in sacra pagina*.

Ultimately, the duties of the bachelor of *Sentences* were transitional, and in 1256, after the chancellor of the university awarded Aquinas the *Licentia docendi*, he was ordered

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<sup>51</sup> During this time he began teaching on the *Sentences* under the guidance of Master Elias Brunet de Bergerac. In order to become a master of theology, Aquinas was required to teach on the *Sentences* as well as assist Elias in disputes. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 96. In this period, Aquinas would produce his massive five-thousand-page *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, his first systematic engagement on philosophical and theological topics that, in several ways, anticipates the *Summa theologiae*. Torrell, however, comments that Tolomeo believes the production of the *super libros Sententiarum* required four years and that Aquinas continued to work on it after he left Paris. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 45. The critical edition of this text is not yet fully available. However, sections on charity, based on the unpublished Leonine edition, have been recently published in English. See Thomas Aquinas, *On Love and Charity: Readings from the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

<sup>52</sup> Torrell does seem to think Aquinas produced commentaries on scripture between his arrival in Paris in 1252, and his departure for Italy in 1259. Torrell states that the first two years of the stay in Paris (1252-4) were "devoted to biblical teaching," while the last two years (1254-6) were "devoted to teaching the *Sentences*." As far as I can tell, Torrell offers no justification or this division of labor. Based on his statement about the first two years of teaching on scripture, one might suppose that the earliest possible date for Aquinas's lectures on the commentaries on Paul's epistles is during the first few years of his first stay in Paris (1252-1256). Torrell makes the claim that the first two years were devoted to scripture in his treatment of Aquinas's first years (1252-4) in Paris but he does not say that Aquinas might have taught on Paul in this period. In his chronology of Aquinas's works (compiled by Gilles Emory), which he includes at the end of his *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, Torrell does not mention this period as a possible date. This is more than likely because he is aware of Tugwell's argument that the first possible period for the writing of the commentaries on Paul's epistles is the second Perisian regency, which I discuss below. Tugwell, 247.

The date of the departure for Italy is unknown. Torrell thinks that after the academic year was complete, Aquinas returned to Italy. "...It does not seem at all plausible that Thomas lingered in Paris beyond the end of the scholastic year; whatever the exact date of his return to Italy (the second half of 1259 is preferable to the beginning of 1260), we can take it as the most natural solution that Thomas lived in Naples during this period." See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 100.

<sup>53</sup> Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 55. Eleonore Stump refers to the dating of the Pauline epistles as "particularly controversial." Stump, "Biblical Commentary and Philosophy," 254.



to prepare his *principium* or inaugural lecture for the ceremony in which he would become *magister in sacra pagina*.<sup>54</sup> These inaugural lectures mark milestones in Aquinas's academic career of teaching scripture, and especially for his teaching of Paul's epistles. During this period, Aquinas is thought to have taught twice on Paul and that his lectures were recorded by secretaries. Most of his commentaries on Paul's epistles are recorded lectures, usually referred to as *reportationes*.<sup>55</sup> From the seventeen-year period beginning with these inaugural

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<sup>54</sup> I will return to the content of the first inaugural lecture below since it serves as an essential resource for understanding how Aquinas views the structure of the commentaries on Paul's epistles. According to Torrell, there were, up until recently, two texts claiming to be Thomas's inaugural lecture. One is the *Rigans montes de superioribus suis* and the other is transmitted under the title *Hic est liber*. See Marietti, *Opuscula theologica*, vol. 1, pp. 435-43. Weisheipl suggests, however, that *sermo secundus fratris Thome* is not the inaugural lecture but is "the text of Thomas's presentation on the day of his *resumptio* or reprise. The resumption was a session that took place on the second day of the installation ceremony. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 50-3. Therefore, the inaugural lecture was actually followed by a second lecture on the second day of a two-day installation ceremony for the new doctor of sacred scripture. Both of these presentations treated the subject of scripture and demonstrate Aquinas's abilities as an exegete. Ralph McNerny's helpful description of these two works as "inaugural lectures" obviously reveals he follows Weisheipl's theory that the second of these lectures could not have been offered earlier, at the beginning of Aquinas's teaching in Paris (1252) because Aquinas did not fill the role of biblical bachelor in Paris, but in Cologne, under Albert. Torrell explains Weisheipl's theory: "Following Mandonnet, everyone up till now saw in this second text Thomas's inaugural lecture as he began his teaching as biblical bachelor at Paris in 1252. Now, as we have seen, to all appearances, Thomas never filled that post at Paris. He, therefore, could not have given this discourse on that occasion. Thus Weisheipl suggests that in this second discourse we have the text of Thomas's presentation on the day of his resumption. This text is clearly continuous with the *principium* analyzed above and in fact, completes and extends it. We may thus form a more precise idea of what happened in September 1256, during Thomas's entry into regency." Torrell, 53. For the inaugural sermons see Ralph McNerny's translations in Thomas Aquinas, *Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings*, trans. and ed. Ralph McNerny (Penguin Classics, 1999).

<sup>55</sup> All of Aquinas's biblical commentaries are products of his classroom lectures. These classroom lectures come to us in two forms: *lectura* in the form of *expositio* and *lectura* in the form of *reportationes*. Weisheipl also uses the term *ordinatio* to refer to *expositio*, but the meanings, as far as I can tell are generally the same. See Weisheipl, 117. All of Aquinas's lectures on the books of the Old and New Testaments fall into either of these two categories and most of the commentaries on Paul's epistles are *reportationes*. An *expositio* refers to a lecture written by Aquinas or dictated directly to a scribe. Although Aquinas's literal lectures on Isaiah, Job, Lamentations and Jeremiah are usually referred to as *expositio* the term should not be reduced to a synonym for the cursory method of the biblical bachelor or the method of literal reading. See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and Work*, Vol. 1, 337. Thus, for example, when Gilles Emery titles Aquinas's lectures on the Pauline corpus he refers to these as consisting of both "*expositio et lectura*." This is because 1 Corinthians 1-7:14 and the first eight chapters of the lecture on Romans are considered an *expositio* since it is in these texts that Aquinas's hand is, as Torrell remarks, "rather directly perceptible." Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 340; Keating, "1 and 2 Corinthians: The Sacraments and their Ministers," in *Aquinas on Scripture*, 128. A *lectura* in the form of a *reportatio*, on the other hand, is a report of the live lecture taken down by a student or scribe. *Reportationes* are notes taken down by persons in the audience and later filled out from memory or other sources to look more like the actual transcript of a letter." Jeremy Holmes, "Aquinas' *Lectura* in Matthaeum," in

lectures of 1256, to his regencies in Orvieto, Rome, Paris, and then to Naples in 1273, it is certain that Aquinas's ordinary labor is to teach scripture at the advanced level of the *magister*.<sup>56</sup> And it is in this advanced stage of his academic career that scholars situate both

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*Aquinas on Scripture*, 74. Weisheipl and Torrell identify the following lectures of Aquinas as *reportationes*: the lectures on Matthew and John; the lectures on 1 Corinthians 11 to 2 Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians 1 and 2 Thessalonians; 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon; and Hebrews. The text of 1 Corinthians 7:15-10:33 is missing. See Keating, 127. With the exception of a redaction of 1 Corinthians 1-7:14 and the first eight chapters of the lecture on Romans, Aquinas's lectures on Paul's epistles are all *reportationes*. A *reportatio* does not, according to Weisheipl, purport to be an official redaction. However, this should not impugn the reliability of these texts as accurate copies of Aquinas's lectures. Indeed, as Baglow has observed, "if this were the criterion for reliability, many if not most of Thomas' works would have to be set aside...." This includes the commentary on John, which is also a *reportatio* and considered among contemporary scholars as reliable record of Aquinas's actual *lectura*. See Baglow, *Modus et Forma*, 120. A *reportatio* is, according to Torrell, a "carefully corrected clean copy of a course of lectures heard by a student, or taken in shorthand by a secretary." See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 29. The productions of Aquinas's works were well supported by secretaries. "In order to cope with his prodigious output," observes Baglow, "an entire team of secretaries was at his disposal from the first Parisian regency through the end of his life...." Aquinas's lectures were not simply taken down by any willing secretary or student. The *reportationes* would be taken down *only* by a cleric who Aquinas thought would be capable of the work. The secretary during Aquinas's first stay in Paris was the cleric Peter of Andria, a Dominican, and a secular cleric whose name is unknown. See Baglow, *Modus et Forma*, 120. From 1259 until his death, which is the range of dates proposed by most scholars for the lectures on Paul's epistles, Aquinas's secretary was Reginald of Piperno. Based on the best available scholarly dates for the Pauline commentaries, it seems Reginald of Piperno recorded all of Aquinas's lectures on Paul's epistles. These facts seem to indicate that the *reportationes* faithfully reproduced Aquinas's lectures. Yocum and Keating, *Aquinas On Scripture*, 21.

<sup>56</sup> In September of 1261, Aquinas was named lector of the Orvieto priory, a setting considerably different from the university of Paris. In the priory, Aquinas devoted himself to the regular teaching of the brothers not able to study in the *studia generalia* or the *provincialia*, which, according to Torrell, "was the case for nine out of ten friars." Aquinas's task was to prepare the brothers for the two principal missions of preaching and confession. He would remain in Orvieto from 1261-1265. In five years at Orvieto, Aquinas composed three great works: the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, the exposition on Job, and a large part of the *Catena aurea*, a compilation of scripture passages from the writings of the Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 141. The *Catena aurea* (Golden Chain) consists of a compilation of passages from the writings of the Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church. The work was commissioned by Pope Urban IV and seems to have been written in the same period as the commentary on Job. Eleonore Stump points out that the *Catena aurea* is useful for understanding the background against which to evaluate Aquinas's own biblical commentaries.... Stump, "Biblical Commentary and Philosophy," 252. The *Catena aurea* is available in the Marietti edition of Aquinas's works. In English, see *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels Collected out of the Fathers by St. Thomas Aquinas*. Translated by John Henry Newman. New ed. 4 vols. Oxford: James Parker, 1874. Reprinted in 7 vols., Albany, NY: Preserving Christian Publications, 1993-96; reprinted in 4 vols., London: St. Austin Press, 1997. See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 119. The mystery of divine providence is the theme of both the *Expositio super Job* and the third book of the *Contra Gentiles*, a fact that influenced the Leonine commission to date the composition of the commentary on Job sometime between 1261 and 1264. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 120. Similar material congruencies could assist in specifying the date of the first teaching of the Pauline commentaries as well.

the composition of the *Summa theologiae*<sup>57</sup> and the production of the *reportationes* of his lectures on Paul's epistles.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> After serving as a teacher to the brothers at the Dominican priory at Orvieto, Aquinas was called upon to found a Dominican *studium* in Rome in 1265. In this new role as teacher of the Dominican *studium* Aquinas had a heightened concern for instruction. It is reported that at first, Aquinas attempted to reuse the commentary on the *Sentences* that he once taught students at Paris, but "he abandoned that attempt at the end of the first year (1265-66)." It is out of Aquinas's concern for teaching that gives birth to the massive project of writing the *Summa theologiae*. Regarding the dating of the *Prima Pars*, Torrell states that it "seems certain that during the time Aquinas was in Rome, until [September] 1268, he composed the *Prima Pars* in its entirety...." Weisheipl is in agreement with Torrell that the *Prima Pars* was written up until about November 1268. The difficulty begins with dating the *Prima Secundae*, which is generally admitted to not have begun until after Aquinas leaves Rome, some time during his second teaching at Paris (1268-72). After his time serving the *studium* in Rome, Aquinas returned to Paris for a second time of teaching, which took place, again, between 1268-72. Scholars are divided over which half of these second teaching years in Paris that Aquinas produced the *Prima Secundae*. Weisheipl proposed an early date of 1270 for the *Prima Secundae* while Gauthier proposed the later date of 1271. According to Weisheipl, the completion of the *Prima Secundae* should be situated during the summer of 1270. Gauthier thinks that the *Prima Secundae* was not written until 1271, towards the end of Aquinas's time in Paris because Aquinas uses Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in Moerbeke's translation, a text that did not come into his hands until near the end of 1270. The *Secunda Secundae* would have been finished before December 1271. But the problem with Gauthier's late view of 1271 is that it, according to Torrell, it overburdens the last few years of Aquinas's second time in Paris. This is because Torrell thinks the *Tertia Pars* was begun in Paris at the end of the winter of 1271-72, and continued in Naples until December 1273, the date on which Thomas ceased writing. In Torrell's view, Gauthier's late theory (1271) for the *Prima Secundae* leads one to think that in eighteen months Aquinas was able to compose this work, and the enormous *Secunda Secundae*, as well as begun the *Tertia Pars*. See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 142-7.

<sup>58</sup> A discussion of three theories for the dating of the lectures on the Pauline epistles is appropriate at this point since these theories can assist scholars attempting to identify material congruencies between the commentaries and the *Summa theologiae*. Each proposal posits two teachings on Paul's epistles, both of which are thought to take place during or around the proposed periods for composition of the *Summa theologiae*. However, these three proposals differ on the precise date of the first and second teaching on Paul's epistles. The three proposals are as follows: Aquinas appears to have commented on the Pauline epistles early in his career. Weisheipl places this first teaching in 1259-65; Torrell proposes 1265-8; and Tugwell proposes 1268-72. These scholars all think Aquinas taught on Paul a second time, towards the end of his life. Weisheipl places this second teaching in 1271-72; Torrell proposes 1272-3; Tugwell, like Torrell, also proposes 1272-3. Each proposal assumes that Aquinas revises parts of 1 Corinthians and Romans late in his career. The first proposal is that of Weisheipl, who follows Mandonnet's suggestion, and places Aquinas's first teaching on Paul rather early, in Orvieto, between 1259 and 1265. Weisheipl puts the second teaching in Paris around 1271-2. Weisheipl's date for the first teaching also overlaps with the beginning of the composition of the *Prima Pars*, written some time between 1265 until his departure in 1268. See Weisheipl, 249. He places the writing of the *Prima Pars* at 1266. Torrell, however, is critical of Mandonnet's and Weisheipl's proposal. He places the first teaching on Paul in the last years at Rome rather than the first years, some time between the Roman years of 1265 to September of 1268. However, Torrell also expresses doubt about his proposed dating for the first teaching on Paul from 1265-68: "The courses on Saint Paul could well have taken place at this moment, but curiously, no record has been preserved of it, or of which books would have been commented on during these years." Christopher Baglow follows Torrell's dating and places this first teaching around 1266-67. See Baglow, *Modus et Forma*, 116. Torrell believes Mandonnet's views demand "serious reworking" on certain points. See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 250-1. Most significantly, he argues that no one today knows what Aquinas did from 1259-1261. However, we do know, according to Torrell, that from 1261-65 (Orvieto)

However, identifying the dates within this stage of his career that Aquinas commented upon the different Pauline epistles as a *magister* will remain difficult “for a long time until the critical edition of the texts will have allowed us to replace hypotheses, if not always with certitude, then at least with more certain data.”<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, it is in the advanced third stage of his career as *magister* that Aquinas produced the bulk of his “more searching” commentaries, and these include his commentaries on Paul’s epistles. Although the exact dating of the commentaries on the epistles is inconclusive, it is clear that these commentaries are authentic works produced by Aquinas during the most mature period of his academic career.<sup>60</sup>

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Aquinas wrote the *Expositio in Job*, *Contra Gentiles*, and the beginning of the *Catena aurea*. Torrell then asks, “Would it have been physically possible for Thomas to teach simultaneously on Saint Paul?” “The amount of work already attributed to that period,” writes Torrell, “renders this hypothesis hardly plausible.” Torrell’s main concern for rejecting the dating of the first teaching during the Orvieto years is therefore due to the idea that Aquinas could not have produced so great an amount of material in so short a time. Because of the sheer output from this period Torrell proposes a date a bit later—the Roman sojourn (1265-8). This is, for Torrell, the best fit for the first teaching of Paul’s epistles. Torrell places the second teaching on Paul later than Mandonnet, in the last years of Aquinas’s life at Naples in 1272-3. He therefore rejects the thesis of Weisheipel that the second course on the Pauline epistles was given in the last year of the second Parisian regency (1271-1272). Although the evidence is inconclusive, Tugwell presents a case for what is the latest dating for the first teaching on Paul. Tugwell thinks Aquinas’s first lectures on Paul can be assigned to the second Parisian period (after September of 1268 and until 1272). See Tugwell, 247. Like Torrell, he thinks Aquinas taught on Paul again in Naples (1272-73). Tugwell’s rationale for this late date is that the commentary on Colossians appears to contain an allusion to Proclus’s *Elements of Theology*, a text that was not translated into Latin until the middle of 1268. He concludes that, based on this fact, the *reportatio* cannot be earlier than the second Parisian regency (beginning in the fall of 1268 and concluding in 1272). Therefore, Tugwell hypothesizes that Aquinas’s first teaching on the epistles may well have been as late as 1268-69 or 1269-70. His theory for the second teaching is the same as Torrell’s: he places this teaching at Naples, 1272-3.

<sup>59</sup> If Torrell is right about the first two years of the Paris teaching being “devoted to biblical teaching,” then it seems one could say Aquinas produced biblical commentaries during all three stages of his career: 1) as a biblical bachelor in Cologne (1245-1252) conducting cursory lectures upon Jeremiah, Lamentations, and a part of Isaiah; 2) as a bachelor of *Sentences* in Paris (1252-1256); and 3) as a *magister in sacra pagina* in 1256, until he ceases to write in December of 1273. See Torrell, 197.

<sup>60</sup> In order to avoid a rather imbalanced picture of Aquinas as mostly producing works on scripture it is necessary to briefly address one more genre of text. Although the lecture was the primary form of university teaching, it could *not* satisfactorily meet an essential requirement of theological education: the concise presentation of *the whole* of sacred wisdom that made clear the relationships of the objects under consideration. Only the disputed question could enable the *magister* to accomplish this task. It was out of insufficiency that Aquinas set out to write a *summa* or summary of the teaching of theology, conformed to the study of its object,

#### 4. The Theological Structure of Grace and the Prerogatives of Israel in Aquinas's Commentaries on Paul's Epistles

My aim in this final section is threefold. First, I attempt to highlight the theological structure of grace in the commentaries on Paul in order to contextualize my examination of the ceremonial law in the Aquinas's thought.<sup>61</sup> Second, I aim to explain how each individual commentary relates to this structure of grace. Third, I explain the organization and content of subsequent chapters of this study of the prerogatives of Israel in the Pauline commentaries in light of the structure of grace.

I accomplish these goals in three steps. First, I will highlight the theological structure of grace by explaining how Aquinas understands the commentaries on Paul's epistles to fit into his view of divine law by drawing upon his first inaugural lecture at the university of Paris, *Hic est liber*. *Hic est liber* reveals how Aquinas views the overall structure of grace in the New Testament as it relates to the Pauline epistles as an organic unit. Second, I demonstrate how Aquinas views the relationship of each individual commentary to the structure of grace by drawing upon the Prologue he attaches to his commentaries. When read together, *Hic est liber* and the Prologue to the commentaries provide a picture of Aquinas's view of the structure of grace in the Pauline commentaries. Aquinas's comments upon the

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which is God, and adapted to the questioning of the beginner. Chenu has observed that Aquinas's speculative theology is the fruit of submitting the Word of God to rational investigation not for the reason's sake alone, but for growth in one's knowledge and love of God. Such rational investigation of the sacred page was conducted "in a way that makes its questioning a profound homage to faith and its awareness of its divine object." See Per Erik Persson, *Sacra Doctrina; Reason and Revelation in Aquinas* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 8. Scripture was "very much the basis and ongoing centre of Thomas's work as a university theologian." But the commenting upon scripture was not an isolated commentary project. Aquinas's commentaries on scripture are the building blocks of the articles of the *Summa*. A comprehensive understanding of his thought requires attending to this dialogical relationship between *both* forms of his university teaching: the lecture and the disputed question.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas O'Meara has argued that grace is the central theological motif in the *Summa theologiae*. Thomas O'Meara, "Grace as a Theological Structure in the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas," in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 55 (1988) 130-53.

ceremonial law in the commentaries do not take place apart from this overarching theological structure of grace. Thus it is only against the backdrop of this structure of grace in the New Testament and its connection to Paul's epistles that Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the commentaries can be understood on his terms. Third, I will explain how the order of subsequent chapters in this study reflects the structure of grace in the commentaries as it relates to points in the structure where Aquinas comments upon the prerogatives of Israel. I will also list important questions that must be carried in the analysis of the commentaries beginning in the next chapter.

#### 4.1 Aquinas's View of the Threefold Structure of Grace in the New Testament According to *Hic est liber mandatorum Dei*

In 1912, two previously lost lectures of Aquinas were discovered at the Santa Maria Novella, in Florence: *Hic est liber mandatorum Dei* and *Rigans montes de superioribus*.<sup>62</sup> The first lecture is known as "Commendation of and Division of Sacred Scripture," and the second is referred to as "On the Commendation of Sacred Scripture." Aquinas presented these lectures at his installation ceremony at the university of Paris. The first lecture, "Commendation and Division of Sacred Scripture," also referred to as *Hic est liber*, is of particular interest in this final section because it contains Aquinas's view of the theological structure of grace in the New Testament and the relationship of this structure to the Pauline

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<sup>62</sup> These two works were discovered among the writings of Remigio dei Girolami, a student of Aquinas. See Ralph McInerney's note on The Inaugural Sermons of 1256 Aquinas, *Thomas Aquinas*. The title *Hic est liber mandatorum Dei* is taken from the verse which Aquinas puts at the beginning of his lecture: "This is the book of the commandments of God," which is a quotation of Baruch 4:1. Following Torrell, *On the Commendation of and Division of Sacred Scripture* will be referred to here as *Hic est Liber*. The Latin text is from the Marietti edition of the *opuscula*: S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Opuscula theologica, t. 1: Principium fratris Thomae de commendatione et partitione Sacrae Scripturae*. (Marietti, Taurini-Romae, 1954) p. 435-39. The title of the second lecture, *Rigans montes de superioribus* is taken from the verse from Psalm 103:13, which Aquinas puts at the beginning of the lecture: "Thou waterest the hills from thy upper rooms...." For the Latin text of *Rigans montes* see the same volume, p. 441-43.

epistles.<sup>63</sup>

For Aquinas, scripture leads humankind to life and away from death. Sacred scripture leads to life in two ways. These two ways correspond to the function of the Old Law and the New Law in the economy of salvation. Scripture brings to life by “commanding through the mandates which it proposes, which belong to the Old Testament....”<sup>64</sup> And, scripture brings to life by “helping, through the gift of grace which the lawgiver dispenses, which pertains to the New Testament.”<sup>65</sup> Aquinas therefore sees the Old Law and the New Law bringing life to humankind in two distinct yet related ways, and he uses John 1:17 to summarize this dual modality: “Both of these” writes Aquinas, “are touched on in John 1:17: ‘For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.’”<sup>66</sup> For Aquinas, the twofold origin (Moses and Jesus Christ) and function (commanding and helping) of divine law represents the primary distinction for understanding the whole order of sacred scripture. This division does not remain as a static principle mentioned during Aquinas’s inaugural sermon and then forgotten. Aquinas consistently relies upon this division throughout his

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<sup>63</sup>The sermon also treats the goal of sacred scripture. Aquinas explains that the goal of the speech of sacred scripture is to teach the ignorant, to delight the bored, and to change the lazy. Scripture accomplishes these transformational ends in three ways: it teaches the ignorant with its eternal truth; it delights with its pleasantness; and it efficaciously changes with its authority. *Hic est liber*. The goal of the speech of sacred scripture is therefore to elevate humankind to beatitude or life with God. Because the speech of scripture reveals to humankind the knowledge of God it is therefore commended by God: Thus, Aquinas’s citation of Baruch 4:1: “This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law that is for ever. All that keep it shall come to life: but they that forsaken it, to death.” *Hic est liber* 1.

<sup>64</sup>*Hic est liber* 2: “Ad hanc autem vitam sacra Scriptura perducit dupliciter: scilicet, praecipiendo et adiuuando. Praecipiendo per mandata quae proponit, quod pertinent ad vetus testamentum, Eccli. XXIV: *legem mandavit nobis Moyses*.”

<sup>65</sup>*Hic est liber* 2: “Adiuuando autem per donum gratiae quod legislator largitur, quod pertinent ad novum testamentum. Ioan. I: *lex per Moysen data est, gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est*.”

<sup>66</sup>Specifically, Aquinas sees both the old law and the new law directing humankind toward its proper end, which is beatitude. *Hic est liber* 2.

commentaries on Paul's epistles. *Hic est liber* therefore, not only serves as an essential source for understanding the theological unity of the canonical scriptures according to Aquinas, but it also illuminates how Aquinas views the commentaries on Paul's epistles as an extended teaching upon the relation between the Old and New Law as these relate to grace. The commentaries on Paul's epistles treat the power of helping grace that is New Law in the context of the commands of the Old Law.

After an extended discussion of the divisions of the books of the Old Law,<sup>67</sup> Aquinas moves on to speak of the subject of the New Testament which he views as organized according to grace. He writes,

The New Testament, which is ordered to eternal life not only through precepts but also through the gifts of grace, is divided into three parts. In the first the *origin of grace* is treated, in the Gospels. In the second the *power of grace*, and this in the epistles of Paul, hence he begins in the power of the Gospel, in Romans 1:6 saying, 'For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.' In the third, the *execution of the aforesaid virtues* is treated, and this in the rest of the books of the New Testament.<sup>68</sup>

Immediately after this description of the three parts of grace in the New Testament, Aquinas cites John 1:16-17 again to emphasize the centrality of the motif of grace: "Christ is the origin of grace in John 1:16-17: And of his fullness we have all received, grace for grace. For

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<sup>67</sup> For a detailed treatment of Aquinas's sermon as it relates to the divisions of the old law, see Matthew Levering, "Ordering Wisdom: Aquinas, the Old Testament, and Sacra Doctrina," in *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life: Essays in Honor of Romanus Cessario, O.P.*, ed. Reinhard Hutter and Matthew Levering (Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 80-91.

<sup>68</sup> *Hic est liber* 2: "Novum autem testamentum, quod ad vitam aeternam ordinat, non solum per praecepta, sed per gratiae dona, dividitur in tres partes. In prima agitur de gratiae origine: et hoc in Evangeliiis. In secunda de gratiae virtute: et hoc in epistolis Pauli; unde in principio a virtute Evangelii incipit dicens: *virtus Dei est in salute omni credenti*. Rom. I. In tertia agitur de virtutis praedictae executione: et hoc in reliquis libris novi testamenti."



the Law was given through Moses: grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”<sup>69</sup> Grace is clearly the organizational principle of the entire New Testament, just as it is in the *Summa theologiae*.<sup>70</sup>

The Pauline corpus also concerns the “power of grace” as it is situated between the “origin of grace” with Christ in the Gospels on the one hand, and the “progress of the Church” on the other.<sup>71</sup> This is why, in Aquinas’s view, Paul begins the epistle to the Romans declaring that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. *Hic est liber* makes clear that Aquinas sees the Pauline epistles as a distinct unit embedded in a structure of grace and distinguished from all the other books of the New Testament by their content, which concerns the power of grace.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *Hic est liber* 2: “Origo autem gratiae Christus est, Ioan. I: *de plenitudine eius omnes accepimus, gratiam pro gratia, quia lex per Moysen data est, gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est.*”

<sup>70</sup> “The presence of grace in the *Summa theologiae* is much wider than its location would indicate; the multiple mystery (designated as ‘grace’) appears at such key moments that the reader may come to see grace as a central theological motif and as an organizational principle of the entire *Summa theologiae*.” O’Meara, 132.

<sup>71</sup> Aquinas says that the first part of the New Testament, which concerns the origin of grace, is constituted by the Gospels. The Gospels are then divided again according to Christ’s twofold nature, where John concerns the divine nature, and Matthew, Mark, and Luke concern the human nature. These latter three are then further divided according to the “threefold dignity that belongs to the man Christ.” Matthew speaks of Christ’s royal honor; Mark speaks of Christ’s prophetic honor; and Luke speaks of Christ’s priestly dignity. See *Hic est liber*; CDSS, 12. The third section of the New Testament treats the execution or progress of the origin and power of grace in the Church. This “progress” of grace then receives a threefold division: 1) the beginning of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles; 2) the progress of the Church in the canonical epistles (James, 1 and 2 Peter, the epistles of John, and Jude); and 3) the end of the Church in the Apocalypse, in which the whole content of scripture concludes.

<sup>72</sup> The epistles are also distinguished because of their authorship, which is attributed to “the Apostle,” whom Aquinas views as “first and foremost of all theologians.” Aquinas sees Paul as a systematic theologian who above all is the teacher of the grace and mercy of Christ to the Gentile Church as well as to the sons of Israel. More will be said in the next section about Aquinas’s view of Paul’s identity and mission to preach the mercy of the gospel to these two groups. Valkenberg has identified how Aquinas sees Paul as the teacher of systematic theological insights: “In his study of Thomas’ treatment of the Resurrection of Christ, Valkenberg notes that Thomas uses the Gospels and Acts mainly as sources of data – his tendency is to consider these sources as ‘objective information.’ Valkenberg claims that Aquinas uses the commentaries on Paul’s epistles in a different way. Aquinas uses the Pauline epistles not as sources of testimonial data but, rather, as purely systematic theological insights. For example, Valkenberg argues that ‘Paul is the main source for Aquinas when

The part of *Hic est liber* that deals with how the power of grace functions in the individual Pauline epistles is actually missing. Therefore, the particular relationship between the individual Pauline epistles and the structure of grace in the New Testament is unclear solely from a reading of the sermon. Another text of Aquinas is required to complete the picture of the theological structure of grace in the commentaries on Paul's epistles. The Prologue that Aquinas attaches to the beginning of the commentaries on the Pauline epistles serves to fill in the rest of the picture because it reveals how Aquinas understands the relationship of each individual epistle to the overall Pauline theme of the power of grace. Indeed, Aquinas actually begins the prologue with a statement on how these epistles are *primarily* about both the origin and manifestation of grace in the Church.

#### 4.2 Israel and Church Amidst the Power of Grace in the Prologue to Aquinas's Commentaries on Paul's Epistles

Aquinas's presentation of the fourteen epistles of the Pauline corpus possesses a theological structure of grace that dovetails with the structure of grace in the New Testament as it is presented in *Hic est liber*.<sup>73</sup> In this section I will demonstrate how Aquinas views the structure of grace in the individual commentaries as it relates to the secondary themes of Israel and Church.

Aquinas does not view the body of Paul's epistles according to a chronological order. Rather, he understands each of the Apostle's fourteen epistles as parts of a whole teaching on

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considering the soteriological value of the resurrection of Christ. He considers Paul as the first and foremost of all theologians, someone who indicates the significance of the salvation Christ brought to us...." Valkenberg, 41.

<sup>73</sup> Following Jerome, Aquinas attributes the authorship of Hebrews to Paul and, in the *prologus* to Hebrews *lectura*, even offers a defense of what was a common view in the early church.

the grace of Christ as it is in the Church. As Torrell has pointed out, “Despite the heterogeneity of these pieces, it is nonetheless certain that Thomas thought of his commentary as a whole. The proof of this is given in the Prologue that he placed at the head of this whole.”<sup>74</sup> For Aquinas, each individual Pauline commentary is organized around the identity of Paul as one chosen by God to carry the teaching of the grace of Christ to three groups.

Aquinas opens the *prologus* to the commentaries with a systematic reflection on the identity and teaching of the Apostle Paul.<sup>75</sup> The text Aquinas selects to open his lecture is Acts 9:15: “This man is to me a chosen vessel to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.”<sup>76</sup> Throughout the *prologus*, it becomes clear that for Aquinas, this verse, which mentions Gentiles and Israel, symbolizes the structure of the Pauline epistles. For the first half of the *prologus*, Aquinas will extol Paul as God’s vessel to carry the divine name of Christ. In the second half, Aquinas describes the groups to whom Paul carried the name of Christ, and these include the Gentiles and sons of Israel. First, I treat Aquinas’s view of Paul as God’s vessel. Second, I present the groups to which Paul carried the name of Christ.

Aquinas orders his teaching on Paul around the metaphor of the Apostle as vessel or *vasi*. He explains that every vessel must be considered according to its construction, contents,

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<sup>74</sup> Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. I, 254.

<sup>75</sup> The *prologus* to the Pauline commentaries is placed first, before the commentary on Romans. Additionally, each *lectura* contains its own *prologus*. See Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura* vol. I, ed. 8, revisa (Taurini: Marietti, 1953). Hereafter cited as *prologus*. The section numbers follow the Marietti edition.

<sup>76</sup> *Prologus* 1: “Vas electionis est mihi iste, ut portet nomen meum coram gentibus et regibus et filiis Israhel.”

and usefulness.<sup>77</sup> Regarding the construction of the Apostle as vessel, Paul is described as chosen by God and adorned with gold and precious stones. Paul is “golden” on account of his brilliant wisdom, and “adorned with precious stones” on account of his possession of all the virtues.<sup>78</sup> Regarding the content of this vessel, Paul carried “precious liquid”—the divine name of Christ. This is because he possessed this name in the knowledge of his intellect, in the love of his affections, and in his whole way of life.<sup>79</sup>

Regarding the use of this vessel, Aquinas explains that it was necessary for God to use Paul to carry this precious liquid of the divine name because God’s name was far from men due to sin and the darkness of human understanding.<sup>80</sup> Paul carried the name of Christ in his body by imitating his life and sufferings, and he also carried the divine name of Christ in his speech, “for he names Christ very frequently in his epistles.”<sup>81</sup> For this reason, Aquinas understands Paul to bring the name of Christ “to the ark, i.e., to the church, when he explained its power and meaning in many ways, disclosing Christ’s grace and mercy.”<sup>82</sup> For

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<sup>77</sup> *Prologus* 1: “Homines in sacra Scriptura inveniuntur vasis comparati propter quatuor, scilicet: propter constitutionem, repletionem, usum et fructum.” Aquinas actually adds a fourth category, which is the fruit of the vessel. However, when he begins discussing the fruitfulness of Paul in *Prologus* 8 he uses usefulness interchangeably with fruit. Thus only three categories are necessary.”

<sup>78</sup> *Prologus* 1: “Aureum quidem vas fuit propter fulgorem sapientiae, de qua potest intelligi quod dicitur Gen. II, 12: Et aurum terrae illius optimum est, quia....Ornatum autem fuit omni lapide pretioso, scilicet omnibus virtutibus....”

<sup>79</sup> *Prologus* 3: “...in ore, quod patet in hoc quod in epistolis suis frequentissime Christum nominat...”

<sup>80</sup> *Prologus* 4: “Hoc autem nobis longinquum propter peccatum, secundum illud Ps. CXVIII, 155: *Longe a peccatoribus salus.*” Aquinas also explains that because of this human darkness, the angels bestowed God’s light, the apostles brought the gospel teaching from Christ, and Moses and the prophets were read to instruct people in the teaching of the law. There is a clear unity in function of the old and new law as a remedy to the darkness of human understanding that mirrors *Hic est liber*, not to mention Ia-IIae q. 99.

<sup>81</sup> *Prologus* 6.

<sup>82</sup> *Prologus* 6: “Hunc autem ramum, virentibus foliis, detulit ad arcam, scilicet Ecclesiam, quando eius virtutem et significationem multipliciter expressit, Christi gratiam et misericordiam ostendendo.”

Aquinas, therefore, Paul's epistles represent a diverse teaching on the power of the grace of Christ for the Church. Yet this is not the only group to whom Aquinas understands Paul to deliver the teaching on the grace of Christ.

Aquinas includes the sons of Israel in an outline of the groups to whom Paul carried this teaching. Paul's "usefulness" as vessel is due to the fact that he carried this teaching on the grace of Christ before three groups: Gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel:

Hence the usefulness or fruit of this vessel is expressed by the words, *before the Gentiles*, whose teacher he was: "A teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (1 Tim 2:7), 10 *and kings*, to whom he preached the faith of Christ, for example, to Agrippa (Ac 16) and even to Nero and his princes. Hence he says: "What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole praetorian guard that my imprisonment is for Christ" (Phil 1:12); "Kings shall see and princes shall arise" (Is 49:7). *And the sons of Israel*, against whom he argued about Christ: "But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ" (Ac 9:22).<sup>83</sup>

The second mention of Israel in the *prologus* appears in this quotation and signals that the theme may return to the theme in the individual commentaries.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, after listing the three groups to whom Paul teaches on the grace of Christ, Aquinas then presents the threefold division of the Pauline corpus. It becomes immediately clear that the division of the fourteen epistles corresponds rather directly to the three groups just mentioned:

The Apostle wrote fourteen epistles: nine of them instruct the Church of the *Gentiles*;

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<sup>83</sup> Fabian Larcher's translation of the Prologue. See Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Fabian Larcher OP (Aquinas Center for Theological Renewal: Ave Maria University). The Marietti text from *Prologus* 9 reads as follows: "Unde utilitas sive fructus huius vasis exprimitur cum dicitur coram gentibus, quarum doctor fuit secundum illud I Tim. II, 7: *Doctor Gentium in fide et veritate*; et regibus, quibus fidem Christi annuntiavit sicut Agrippae, ut habetur Act. XVI, 38, et etiam Neroni et eius principibus; unde dicitur Phil. C. I, 12-13: *Quae circa me sunt magis ad profectum venerunt evangelii, ita ut vincula mea manifesta fierent in Christo in omni praetorio*; Is. XLIX, 7: *Reges videbunt et consurgent principes*. Et filiis Israël, contra quos de Christo disputabat, Act. IX, 22: *Salus autem magis convalescebat et confundebat Iudaeos, qui habitabant Damasci, affirmans quoniam hic est Christus*."

<sup>84</sup> The first mention of Israel is from the Acts 9:15 text Aquinas attaches to the beginning of the prologus.

four the *prelates and princes of the Church, as well as kings*; the last is addressed to the Hebrews, *the sons of Israel*. The teaching bears entirely on Christ's grace, which we can consider under a triple modality.<sup>85</sup>

The grace of Christ provides the ordering principle for all three divisions of the fourteen epistles.

Aquinas then explains how each of the individual epistles fits into these three groups. Each epistle corresponds to one of three ways Christ's grace is present in the Mystical Body:

1) the presence of grace in Christ the Head of the Body; 2) the presence of grace in the principle members (prelates) of the Body; and 3) the presence of grace in the Body itself.<sup>86</sup>

The first way in which the grace of Christ is present is 1) the existence of grace in "the Head himself, Christ, and it is thus that we find it in the Epistle to the Hebrews."<sup>87</sup> The second way in which the grace of Christ is present, explains Aquinas, is 2) the existence of grace in the "principle members of the mystical body, and it is thus that we find it in the epistles addressed to the prelates and kings."<sup>88</sup> Epistles to the prelates include I Timothy and II Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. The third way in which the grace of Christ is present is 3) the existence of grace "according as it is in the mystical body itself, which is the Church, and it is

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<sup>85</sup> Torrell's translation of the Prologue 11. The translation can be found in Torrell, 255. [emphasis mine]. The Maritetti text reads: "Scripsit enim quatuordecim epistolas quarum novem instruunt Ecclesiam Gentium; auatuor praelatos et principes Ecclessiae, id est reges; una populum Israël, scilicet quae est ad Hebraeos. Est enim haec doctrina tota de gratia Christi, quae quidem potest tripliciter considerari."

<sup>86</sup> *Prologus*, 11.

<sup>87</sup> *Prologus*, 11: "Uno modo secundum quod est in ipso capite, scilicet Christo, et sic commendatur in Epistola ad Hebraeos."

<sup>88</sup> *Prologus* 11: "Alio modo secundum quod est in membris principalibus corporis mystici, et sic commendatur in epistolis quae sunt ad praelatos."

thus that we find it in the epistles addressed to the Gentiles.”<sup>89</sup> Aquinas devotes the largest amount of material to this third group, the Gentile *ecclesia*, which includes nine epistles: Romans, 1 and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and I and II Thessalonians.

The division of the epistles as it is explained in the *prologus* indicates that Israel and Church are major themes in the commentaries on Paul’s epistles.<sup>90</sup> The sons of Israel, the prelates, and the Gentile Church, represents the three major audiences Aquinas views in the Pauline epistles and are second only to the overall organizing theme of Christ’s grace. The two sections of the Pauline corpus to which Aquinas devotes the most material are the first and third divisions: the sons of Israel and the Gentile *ecclesia*. Therefore, based on Aquinas’s own division of the Pauline corpus and the amount of material he devotes to the first and third divisions, the commentaries on Paul’s epistles provide some of the largest amounts of material on Aquinas’s view of Israel and Church. Next, I outline which of the individual commentaries of the Pauline corpus directly treat of the observance of the Mosaic Law.

#### 4.3 The Prerogatives of Israel in Aquinas’s Commentaries on Paul’s Epistles

The structure of the *prologus* indicates that relevant texts on Israel and the Church may be found in the first and third divisions of the Pauline corpus. Below, I hope to show that the actual content of the individual epistles confirms this view. Both these divisions,

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<sup>89</sup> *Prologus* 11: “Tertio modo secundum quod in ipso corpore mystic, quod est Ecclesia, et sic commendatur in epistolis quae mittuntur ad Gentiles...”

<sup>90</sup> Overall, the schema clearly concerns the effects of the power of grace of Christ in the Church (though Romans and Hebrews overlap with the theme of the Gospels, which is the origin of grace in Christ). Christology and ecclesiology are, therefore, central themes of the fourteen epistles. Baglow, drawing upon the work of Cuellar, points out that for Aquinas, “All the letters of St. Paul have an ecclesiological orientation with a base Christology.” Baglow, 126.

including the division devoted to the Gentile *ecclesia*, contains crucial material on Aquinas's view of the prerogatives of Israel. My aim in this section is to identify how each epistle is related to the prerogatives of Israel. First, I will explain how the content of the first division devoted to the sons of Israel confirms this view of the *prologus*. Second, I will explain how the content of the third division of epistles devoted to the Gentile *ecclesia* confirms this view of the *prologus*.

As I pointed out above, in the *prologus* to the commentaries Aquinas explicitly states the epistle to the Hebrews is a teaching directed to the sons of Israel. The *prologus* attached to the Hebrews commentary as well as its first *lectio* reinforces this point. In the *prologus* to the Hebrews *lectura*, Aquinas explains that the epistle concerns Christ's grace as it is "in the Head, namely, Christ." It is as priest that Christ is head of the Mystical Body. This letter deals with Christ's priesthood, which is explained to be higher than the angels and the Mosaic priesthood. Paul's purpose in writing the epistle, as Aquinas understands it, is also relevant to this study: "The Apostle wrote this epistle against the errors of some who, having converted from Judaism to the faith of Christ, wanted to keep the legal observances along with the Gospel, as if the grace of Christ did not suffice unto salvation."<sup>91</sup> The epistle is divided into two parts, with the first treating this error of converts from Judaism. The commentary on Hebrews mentions the ceremonial precepts seven times and the Jews thirty-

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<sup>91</sup> *Ad Hebraeos* 1.1.6: "Scripsit autem epistolam istam contra errors quorundam, qui ex Iudaismo ad fidem Christi conversi, volebant servare legalia cum evangelio, quasi non sufficeret gratia Christi ad salute." Again, all citations of the Latin are from Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolas S. Pauli lectura*, ed. Marietti (Turin-Rome, 1953). Quotations from the individual commentaries include an abbreviated reference to the individual commentary (for example, *In Epistolam S. Pauli ad Romanos expositio* is shortened to *ad Romanos* (following the abbreviation from Marietti). As is well known, the chapters of the commentaries correspond to the chapters of the biblical text and each chapter is then subdivided into *lectiones* and *not* verses of the biblical text. For example, the above citation from the Hebrews *lectura* is *Ad Hebraeos*, 1.1.6, which means chapter one, lectio one, Marietti paragraph number 6.



eight times.<sup>92</sup> I investigate Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the Hebrews *lectura* in chapter three of this study.

Above, I mentioned that Aquinas states that one group Paul addresses are “*the sons of Israel, against whom he argued about Christ.*”<sup>93</sup> Aquinas states this in connection with the epistle to the Hebrews, which may seem to indicate that his comments upon the prerogatives of Israel are limited only to the commentary on Hebrews. However, the topic of Israel recurs throughout the third division on the Gentile *ecclesia*.<sup>94</sup> As I show below, Paul's argument against the sons of Israel is a theme that runs throughout the commentaries in this third division. In particular, Aquinas comments at length upon the sons of Israel and the ceremonial law in the following three commentaries in the third division on the Gentile *ecclesia*: Romans, Galatians, Ephesians.

I now present a brief outline of relevant material in these epistles according to the threefold structure that Aquinas attributes to the third division devoted to the Gentile *ecclesia*. As stated above, Aquinas understands this third division of the Pauline corpus to possess a threefold structure. The third division of the Pauline corpus (addressed to the Gentile *ecclesia*) includes nine epistles total, which, all treat how the grace of Christ exists in the Mystical Body itself. Aquinas writes that these nine epistles “are distinguished from one another according to the three ways the grace of Christ can be considered.”<sup>95</sup> My examination

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<sup>92</sup> *Iudaeus* and related words occur around 38 times. *Lex Vetus* or old law occurs 39 times.

<sup>93</sup> *Prologus*, 9. [emphasis mine]

<sup>94</sup> Boguslawski's work on Romans 9-11 makes this especially obvious.

<sup>95</sup> *Prologus*, 11: “Scripsit enim quatuordecim epistolas quarum novem instruunt Ecclesiam Gentium; quatuor praelatos et principes Ecclesiae, id est reges; una populum Israel, scilicet quae est ad Hebraeos. Est enim haec doctrina tota de gratia Christi, quae quidem potest tripliciter considerari.”

of Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in chapters four through six of this study will be organized according to these three ways the grace of Christ can be considered.

The first way that the grace of Christ can be considered is "in itself," and this way is set out in the epistle to the Romans. The prerogatives of Israel are treated in detail in chapters two through four of the Romans commentary and Aquinas also discusses the prerogatives of Israel as a present spiritual benefit to the Jews in chapter nine. The commentary on the Romans mentions the Jews more than any other commentary in the Pauline corpus.<sup>96</sup> I examine Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in Romans in chapter four of this study.

The second way the grace of Christ can be considered is in the nature of the sacraments.<sup>97</sup> In the letter to the Galatians, Aquinas addresses what he refers to as "superfluous sacraments," by which he seems to mean the ceremonial law. In this epistle, writes Aquinas, the "Apostle reproves the Galatians who had been so deceived by false teachers as to observe at once the rites of the Law and those of the Gospel."<sup>98</sup> Here, Aquinas understands Paul to once again address the error of the Jews as observing the ceremonial law along with the Gospel, as he did in Hebrews. Here, Aquinas also comments on divine providence as it relates to the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE; the Antioch incident between Paul and Peter; and the controversy between Jerome and Augustine on the Jewish

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<sup>96</sup> *Iudaeus* and related words occur in the commentary on Romans around 312 times. *Lex Vetus* or old law occurs 12 times.

<sup>97</sup> The material in I and II Corinthians is relatively sparse. In I Corinthians, Aquinas briefly mentions the sacraments of the "old people" and the "new people," and the paschal lamb as a figure of Christ. In II Corinthians Aquinas comments upon another figure of Christ, which he states is the veil over the face of Moses. Nevertheless, for Aquinas, Galatians is the letter that deals particularly with the "old" sacraments.

<sup>98</sup> *Ad Galatas, Prologus* 1: "Haec verba competent praesenti epistolae, in qua Apostolus redarguit Galatas, qui intantum seducti fuerant a pseudo, ut simul servarent legalia et evangelium, quod Apostolus improperat eis in verbis praemissis, dicens vetera, novis supervenientibus, proiicietis."

apostles' observance of the ceremonial law in Acts. I examine Aquinas's view of the observance of the ceremonial law in the Galatians *lectura* in chapter five of this study. Galatians contains the second highest number of references to the Jews, second only to the commentary on Romans.<sup>99</sup>

The third and final way Christ's grace can be considered is in regard to the unity it produces in the Gentile *ecclesia*. In Aquinas's view, Paul addresses the third way that Christ's grace can be considered in the epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and I and II Thessalonians. I do not examine the Philippians, Colossians, and the epistles to the Thessalonians because these texts do not treat the ceremonial law or the Jewish people.<sup>100</sup> Ephesians, however, contains some of the most profound comments of Aquinas on ceremonial law, including the joining of both Jews and Gentiles into unity. Aquinas comments at length on the unity shared between these two peoples and how they are now "incorporated" and built together like living stones by Christ.<sup>101</sup> I examine Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in Ephesians, in chapter six of this study.

In addition to Hebrews, therefore, which addresses the sons of Israel explicitly, it should be clear that the third division, addressed to the Gentile *ecclesia*, contains a considerable amount of relevant material on Israel and the law. This study of Aquinas on

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<sup>99</sup> *Iudaeus* and related words occur in Galatians, around 192 times. *Lex Vetus* occurs 35 times.

<sup>100</sup> There is a reference to the idea of the Augustinian middle period, which Aquinas adopts in order to explain the duration and expiration of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ. *In Thess.* 2.2. The relevant material on the ceremonial law in Philippians and Colossians is sparse, and will also be considered but only as it relates to the larger theme of unity between Jew and Gentile treated at length in Ephesians. Therefore, the brief material from these commentaries will be incorporated into the chapter on Ephesians.

<sup>101</sup> *Ad Ephesios* 2.5.111: "Sequitur qui fecit utraque unum, quia scilicet Christus utrumque populum, videlicet Iudaeorum colentium Deum verum et gentilium, ab huiusmodi Dei cultura alienatorum, coniunxit in unum."

Israel and the Church will therefore focus on the following commentaries in this order:

Hebrews, Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians. My aim in each treatment of the commentaries is to uncover Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law with attention to questions at the heart of the problem of supersessionism. Do the rites retain a theological value after the passion? If so, what sort of value? Can the rites bring a spiritual benefit in the present, or are they simply dead and deadly? What theological status does Aquinas attribute to the observance of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ in his commentaries on Paul's epistles?

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE SHADOW OF THE LAW'S NIGHT: THE CEREMONIAL MOSAIC LAW IN AQUINAS'S HEBREWS *LECTURA*

In this chapter I examine Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the Hebrews *lectura* in order to determine whether he understands the ceremonial law solely as what Boguslawski referred to as "Christological prefigurements" or whether he maintains some sort of theological status for this worship after the passion of Christ.<sup>1</sup> In other words, is there any sense in which these rites serve as a spiritual benefit for the Jews now, or are they dead and deadly? Answering this question should indicate whether the Hebrews *lectura* contains what Marshall has referred to as an "unofficial teaching" on the ceremonial law—a teaching in tension with the "official teaching" that the rites are now dead and deadly. As I argued in chapter one, answering this question will help determine whether or to what extent Aquinas's view of the relationship between Israel and the Church is characterized by what R. Kendall Soulen has referred to as economic supersessionism.

A word on why my examination of the Pauline corpus begins with the Hebrews *lectura* is in order. For Aquinas, the epistle to the Hebrews possesses a prominent status among the fourteen letters of Paul. The status is due to the Christological content of the letter, which concerns grace as it is in the Head of the Church, namely, Christ. Recall that Aquinas

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<sup>1</sup> All English translations are from Chrysostom Baer's 2006 St. Augustine Press edition of Aquinas's commentary on Hebrews. I indicate my changes to Baer's translations with "[emended]." In several places I have also consulted Fabian Larcher's English translation of the text. As explained in chapter two, in order to simplify the citation format and maintain uniformity, each citation of a translation will be according to the Marietti numbers, which Baer and Larcher use. Each citation of the *lectura* will include the chapter, *lectio*, and paragraph numbers from the Marietti edition of the *lectura*. For example, *Ad Hebraeos* (hereafter *Ad Heb.*) 3.2.173. Regarding the English translation of scripture throughout the dissertation: Aquinas's text would have been the Latin Vulgate. Any citations of scripture in English that do not come from translations of Aquinas's works are from the Douay-Rheims version of the Latin Vulgate, which is closer to the Latin that Aquinas used for his commentaries than other modern translations. Bayer and Christopher Baglow rely upon the Douay-Rheims as well.

lists Hebrews first in the schema he refers to as Paul's "entire teaching" about Christ's

grace:

For this entire teaching is about Christ's grace, which can be considered in three ways: In one way, as it is in the Head, namely, Christ, and in this regard it is explained in the letter to the Hebrews. In another way, as it is found in the chief members of the Mystical Body, and this is explained in the letters to the prelates. In a third way, as it is found in the Mystical Body itself, that is, the Church, and this is explained in the letters sent to the Gentiles.<sup>2</sup>

As explained in chapter two, my examination of the ceremonial law in the commentaries on the Pauline corpus will attempt to remain attentive to the theological unity that Aquinas ascribes to the letters.

My examination of the Hebrews *lectura* proceeds in four steps. In the first section I explain what I view as the main themes of the *lectura*: the excellence of Christ and the old law. In this section I also outline the subject of each chapter of Aquinas's *lectura* and how the chapters relate to the subject of the old law in general, and the ceremonial law in particular. In the second section of the chapter I present a brief overview of Aquinas's understanding of how Christ is preeminent over angels, Moses, and the prophets, and how this Christological argument affects Aquinas's view of the Old Testament and the legal

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<sup>2</sup> *Ad Romanos, Prologus* 11: "Est enim haec doctrina tota de gratia Christi, quae quidem potest tripliciter considerari. Uno modo secundum quod est in ipso capite, scilicet Christo, et sic commendatur in Epistola ad Hebraeos. Alio modo secundum quod est in memberis principalibus corporis mystici, et sic commendatur in epistolis quae sunt ad praelatos. Tertio modo secundum quod in ipso corpore mystic, quod est Ecclesia, et sic commendatur in epistolis quae mittuntur ad Gentiles..." Chrysostom Baer also notes the prominent place Aquinas affords Hebrews in the Pauline schema as is clear from his outline of the Pauline epistles. Below is a sketch of part of his outline:

1. Power of the Grace of Christ (Pauline Letters)
2. As Head of the Mystical Body (Hebrews)
3. In the Principle Members of the Mystical Body (I & II Timothy; Titus; Philemon)
4. In the Mystical Body itself; i.e. the Church (Romans; I & II Corinthians; Galatians, etc.)

See Baer, 3. The epistles addressed to 2) principle members (or prelates) of the Mystical Body do not discuss the ceremonial law and thus, as explained in the end of chapter two, my study focuses upon the first and third sections of what Aquinas views as Paul's teaching. Aquinas's most extended reflections upon the Jewish people and the ceremonial law can be found in these first and third sections of the Pauline corpus, which treat the Sons of Israel and the Gentile ecclesia.

observances. In the third section of this chapter I explain how Aquinas understands Christ as an entirely new priesthood that replaces the Levitical priesthood and discuss how this change affects changes in the observance of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ. In the last section I summarize the conclusions of my findings and briefly locate the *lectura* along Donaldson's typology of relations between Israel and the Church. I hope to show that although the Hebrews *lectura* represents a concise statement of what Marshall refers to as the official position it also reveals that Aquinas is concerned to maintain continuity between Israel and the Church.

### 1. The Themes and Division of the Hebrews *Lectura*

In this first section of the chapter I set the context for an analysis of Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the Hebrews *lectura* by explaining its themes and structure. First, I present my understanding of the two major themes of the *lectura*, which I believe indicate how Aquinas understands the Apostle's purpose in writing the epistle, and his teaching on the ceremonial law. In the second part of this section I explain the how Aquinas understands the primary divisions of the *lectura*, the topics of its thirteen chapters, and which chapters receive attention below.

Paul's teaching on the excellence of Christ is the primary theme of Aquinas's *lectura*. The intention of the Apostle, as Aquinas understands it, is to demonstrate the preeminence of Christ, the head of the Church, over the old law. Yet Aquinas also weaves a secondary theme that brings into focus the central concerns of this study: Christ's works are *more excellent* than the works of the priesthood of the old law, which include the legal observances. In the *prologus* and beginning of *lectio* one it is immediately clear that Aquinas understands the

epistle to directly address the subject which I have argued is at the crux of the matter in the discussion over whether or not his theology is supersessionist: the observance of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ. Both the *prologus* and *lectio* provide a picture of several key features of Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law and indicate the prominence of the theme in the *lectura*.

At the close of the *prologus* Aquinas raises the question of Pauline authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews, states two ancient objections to the idea of his authorship offered at the Council of Nicaea, and presents a *respondeo*.<sup>3</sup> His reply to one of the arguments that Paul did not author the epistle reveals three key features of his view of the observance of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ: that there exists a Pauline teaching on the subject; that the teaching is tied to the dispute at the Jerusalem council chronicled in Acts 15; and that the teaching is addressed to a particular group.<sup>4</sup>

The first feature of Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law is that Paul taught directly on the ceremonial law and that it created a controversy. According to Aquinas, Paul did not give his name in the epistle because "his name was odious to the Jews since he said that the

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<sup>3</sup> *Ad Heb., Prologus 5*. The first argument against Pauline authorship is that there is no greeting or name as is customarily done in his other epistles. Additionally, the epistle does not "savor the style of the other epistles; rather, it has a more elegant style, nor is there another writing which proceeds in this order of words and arguments as this does. Hence they said it was written by Luke the Evangelist, or Barnabas, or Pope Clement, for he wrote to the Athenians much in this style."

Aquinas's reply to the first argument actually includes a "threefold reason" for why Paul did not give his name. The first pertains to the nature of Paul's apostleship: Paul did not identify himself as the author to this epistle to the Hebrews because was *not* the apostle of the Jews but to the Gentiles. Aquinas explains, "[Paul] does not make mention of his apostleship in the beginning of this epistle, since he did not want to assume the duty of the apostolate, except to the Gentiles." For Aquinas, Paul's epistle to the sons of Israel is a special occasion. It is an occasion in which he departs from his regular mission to Gentiles in order to address particular errors of Jewish converts. The second pertains to the controversy of his teaching on the Mosaic Law. Paul did not write his name because his name was odious to the Jews "since he said that the observances of the law were not to be kept, as is clear from Acts 15:2." The third pertains to his desire to avoid making the Jews jealous of his excellency. He writes, "The third is that he was a Jew. II Cor. 11:22: 'They are Hebrews: so am I.' And the members of one's household do not suffer well the excellence of one of their own." *Ad Heb., Prologus, 5*.

<sup>4</sup> Aquinas views the epistle to address the subject as it relates to "Jewish converts" to Christianity *as well as Jews*. He understands the teaching to apply to those that followed the law.



observances of the Law were not to be kept, as is clear from Acts 15:2. So he remains silent about his name, lest the most salvific doctrine of this epistle be rejected.”<sup>5</sup> From Aquinas’s perspective the Apostle did not claim authorship of the epistle because he knew his name was already associated with a controversial teaching that his Jewish audience would reject outright if they knew he was the author. The teaching is that the observances of the law, or what might be called the “prerogatives of Israel,” which he understands as the practices of circumcision, Passover, and dietary laws, can no longer be followed.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>5</sup> *Ad Heb., Prologus 5*: “Secunda, quia nomen suum Iudaeis erat odiosum, cum diceret legalia non debere servari, ut patet Act. XV, 2. Et ipsum tacuit, ne saluberrima doctrina huius epistolae abiiceretur.”

<sup>6</sup> Following Boguslawski, I also refer to these particular rites of the ceremonial law as the prerogatives of Israel. Aquinas does not make a clear distinction between these three rites (or what I am referring to as prerogatives of Israel) in this *lectura* but he does in the *Summa theologiae* and in the commentary on Romans. In general, Aquinas uses *legalis* to refer to the law in general, human law, or the law of the Old Testament. Here, the context is of course the law of the Old Testament. See Roy J. Deferrari, *A Latin-English Dictionary of St. Thomas Aquinas, Based on The Summa Theologica and Selected Passages of His Other Writings* (St. Paul Editions, 1986). According to Deferrari, Aquinas’s use of the phrase *observatio legalis* refers to the “observance of the prescriptions of the Old Testament.” Although it is not exactly clear in this section of the *lectura* which laws Aquinas is referring to, his mentioning of *legalia* in relation to Acts 15:2 reveals he is more than likely referring to three specific rites or “legal observances” that can be considered under the broader category of *caeremoniae veteris legis* (or ceremonies of the old law): these rites include the sacraments of circumcision and Passover, and observance of dietary regulations. Additionally, associating “legal observances” with these rites in particular seems justified by a reading of *Ad Galatas* 2.1 In this text, Aquinas refers to Acts 15:2 as a discussion among the apostles that resulted in the handing down of a decree on not observing the rites of the law: *legalibus non observandis*.

In Ia-IIae q. 101.4, “observances” are only one category of *caeremoniae veteris legis* or ceremonies of the old law. Aquinas divides the ceremonies of the old law into four categories: 1) *sacrificia* or sacrifices; 2) *sacra* or sacred things; 3) *sacramenta* or sacraments; and 4) *observantias* or observances. All of these categories are referred to together as *caeremoniae veteris legis*.

The 1) *sacrificia* include sacrificial animals offered by the Levite priesthood. 2) *Sacra* include instruments such as the temple, tabernacle and the vessels. 3) *Sacramenta* include circumcision, “without which no one was admitted to the legal observances” (102.5) and the eating of the paschal banquet. Aquinas actually refers to the paschal banquet as an observance but it is treated in the same article on sacraments, indicating that the Passover, for him, may fit into both *sacramenta* and *observantias* categories. 4) *Observantias* mostly refers to dietary regulations, which include the prohibition of blood and fat of animals. According to Aquinas, the latter two precepts, which are the 3) sacrament of circumcision and 4) observances both function together to consecrate the Jewish people to the worship of God. Indeed, in Ia-IIae q. 102.6 Aquinas affirms the literal, rational cause for the *observantiae* of the law as “a special prerogative of that people.” All of these precepts are ceremonial in character in the sense that they give public expression to divine worship. Replacement of the Jewish people as God’s elect people has more to do with the third and fourth categories than the first two. Replacement is brought about by the teaching that the latter two categories of ceremonial law are now useless (3) *sacramenta* and 4) *observantias*) and not that the former two categories (1) *sacrificia* or 2) *sacra*) are useless. This is because Jews can remain Jews without *sacrificia* of the Temple and without *sacra*. However, they cannot remain Jews without *sacramenta* and *observantias*.

second feature of Aquinas's view of the Pauline teaching on the ceremonial law is its relationship to the Jerusalem council. Aquinas associates the teaching on the ceremonies with the controversy and apostolic decree concerning the practice of circumcision at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15:2. The above citation of Acts 15 seems to indicate that Aquinas interprets the idea that the ceremonial law is no longer to be kept as a teaching approved by the council.<sup>7</sup> The third feature of Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law concerns the group to whom the teaching is directed. In the opening paragraph of the first *lectio* Aquinas explains that Paul's teaching in this epistle is directed to "converted" Jews: "The Apostle wrote this epistle against the errors of some who, having converted from Judaism to the faith of Christ, wanted to keep the legal observances along with the gospel, as if the grace of Christ did not suffice unto salvation."<sup>8</sup>

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Interestingly, even Aquinas recognizes the importance of ceremonial law categories 3 & 4 for the distinctiveness of the Jewish people. On his own terms temple sacrifice (or *sacrificia*) and sacred things (or *sacra*), such as the tabernacle, are *not* tied to the "special prerogative of that people." The "special prerogative of that people" is tied to category 3 and 4 of the ceremonial law: *sacramenta* and *observantias* or circumcision, Passover, and dietary laws. In *Ad Heb.* 7.3.359 he seems to employ the term *mandatum carnale* or carnal commands in order to refer to two of these prerogatives when he explains that the Old Testament is a carnal commandment "because it had certain carnal observances such as circumcision and carnal purifications." But the distinction is not as explicit as it is in the *Summa theologiae*. That Aquinas recognizes the special dignity of these markers of Jewish identity as "prerogatives" (in the *Summa theologiae*) rather than collapsing all rites into ceremonial law in general seems as if it is a nuanced achievement in its own right that might be a fruit of his engagement with Maimonides.

<sup>7</sup>Acts 15:1-2 reads as follows: "And some, coming down from Judea, taught the brethren: That, except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small contest with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of the other side should go up to the apostles and priests to Jerusalem, about this question." Aquinas's interpretation of the Jerusalem council of Acts 15 becomes clearer in *Ad Galatas*. He discusses the controversy over the observance of the law between Paul and Peter (frequently referred to as the "Antioch incident"), and refers to the teaching as a "decree" that the law ought not be kept in *Ad Galatas* 2.1; 6.3.

<sup>8</sup>*Ad Heb.* 1.1.6: "Scripsit autem epistolam istam contra errors quorundam, qui ex Iudaismo ad fidem Christi conversi, volebant servare legalia cum evangelio, quasi non sufficeret gratia Christi ad salute." Although it might appear that the intended audience is Jewish Christians or what Aquinas refers to as "Jewish converts" the argument he understands Paul to make applies to Jews who observe the rites after the passion of Christ. Near the end of the *lectura*, in *Ad Heb.* 13.3.774, Aquinas comments once again upon the audience of the message and it seems to include anyone who followed the observances of the Law. Although Paul's epistle contains a salutation to the saints and other disciples, he explains that the epistle is not written to them but to

Aquinas's statement about Paul's purpose in writing this epistle summarizes well the two major themes of the *lectura*. According to Aquinas, the Apostle's purpose is to teach that the salvific efficacy of Christ's grace is more excellent than the observances of the Law, which is a law that, as I shall demonstrate, has ultimately passed away. "The time of the New Testament is called the day," Aquinas states, "because it repels the shadow of the Law's night."<sup>9</sup> I will now turn to how Aquinas organizes these two themes throughout the thirteen chapters of the *lectura*.

As was customary in scholastic exegesis, Aquinas begins his Hebrews *lectura* with a citation from scripture that he understands as an interpretive key to the *divisio textus*<sup>10</sup> of the book under comment. Aquinas uses Psalm 85:8, which states, "There is none among the gods

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those that followed the law: "He does not write to them since he had no intention to write except against those who followed the observances of the Law."

<sup>9</sup> *Ad Heb.* 3.2.173: "Tempus est hodie, scilicet tempus diei. Tempus enim legis veteris dicebatur nox, quia erat tempus umbrae. Infra X, 1: umbram enim habens lex futurorum bonorum. Sed tempus novi testamenti, quia repellit umbram noctis legis, dicitur dies. Rom. XIII, 12: *nox praecessit, dies autem appropinquavit....*"

<sup>10</sup> Such scholastic practice is referred to as "division of the text." "In a division of the text, a commentator states some theme that serves an interpretive key for his commentary. St. Albert the Great uses the lion and its attributes as the starting point for his commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark. The Franciscan John of La Rochelle uses a passage from Isaiah as the starting point for his commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew. With the theme stated, the commentator begins to divide the text, dividing each division in turn into smaller and smaller parts down to the verse or even smaller. Thus, St. Albert divides the Gospel according to St. Mark into seven initial parts according to seven properties of the lion. The division of the text provides a sustained structural analysis by which the parts of the Gospel stand in relation both to the whole and to each other. No verse stands in isolation, but rather each stands in a rich and organic set of relations to the rest of the Gospel. The division maintains the integrity of the Gospel in the midst of careful, detailed, and often word for word interpretation. In the *De Potentia*, Thomas stated that one of the criteria for considering the legitimacy of a given interpretation of scripture is that 'the circumstance of the letter' is preserved. By providing a context that reaches not only to the surrounding verses or even chapters, but to the Gospel as a whole, the division of the text articulates in a highly formal way the circumstance of the letter." Though Boyle is speaking of the commentary on the Gospel of John, his analysis of the *divisio textus* applies to all Aquinas's scholastic exegesis, which include the commentaries on Paul's epistles. Indeed, Aquinas's method of division routinely slices down sentences to the smallest of phrases, often devoting entire paragraphs to explicating only two words, such as the "hold fast." See John F. Boyle, "Authorial Intention and the Divisio Textus," in *Reading John with St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2005), 7-8; see also John F. Boyle, "'Division of the Text' with Particular Reference to the Commentaries of Saint Thomas Aquinas," in *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish, and Joseph W. Goering (Oxford University Press, USA, 2010), 276-83.

like unto Thee, O Lord: and there is none according to Thy works.”<sup>11</sup> For Aquinas, the spiritual meaning<sup>12</sup> of this verse of Psalm 85 expresses the twofold division of the Apostle’s epistle. Aquinas explains that these words express the excellence of Christ in regard to two things: 1) the excellence of Christ in comparison to “other gods” which is expressed by the Psalmist’s words “There is none among the gods like unto Thee, O Lord....”; and 2) the effects of Christ, which are expressed by the Psalmist’s words “...and there is none according to Thy works.”<sup>13</sup>

Aquinas understands Paul to treat each of these two subjects in the following ways: First [the Apostle] commends the excellence of Christ in many ways, so that in this way to prefer to the New Testament to the Old. Second, he treats those things through which the members are joined to their Head, namely, faith.<sup>14</sup> Each of these two subjects corresponds to what I refer to as division one and two of the *lectura*. Division one consists of an extended argument for the supremacy of Christ over the old law and is treated throughout chapters one through ten. Division two concerns the virtue of faith that joins members to Christ, the Head of the mystical body, and is treated in chapters eleven through thirteen of the *lectura*. Next, I explain the subjects treated in the first division and second division.

More than two thirds of the *lectura* is devoted to division one, which concerns Paul’s

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<sup>11</sup> *Ad Heb.*, Prologus 1: “*Non est similis tui in diis, domine, et non est secundum opera tua.*”

<sup>12</sup> By “spiritual meaning” I refer to the broader definition of the term, which means “the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament in light of Christ and the New Testament.” Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture: Volume I* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), ix.

<sup>13</sup> *Ad Heb.*, Prologus 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ad Heb.* 1.1.6.

preference for the New Testament over the Old.<sup>15</sup> Division one is by far the longest and contains the most relevant material on the subject of the ceremonial law. I find it helpful to divide the first division into two parts, the first of which consists of chapters one through six, and the second consisting of chapters seven through ten.

Chapters one through six compare Christ to “other gods.”<sup>16</sup> “Other gods” refers to angels, prophets, and priests, which Aquinas also calls the “three religious persons” contained in the Old Testament.<sup>17</sup> In chapter one, Aquinas explains how Paul, or “the Apostle,” proves that Christ excels over the angels in four ways. In chapter two, he explains that the conclusion of the first chapter is that the new law is to be followed rather than the Old. Chapter three treats how Paul prefers Christ to Moses as the principle lawgiver, and chapter four consists of a warning to Israel to enter into Christ, who is the “divine rest.” In chapter five, Aquinas comments upon how Christ is a priest preeminent over Aaron. Chapter

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<sup>15</sup> The first division contains 121 pages in the Marietti version. The second division contains 49 pages.

<sup>16</sup> Citing the *Shema* in Deut. 6:4 (The Lord our God is one Lord) Aquinas explains that though God is only one in nature, there are many gods in heaven and on earth “by participation.” These gods though, are not like the one God. They are only sometimes “called gods” on account of some excellence, such as shining with the glory of God as in the case of angels, or possessing knowledge of the word of God as in the case of prophets. *Ad Heb.*, Prologus 2: “Quantum ad primum dicit: non est similis tui in diis, domine, circa quod sciendum est quod quamvis sit unus Deus natura, ut dicitur Deut. VI: dominus Deus tuus unus est, participatione tamen multi sunt dii in caelo et in terra, ut dicitur infra cap. VIII; nam dii quandoque dicuntur ipsi Angeli, ut patet Iob I et II: cum venissent filii Dei ut assisterent coram domino etc., quandoque prophetae, sicut de Moyse dicitur, Exod. VI: constitui te Deum Pharaonis, quandoque sacerdotes, secundum illud Exod. XXII: diis, idest sacerdotibus, non detrahes. Sed Angeli quidem dicuntur dii propter vehementem refulgentiam claritatis divinae gloriae, secundum illud Iob XXVI: numquid est numerus militum eius et super quem non fulgeat lumen illius?; Sed Angeli non sunt similes Christo in diis qui est splendor paternae gloriae, Eph. I: constituit eum super omnem principatum et potestatem et cetera. Prophetae vero dicuntur dii, quia ad eos verbum Dei factum est; non ergo sunt similes Christo in diis, quia est substantialiter ipsum verbum Dei, Io. I: verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat verbum. Sacerdotes autem dicuntur dii quia sunt ministri Dei nostri; non ergo sunt similes Christo in diis qui est dominus, infra IV: tamquam dominus in omni domo sua. Sic ergo patet excellentia eius super omnes deos quantum ad naturam, quia ipse est splendor, Angeli autem participant refulgentiam splendoris eius; ipse est verbum Dei quod prophetis innotescit; ipse est Deus et dominus cuius ministerio sacerdotes deputantur.”

<sup>17</sup> *Ad Heb.*, Prologus 2. The three are referred to as *tres personas solemnes* or three “sacred persons” or “religious persons” instead of “gods” in *Ad Heb.* 1.1.6. As I show below, Aquinas understands the old law as having authority from these persons. “Christ our God,” explains Aquinas, “is much more excellent than angels, prophets, priests, because Christ is “Himself substantially the Word of God.”

six, which is the final chapter of the first part of division one, addresses the slowness of Israel and the promise to the Fathers. In general, the first part of the first division of the *lectura* reveals Aquinas's view of the authority of the Old Testament as it relates to the authority of Christ. I discuss the first part in the next subsection.

In the second part of the first division, which consists of chapters seven through ten, Aquinas comments on the ceremonial law at length. In chapter seven, Aquinas comments extensively on how the Apostle proves the excellence of the priesthood of Christ over the Levitical priesthood of Melchizedek. In chapter eight, he explains how the Apostle proves the excellence of the priesthood of Christ as compared to the Levitical priesthood. In chapter nine, Aquinas compares the first temple of the Old Testament priesthood to the new temple that is Christ's body. In chapter ten, Aquinas commends the grace of Christ and comments upon the imperfection of the ceremonial law to cleanse sins. Since the second part of division one contains the bulk of the relevant material on the ceremonial law it receives the most attention. This second part of division one is treated below in subsection three.

Division two consists of chapters eleven through thirteen, which Aquinas considers as the works or "effects" of Christ. In chapter eleven through thirteen, Aquinas commends the faith through which members are joined to Christ the Head, posits several examples of the faith of the ancients, and explains the necessity of faith expressing itself in good deeds. The little relevant material from these chapters is incorporated into subsection three. Next, I present an overview of the argument that Aquinas understands the Apostle to make as it relates to the Mosaic Law in general in the first part of division one.

## 2. The Authority of the New Testament over the Old Testament

Aquinas's commentary is an elaborate and theologically rich Christological treatise worthy of study in its own right. It is beyond the scope of this inquiry to attempt even a summary of the detailed distinctions he draws between Christ, the angels, Moses, and Aaron. To give adequate attention to its Christology would require an entire study. I therefore limit my overview of the argument in the first six chapters to how this section relates to the Mosaic Law in general. The treatment of this first part of the first division is meant to provide context for the examination of chapters seven through ten which directly treat of the ceremonial observances of the law. I argue here that, initially, Aquinas emphasizes continuity between the New and Old Testaments and then moves into an exploration of the differences between the two testaments via a contrast of Christ and the "religious persons" of the Old Testament.

### 2.1 Continuity Between the New and Old Testaments

More than any other of Paul's letters, Aquinas understands the Hebrews *lectura* to demonstrate the *eminentiam* or prominence of the New Testament over the Old.<sup>18</sup> As explained above, Aquinas understands the occasion of the epistle as a misunderstanding on behalf of Jewish converts who "wanted to keep the legal observances along with the Gospel, as if the grace of Christ did not suffice unto salvation."<sup>19</sup> According to Aquinas, in order to convince these Jewish converts that the grace of Christ is sufficient for salvation Paul argues

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<sup>18</sup> In Ia-IIae q. 98.3, Aquinas states that epistle to the Hebrews is especially important in showing how the new law transcends the Old. Aquinas states that "Paul—especially in Hebrews—proves that the new law transcends the Old, namely that in the New Testament 'God spoke to us in his Son,' whereas in the Old Testament 'thy word was spoken through angels.'" ...apostolus, in principio ad Heb., probat eminentiam novae legis ad veterem, quia in novo testamento *locutus est nobis Deus in filio suo*, in veteri autem testamento *est sermo factus per Angelos*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ad Heb.* 1.1.6.

that the New Testament transcends the Old Testament in its authority.

However, Aquinas also attempts to maintain a degree of continuity between the two testaments.<sup>20</sup> Though he does not use the term “continuity,” the theme appears as early as the first *lectio* and recurs at several points in the first division. The first example is evident when Aquinas explains how the Apostle Paul *removet errorem Manichaei* or removes the errors of the Manichaeans. According to Aquinas, the errors are removed in two ways: “First, by calling God the author of the Old Testament; second, by saying that he made temporal things.”<sup>21</sup> Aquinas thinks Paul’s words that God spoke in “times of past” refers to the Old Testament, and that such divine speech rules out the view of the Manicheans: “By this he shows against the Manichaeans that the author of the Old and the New Testaments is the same.”<sup>22</sup>

Aquinas then explains the goodness of the Old Testament by outlining several positive attributes. His comments about the positive attributes are inspired by the first verse of Hebrews: “God, Who, at sundry times and in diverse manners, spoke in times past to the fathers in the prophets, last of all, In these days hath spoken to us by His Son, Whom He hath set as heir of all things....”<sup>23</sup> In Aquinas’s view, Paul *commendat vetus testamentum* or

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<sup>20</sup> Aquinas does not use the term “continuity.” His view of the unity of divine law allows him to step toward continuity between Israel and the Church and away from the first type of relationship between Israel and Church identified by Donaldson: *Relationship of Binary Opposites*. Donaldson explains that this type understands the God of Israel as “distinct from the Father God proclaimed by and revealed by Jesus Christ.” Terence L. Donaldson, “Supersessionism in Early Christianity,” Presidential Address at the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies Annual Meeting, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, 2009, 15.

<sup>21</sup> *Ad Heb.* 1.1.23: “Primo in hoc quod dicit eum actorem Veteris Testamenti; secundo quod dicit ipsum fecisse temporalia.” [Emended]

<sup>22</sup> *Ad Heb.* 1.1.19: “...et denotat eundem esse actorem Veteris et Novi Testamenti contra Manichaeum.”

<sup>23</sup> According to the Vulgate quoted by the Marietti edition, the Latin reads as follows: “Multifarie multisque modis olim Deus loquens patribus in prophetis, Novissime diebus istis locutus est nobis in Filio, quem



praises the Old Testament for its “authority, since it is of God; by its subtlety and sublimity, at sundry times and in diverse manners; and by its durability, in times past.”<sup>24</sup> The Old Testament was promulgated among diverse persons, such as Abraham and Noah, and in diverse times. Aquinas also elaborates upon the special content of the speech of God in the Old Testament. The Old Testament consists of the revelation of *quia divina*. Aquinas states that the Old Testament “regards those things which are revealed, namely, divine things: Ex 3:14: I AM WHO I AM, etc.” The example Aquinas offers of this divine revelation is one of two names of God given to Moses in Exodus 3:14.<sup>25</sup>

Another example of continuity between the testaments appears in *lectio* three where Aquinas briefly discusses the unity created by Christ between Jews and Gentiles.<sup>26</sup> Aquinas comments upon the Apostle’s words in Hebrews chapter three, verses one through four, and explains how he proves that Christ is the builder of the house that is the communion of the faithful.<sup>27</sup> For Aquinas, Paul proves that Christ is the builder of the house (a term he is using

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constituit haeredem universorum, per quem fecit et saecula.”

<sup>24</sup> *Ad Heb.* 1.1.11: “Ex his autem tribus commendat vetus testamentum, scilicet ab auctoritate, quia est a Deo, a subtilitate et a sublimitate, quia multifarie multis que modis, a firmitate, quia olim.” [Emended]. Baer translates *commendat vetus testamentum* as “he commends the Old Testament” yet the context suggests commendation may be too reserved for describing the laudatory character of all the praises of the Old Testament in *Ad Heb* 1.1.11.

<sup>25</sup> *Ad Heb.* 1.1.9: “Primo quantum ad diversas personas, quia non uni personae, sed pluribus, scilicet Abrahae, Noe, et sic de aliis. Secundo quantum ad diversa tempora, et hoc totum ad eius certitudinem. Unde Matth. c. XX, 1 ss.: exiit primo mane ... et circa horam tertiam, et cetera. Item quantum ad ea, quae ibi ostensa sunt, quia divina. Ex. III, v. 14: *ego sum, qui sum*, et cetera.”

<sup>26</sup> This is a theme Aquinas will expound upon greatly in the commentary on Ephesians.

<sup>27</sup> “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly vocation, consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus; Who is faithful to Him that made Him, as was also Moses in all His house. For this Man was counted worthy of greater glory than Moses, by so much as he that hath built the house, hath greater honor than the house. For every house is built by some man: but He that created all things, is God.” *Ad Heb.* 3.1.155: “Unde, fratres sancti, vocationis caelestis participes, considerate apostolum et pontificem confessionis nostrae, Iesum. Qui fidelis est ei qui fecit illum, sicut et Moyses in omni domoeius. Amplioris enim gloriae iste prae Moyse dignus est habitus, quanto ampliore honorem habet domus, qui fabricavit illam.” Although Moses

for the ecclesia) because Christ unifies diverse things, which cannot be “joined together unless they are so joined by some one thing, as is evident in the case of a house made by art, in which the wood and the stones, from which it is composed, are united by someone.”<sup>28</sup>

These “diverse things” include both Jews and Gentiles:

The communion of the faithful, which is the Church and the house of God, is collected from diverse peoples, namely, from Jews and Gentiles, from slaves and free men. And therefore the Church is like a complete house built by some one person unifying it.<sup>29</sup>

Aquinas then cites 1 Peter 2:5 and Ephesians 2:20 which he understands to strengthen Paul’s argument.

Lastly, Aquinas stresses that the new covenant of the New Testament brings justice to the house of Israel. He teaches that the new covenant is for *both* Jews and Gentiles. “Those who obtain the grace of God are of Israel through faith, and of Judah through confession.”<sup>30</sup> Here, Aquinas strikes a strong cord of continuity, emphasizing that Gentiles who obtain grace of God are “of Israel” through faith, and “of Judah” through confession. Here, it seems Gentiles are of Israel through faith and with Israel rather than in the place of Israel. Further on in the *lectura*, Aquinas draws upon Paul’s words in Romans 11 to strike an even stronger chord of continuity. Aquinas states that the new covenant is a *shared covenant*: “Because the

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is very honorable, explains Aquinas, Christ is more honorable as the maker of the house of the faithful and its principal lawgiver.

<sup>28</sup> *Ad Heb.* 3.1.163: “Primo ergo probat quod ista domus sicut et quaelibet alia indiget fabricatore, quia diversa non coniunguntur nisi ab aliquo uno, sicut patet de domo artificiali, in qua ligna et lapides, ex quibus composita est, uniuntur ab aliquo.”

<sup>29</sup> *Ad Heb.* 3.1.163. “Aggregatio autem fidelium, quae est Ecclesia et domus Dei, ex diversis collecta est, scilicet Iudaeis et gentibus, servis et liberis. Et ideo Ecclesia sicut et omnis domus ab aliquo uniente fabricatur. Huius rationis ponit tantum conclusionem, supponens veritatem praemissarum ex facti evidentia. I Pet. II, 5: *ipsi tamquam lapides vivi superaedificamini domos spirituales*, et cetera. Eph. II, 20: *superaedificati supra fundamentum apostolorum et prophetarum*, et cetera.”

<sup>30</sup> *Ad Heb.* 8.2.397: “Illi ergo qui sortiti sunt gratiam Dei, sunt Israel per fidem, et Iuda per confessionem.”

Gentiles were made partakers of the New Testament just as the wild olive tree is grafted into the good olive tree and *shares* of its fatness, as is said in Rom. 11:24.<sup>31</sup> Here, Aquinas depicts the Church not only as being of Israel through faith, but more explicitly as partakers in the fatness of the good olive tree. Here, Aquinas does not say that the wild olive tree that is the Gentiles is grafted on top of the good olive tree, but, rather, it is grafted into Israel. In these texts, Aquinas sees the Church as a sharer of Israel's faith and its presence does not seem to entail the passing away of the older olive tree or the reconfiguration of the whole mode and order of the good olive tree.

## 2.2 Christ More Excellent than Angels, Moses, and Aaron

The greater part of the Hebrews *lectura* is devoted to explicating the myriad differences between the two *testamenti*. For the rest of the commentary, Aquinas's comments emphasize varying degrees of discontinuity between Israel and the Church through a comparison of Christ's superiority over the Levitical priesthood. Aquinas comments upon differences between the two testaments beginning in the fifteenth section of the first *lectio*, and in the context of this discussion on God's dual authorship of the testaments.<sup>32</sup> Though

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<sup>31</sup> *Ad Heb.* 8.2.397: "...quia gentiles facti sunt participes novi testamenti, sicut oleaster insertus in bonam olivam participat pinguedinem eius, Rom. XI, 24." [emphasis mine]

<sup>32</sup> In Ia-IIae q. 98.3, Aquinas compares the difference between God's relationship to the old law and the new law to the difference in relationship between a shipbuilder to the materials produced or prepared for his use by subordinates. He comments on the difference as it relates to 1) the two types of mediators (angels and Christ) and 2) the two effects which the Law produces. These two differences, both treated in the *Summa theologiae* seem to operate as a summation of the entire first division of the Hebrews commentary. Both reflect the content of the Hebrews commentary since chapters one through six pertain to Christ the more perfect mediator and chapters seven through ten demonstrate that the old law was imperfect (or accomplished different effects than the new law). This mirrors the twofold difference between the testaments in 98.3: "...it was right for the old law to be given by angels. For, as we have already said, the old law, while itself imperfect, nevertheless prepared the way for the perfect salvation of the human race which was to be achieved through Christ." He then goes on to explain the difference between the testaments by employing the ship-building analogy: "Now the following general rule may be taken to apply whenever we find a series of causes of this

God speaks through both *testamenti*, it is more important that God speaks through them in different ways “according to the degree of their potency and the effects they produce.”<sup>33</sup>

In Aquinas’s view, the testaments receive their authority directly from the mediators of the respective covenants. The *eminentiam* of the New Testament over the Old is, therefore, first and foremost grounded in the authority of its mediator, Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word of God. From section fifteen of the first *lectio*, and all the way to the end of the first division, Aquinas comments upon Christ’s excellence over the mediators of the Old Testament. The speech of God in the New Testament is mediated through Christ, whereas, in the Old Testament, God spoke through the prophets “by revelations in the minds of men.” Aquinas states that the old law “had its authority from three things, namely, from the angels, from Moses, and from Aaron the high priest.”<sup>34</sup> Christ does not mediate the speech of God in the same way as angels, Moses, or Aaron. This is because Christ does not simply mediate God’s speech, but rather, Christ *is* God’s speech. Since Christ is the Incarnate Word of God, he “relates to the uncreated Word just as the word of the voice does to a word of the heart.”<sup>35</sup> In

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sort ranged in order according to the degree of their potency and the effects which they produce. With regard to the principal and perfect effect the agent who is above all the rest acts of himself in person to produce this. But with regard to those factors which merely induce the right dispositions for the ultimate perfection to be achieved, he operates these through his subordinates. Thus for instance, a shipbuilder puts the parts of the ship together himself in person, but makes use of subordinate assistant builders to prepare the materials. For this reason then, it is appropriate that the perfect Law of the New Testament should have been given directly by God made Man in person, and that the old law, on the contrary, should have been given to men through the ministers of God, in other word the angels.” Aquinas then concludes: “This is the way in which St. Paul—especially in Hebrews—proves that the new law transcends the Old....” Ia-IIae q. 98.3 seems as if it is a concise summation of the major points of the Hebrews commentary.

<sup>33</sup> Ia Iae 98.3. Aquinas returns to the notion that scripture is the speech of God delivered through mediators. This is an idea he first employed in his inaugural sermon, *Hic est liber*, 5.

<sup>34</sup> *Ad Heb.* 3.1.155: “Sicut supra dictum fuit, lex vetus ex tribus habuit auctoritatem, scilicet ex Angelo, ex Moyse, et ex Aaron pontifice.”

<sup>35</sup> *Ad Heb.* 1.1.15: “Tertio per carnis assumptionem, de qua dicitur Io. I, 14: *verbum caro factum est, et vidimus gloriam eius*, et cetera. Et ideo dicit Augustinus, quod hoc modo se habet verbum incarnatum ad verbum increatum, sicut verbum vocis ad verbum cordis.” Aquinas’s argument is a sophisticated Trinitarian

this way, the Apostle, according to Aquinas, shows the “excellence of Christ as regards the peculiarity of His origin.”<sup>36</sup> The first argument that Aquinas offers for the superiority of the New over the Old Testament is therefore Christological. He then applies this Christological argument to angels, Moses, and Aaron, from the second chapter of the *lectura* all the way to the sixth, and with exhaustive detail.

Because Christ is greater than angels, “it is more necessary to obey the commandments of Him...” rather than the old law, which Aquinas understands to have been given through the angels.<sup>37</sup> Christ is more excellent than Moses because, although Moses was “very honorable” and a faithful servant, he “was only one who proclaimed.”<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Moses was a servant in the house of the Lord but Christ “is as the Lord in his own house.”<sup>39</sup>

Lastly, Christ is more excellent than a priest of the old law, such as Aaron. Two things pertained to the high priest, and, according to Aquinas, Christ exceeds both of these. One was his office, which required him to enter once a year into the holy of holies with blood. The other is that he was to be a certain tribe. Christ exceeds the high priest since he entered through his own blood into the holy of holies, the sacred heavens. He is without sin,

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argument that draws upon Augustine’s *Dei Trinitate* and shares overlap with his treatment of the three persons of the Trinity in the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa theologiae*.

<sup>36</sup> *Ad Heb.* 1.1.7: “Hoc autem est in hac epistola singulare quod singula verba habent singulas sententias, et servant ordinem suum.” Additionally, Aquinas also comments upon the excellence of Christ in regard to the majesty of His dominion; and the power of His operation.” *Ad Heb.* 1.2.24

<sup>37</sup> *Ad Heb.* 2.1.90 “Oportet ergo servare mandata illa legis, ergo oportet magis obedire mandatis eius, qui maior est Angelis, per quos lex data est.”

<sup>38</sup> *Ad Heb.* 3.1.165: “Dicit ergo quod Moyses fidelis erat tamquam servus, id est, sicut fidelis dispensator. Matth. XXV, 21: euge, serve bone et fidelis, quia in pauca fuisti fidelis, supra multa te constituam. Christus autem quodammodo servus est, scilicet secundum carnem, Phil. II, v. 7: formam servi accipiens, sed Moyses fuit famulus Dei in verbis Dei proponendis filiis Israel.”

<sup>39</sup> *Ad Heb.* 3.1.168: “Est ergo non servus, sed filius, et in domo sua: sed Moyses est servus, et in domo aliena.”

perfect in obedience, and the priest of a nobler tribe than Aaron because of his origin as Son of God.<sup>40</sup>

Christ is also a high priest of temporal as well as future and eternal goods: “For the [priesthood of the old law] was temporal since it was a figure, and so it was not perpetual but passed away with the coming of the One prefigured. But the priesthood of Christ is eternal since it is of truth, which is eternal.”<sup>41</sup> Although Aquinas explains figures in the Old Testament several times throughout chapter one through four, this text is the first occurrence of the concept applied to the old law.<sup>42</sup> Aquinas returns to the subject of the prefiguring function of the old law in greater detail in chapter seven through ten.

In summary, the main intention of the Apostle is to show that Christ is more excellent than those from whom the Law had its authority. Aquinas’s view of the preeminence of the New over the Old Testament is, therefore, largely an argument from authority. The conclusion that follows from the argument is that Christ is more excellent than these “religious persons” is that the “New Testament is more to be obeyed than the Old Testament,” a conclusion which he explains in the rest of division one.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Ad Heb.* 4.3.234: “Hoc autem competit Christo, qui est nobilioris originis: unde dicitur filius Dei. Matth. III, 17: hic est filius meus dilectus. Ps. II, 7: *filius meus es tu*, et cetera.”

<sup>41</sup> *Ad Heb.* 5.1.252 [emended]: “Et ne credatur tale esse sacerdotium Christi, sicut fuit in veteri lege, distinguit ipsum quantum ad duo. Primo quantum ad dignitatem, quia in aeternum. Illud enim fuit temporale, erat enim figurale, et ideo non est perpetuum, sed transit veniente figurato. Sed sacerdotium Christi est aeternum, quia est de veritate, quae est aeterna. Item hostia eius habet virtutem introducendi in vitam aeternam. Item durat in aeternum. Secundo quantum ad ritum, quia offerebantur animalia; hic autem panis et vinum. Et ideo dicit secundum ordinem Melchisedech. Istud autem infra exponetur.”

<sup>42</sup> Prefiguring language appears in *Ad Heb.* 1.3.51; 4.1.202. The first time Aquinas elaborates on the prefiguring aspect of the old law is in his explanation of the sense in which the Levitical priesthood is described as “perpetual” in Exodus 27:21. The most explicit treatment of the prefiguring function of the ceremonial law seems to be in 7.3.352, which I discuss in section three of this chapter.

<sup>43</sup> *Ad Heb.* 2.1.89: “Supra ostendit apostolus multipliciter eminentiam Christi ad Angelos, hic ex hoc concludit, quod magis obediendum est doctrinae Christi, scilicet novo testamento, quam veteri testamento.”

### 2.3 The Conclusion of the Argument that Christ is More Excellent than the Religious Persons of the Old Law

The conclusion that follows from the comparison of Christ the religious persons of the old law is that the new law is to be obeyed rather than the Old. The commandments of the new law in particular are to be followed with “more diligence” than the commandments of the Old for several reasons.<sup>44</sup> First, because of the “usefulness of the things said” since the commandments of Christ are “the words of eternal life, as it says in Jn. 6:69, *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, etc.*”<sup>45</sup>

The usefulness of the New Testament is that its commands provide salvation while the Old Testament does not. This is because the Old Testament does not provide grace: “the Old Testament did not confer grace; but in the New Testament grace is conferred.” Aquinas then cites John 1:17: “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”<sup>46</sup> The commandments of the Old Testament are only *bonorum temporalium* or temporal goods. The temporal nature of the commandments is due to the end for which the “word spoken by angels” is ordered. These commandments were “ordered to knowledge only” because they provide *cognitio peccati* and

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<sup>44</sup> Aquinas gives a total of three reasons. The first reason has already been discussed at length: Christ’s authority as the Creator and Son of God gives his commandments a status far above that of an angel, which is only a creature. I only include the second and third reasons here. *Ad Heb.* 2.1.90

<sup>45</sup> *Ad Heb.* 2.1.90: “Et dicit abundantius propter tria: primo propter dicentis auctoritatem, quia iste creator et filius Dei, et ille creatura et Dei minister. Act. V, 29: *obedire oportet magis Deo quam hominibus*, et etiam Angelis. Secundo propter dictorum utilitatem, quia sunt verba vitae aeternae, Io. VI, 69: *domine, ad quem ibimus? Verba vitae habes*, etc., illa bonorum temporalium. Is. I, 19: *si volueritis et audieritis me, bona terrae comedetis*, et cetera. Tertio propter observantiae suavitatem, quia haec sunt suavia I Io. V, 3: *mandata eius gravia non sunt*, et Matth. XI, 30: *iugum meum suave est*, etc. illa gravia, Act. XV, 10: *hoc est onus quod neque nos, neque patres nostri portare potuerunt.*”

<sup>46</sup> *Ad Heb.* 2.1.97: “Non tamen conferebat gratiam, sed in novo testamento confertur gratia Io. I, 17: *gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est*, quae ducit ad salutem aeternam.”

*Item cognitio Dei.*<sup>47</sup>

Regarding *cognitio peccati* the old law is described as subjecting man in servitude because of what Aquinas understands the apostles to say about this Law in Acts 15. Aquinas writes, “In Acts 15:10, the Law is called a ‘yoke...which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear.’”<sup>48</sup> Likewise, Aquinas understands the old law as revealing a crucial *cognitio* of God but only in a temporal way. The old law was a time of expectation and shadows in comparison to the new law: “[God] spoke first in a time of expectation and shadows, but the latter in these days, that is, in the time of grace. Rom. 13:12: Night is passed, and the day is at hand, etc. The old law “was called night.”<sup>49</sup> The promises of the Old Testament are to be understood spiritually: “...It must be known that those things which were promised temporally in the Old Testament are to be understood spiritually.”<sup>50</sup>

Aquinas explains that everything that was *praenuntiatum*, or foretold in the old law, was *totum impletum est* or fulfilled in its totality. However, Aquinas then says *this does not mean* that the new law renders the old law *irritatus* or void in these latter days. Aquinas explains that in the fulfillment through Christ, the old law “became steadfast, since it was *not*

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<sup>47</sup> *Ad Heb.* 2.1.97: “Dicit ergo. Si sermo factus per Angelos punit praevaricatores et inobedientes, quomodo nos effugiemus, et cetera. In quo denotat periculum quod imminet non observantibus. Supra autem vetus testamentum vocavit salutem. Cuius ratio est, quia sermo ordinatur ad cognitionem tantum, hoc enim facit vetus testamentum, quia per ipsum est cognitio peccati. Rom. III, 20: *per legem cognitio peccati*. Item cognitio Dei.” Regarding knowledge of God among the Jews, Aquinas cites Psalm 147:20 “He hath not done in like manner to every nation.” And also, Psalm 75:1: “In Judea God is known.”

<sup>48</sup> This twofold servitude includes a subjection to sin and the law.

<sup>49</sup> *Ad Heb.* 1.1.14: “Item illud olim in tempore expectationis et tenebrarum, sed istud in diebus istis, id est, tempore gratiae. Rom. c. XIII, 12: *nox praecessit, dies autem appropinquavit*, et cetera.”

<sup>50</sup> *Ad Heb.* 4.1.198 “Dicit ergo etenim nobis nuntiatum, id est, nobis promissum est. Unde sciendum est quod illa quae in veteri testamento promissa sunt temporaliter, intelligenda sunt spiritualiter. *Omnia enim in figura contingebant illis*, I Cor. X, 11, et Rom. XV, 4: *quaecumque scripta sunt, ad nostram doctrinam scripta sunt*.”



made void.”<sup>51</sup>

The second reason that the commandments of the New are to be more diligently followed than the Old is that the latter are *gravia* or burdensome. Aquinas cites the words of Peter at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15:10 as evidence of the *gravia* of the old law: “This is a burden which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear.”<sup>52</sup> The commandments of the new law, on the other hand, *gravia non sunt* or “are not burdensome,” since, as Aquinas explains, Jesus taught “For my yoke is sweet” in Matthew 11:30. Aquinas reads Acts 15:10 as not only a judgment by the apostles that the old law is burdensome, but also that it is too heavy to bear now that the age of grace has come. His comment on the *gravia* of the law illuminates his reference to the same Acts verse in the *Prologus* and reveals what he views as the rationale behind an apostolic decision to end the observance of the law.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *Ad Heb.* 2.1.94: “Factus est ergo firmus, quia *non fuit irritatus*.” [emphasis mine] Baer translates *irritatus* as “void.” Larcher also translates the term as “void.” Deferrari defines the term as “void” and lists other meanings of the adjective, *irritus* as “vain, useless, without effect, ineffectual.” The Marietti text points the reader to 1.1.15, which explains the way in which the Old Testament spoke in the past. The note seems to imply that the Old Testament is not void or useless because God spoke divine things through it. Both Larcher and Baer translate the term void. In chapter seven, Aquinas will say, using a different term, that the law is rendered void—the exact opposite of his statement in *Ad Heb.* 2.1.94.

<sup>52</sup> *Ad Heb.* 2.1.90: “Act. XV, 10: *hoc est onus quod neque nos, neque patres nostri portare potuerunt*.”

<sup>53</sup> Aquinas also refers to the law as a heavy yoke and refers to Acts 15:10 in *Ad Heb.* 2.4.145 and 12.4.704. In 2.4.145: “Vel aliter: homo enim duplici servituti erat obnoxius, scilicet legis et peccati. Unde Act. XV, 10 lex dicitur iugum, quod nec nos, nec patres nostri portare potuimus. Manus enim Moysi erant graves, Ex. c. XVII, 12; Gal. IV, 5: ut eos qui sub lege erant redimeret. Erant enim obnoxii servituti peccati. Ab ista duplici servitute Christus nos liberavit. Differentia autem inter novum et vetus testamentum est timor, et amor. In novo est amor. Io. XIV, 15: si diligitis me, mandata mea servate. Vetus autem fuit lex timoris. Rom. VIII, 15: non enim accepistis spiritum servitutis iterum in timore. Et ideo dicit ut liberaret eos qui timore mortis corporalis, quam infligebat lex, per totam vitam obnoxii erant servituti legis.”

See also 12.4.704, when commenting upon Hebrews 12:21 [“And so terrible was that which was seen, Moses said, I am frightened, and tremble”] Aquinas says that the old law was a law of fear. Aquinas writes, “Then when he says, Moses said, he treats the fear of the lawmaker, namely Moses. In 1:17: “For the law was given by Moses.” If, then, in the giving of the Law Moses was terrified so that he would say, as the Apostle says here, ‘I am frightened,’ that is, interiorly, ‘and tremble,’ that is, exteriorly, he who was most perfect among all men, this was a sign that the Law itself was terrible even to the perfect, since it did not give grace, as has been said, but only showed fault. Hence, it was a heavy yoke, about which Peter speaks in Acts 15:10, saying about this yoke that *neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear it*.” The old law is a law of fear, while the new law is viewed as a law of grace. See *Ad Heb.* 12.4.704. As the study progresses, it should become clear that for

In summary, Aquinas argues in the first division that Christ holds more authority than angels, Moses, and Aaron, because of his diverse excellence. Because he possesses more authority than these religious persons, his commandments in the New Testament are more to be followed than the commandments of the Old Testament.

### 3. The Change in the Mode and Order of the Divine Regime

The consequences of the new priesthood of Christ for the prerogatives of Israel become clearer in chapters seven through ten. Here, I present the general argument that Aquinas understands Paul to make. In the first section, I explain how Aquinas understands the perfect priesthood of Christ to render the Levitical priesthood void. In the second section I discuss how the change of the priesthood affects what Aquinas refers to as the “whole mode and order” of the regime, which includes the observances of the ceremonial law.

#### 3.1 The Perfect Priesthood of Christ Renders the Levitical Priesthood Void

Aquinas unfolds a detailed comparison between Christ and the Levitical priesthood beginning in *lectio* one of chapter seven. Despite having been born after Melchizedek in time, Aquinas explains that Christ is more excellent because “Christ, insofar as He is God and the Son of God...is from eternity.”<sup>54</sup> Christ’s priesthood is eternal because “there is no mention of Christ’s successor” and because Melchizedek’s priesthood was only a figure of the perfect priesthood.<sup>55</sup>

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Aquinas, Acts 15:10 is as an official apostolic decision that the ceremonial law no longer be observed by all.

<sup>54</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.1.334: “Et ideo ne credatur, quod sacerdotium Christi sit posterius sacerdotio Melchisedech, hoc remonet apostolus, quia et si Christus inquantum homo natus sit post eum et ex tempore, tamen inquantum Deus et filius Dei est ab aeterno.”

<sup>55</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.1.334: “Item est sacerdos in perpetuum, quia figuratum eius, scilicet sacerdotium Christi, in perpetuum est. Unde et in Scriptura pluries repetitur, ritu perpetuo.”

Aquinas then contrasts the perpetuity of Christ's priesthood with the perpetuity of the Levitical priesthood since he is aware of Old Testament statements that the priesthood and the law are forever. He cites the verses that describe the latter as perpetual or forever: "Whence, also in Scripture many things are repeated with a perpetual rite. Ex. 27:21: "It shall be a perpetual observance throughout their successions among the children of Israel. Lev. 24:3: By a perpetual service and rite."<sup>56</sup> He then explains the particular sense in which the latter are perpetual by drawing once more upon the prefiguring function of the ceremonial law. The priesthood is described as such since "that which was figured through this was perpetual." Melchizedek is said to "continueth a priest forever, because the thing of which it is a figure, namely, the priesthood of Christ, remains forever."<sup>57</sup> *Lectio* one of chapter seven is the second appearance of the concept of the prefiguring function of the old law.<sup>58</sup> The theme appears again in *lectio* two of chapter eight: "Then there was a figure only; now, however, is the expressed truth of the figures."<sup>59</sup> And again, "There were only figurative things in the Old Testament; but in the New, the truth of the figures. And thus the New consummates and perfects the Old."<sup>60</sup> It is only because Melchizedek's priesthood was a

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<sup>56</sup> "Ex. XXVII, 21: *cultus perpetuus erit*. Lev. c. XXIV, 3: *cultu, rituque perpetuo*, quia illud quod figurabatur per istud, perpetuum erat."

<sup>57</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.1.334: "Item est sacerdos in perpetuum, quia figuratum eius, scilicet sacerdotium Christi, in perpetuum erit."

<sup>58</sup> Aquinas uses the perfect passive participle *figuratum* and then the imperfect passive *figurabatur* in this paragraph to describe the priesthood's function of prefiguring. The tense emphasizes that the prefiguring *was* and is now no longer functioning. He does not refer to the priesthood as *figura*. This *lectio* may also be unique for its treatment of the idea of the perpetuity of the old law. I investigate this further when I correlate my findings with that of the *Summa theologiae*.

<sup>59</sup> *Ad Heb.* 8.2.392: "Item sacramenta sunt diversa; quia ibi erat figura tantum, hic autem figurae veritas expressa. Per omnia ergo testamentum illud est melius."

<sup>60</sup> *Ad Heb.* 8.2.396. That statement that there were "only" figurative things in the Old Testament is in

figure of the one who is from eternity that his priesthood was described as perpetual.<sup>61</sup>

Though the imperfect priesthood of the Old Testament is recognized as “perpetual” in its prefiguring function, it does not remain unchanged by the arrival of that which it prefigured. The perfect priesthood of Christ is changed (*mutatur*) in relation to the mode and order of the Levitical priesthood since “the perfect renders the imperfect annulled” or *evacuo*.<sup>62</sup> Aquinas interprets 1 Corinthians 13:10 to support what he refers to at one point as the translation of the priesthood: “But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.” For Aquinas Paul proves that “the priesthood of Christ renders the Levitical priesthood void.”<sup>63</sup>

### 3.2 The Change in the Mode and Order of the Imperfect Regime

The change in the priesthood also brings about a changing of the ceremonial law. Because the “priesthood of Christ renders the Levitical priesthood void” it also renders void “the Law through which it was administered.” Aquinas writes, “For the Law was under the administration of priests; therefore, with the priesthood being changed, it is necessary that the Law be changed.”<sup>64</sup> He then provides the *ratio* for the changing of the Law by drawing upon

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tension with Aquinas’s admission in other texts that the rites of the ceremonies actually provided ways to worship God for a time.

<sup>61</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.1.334.

<sup>62</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.349: “Secunda ratio probat quod etiam ipsum evacuate, quia perfectum evacuate imperfectum. – I Cor. XIII, 10: *Cum venerit quod perfectum est, evacuabitur quod ex parte est*. Ergo sacerdotium Christi evacuate sacerdotium Leviticum. Est ergo primum consequens, quod sacerdotium Christi evacuate sacerdotium Leviticum. [emended] Baer translates evacuate as “void.”

<sup>63</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.349: “...*quia perfectum evacuate imperfectum*....” Aquinas cites this verse again in 9.3.437 to explain how Christ’s entering of the holy of holies is the coming of the perfect tabernacle and the cessation of the imperfect tabernacle.

<sup>64</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.350: “Et istud ponit cum dicit quod translato enim sacerdotio, necesse est, ut legis translatio fiat. Erat enim lex sub administratione sacerdotii; ergo mutato sacerdotio, necesse est quod lex

the analogy of a political regime and its laws, as understood by Aristotle:

And the reason for this is that the end being changed [*quia mutato fine*], it is necessary that the means be changed, just as he who changes the intent of traveling by water, changes the intent of searching for a ship. For every law is ordained to human interaction according to some regime. Whence, according to the Philosopher in the *Politics*, by interaction changing, it is necessary that the law be changed. Moreover, just as human law is ordered to a human regime, so is spiritual and divine law ordered to the divine regime. But this regime is designated through the priesthood. Therefore, the priesthood being translated, it is necessary that the law be transferred.<sup>65</sup>

Aquinas explains further that this change is not simply the equivalent of the change brought about by *a* new priest. For example, he says that the Law is not changed if one priest dies. However, if the *entire* priesthood is changed then a proportional change occurs in that regime's laws. Therefore, because the priesthood is changed, "the whole mode and order of the regime is changed."<sup>66</sup>

This change in the "whole mode and order of the regime" [*totus modus, et ordo regiminis*] is defined by a series of contrasts between the Old and New priesthoods that appear throughout chapters seven through ten: The Old is characterized by a carnal command while the New is a spiritual command. The promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is a carnal and temporal promise, while the promise in the New concerns heavenly and eternal things. The old law is ordained to an imperfect end while the New is ordained to the perfect. The

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mutetur."

<sup>65</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.350: "Et huius ratio est, quia mutato fine, necesse est quod mutantur ea quae sunt ad finem, sicut qui mutat propositum eundi per aquam, mutat propositum quaerendi navem. Omnis autem lex ordinatur ad conversationem humanam secundum aliquod regimen. Unde secundum philosophum in politicis, mutata conversatione, necesse est mutari legem. Sicut autem lex humana ordinatur ad regimen humanum, ita spiritualis et divina ad regimen divinum. Hoc autem regimen designatur per sacerdotium. Translato ergo sacerdotio, necesse est transferri legem." Aquinas relies upon Aristotle to help describe the process of the change of the old law in the Ephesians commentary as well. See chapter six.

<sup>66</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.351: "Signanter autem loquitur, quia non dicit: sacerdote translato. Lex enim non respicit personam sacerdotis. Unde mortuo sacerdote, non mutatur lex, nisi forte sit illa introducta propter personam eius; sed mutato sacerdotio mutatur totus modus, et ordo regiminis."

Old Testament was a time of shadow while the New is a time of grace. I examine each contrast below.

### 3.2.1. The Coming of the Eternal Priesthood Renders the Old Testament Void

From Aquinas's view, the reason for the change of the divine regime is due not only to the divine institution of the perfect priesthood. The priesthood is brought about in connection with what seems like a twofold *ratio* for the new priesthood. The new priesthood is brought about because of the 1) imperfection of the law and 2) what Aquinas refers to as a "change of time." The imperfection of the law consists of its carnal nature and its inability to lead to beatitude. The change of time pertains to the law's character as a "shadow." Here, I discuss only the law's carnal nature and its inability to lead to beatitude as well as the necessity of the new covenant.<sup>67</sup> I take up the change of time in the last subsection.

For Aquinas, the Levitical priesthood is inseparable from the ceremonial law, which was only a temporal and carnal commandment as opposed to the perfect priesthood, which is spiritual and eternal. The Old Testament is a "carnal commandment" because it had certain carnal observances such as "circumcision and carnal purifications" and because it "promised carnal punishments and rewards."<sup>68</sup> The New Testament, on the other hand, is not dispensed through carnal things, but consists of spiritual things. For Aquinas, that which is spiritual is perpetual: "There are promised in the New Testament perpetual goods and punishments."

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<sup>67</sup> The ratio behind the institution of the new priesthood, which administers the new covenant seems due to both the inadequacy of the imperfect old law as well as the change of time orchestrated by divine providence. Despite the space attributed to the inadequacy of the old law, Aquinas repeatedly returns to in the Hebrews *lectura* to the change of time. He does this when he considers the objection that the law is not evil but only fitting for a time (*Ad Heb.* 7.3.362); and when he considers the objection that God's law cannot change because God is also immutable (*Ad Heb.* 7.3.352).

<sup>68</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.359: "In maiori ergo sunt duo, quorum unum pertinet ad vetus testamentum, scilicet quod est mandatum carnale, et hoc quia habebat quasdam observantias carnales, sicut circumcisionem, et purificationes carnales. Item quia promittebat poenas et praemia carnalia."

The old law was only a shadow of the good things to come.<sup>69</sup> “There were only figurative things in the Old Testament; but in the New, the truth of the figures. And thus the New consummates and perfects the Old.”<sup>70</sup>

This consummation and perfection, however, also involves the making void of the carnal commands of the Old Testament. According to Aquinas the introduction of the New brings about “the rendering void of the Old Testament.”<sup>71</sup> This rendering void is an *evacuatio*.<sup>72</sup> Aquinas explains the reason for the *evacuatio Veteris Testamenti* or the “rendering void of the Old Testament.”

If a new priest arises, this will not be according to the law of a carnal commandment, but according to the law of an eternal and indissoluble life. And the reason for this is that because the first was according to that law, it would then be necessary that the new be according to another law, if indeed there arose some new priest.”<sup>73</sup>

The carnal commands of circumcision and purifications were not perpetual because they did not consist in eternal and spiritual things.<sup>74</sup> The new priesthood therefore requires a new law and the *mandatum carnale* or carnal commandment is rendered void.

This rendering void of the *mandatum carnale* is the teeth of economic

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<sup>69</sup> *Ad Heb.* 8.1.388: “Quantum ad secundum dicit umbrae, quia sicut umbra repraesentat corpus, nec tamen illud attingit: ita et illa repraesentabant novum testamentum. [Heb. X], 1: umbram habens lex futurorum, et cetera.”

<sup>70</sup> *Ad Heb.* 8.2.396: “Item in veteri testamento erant tantum figuralia: in novo vero, veritas figurarum: et ita novum consummat et perficit vetus.”

<sup>71</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.361: “Deinde cum dicit reprobatio quidem fit, etc., ponit duo consequentia. Et primo de evacuatione veteris testamenti; secundo de institutione novi, ibi introductio vero.”

<sup>72</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.361. “Evacuatio” means to make void.

<sup>73</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.359: “si novus sacerdos surgit, hoc non erit secundum legem carnalis mandati, sed secundum legem vitae aeternae et insolubilis. Et huius ratio est quia primus fuit secundum legem illam, oportet ergo quod novus sit secundum aliam legem, si tamen surgit aliquis novus.”

<sup>74</sup> The carnal command is contrasted with what is genuinely perpetual, that of spiritual virtue. It is only through spiritual virtue that there “is generated in us a perpetual life.” See *Ad Heb.* 7.3.359.

supersessionism and the problem that Wyschogrod addresses in his 1987 critique of Aquinas. It is also what Matthew Levering seems to miss when he interprets Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law to apply only to Jewish Christians (or what Aquinas would refer to as "Jewish converts") and *not* to Jews.<sup>75</sup> To the contrary, the rendering void of the *mandatum carnale* is, for Aquinas, similar to how light repels shadow. "The time of the New Testament is called the day," Aquinas states, "because it repels the shadow of the Law's night."<sup>76</sup> The shadow is the temporal nature of the ceremonial law and the coming of the light does not leave it intact. As stated above, Aquinas teaches that God no longer desires these sacrifices "for that time in which the shadows cease with the advent of truth...." The one who continues to observe these rites commits sin: "And hence, now he would sin who offers such things."<sup>77</sup>

### 3.2.2. The Temporal Promise

Aquinas also understands the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as a promise of carnal things. Commenting upon Paul's words "For finding fault with them, he saith: Behold, the days shall come, saith the Lord: and I will perfect unto the house of Israel, and unto the house of Judah, a new testament. Not according to the testament which I made to their fathers, on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt,"

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<sup>75</sup> "Aquinas does not condemn the observance of Torah by Jews who do not believe in Jesus Christ, but neither does he condone not believing in Jesus Christ." Matthew Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation According to Thomas Aquinas* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), chapter one, fn. 64, 161.

<sup>76</sup> *Ad Heb.* 3.2.173.

<sup>77</sup> *Ad Heb.* 10.1.488: "...quod non vult ea pro tempore isto, in quo adveniente veritate cessat umbra, unde modo peccaret qui ea offerret." Here, Aquinas is discussing in what sense it might be said that God does not desire sacrifice and offerings. He lists several reasons but the first is that these are now sinful in after the time that the shadow has ceased and the truth has come. It seems clear here that Aquinas is describing how the observing the ceremonial law, in this case, the sacrifices, is a sin for anyone who offers such things, not only Jewish Christians.



Aquinas describes the perpetuity of the promise given to the fathers: “He says moreover, to their fathers, namely to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom He had initiated a special covenant. Ps. 104:8: *He hath remembered his covenant forever: the word which He commanded to a thousand generations. Which He made to Abraham, etc.*” Yet, these promises, explains Aquinas, were carnal things: “But to these He promised carnal things in the exodus from Egypt.”<sup>78</sup> While discussing how Christ is a mediator of a better covenant, he writes of the Old Testament that “Then, temporal things were promised. Is 1:19: *If you be willing, and harken to Me, you shall eat the good things of the land.*” Now, however, “heavenly things are promised.” Aquinas concludes: “In such a way therefore, is the New Testament better, according to that which the Lord promises to men.”<sup>79</sup>

### 3.2.3. The Old Law as Imperfect but not Evil

In addition to the carnal nature of its commandments and promises the former *figura* of the priesthood of Christ was imperfect because *it did not lead to perfection*. Aquinas explains that the priesthood “was not consummated, that is, it was not perfected.”<sup>80</sup> This is because the old law only provided knowledge of sin and knowledge of God. But it failed to bring the perfection of justice. Aquinas states, “For [the priesthood’s] whole perfection was through the law it administered. But, as he now says, the law brought nothing to perfection, because it did not lead to the perfection of justice.”<sup>81</sup> Aquinas then cites Matthew 5:20 in

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<sup>78</sup> *Ad Heb.* 8.2.401.

<sup>79</sup> *Ad Heb.* 8.2.392.

<sup>80</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.2.348: “Sacerdotium vero non consummabat, id est, perficiebat.”

<sup>81</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.348: Sed, ut iam dicetur, nullum ad perfectum adduxit lex, quia nec ad perfectionem iustitiae.

support the idea of the law's imperfection: "For I tell you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

In Aquinas's view, the scribes and Pharisees' practice of the law was representative of the Levitical priestly office. Moreover, the above words from Matthew 5:20 are taken to indicate that Christ himself thought that the old law in and of itself, not the Pharisees' improper practice of the law, did not justify and was imperfect.<sup>82</sup> The law administered by this priestly office did "not have the power to purge those things which had been committed" and it did "not give the helping grace to avoid sin, but only to know it..."<sup>83</sup> Christ's priesthood is perfect because it brings a justice that "abounds more than that of the scribes and Pharisees."

Therefore, the rendering void of the Old Testament also brings about a second consequence: it institutes the New.<sup>84</sup> The institution of the new is necessary because only the sacraments of the new covenant bring perfect justice. The institution of the new is a *transmutationis illius* or transfer from one to another. The voiding of the old law is therefore followed by a transfer to a new law.

In Aquinas's view, this transfer is indicated in scripture by two verses. The first is Jeremiah 31:31, which, Aquinas cites as: "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, etc." The second is Rom. 8:2, which states "For the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath delivered me from the law of sin and of death." Here, Aquinas takes the "law of sin and death" mentioned in this Romans 8:2 to refer to the old law: "For the Old Law is

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<sup>82</sup> Aquinas makes this nuanced distinction in the *Summa theologiae*.

<sup>83</sup> *Ad Heb.* 8.2.393: "Secundo, quia non dabat gratiam adiutricem ad vitandum peccata, sed ad cognoscendum tantum: et sic erat occasio peccati."

<sup>84</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.360.

called the law of sin and death, by an accepted circumstance that it does not confer grace *ex opera operato* as do the sacraments of the New Law.”<sup>85</sup> The new covenant establishes justice while the imperfect old law could not. The new law joins man to God through divine grace and provides perfect cognition of God and the remission of sins.<sup>86</sup> The old law contained “no grace in itself.”<sup>87</sup> This was true even for the fathers of the Old Testament who Aquinas admits are described in the Old Testament as holy. Abraham and Moses were holy *only* because of faith in Christ, not the observances.<sup>88</sup>

Aquinas seems aware of how the imperfection of the law might be taken to mean that it is evil. He is again concerned to guard against Manicheans who “condemn the Old Testament, saying it was made by the evil principle, that is, by the devil....”<sup>89</sup> He is also aware of Paul’s statement that the law is holy and just: “But to the contrary, nothing is reprobated except evil... But that commandment is not evil. Rom. 7:12: ‘Wherefore the law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.’” Aquinas then explains why the law is not sinful: “I respond that that it was not evil in itself but as unfitting to the time

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<sup>85</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.352. Aquinas’s view here represents his mature view on circumcision where grace is mediated only through faith in Christ *not* through the law itself. Aquinas adopts the same position in the *Galatians lectura* and the *Romans lectura*, as well as in the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa theologiae* where he rejects his earlier position on circumcision (that the rite saves in and of itself) in the *Sentences*. For the argument that this view is the mature view of Aquinas see Richard Schenk, “Views of the Two Covenants in Medieval Theology,” *Nova Et Vetera* 4, no. 4 (2006).

<sup>86</sup> *Ad Heb.* 8.3.405.

<sup>87</sup> *Ad Heb.* 9.1.415.

<sup>88</sup> “But were not many perfect in the old law? It would seem so. For it is said of Abraham in Gen. 17:1: *Walk before me, and be perfect*. Moses also, and many others, were very holy and perfect. I respond that although many were then holy and perfect, this was not because of works of the Law. Above 7:19: *For the law brought nothing to perfection*. Rather, it was because of faith in Christ. Gen. 15:6 *Abram believed God, and it was reputed to him unto justice*. Therefore, this was not in virtue of the ceremonies or the legal observances. *Ad Heb.* 9.2.431.

<sup>89</sup> *Ad Heb.* 11.2.566: “Item damnant vetus testamentum, dicentes quod a malo principio, scilicet a Diabolo, conditum sit. Contra quod dicit, quod in hac fide testimonium consecuti sunt senes.”

(*inconveniens tempori*).”<sup>90</sup> The law was not evil. It is simply unfitting to the time, meaning unfitting to the time of the New Testament. Both the law and the priesthood is *reprobatur* or rejected because it is “infirm.” Aquinas explains “that is called infirm, moreover, which is not able to execute its effect, and to justify is properly the effect of Law and priesthood.”<sup>91</sup> Aquinas explains further: “That is called unprofitable which does not prevail in attaining its end. This the Law could not do, because it did not lead to beatitude, which is the end of man. But it was nevertheless useful in its own time, inasmuch as it disposed to faith.”<sup>92</sup> Aquinas does not say why it was useful for a time, other than that it made the knowledge of sin and of God available to the Jews.

When Aquinas considers the question why God would institute such a weak and imperfect law, he offers the argument that a change of time occurred which he refers to as the “time of correction”:

And lest anyone say: Why, then, were they instituted, if they could not perfect, for then it seems that God instituted them uselessly? He says, “Until the time of correction,” as if to say: It is true that they would have been uselessly instituted if they were to remain always. But just as one ought to give a teacher to a child, but when he arrives at the perfect age he is given the manner of comporting himself according to the judgment of the ruler of the republic: so in the Old Law those things which were instituted until the perfect time arrived, and then those things which lead to perfection had to be instituted. And so he says, Until the time of correction, that is, the time in which it is corrected, not as something evil, but imperfect. “For the law is good,” as it says in 1 Tim. 1:8. Ps. 89:10: “For mildness is come upon us: and we shall be corrected.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.362: “Dicendum est, quod non erat malum secundum se, sed ut inconveniens tempori.”

<sup>91</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.362.

<sup>92</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.362.

<sup>93</sup> *Ad Heb.* 9.2.434: “Et ne aliquis dicat: quare ergo instituta sunt, si non poterant perficere? Quia iam videretur quod Deus ea inutiliter instituerit. Hoc removet cum dicit usque ad tempus correctionis impositis, quasi dicat: hoc verum est quod fuissent inutiliter instituta si semper deberent durare. Sed sicut puero primo oportet dare paedagogum, quando autem iam pervenit ad aetatem perfectam, tunc datur ei modus se habendi secundum iudicium rectoris reipublicae: ita in veteri lege ea, quae spectant ad imperfectionem instituta fuerunt,

Here, Aquinas recognizes for the first time in the Hebrews *lectura* that the ceremonial law possessed a literal *ratio*: it disposed the Jewish people to faith in God though only for a time.<sup>94</sup> He affirms this again in an explicit way when he says, while describing the first tabernacle of the Old Testament and the second as Christ, that the “ceremonies of the Law were ordered to use *according to that state*, but they were figurative on the second state inasmuch as they prefigured Christ.”<sup>95</sup> The ceremonial laws were “instituted to represent the magnificence of God, which was not represented except in its effects.”<sup>96</sup> I return to the idea of the change of time at the end of this section.

#### 3.2.4. The Renunciation of the Ceremonial Law

Because the law has been made void, to practice the laws of the old regime is now considered a sin. While commenting upon Paul’s statement that the priesthood have a commandment to take the tithes of the people according of the law, he explains that the ceremonial laws are no longer to be followed.<sup>97</sup> The commandment to tithe in the Old

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sed quando venit tempus perfectum, tunc debuerunt institui illa quae ducunt ad perfectionem. Et ideo dicit usque ad tempus correctionis, id est, in quo corrigeretur, non quidem sicut mala, sed sicut imperfecta. Lex enim bona est, Rom. VII, 12. Ps. LXXXIX, 10:supervenit mansuetudo, et corripiemur.” Aquinas thinks that there is a twofold cleansing: one from the stain of the guilt of sin, and “regarding this the Law could not do anything.” The other cleansing is in regard to “worship, namely, so that they would be allowed to minister at these sacrifices; and thus the Law did cleanse.” *Ad Heb.* 9.2.430. See also 9.3.443; 9.4.449; 9.4.460.

<sup>94</sup> Here, the *lectura* comes into full agreement with Aquinas’s view of the twofold ratio for the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae*: it served to prefigure the perfect priesthood of the One who was to come; and it enclosed the Jewish people in proper worship of God.

<sup>95</sup> *Ad Heb.* 9.1.422. [emphasis mine]

<sup>96</sup> Aquinas states that God “is not able to be comprehended by a creature except through His effects.” *Ad Heb.* 9.1.422.

<sup>97</sup> Heb. 7:5 in the Douay-Rheims reads: “And indeed they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is to say, of their brethren: though they themselves also came out of the loins of Abraham.”

Testament provides Aquinas with the opportunity to explain why it is acceptable to tithe after the passion of Christ, even though tithing is a commandment of the old law, which has passed away. Aquinas introduces his comment upon this verse with an objection to tithing based on the idea that observing the ceremonial law is now a sin: “On the contrary, if this were a command of the Law when *to keep the commands of the Law is now a sin*, it seems illicit to give or receive tithes.”<sup>98</sup> Aquinas then responds to this objection by presenting the distinction between moral and ceremonial law:

I respond that in the Law there were some things purely ceremonial, such as circumcision, the offering of the lamb, and such like. And since these were only figurative, it is not licit to keep them, for they were figures of the future. Hence those who keep them now signify that Christ is to come in the future. Other things were purely moral, and these are even now to be kept, and tithing is one such thing, as has been said above. Hence tithing was given in the law and in the New Testament. Mt. 10:10: “For the workman is worthy of his meat.” Lk. 10:7: “For the laborer is worthy of his hire.” But the determination of such a portion is now by the Church, just as in the Old Testament it was from the Law.<sup>99</sup>

In *lectio* two of chapter eight, Aquinas makes the distinction again: “...in the Old Testament certain things are said which pertain to the worship of God, and these are ceremonial; but there are certain ones which pertain to the rectitude of life, and these are moral precepts, which remain, while there are others that do not.”<sup>100</sup> The observance of the ceremonial law

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<sup>98</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.2.339: “Contra. Si hoc est mandatum legis, cum servare mandata legis modo sit peccatum, videtur illicitum modo dare, vel accipere decimas.” [emphasis mine]

<sup>99</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.2.339: “Respondeo. Dicendum est, quod in lege fuerunt quaedam pure caeremonialia, sicut circumcisio, immolare agnum, et huiusmodi. Et ista quia erant figurativa tantum, non licet modo servare. Erant enim figura futuri. Unde qui modo servaret significaret Christum adhuc futurum. Quaedam vero erant pure moralia, et ista modo servanda sunt, et de talibus fuit datio decimarum, sicut supra dictum est. Unde decimatio et in lege data est, et in novo testamento. Matth. X, 10: dignus est operarius cibo suo. Lc. X, 7: dignus est operarius mercede sua. Sed determinatio talis portionis modo est ab Ecclesia, sicut et in veteri testamento fuit ex lege.”

<sup>100</sup> *Ad Heb.* 8.2.392: “Item in illo dicuntur quaedam, quae pertinent ad cultum Dei, et ista sunt caeremonialia: quaedam vero, quae ad rectitudinem vitae, et ista sunt praecepta moralia, quae manent: alia vero, non.”

has been made illicit in what Aquinas refers to as “the time of grace.”

In chapter ten, *lectio* one, Aquinas comments upon on Hebrews 10:5-6 and asks why God would command sacrifices if he did not desire them.<sup>101</sup> According to Aquinas, God does not want them “for that time in which the shadows cease with the advent of truth, and hence now he would sin who offers such things.”<sup>102</sup> The advent of truth is the coming of Christ. Aquinas then affirms a twofold *ratio* of the ceremonies when he explains that these have never themselves been pleasing to God but were accepted because “they were figures of Christ, Whose passion was acceptable” and they “call us back from idolatry through these sacrifices.”<sup>103</sup> To observe these ceremonies after the passion “would be an insult [iniuria] to the sacrifice of Christ.”<sup>104</sup> After the passion, however, all those who observed the ceremonies must “go outside the common society of carnal things, or outside legal observances, or outside the senses of the body.”<sup>105</sup> Again, he writes, “Let us renounce [*renuntiemus*] the legal observances, with the approach of truth, on account of which we are a reproach to the Jews, that is, on account of the signs of penance which are a reproach to carnal things.”<sup>106</sup> Both Christ and the Apostle are examples in this renunciation of the law: “For just as Christ was

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<sup>101</sup> Heb. 10:5-6, in the Vulgate reads: “Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith: Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me: Holocausts for sin did not please Thee.”

<sup>102</sup> *Ad Heb.* 10.1.488. It seems clear here that Aquinas is describing how the observing the ceremonial law, in this case, the sacrifices, is a sin for anyone who offers such things, not only Jewish Christians.

<sup>103</sup> *Ad Heb.* 10.1.488. This twofold meaning of the ceremonial law echoes that of the *Summa theologiae* in that it prefigures Christ’s passion and also served as to enclose the Jewish people in worship.

<sup>104</sup> *Ad Heb.* 10.1.500: “Ubi ergo est horum remissio, et cetera. Fieret enim iniuria hostiae Christi.”

<sup>105</sup> *Ad Heb.* 13.2.749: “Modus accedendi ponit primo, dicens, quod sicut Christus passus est et improprium passionis extra portam sustinuit, sic et nos exeamus ad eum extra castra, id est, extra communem societatem carnalium, vel extra observantiam legalium, vel extra sensus corporis.”

<sup>106</sup> *Ad Heb.* 13.2.749: “Vel improprium portemus, id est, renuntiemus legalibus, adveniente veritate, propter quod sumus Iudaeis improprium, id est propter signa poenitentiae quae a carnalibus impropriantur.”

accused of subverting the Law, so the Apostle was a reproach for preaching that the legal observances ought not to be kept.”<sup>107</sup> After Christ appears the literal ratio no longer functions and the ceremonies must be renounced.

### 3.2.5. The Change of Time

Aquinas anticipates an objection to the idea that divine providence would change an immutable law.<sup>108</sup> Aquinas understands how one might think that divine providence implies immutable law:

But here the Manichean objects: If the Old Law were given through divine providence, and that is immutable, so also would the Law itself be immutable, and consequently ought not to be changed. Yet, since it is changed, therefore it was not given through divine providence.<sup>109</sup>

Aquinas marshals Augustine’s *Contra Faustum* in his *respondeo* to the objection and appeals again to the hermeneutics of a “change of time.” In so doing he makes clear that he understands the ceremonial law to have exhausted its prefiguring function:

I respond that, according to what Augustine says in *Contra Faustum*, as the wise

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<sup>107</sup> *Ad Heb.* 13.2.749: “Sicut enim accusatus est Christus, quod subverteret legem, ita apostolo improperebatur, quod praedicaret non debere servari legalia.”

<sup>108</sup> The objection actually contains a premise similar to Wyschogrod’s argument that the law is eternal and cannot be declared dead and deadly, because to say so implies that God has lied about the perpetuity of the people of Israel and no longer desires for them to exist as his distinct people. Of course the conclusion that Wyschogrod comes to is all together different than the Manichean, since he understands the change in the immutable law not to indicate that the law was not given through divine providence but that this providence is somehow lacking in goodness: that God lied about the promise to Abraham to create a people and tie the identity of the people to the perpetuity of the law. Here, however, Aquinas defines both the promise to Israel and the ceremonial law as temporal as well as separates the two concepts. While the old law ordained Israel to knowledge of God and knowledge of sin, the promise to Abraham is reduced to the deliverance out of Egypt and other temporal goods. This dichotomy between Law and Promise might represent the theological source of economically supersessionist readings of the Jewish people and the Old Testament. The dividing of the law from the irrevocable and perpetual promise to the people seems to provide the occasion for viewing the law as a temporal manifestation.

<sup>109</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.352: “Sed obiicit hic Manichaeus: si lex vetus fuit data per divinam providentiam, cum illa sit immutabilis, etiam ipsa lex esset immutabilis, et per consequens non debuit mutari. Cum ergo mutata sit, ergo non est data per divinam providentiam.”



dispenser by one and the same disposition and providence according to a diversity of times and persons gives now some, now other precepts: as he gives some in the winter, others in the summer, some to children, others to the aged, some to the perfect, others to the imperfect, while nevertheless the providence is the same; so also while divine providence remains permanently immobile, the Law is changed *on account of the change of time*; because before His coming precepts had to be given which prefigured the One to come, but after His coming those which signify that He had come. Likewise, those precepts were given as to children: but in the New as to the perfect. Wherefore, the Law is called a pedagogue, which properly regards children. And so if in the Law something is said which bespeaks perpetuity, this is by reason of the One prefigured.<sup>110</sup>

Aquinas already introduced the concept of the prefigurement of the law above. Here, he explicitly explains why the prefiguring function ceases after the coming of Christ. The Old Testament's language of perpetuity refers only to that which is truly perpetual: the future coming of the new priesthood of Christ. After the coming of Christ, the function of the figures is changed because Christ "dispenses" the things figured. "In the Old Testament," he writes, "figures were dispensed, but Christ dispenses the spiritual things which were prefigured by those others."<sup>111</sup> After Christ's coming the precepts are replaced by precepts of the new law. The ceremonial law was good but it is now changed and rendered void by a change of time.

#### 4. Continuity and Discontinuity Between Israel and the Church in the Hebrews *Lectura*

In this last section I present three observations about continuity and discontinuity between Israel and the Church in the Hebrews *lectura*. The first relates to placing the *lectura*

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<sup>110</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.352 [emphasis mine]: "Respondeo. Dicendum est, secundum quod dicit Augustinus contra Faustum, sicut sapiens dispensator una et eadem dispositione et providentia secundum diversitatem temporum et personarum dat alia et alia praecepta: sicut et alia hyeme, alia aestate, alia pueris, alia senibus, alia perfectis, alia imperfectis, et tamen est eadem providentia, ita divina providentia immobili permanente, mutata est lex propter mutationem temporum; quia ante adventum debuerunt dari praecepta, quae figurarent venturum, sed post adventum, quae significant venisse. Item data sunt illis praecepta sicut pueris: in novo vero sicut perfectis. Unde lex dicitur paedagogus, quod est proprie puerorum. Unde si in lege dicitur aliquid, quod sonet perpetuitatem, hoc est ratione figurati."

<sup>111</sup> *Ad Heb.* 9.3.436.

along the typology of relations between Israel and Church by judging whether and to what extent Aquinas's thought is economically supersessionist. The second pertains to a tension in Aquinas's thought that seems to confirm this scholar and Marshall's view that there exist tensions and contradictions in Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law. Lastly, I point toward what might be considered echoes of an unofficial position that emphasizes continuity between Israel and the Church after the passion of Christ.

First, it seems rather clear that the Hebrews *lectura* represents a sophisticated and concise statement of what Marshall has referred to as Aquinas's "official position" on the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ. In the Hebrews *lectura* Aquinas teaches that observing the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ is a sin and, therefore, the commentary does not stray from the official position. The observance of the ceremonial law is a sin after the passion because its observance is understood as a profession that Christ has yet to come despite his already coming. The eternal priesthood of Christ, which is the advent of the truth, fulfills the old law in its totality. Aquinas frequently states that the law is rendered void. The coming of the New is likened to a day that "repels the shadow of the law's night." The shadow of the law's night is comprised of a matrix of the law's attributes: its prefiguring function; its temporal and carnal characteristics; and its inability to lead to beatitude. Although the legal observances of the ceremonial law were figures of the eternal and perfect priesthood of Christ, these ceremonies are no longer to be kept because the change of time manifested in the coming of the new priesthood, which renders them void. Moreover, to observe the ceremonies after the institution of the New commandment is not only a sin but an offense to the sacrifice of Christ. These ceremonies, in fact, must even be renounced. It seems there is little to no theological value in the prerogatives of Israel after the

passion. Therefore, it seems safe to conclude that Aquinas's view of the relationship between Israel and the Church in the Hebrews *lectura* is economically supersessionist.

Second, my examination reveals a tension in Aquinas's thought on the law. Early in the Hebrews *lectura* Aquinas argues that the fulfillment of the old law by Christ does not render the old law *irritatus* or void.<sup>112</sup> Aquinas is clearly concerned to avoid Manichean interpretations of the old law as evil and argues that the ceremonial law was good for a time. He preserves the literal ratio of the worship that is the ceremonial law before the coming of Christ, though this worship did not provide grace. His view therefore echoes the *Prima Secundae* where the ceremonial law is described as having a twofold ratio of prefiguring Christ and enclosing the Jewish people in the worship of the one God. However, in 7.3.361, and at several other places in the text of the second division, Aquinas contradicts his earlier statement that the Old Testament is not void when he says that the introduction of the New priesthood and testament brings about "the rendering void of the Old Testament."<sup>113</sup>

Lastly, the economic supersessionism in the *lectura* sits in tension with two important points in Aquinas's thought that stress a high degree of continuity between Israel and the Church. The tension exists between the Aristotelian regime analogy and two metaphors Aquinas draws upon from scripture: the olive tree metaphor of Romans 11 and the cornerstone of the house metaphor of Ephesians 2. The regime analogy seems to point to the complete replacement of the temporal priesthood and the old law with the eternal priesthood new law. The transfer from one regime to another brings about a total change in the mode and order of the former regime, which includes the complete voiding and renunciation of the

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<sup>112</sup> *Ad Heb.* 2.1.94.

<sup>113</sup> *Ad Heb.* 7.3.361.

carnal commandments. However, the olive tree metaphor of Romans 11 describes the Gentile *ecclesia* as grafted into Israel or existing with and *alongside* of Israel in faith. The Gentiles “were made partakers” of the New Testament. The wild olive tree is grafted into the good olive tree and it “shares of its fatness.”<sup>114</sup> Additionally, Aquinas synthesizes the olive tree metaphor with the Ephesians metaphor to describe Christ as a builder of a house uniting Jews and Gentiles. These metaphors of continuity between Israel and Church in Aquinas sit in tension with the discontinuity of the Aristotelian regime change metaphor. Aquinas’s use of the olive tree metaphor as well as his argument that the Church is a union of Jews and Gentiles strikes strong chords of continuity and can be seen as echoes of more positive descriptions of Israel’s promises in the commentaries on Romans and Ephesians. Next, I turn to an examination of Aquinas’s view of the theological status of the ceremonial law in his Romans *lectura*.

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<sup>114</sup> The “sharing” relationship between Israel and the Church which Aquinas builds using these metaphors is not unlike the one described by George Lindbeck in “Critical Exegesis and Theological Interpretation”: “Thus, in being shaped by the story of Christ, the church shares (rather than fulfills) the story of Israel.” Garrett Green, ed. *Scriptural Authority and Narrative Interpretation* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), 166. In chapter six, I argue that although Aquinas employs the metaphor of Israel and Church as representing “two walls” of the temple that is Christ’s body in the Ephesians *lectura*, his view is undermined by position that the ceremonial law is destroyed by Christ.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FULFILLED AND UPHELD: THE CEREMONIAL MOSAIC LAW IN AQUINA'S ROMANS *LECTURA*

In this chapter I answer whether Aquinas views the ceremonial law in the Romans *lectura* only as a Christological prefigurement<sup>1</sup> and as mortally sinful acts, or whether he understands the rites to also retain a theological value after the passion of Christ. I attempt to demonstrate that the Romans *lectura*<sup>2</sup> contains an unofficial<sup>3</sup> view of the prerogatives of Israel in the *tempus post gratiam*, or era after grace. I also show that this unofficial view sits in tension with a particular point in the *lectura* where the ceremonial law is described as only having had status before Christ. It should be clear by the end of the chapter that a tension

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<sup>1</sup> As I argued in chapter one, Steven Boguslawski refers to such a view of the prerogatives of Israel as “Augustinian supersessionist.” Steven C. Boguslawski, *Thomas Aquinas on the Jews: Insights into His Commentary on Romans 9-11* (Paulist Press, 2008), xv.

<sup>2</sup> I will refer to *Ad Rom.* as a *lectura* but am aware that it can also be referred to as an *expositio* because chapters one through eight of the Latin text indicate that Aquinas revised it himself. As explained in chapter two, all of Aquinas's biblical commentaries are products of his classroom lectures. These classroom lectures come to us in two forms: *lectura* in the form of *expositio*; and *lectura* in the form of *reportationes*. An *expositio* refers to a lecture written by Aquinas or dictated directly to a scribe. Thus, for example, when Gilles Emery titles Aquinas's lectures on the Pauline corpus he refers to these as consisting of both “*expositio et lectura*.” This is because 1 Corinthians 1-7:14 and the first eight chapters of the lecture on Romans are considered *expositio* since it is in these texts that Aquinas's hand is, as Torrell remarks, “rather directly perceptible.” See chapter two, and Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1, 340. At the time of the writing of this chapter Steven Boguslawski's English translation of the commentary on Romans was complete but unavailable since it was awaiting publication. Therefore, all English translations are from Fabian Larcher's translation of the commentary on Romans, available online at the *Nova et Vetera* website. I indicate any changes to Larcher's translations with “[emended].” Citations of the text of *Ad Rom.* will use the Marietti numbers, which includes the chapter, *lectio*, and paragraph numbers. Citations therefore include three numbers, which correspond to the chapter number, *lectio* number in that chapter, and Marietti paragraph number. For example, *Ad Rom.* 3.1.253.

<sup>3</sup> As I explained in chapter one, Bruce Marshall coined the term “unofficial view.” He uses the term to refer to a text in the *Summa theologiae*, which seems to indicate that Aquinas understands the ceremonial law to somehow continue to figure Christ even after the passion. Marshall's work treats Aquinas's consideration of whether the worship of infidels and unbelievers should be tolerated by Christians (*Summa theologiae* IIa IIae q. 10, a. 11). Marshall was also the first to argue there is a positive view of Israel's carnal election in the Romans *lectura*, which I return to below. I think he would apply the term “unofficial view” to the Romans *lectura*, although he does not say this. My analysis uncovers insights similar to his reading and attempts to expand them in order to compare Aquinas's view in the *lectura* to the other commentaries and the *Summa theologiae*. I view this chapter as building on Marshall's work and expanding on his points by drawing upon the work of Kendall Soulen. See Bruce Marshall, “Quasi in Figura: A Brief Reflection on Jewish Election, After Thomas Aquinas,” *Nova Et Vetera* 7, no. 2 (Spring 2009), 483; “Postscript and Prospect,” *Nova Et Vetera* 7, no. 2 (2009): 523–8.

exists between the official view in the Hebrews *lectura* and the unofficial view in Romans *lectura*.

My examination of the Romans *lectura* will proceed in three steps. In the first section I explain the main theme of the *lectura*, which is the power of the grace of Christ in the Mystical Body, the Church. I also outline the subject of each chapter of the *lectura*, and identify chapters that discuss the “prerogatives of the Jews” (*praerogativae Iudaeorum*). In the second and largest section of the chapter I examine Aquinas’s understanding of the prerogatives of Israel in the time before the passion of Christ and in the era after grace. In the last section I discuss whether and to what extent Aquinas’s view of the relationship between Israel and the Church is characterized by what R. Kendall Soulen has referred to as economic supersessionism.

### 1. The Themes and Division of the Romans *Lectura*

In this first section of the chapter I set Aquinas’s view of the ceremonial law in the Romans *lectura* in context by explaining its primary and secondary themes, major divisions, and the subjects of the chapters. Together, Aquinas’s lectures on Hebrews and Romans provide a rich theological picture of his view of Israel and Church. Whereas the letter to the Hebrews concerned Paul’s teaching on grace for the “sons of Israel,”<sup>4</sup> Aquinas understands the letter to the Romans as instruction for the “church of the Gentiles.”<sup>5</sup>

Aquinas places the letter to the Romans as the first among the nine epistles of Paul that treat grace.<sup>6</sup> For Aquinas, Paul is the exemplary teacher of grace. His epistles contain

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<sup>4</sup> *Prologus* 9.

<sup>5</sup> *Prologus* 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Prologus* 11. Hebrews is considered the first of fourteen epistles on grace in general. Aquinas

“almost the whole teaching of theology.”<sup>7</sup> In general, the letter to the Romans treats the grace of Christ “as it is in itself” and in the mystical body, the Church.<sup>8</sup> In particular, the letter treats why the grace of Christ is necessary and sufficient for salvation; the origin of grace of Christ; and the use of grace of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

Regarding the first division of the text, Aquinas states that the letter to the Romans contains two parts: the greeting and the body.<sup>10</sup> The theme of Israel and the ceremonial law appears in each of these parts. In the greeting, these themes surface in Aquinas’s comment upon the errors of the Manicheans and the Galatians. Aquinas explains how Paul’s greeting excludes “three errors of the Manicheans.” First, Paul excludes what Aquinas refers to as the Manichean assertion that the God of the Old Testament and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ are not the same. This is excluded, explains Aquinas, by the phrase: “that which God promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures.”<sup>11</sup> Paul’s words also exclude a second error: the Manicheans’ condemnation of the Old Testament writings. These

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understands nine of the epistles to consider grace as it exists in the Church. He explains that grace as it exists in the Church can be considered in three ways. First, in itself, and this is in the epistle to the Romans. Second, is grace as it is in the sacraments. This is treated in 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. The third way is in the effect of grace, which is, namely, the unity of the mystical body that is the Church. The foundation of the Church’s unity is treated in Ephesians; The progress and confirmation of the Church’s unity is treated in Philippians; and lastly, the defense of unity against error and persecution is treated in Colossians, and 1 and II Thessalonians.

<sup>7</sup> *Prologus* 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Prologus* 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.1.15. My division of the *lectura* as well as my outline of the subjects of each chapter follows Fabian Larcher’s outline of the commentary Aquinas, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Fabian Larcher, 3-5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.1.15. The greeting runs from 1.1.1 to 1.4.73; the body runs from 1.5.74 to 16.2.1229.

<sup>11</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.2.41: “Quod ante promiserat per prophetas suos in Scripturis sanctis.” All citations of scripture are directly from the Marietti edition of the Latin text, which places all Aquinas’s citations of scripture in italics. I put the citations of scripture in quotations.

writings, says Aquinas, are what “the apostle here calls holy. For no other writings were holy before the Gospel except those.”<sup>12</sup>

The theme of the ceremonial law appears in the greeting when Aquinas explains how Paul commends the Romans for firmly embracing the faith. Aquinas contrasts the faith of the Romans to the Galatian believers who struggled because of a particular teaching on the ceremonial law.<sup>13</sup> According to Aquinas, the Galatians’ faith “was not yet perfect” due to the very same error he understands to have plagued the Hebrews: “some of them had been reached by false apostles, who taught that the rites of the Law must be joined to the Gospel.”<sup>14</sup> Here, it is once again clear that Aquinas views the idea of the observance of the ceremonial law after Christ’s passion as a false teaching. He has now mentioned this false teaching in the Hebrews *lectura*, and the Romans *lectura*.<sup>15</sup>

The great majority of the *lectura*, however, consists of Aquinas’s comments upon the

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<sup>12</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.2.41. “...quas Apostolus hic dicit sanctas. Non enim aliae scripturae fuerunt sanctae ante Evangelium.” The third error is the Manichean claim that Christ had an imaginary body. *Ad Rom.* 1.2.41. I do not mean to imply that in the greeting Aquinas is solely concerned with the errors of the Manicheans. He also understands Paul to exclude errors of Arius, Apollinaris, Nestorius, and Sabellius. Moreover, Aquinas’s comments on the greeting primarily concern Paul’s description of his apostleship, as well as the origin, power, and generosity of the gospel of Christ.

<sup>13</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.5.77.

<sup>14</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.5.77: “...quia aliqui eorum praeventi errant a pseudo apostolis ut crederent legis caeremonias evangelio iungendas.”

<sup>15</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.5.77; *Ad Hebraeos* 1.1.6. As I show in the next chapter, Aquinas discusses this problem directly and at length in his *Super Epistolam ad Galatas*. The theme of the observance of the ceremonial law along with the gospel as a teaching of pseudo apostles runs through the commentaries. See *Ad Galatas*, *Prologus* 1; and *lectio* 1: “The Apostle therefore writes the Galatians this epistle in which he shows that with the coming of the grace of the New Testament, the Old Testament should be cast out, so that with the fulfillment of the truth, the figure may be abandoned, and with the attainment of these two, namely, grace and truth, one may arrive at the truth of justice and glory. And these two are acquired, if, abandoning the observance of the “legalia” [i.e. the ceremonial precepts of the Old Law], we concentrate fervently on observing the Gospel of Christ.”



body of Paul's letter, which he divides into two parts.<sup>16</sup> The theme of Gentiles and Jews is prominently featured throughout the first division, and can be said to function as a secondary theme, alongside the more general theme of the gospel of grace.<sup>17</sup> Aquinas explains that chapters 1 through 11 consider three things in relation to the power of Christ's grace: to what the gospel of grace extends, which is salvation; how the gospel confers salvation, which is through faith; and finally, "the people for whom the Gospel works salvation, namely, both Jews and the Gentiles."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Aquinas takes care throughout the first division to treat the prerogatives of the Jewish people in the era after grace three different times. Before explaining the term "Israel's prerogatives" in greater detail, it is necessary to complete this survey of the themes and divisions of the *lectura* by outlining the individual subjects treated in each chapter.

According to Fabian Larcher, the subjects of the sixteen chapters of Romans are as follows: Chapter 1 shows that grace is necessary for the Gentiles because the wisdom in which they were confident was unable to save them.<sup>19</sup> In chapter 2, Aquinas understands Paul to argue that grace is necessary for salvation for Jews because the law in which they were confident did not bring them to salvation either. Chapter 3 consists of answers to objections to the argument that the Gentiles and the Jews were in need of grace. In chapter 4, Aquinas understands Paul to treat how the Jews were not justified by circumcision. In chapter 5,

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<sup>16</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.6.97. The first teaching is by far the largest. It consists of chapters 1 through 11 and concerns Paul's instruction in the truth about the power of Christ's grace. The second division consists of chapter 12 through 16, where Paul urges the Romans "to perform the works of grace."

<sup>17</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.5.74; 1.5.97.

<sup>18</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.6.98-101: "Tertio, quibus evangelium fit in salute, quia tam Iudaeis quam Gentibus."

<sup>19</sup> My summary of the chapter subjects relies upon Fabian Larcher's helpful outline of the Romans *lectura*, which he includes in his English translation. Aquinas, *Lectures on the Letter to the Romans*, 3-5.

Aquinas understands Paul to treat the primary theme that the gospel of grace is sufficient for salvation. Chapter 6 and 7 treat the evils which mankind is liberated from through the gospel of grace, namely the servitude of sin and law. According to Aquinas, chapter 8 shows that mankind is liberated from the condemnation of guilt, punishment, and bodily death. In chapters 9 through 11 Aquinas understands Paul to treat the origin of grace given by the election of God taking occasion from the seeming rejection of the Jews. Chapters 12 through 16, which are found in the second division, pertain to moral instruction, or “how grace should be used.”<sup>20</sup>

The Romans *lectura* is the longest of all Aquinas’s commentaries on Paul. It has received more scholarly attention than any other of the commentaries on Paul’s epistles. However, studies of the *lectura* are understandably limited to one or two chapters. These studies only scratch the surface of this sophisticated theological treatise.<sup>21</sup> My examination of

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<sup>20</sup> *Ad Rom.* 12.1.953.

<sup>21</sup> The works most relevant to this study are Bruce Marshall’s brief article “Postscript and Prospect,” 523–8; and Steven C. Boguslawski, *Thomas Aquinas on the Jews: Insights into His Commentary on Romans 9–11* (Paulist Press, 2008); Other works not related to the theme of Israel include the following: Eugene F. Rogers, “Selections from Thomas Aquinas’s Commentary on Romans,” in *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, Stephen E. Fowl, ed. (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1997), 320–37; Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: *Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1999); Joseph Di Noia, “Christ Brings Freedom from Sin and Death: The Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas on Romans 5:12–21,” in *Saint Thomas’s Interpretation on Saint Paul’s Doctrines*, Proceedings of the IX Plenary Session (Vatican City: The Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, 2009), 60–75; Reinhard Hütter, “‘In Hope He Believed Against Hope’ (Romans 4:18). Faith and Hope, Two Pauline Motifs as Interpreted by Aquinas: An Approach to the Encyclical Letter of Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*,” in *Saint Thomas’s Interpretation on Saint Paul’s Doctrines*, Proceedings of the IX Plenary Session (Vatican City: The Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, 2009), 39–59. Thomas Ryan, “The Love of Learning and the Desire for God in Thomas Aquinas’s Commentary on Romans,” in *Medieval Readings of Romans*, ed. William S. Campbell, Brenda Deen Schildgen, and Peter S. Hawkins (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 110–4; Matthew Levering, “Aquinas,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, ed. Stephen Westerholm, 1st ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

Besides Marshall and Boguslawski’s work on the Jews in Aquinas’s commentary on Romans, I am aware of a forthcoming volume of essays delivered at a 2009 conference at Ave Maria University, entitled *Reading Romans with St. Thomas Aquinas: Ecumenical Explorations* edited by Michael Dauphinais & Matthew Levering (Catholic University of America Press, forthcoming). The conference sought to “investigate Aquinas’s Lectures on Romans in hopes of understanding what Aquinas can teach contemporary Christians about the realities that Paul, and the Holy Spirit, sought to convey.” In my correspondence with CUA Press, I

the *lectura* is no different. A comprehensive analysis of Aquinas's view of Israel in the Romans commentary would require a thorough examination of all sixteen chapters. For these reasons, I cannot give comprehensive treatment to all the relevant themes that pertain to Israel, including those in chapters 9 through 11. My examination of the *lectura*, therefore, focuses rather narrowly on Aquinas's view of the ceremonial precepts in the era after grace.<sup>22</sup> The precepts of the ceremonial law are an aspect of what Aquinas refers to as the *praerogativa Iudaeorum* or Jews' prerogative.<sup>23</sup> A word about this term is in order.

My use of the term "prerogatives of the Jews" (*praerogativae Iudaeorum*) includes but is not limited to the particular rites of the ceremonial law, namely the practices of circumcision, Passover, and dietary laws. This use of "prerogatives" therefore follows my

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learned the volume is scheduled for publication sometime in April 2012, after the completion of this project. The volume contains an essay by Holly Taylor Coolman. Coolman, like Marshall, thinks that there is a tension between the Romans commentary and the teaching that the ceremonial law is *mortua et mortifera*. Coolman argues that there is a tension between Aquinas's negative claims about the ceremonial law and Aquinas's claim the Jews will receive salvation. However, the eventual salvation of the Jews was a commonplace view among medieval theologians since most assumed they would convert to Christ. So, if there is a tension in Aquinas's view of eventual salvation and the Jews and the negative view of the ceremonial law, this is hardly a tension unique to Aquinas. Moreover, concerning the question of Aquinas's relationship to supersessionism, the eventual salvation of the Jews is not the issue in determining whether Aquinas understands the Church to have replaced the Jewish people. One can hold that the Jewish people will be converted at the Second Coming and also hold punitive supersessionist as well as economically supersessionist views of the Jews, as did Robert Grosseteste. The more relevant question is the theological status of the "ongoing" *present* role of the Jews, as Boguslawski rightly notes, and the relation of their role to Aquinas's teaching on the *mortifera* character of the law (Although, Boguslawski does not say what that role is in the present as it relates to the idea that the ceremonies are also now dead and deadly). Coolman therefore seems to miss the most important tension for any discussion on whether Aquinas's theology is economically supersessionist: the tension between the negative claims about the ceremonial law that, as I hope to show below, are present alongside very positive statements about the *present theological status of the law in the era after grace*. I am grateful that Dr. Coolman kindly shared her article with me before publication. Holly Taylor Coolman, "Rereading Aquinas on the Jews," *Unpublished Article*.

<sup>22</sup> In doing so I hope to compliment Marshall's brief but insightful reading of the commentary as well as Boguslawski's study of the themes of predestination and election in chapters 9-11. The term "era after grace" appears in the *lectura* in 2.4.238; 4.2.357.

<sup>23</sup> Aquinas refers to the ceremonial precepts nine times. In one place he refers to these as ceremonial works. Jews' prerogative or Judaism's prerogative appears six times. Boguslawski points out that Aquinas uses Israel and Jews interchangeably throughout his *lectura*. I therefore refer to the Jews' prerogatives or Israel's prerogatives interchangeably.

use of the term in chapter three, on the Hebrews *lectura*, as well as my view of Aquinas's handling of the term in the *Summa theologiae*.<sup>24</sup> In the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas uses the term frequently and more broadly. In addition to law and circumcision he includes the term "race" (*gentis*) as a prerogative.<sup>25</sup> He uses the term prerogatives of the Jews (in the singular or plural) at least eight times. The first two occurrences can be found in 2.4.224<sup>26</sup> and the third is in 2.4.226.<sup>27</sup> Each of these occurrences refers to the *praerogativam Iudaeorum* in regard to the Law. The fourth time occurs in 2.4.227 in regard to the "fruit of the Law."<sup>28</sup> The fifth and sixth times are in regard to "Judaism's prerogative" as it relates to circumcision. Both these references appear in 3.1.248.<sup>29</sup> The seventh time is in reference to the idea that someone might "belittle the Jews' prerogative" in 3.1.252.<sup>30</sup> The eighth time is in reference to the idea of the prerogatives being "taken away" and appears in 3.1.253.<sup>31</sup> Aquinas also uses "advantage" (*amplius*) of the Jews several times and interchangeably with prerogative. In 3.1.249 he refers to the Jews as having "great and important" advantages. In 9.1.743-47,

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<sup>24</sup> See the footnote on the term "prerogatives of Israel" in chapter three of this study for a brief treatment of how this term relates to the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae*.

<sup>25</sup> *Gentis* can also be interpreted as "tribe" or "people."

<sup>26</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.224: "Primo ergo ostendit praerogativam Iudaeorum quantum ad legis susceptionem...ponit autem eorum praerogativam tripliciter."

<sup>27</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.226: "Consequenter cum dicit Et requiescis in lege, ponit eorum praerogativam quantum ad legem."

<sup>28</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.227: "Deinde, cum subdit Et nosti, ponit praerogativam eorum quantum ad fructum legis...."

<sup>29</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.248: "Et primo quantum ad praerogativam Iudaismi, secundo quantum ad utilitatem circumcisionis...."

<sup>30</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.252: "Posset aliquis praerogativae Iudaeorum derogare...."

<sup>31</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.253: "...praerogativa Iudaeorum tolleretur..."

Aquinas refers to the Jew's "dignity" or "greatness" (*dignitatem*).<sup>32</sup> The term "prerogative" can be used interchangeably with both "advantage" and "dignity." The term prerogative always includes the Mosaic law in general, and ceremonial law in particular, which includes circumcision, Passover, and dietary laws. I therefore use the term "prerogatives of Israel" to refer the matrix of advantages Aquinas ascribes to Judaism.

The Romans *lectura* contains three extended reflections upon the prerogatives of Israel and each occurs in the present tense. The first reflection on the privileged state of the Jews occurs as a comment upon the implied present tense of the phrase "But if you call yourself a Jew" of Romans 2:17. The second reflection on the advantage of the Jew occurs as a comment upon the present tense answer to Paul's rhetorical question "What advantage has the Jew?" in Romans 3:2, which is, "Much in everyway!" The third reflection on the greatness of the Jews occurs as a comment upon the present tense statement "They are Israel" of Romans 9:4-5. In each case, a present tense Pauline phrase about the Jews provides Aquinas the opportunity to comment at length on the prerogatives of Israel.<sup>33</sup>

Soulen's work suggests this connection between the prerogatives and the three phrases is not a coincidence.<sup>34</sup> Soulen argues that Paul's present tense descriptions of Israel (that they "are Israelites"; that they "are beloved") problematizes the characterization of

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<sup>32</sup> *Ad Rom.* 9.1.743: "Ostendit autem eorum dignitatem tripliciter...."

<sup>33</sup> The first reflection on the privileged state of the Jews occurs as a comment upon the phrase *But if you call yourself a Jew* of Romans 2:17. The second reflection on the advantage of the Jew occurs as a comment upon the answer to *What advantage has the Jew?* of Romans 3:2 which is, *Much in everyway!*. The third reflection on the greatness of the Jews occurs as a comment upon *They are Israel* of Romans 9:4-5.

<sup>34</sup> Soulen, R. Kendall, "'They are Israelites': The Priority of the Present Tense for Jewish-Christian Relations," in Florian Wilk, J. Ross Wagner, and Frank Schleritt, eds., *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9-11 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament)*, 2010.

Israel as a relic. Soulen writes, “The single most important element of Romans 9-11 for Jewish-Christian relations is its use of the present tense to characterize the Jewish people—Paul’s kinsmen ‘according to the flesh’—as the heirs of God’s covenant promises.”<sup>35</sup> When the present tense is ignored it leads to a reading of the election of the Jewish people as a phenomenon of the past:

When Christians do not attend in a serious way to “the shock of the present tense” in Romans 9-11, they are prone to read their Scriptures in ways that lead them to conclude that God’s election of the Jewish people was a phenomenon of the *ancient past*. Perhaps if they pay a little attention to Rom 11, they will also think of Israel’s election as a phenomenon of the *eschatological future*, when ‘all Israel will be saved’ 11:26. This traditional Christian view of Israel’s election may remind us of the Queen’s attitude toward tea in *Alice in Wonderland*: “Tea yesterday, and tea tomorrow, but never tea today!” Precisely here, the “shock of the present tense” in Romans 9-11 exerts its enduring, foundational importance for Christian-Jewish relations. To the degree that Christians submit themselves to this shock, they will turn to their Jewish neighbor and see one who is God’s beloved – not *only* in the primordial past and eschatological future – but *also* and *above all* in the abiding *now* of covenant history.<sup>36</sup>

I intend to demonstrate that Soulen’s “shock of the present tense” helps illuminate Aquinas’s engagement of Paul’s descriptions of the Jewish people in a way that highlights the significance of the question of the theological status of circumcision after the passion of Christ in Aquinas’s thought.

Indeed, Soulen’s work helps illuminate significant features of the Romans *lectura* regarding circumcision that Bruce Marshall’s helpful reading does not address. As I

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<sup>35</sup> Soulen, “They are Israelites,” 2-3. He continues: “We encounter this all-important present tense at two crucial points, near the very beginning: ‘They are Israelites (οἱτινες εἰσιν Ἰσραηλῖται) and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (9:4-5)’ And again near the very end (where the present tense is, to be sure, implied): ‘As regards the gospel they are enemies for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved (κατα δε την εκλογην αγαπτοι) for the sake of their ancestors; (11:28).’”

<sup>36</sup> Soulen, “They are Israelites,” 2-3.

mentioned in chapter one, Marshall's reading reveals how the Romans *lectura* is in tension with the *Summa theologiae* because it contains an affirmation of the permanent election of Israel. Marshall argues this election possesses a "carnal character" and is "inextricably linked to fleshly descent."<sup>37</sup> Below, I elaborate on this claim and show that Marshall is indeed right about the high view of Israel's election and the undermining of supersessionism. However, I extend Marshall's thought by 1) demonstrating the precise points in Aquinas's teaching in the Romans *lectura* that contradict the more official position he takes in the lectures on Hebrews, Galatians, and in the *Summa theologiae*; and 2) explaining how this teaching calls into question the logic of what Soulen refers to as punitive and economic supersessionism. As I demonstrate below, Aquinas not only affirms the election of this chosen people but goes in the opposite direction of the more official teaching by connecting the doctrine of election with a positive affirmation of the theological status of Jewish observance of circumcision after the passion of Christ.<sup>38</sup> I show that Aquinas's positive affirmations are directly related to his encounter with Paul's present tense language about Israel's prerogatives in the era after grace.

At three points in particular Aquinas encounters the priority of the present tense in a way that evokes comment upon the prerogatives of Israel in the present, or era after grace. Throughout the next section of this chapter I examine Aquinas's view of Israel's prerogatives in the first division of the *lectura*. I argue that in three places in the *lectura* Aquinas attributes a positive theological status to the prerogatives of Israel in the era after grace. I attempt to

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<sup>37</sup> Marshall, "Postscript and Prospect."

<sup>38</sup> This theme will become increasingly important as the study unfolds. Aquinas holds two views of the theological value of circumcision in the era after grace. This is significant to note because Aquinas handles the questions of the theological status of circumcision differently in both Galatians and the treatise on law in the *Summa theologiae*.

highlight points where Aquinas departs from the official view that Jewish observance of circumcision is superfluous and deadly after the passion of Christ and argues that circumcision is, for the Jew, advantageous and spiritually beneficial after the passion of Christ.

## 2. The Theological Status of the Prerogatives of Israel Before and After the Passion of Christ

The chapters that contain material directly related to the prerogatives of Israel include 2 through 4, and 9. Although the content of the chapters overlaps at points, especially on the subject of circumcision, my examination of the prerogatives is organized thematically in order to include relevant but isolated texts from chapters that discuss the prerogatives of Israel indirectly. I therefore organize the material on the prerogatives as follows: In section 2.1 I treat the privileged state of the Jews as a light to the nations. In 2.2 I treat the value of circumcision in the time before the passion. Section 2.3 treats the status of the prerogatives as these relate to the faithfulness of God. Section 2.4 treats the status of the ceremonial precepts as “fulfilled and upheld” by the passion of Christ. And, section 2.5 treats the observance of the ceremonial law as a present spiritual benefit. In each of these sections my objective is to discover what theological status Aquinas attributes to the prerogatives of Israel before and after the era of grace.

### 2.1 The Privileged State of the Jews as a Light to the Nations

In *lectio* four of chapter two, Aquinas presents the first of three extended reflections on the prerogatives of Israel in the *lectura*.<sup>39</sup> He comments in detail on the idea that the Jews

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<sup>39</sup> The first reflection is on the “privileged state” of the Jews in receiving the Law. Aquinas’s second reflection on the prerogatives of Israel is on the “advantage of the Jew” and appears in chapter three, *lectio* one. The third reflection on the “greatness of the Jews” appears in chapter nine, *lectio* one. I discuss Aquinas’s



are not justified by *hearing* the law, but by *doing* the law. When commenting upon Paul's words in 2:17 "But if you call yourself a Jew," he treats the Jews' present privileged state as it relates to the law. In doing so, Aquinas does not say that the Jews *were* privileged before the age of grace. Here, he speaks of the Jews as enjoying a privileged state even now, post *Christum natum*.

Aquinas argues that the prerogative of the Jews is threefold: The first account on which the Jews possess a privileged state is in their "being the race to whom the Law was given."<sup>40</sup> According to Aquinas, the name "Jew" is an honorable name.<sup>41</sup> The second account on which the Jews enjoy a privileged state regards the Law itself, and this regard can be considered in two senses. The Jews enjoy a "prerogative in regard to the Law"<sup>42</sup> because the Jews "rested upon the law" (*requiescis in lege*) in the sense that the law "certified what they believed and did" (*certificatus in credendis et in agendis*).<sup>43</sup> The first sense in which they

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second and third reflections upon the prerogatives below. In each case, a present tense Pauline statement about the Jews provides Aquinas the opportunity to comment at length on the prerogatives of the Jews. I am indebted to Kendall Soulen's article "They Are Israel": The Priority of the Present Tense for Jewish-Christian Relations" for helping me see the importance of this language in Aquinas's *lectura*. The term "priority of the present tense" refers to the present tense Paul uses to describe Israel in Romans 9-11 and its implications for interpreting the election of Israel. Soulen's argument about the significance of the present tense seems affirmed in each of the places where Aquinas comments at length on the prerogatives of the Jews. This is true regarding the first, second, and third reflection and each of the Pauline statements that serve as the ground of Aquinas's positive remarks: Rom. 2:25 *Indeed circumcision has value*, and the answer to *What advantage has the Jew?* in Rom. 3:2 which is, *Much in every way*. As I hope to demonstrate below, the impact of Aquinas's attentiveness to the priority of the present tense allows him to describe the Jewish people not only as neighbors but as the friends of God. Soulen, "They are Israelites."

<sup>40</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.224: "Secundo, quantum ad legem, ibi Et requiescis in lege...."

<sup>41</sup> He offers his own etymology of the term woven together with a series of Old Testament texts and then cites Psalm 114:2 and John 14:22 to demonstrate the honor of the name. Psalm 114:2 refers to Judah as God's sanctuary: "Judah became his sanctuary." John 14:22 refers to the origin of salvation: "Salvation is from the Jews."

<sup>42</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.226.

<sup>43</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.226: "Dubitans enim intellectu non quiescit, sed utrinque sollicitatur: qui autem sapientiae certitudinem accipit, mente quiescit." "For an intellect in doubt is not at rest but is solicited by both sides; but once it has the certainty of wisdom it rests...."

rested in the law is therefore in regard to the stability it brings to their knowledge and will. The second sense in which they rested upon the Law is that the reception of the Law put them in relation with the Lawgiver. Such a relation with God, the Lawgiver, brings privilege since they were able to properly worship and know the one God. Here, Aquinas affirms the literal *ratio* of the ceremonial rites.

The third way in which the Jews enjoy a privileged state is their prerogative in regard to the fruit of the law (*fructum legis*) or the effect of the law.<sup>44</sup> The effect of the *fructum legis* can be understood in two ways: First, with respect to the “person himself.” Second, with “respect to others.”<sup>45</sup>

In regard to the person himself, which is God, the fruit of the Law can be considered in two ways. The first personal way in which the fruit of the Law manifests itself is that the Jews know the will of God: “The first corresponds to boasting of their relation to God, when he says, *and know his will....*”<sup>46</sup> The second personal way the fruit of the Law corresponds to another way that the Jews “rest in the law” and this consists of the Jews approving what is excellent or being “able to select not only good from bad things but better from less good.” Aquinas argues that this is why a Jew asked Christ “Which is the greatest commandment?” in Matt 22:36.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.227: “Deinde, cum subdit Et nosti, point praerogativam eorum quantum ad fructum legis...”

<sup>45</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.227.

<sup>46</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.228: “Primum quidem respondentem gloriae, quam de Deo habebant, cum dicit nosti voluntatem eius, quid scilicet Deus velit nos facere.”

<sup>47</sup> Aquinas understands the effect of the old law to equip its doers with a sophisticated level of practical reasoning about the good that seems lacking in those who only have the natural law as guide because conclusions about the natural inclinations are so obscured by habitual sin.

In regard to the fruit of the law as it relates to others, Aquinas teaches that the Jews enjoy the prerogative of the fruit of the law from the fact that others need the help of the Law. These others “find themselves in three different situations, so far as knowledge of the Law is concerned.”<sup>48</sup> Aquinas then presents three groups that require the help of the fruit of the law. The first group consists of those “entirely ignorant of the Law, because they lack natural talent, just as a man is physically blind, because he lacks visual power.”<sup>49</sup> Some persons cannot be given the light of knowledge enabling them to see by themselves what to do. “Rather,” explains Aquinas, “they must be led, as the blind are, by commanding them to do this or that, even though they do not understand the reason for the command.” These people, in Aquinas’s view, seem to lack basic capacities of reasoning about the good. Aquinas then introduces a subgroup of the ignorant that need help: those who are ignorant through lack of training. These others are ignorant through lack of training or not enlightened by teaching. For these people, “a wise man” can offer “the light of training, so that they will understand what is commanded.” Aquinas views those who know the Law and train others as a light in the darkness: “This is why Luke says, “To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death” Lk 1:79.”<sup>50</sup> The second group consists of “those who are on the way to knowledge they have not yet attained through lack of full instruction.”<sup>51</sup> These are the foolish that need correction or those who have “not yet received wisdom” but are beyond

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<sup>48</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.229: “Consequenter point fructus per respectum ad alios, qui quidem tripliciter se habent ad notitiam legis.”

<sup>49</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.229.

<sup>50</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.229.

<sup>51</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.230: “Secundo autem tangit illos qui sunt in via perveniendi ad scientiam, quam nondum attigerunt. Et hoc, uno modo, per defectum plenae instructionis.”

a stage of ignorance. One group that requires such instruction are children. For this group, the law serves as “a corrector of the foolish.”<sup>52</sup> The third and final group that benefits from the Law of the Jewish people is a group that is advanced in knowledge but that still requires wisdom. This group is “already advanced in knowledge, but they need instruction from the wise in order to possess the authorities sayings of wisdom as their rule pattern.”<sup>53</sup> These have knowledge but lack wisdom as their rule or pattern.

It is clear from a reading of these sections of chapter two *lectio* four that Aquinas understands the prerogative of the Jewish people to consist in benefits the law brings to the Gentiles who lack knowledge of the law *in the present*. There is no indication that any aspect of the Mosaic law has come to an end after a certain time or is an offense to the sacrifice of Christ as it is described in the Hebrews *lectura*. Rather, Aquinas attributes a positive theological status to Jewish circumcision, law, and race. The prerogatives provide the Jews a privileged status among the nations in the era after grace.<sup>54</sup>

## 2.2 The Value of Circumcision in the Time Before the Passion of Christ

Although the concept of the end of the ceremonial law does not appear in the first treatment of the prerogative of Israel, it does surface in his discussion of the limitations and value of circumcision. When Aquinas discusses circumcision’s value, he introduces an

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<sup>52</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.230.

<sup>53</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.231: “Tertii vero sunt qui iam sunt in scientia proveci. Et isti indigent a sapientibus informari, ut habeant sapientium dicta in auctoritate quasi quamdam regulam seu formam.”

<sup>54</sup> After discussing the privileged state of the Jews in regard to the law and its fruit, Aquinas also discusses their failures. He presents somewhat of a catalogue of errors of the Jews in order to make the more general point that though “observance of the Law by good works is an occasion for others to honor God, so its transgression by evil works is an occasion to blaspheme: ‘That they may see your good deeds and glorify God’” *Ad Rom.* 2.4.235 .

eschatological concept prominently featured in the Hebrews *lectura*: the change of time from *before* the passion of Christ to the *tempus post gratiam*. Here I present Aquinas's view of the limitations of circumcision. I then introduce his view of the value of circumcision before and after the passion of Christ.

Aquinas understands Paul to, in a sense, level the playing field among Jews and Gentiles in regard to sanctifying grace. According to Aquinas, Paul does this by showing that Gentiles were not justified by their good deeds. Paul demonstrates that the Gentiles "...did not become just from the knowledge of the truth they had..."<sup>55</sup> "The power of grace was necessary for the Gentiles' salvation," writes Aquinas, "because the wisdom in which they trusted could not save them."<sup>56</sup> Likewise, the Jews also stand in need of salvation. Aquinas explains that Paul shows that the Jews were not made just by the "things in which they gloried."<sup>57</sup> In 2.3.210, Aquinas says the Jews gloried in two things, "namely, the Law and circumcision."<sup>58</sup> These "things in which they gloried" included not only circumcision and law but "other things they trusted." These did not bring them salvation.<sup>59</sup> Aquinas specifies the "other things" they trusted in 2.1.169. Here, he states that circumcision, law, and "the race in which they gloried," did not justify.<sup>60</sup> Aquinas understands Paul to teach that, "Jewish

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<sup>55</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.1.169: "...Gentiles iustificati non sunt ex veritatis cognition quam habuerunt."

<sup>56</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.6.109. "Primo ostendit virtutem evangelicae gratiae esse necessariam ad salute Gentibus, quia scilicet sapientia, de qua confidebant, salvare eos non potuit..."

<sup>57</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.1.169: "...in quibus gloriabantur."

<sup>58</sup> This reinforces the point made in chapter three that when it comes to speaking about how the Jews are special or enjoy "prerogatives," Aquinas puts a priority on the importance of circumcision and legal observances to the neglect of Temple sacrifice.

<sup>59</sup> *Ad Rom.* 1.6.109.

<sup>60</sup> However, Aquinas does understand the law to justify in a sense. The righteousness brought about by the observance of the law was only in a qualified sense: Aquinas points out a tension related to Paul's statement

Law heard or accepted was not enough for salvation.”<sup>61</sup> From these comments, it is clear

that Aquinas does not attribute a saving significance to circumcision. The theological status of the ceremonial law in the Romans *lectura* in the era *before* grace is limited: these rites did not confer sanctifying grace. Consequently, argues Aquinas, both Gentiles and Jews need the

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that those who observe the works of the law are justified. For Aquinas, when Paul declares that it is not the hearers but the doers of the Law who are righteous, this seems to conflict with his statement in 3:20 that “no human being will be justified in his sight by the works of the law.” Aquinas’s text of Romans 3:13 reads: *For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.* How can Paul say that the doers of the law (those who go above and beyond simply hearing the law) are righteous, if it is also true that circumcision and observance of the law did not bring salvation? Aquinas explains that the doers of the law are “justified” by introducing degrees of justification. The “justification” of the doer of the law can be taken in three ways. First, justification can be taken in regard to one’s reputation, such as appearing to be justified by others. In this sense, explains Aquinas, doers of the law are considered “just before God and men.” 2.3.212. Second, justification can be taken in regard to “doing what is just” because, for example, “the publican performed a work of justice by confessing his sin.” In this way, also, doers of the law will also be justified “by performing the justices of the Law.” Third, justification can be considered in regard to the cause of justice, so that a person is said to be justified, when he newly receives justice, as in Romans 5:1: *Since we are justified by faith, we are at peace with God.*” This is the sense in which doers of the law are not justified. The doers of the law are *not justified* as though receiving this sort of justice through the works of the Law. Aquinas explains that both the ceremonial works and what he calls “moral works” *cannot* confer justifying grace: “This cannot be accomplished either by the ceremonial works, which confer no justifying grace, or by the moral works, from which the habit of justice is not acquired; rather, we do such works in virtue of an infused habit of justice.” 2.3.212

For Aquinas, even moral works are the product not of acquired but an “infused habit of justice.” It is also in this sense that even Gentiles are doers of the law without being hearers of the law. It seems Aquinas is saying that sanctifying justice is only received as a gift from God, and that any virtue of justice that produces “moral works” is actually an infused virtue. Here, Aquinas is guarding against Pelagianism, as well as the idea that the ceremonial law brought justifying grace. His aim is to say that the idea that *anyone without reformed grace* can accomplish the moral precepts of the Law is a Pelagian idea. He seeks to guard against this idea on the Gentile and Jewish side. Commenting upon Gentile observance of the law, and Paul’s words that Gentiles “do by nature what the law requires” (which he identifies as “the moral precepts, which flow from a dictate of natural reason”) he says: “For this seems to favor the Pelagians, who taught that man could observe all the precepts of the Law by his own natural powers. Hence, *by nature* should mean nature reformed by grace. For he is speaking of Gentiles converted to the faith, who began to obey the moral precepts of the Law by the help of Christ’s grace. Or *by nature* can mean the natural law showing them what should be done, as in Ps 4:6: *There are many who say, ‘Who shows us good things!’ The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us,*” i.e. the light of natural reason, in which is God’s image. All this does not rule out the need of grace to move the affections any more than the knowledge of sin through the Law (Rom 3:20) exempts from the need of grace to move the affections.” 2.3.216. Aquinas’s view of natural law that is thoroughly theological and finds its source in God’s grace. Neither Gentile nor Jew can boast. For Aquinas, Paul shows that “the doers of the Law are justified even without being hearers, which pertained to the Gentiles... and the hearers are not justified, unless they are doers, which pertains to the Jews.” 2.4.224. It is on this logic that Jew’s observance of ceremonial law and the Gentile’s “moral works” are set on the same plane and in need of salvation.

<sup>61</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.3.210. “Primo ergo ostendit quod lex audita sive recepta, non sufficiebat ad salutem.”

power of the gospel's grace for salvation.<sup>62</sup>

However, Aquinas also attempts to explain how circumcision possessed a theological status before the passion. Near the end of chapter two he restates that circumcision is not sufficient for salvation any more than the Law. Here, though, he encounters a statement by Paul that indicates that circumcision does have a theological status after the passion of Christ. The present tense of the statement from 2:25 "Circumcision indeed is of value" pushes Aquinas to say how the rite has value: "First, therefore, he says: "Circumcision indeed is of value," inasmuch as it remits original sin; hence, it is written in Gen 17:14: "Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people."<sup>63</sup> Aquinas states that circumcision is a value because it remits original sin. *Prima facie*, his comment could be taken to mean that the ceremonial law remits original sin even now, after the passion.

However, Aquinas immediately explains that the meaning of the value ascribed to circumcision is a value that was *in the past*.<sup>64</sup> He appeals to Galatians 5:2, which operates as a marker for the era after grace, a time in which the practice of circumcision no longer has

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<sup>62</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.1.169.

<sup>63</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.238: "Dicit ergo primo Circumcisio quidem prodest quantum ad remissionem peccati originalis, unde dicitur Gen. XVII, 14: *Masculus cuius praeputti caro circumcisa*, etc."

<sup>64</sup> Later, Aquinas will clarify how circumcision removed original sin for Jews *who had faith in Christ*. Aquinas also adds a third condition for the way in which the ceremonial law can be observed which might be called Christological and apostolic form of observance of the ceremonial law. Aquinas actually discusses two ways of being under the ceremonial law. The first way did not sanctify because it was observed out of fear and not faith. Those who observe out of fear lack faith and thus they also lack grace. The second way the ceremonial law is observed is "voluntarily" through faith and love and this is how Christ and the apostles observed the ceremonial and moral aspects of the Mosaic Law. Grace is obtained through this voluntary form of observance of the law. Aquinas mentions Christ's observation of the ceremonial law in 6.3.497-8. This distinction between those who observe the old law out of fear and those who observe it voluntarily marks a significant difference from the Hebrews *lectura* which posits that the old law was only observed out of fear, whereas, the New is observed in charity. Aquinas also makes this distinction in the commentary on Galatians and treats the way in which Christ and the apostles were "under the law."

status. He explains that Paul's language about the positive value of circumcision was referring to its value before the passion: "However, the Apostle's statement in Gal 5:2 that "if you receive circumcision, Christ will be no advantage to you" refers to the era after grace; but now he is referring to the time before the passion of Christ, when circumcision had status."<sup>65</sup>

Before the passion of Christ, the value of circumcision was that it removed original sin. Yet, in the era after grace, Aquinas implies that the value of circumcision is negative: it renders Christ no advantage. It should be noted that here, Aquinas uses the Galatians 5:2 reference to appeal to the shift of time from before the passion to the era after grace. Indeed, Aquinas sees Galatians 5:2 as the most important authority for grounding the teaching that the ceremonial law is *now mortua et mortifera*. In the famous question addressing the duration of the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae*, Ia-IIae q. 103.4 (Whether, since Christ's passion the legal ceremonies can be observed without committing mortal sin?), Aquinas's response begins with a citation of Galatians 5:2: "The Apostle says (Gal. 5:2): 'If you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.' But nothing save mortal sin hinders us from receiving Christ's fruit. Therefore since Christ's passion it is a mortal sin to be circumcised, or to observe the other legal ceremonies."<sup>66</sup>

However, in the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas does not take the opportunity to state the full consequences of the official position for the observant Jew or Jewish Christian as he does in the *Summa theologiae*: the teaching that observing the ceremonial law becomes dead in the

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<sup>65</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.238: "Quod autem Apostolus dixit [Gal. v, 2]: Si circumcidamini, Christus nihil vobis proderit, loquitur quantum ad tempus post gratiam Evangelii divulgatum; hic autem loquitur quantum ad tempus ante passionem Christi, in quo circumcisio statum habebat."

<sup>66</sup> Ia IIae q. 103.4. I return to this connection in the last chapter of the study.



era after grace and brings mortal sin. He affirms that circumcision was of value in the past and is of no advantage in the era after grace. But it is *not* declared dead and deadly. Indeed, as I hope to show, Aquinas departs from this official view that circumcision only had value before Christ but is now unprofitable—a teaching that is, for Aquinas, represented by Galatians 5:2. Indeed, when Aquinas discusses the claim that circumcision is no longer profitable in the context of “inward Judaism,” it is in the form of an objection Aquinas thinks Paul raises and then defeats.

Near the end of chapter two, Aquinas introduces the idea of the “external” Jew and contrasts it with the idea of “inward Judaism.” Here, Aquinas once again says that circumcision profits *only* if the law, i.e., the moral precepts, are observed. Aquinas understands Paul to argue that inward Judaism is keeping the moral precepts. An outward Jew is one who only keeps the ceremonial law but neglects the moral law. Aquinas explains that “he is truly a Jew who is one inwardly, i.e., whose heart is possessed by the precepts of the Law, which the Jews professed.”<sup>67</sup> The contrast between internal and external Judaism is based on his reflection upon Paul’s words that circumcision in one who breaks the law becomes “uncircumcision.”<sup>68</sup> Paul shows that “Judaism, which involved receiving the Law and circumcision, is not sufficient for salvation without the Law’s observance, through which the Gentile without external Judaism and circumcision obtains the fruit of each....” The inward character of Judaism, which again, is observing the moral precepts, is therefore

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<sup>67</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.244: “Deinde, cum dicit Sed qui in abscondito, assignat rationem quare praepotium custodientis legem reputetur in circumcisionem et iudicet circumcisionem carnalem; quia scilicet ille vere est Iudaeus qui est in abscondito, id est, qui habet in affect cordis mandata legis, quam Iudaei profitentur. – Matth. VI, 6: *Pater tuus qui videt in abscondito*, etc.”

<sup>68</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.243: “Dicit ergo quod ideo circumcisio praevaricantis legem sit praepotium et iudicatur a praepotio custodiente legem, non enim est verus Iudaeus ille qui in manifesto est Iudaeus, secundum carnalem generationem....”

obtainable by both the Jew and the Gentile alike. Here, inward Judaism and circumcision “prevail over the outward.”<sup>69</sup> It should be noted that in these early places in the *lectura* Aquinas takes a more official view of the ceremonial law where it has theological status only if it was observed according to two conditions: 1) it had to be observed before the passion of Christ, the time during which it removed original sin, and 2) it had to be observed “inwardly” or along with the moral law or else it becomes uncircumcision. As he moves along it seems this official emphasis fades and he begins to argue that circumcision is not relativized by grace, but rather retains a permanent theological status even after the passion of Christ.

### 2.3 Aquinas on the Advantage of Circumcision and the Faithfulness of God

In chapter three Aquinas presents what he refers to as Paul’s objection to his own teaching on the idea of outward Judaism. After Paul has argued that the Gentile can obtain the status of being a “true Jew,” i.e. inwardly observing the moral precepts, Paul then “objects to his own doctrine.”<sup>70</sup> The objection, according to Aquinas, is represented by the words “Then what advantage has the Jew?” Aquinas’s comments upon this rhetorical question serve to further clarify his view of Paul’s objection to the idea of the outward Jew: “If what I say is so, i.e., that the true Jew and true circumcision are not something outward but inward in the heart, ‘Then what advantage has the Jew,’ i.e., what has been given to him more than others? It seems to be nothing.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.245 “Unde relinquitur quod interior Iudaismus et circumcisio praevallet exteriori.”

<sup>70</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.246: Postquam Apostolus ostendit quod Iudaismus, ad quem pertinent legis susceptio, et circumcisio non sufficient ad salute sine legis custodia, per quam Gentilis, sine exteriori Iudaismo et circumcisio, fructum utriusque consequitur...hic obiicit contra praemissa; et primo quidem proponit obiectionem, secundo solvit, ibi Multum quidem.”

<sup>71</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.247: “Obiicit ergo primo sic: Si ita esset, sicut dictum est, quod non est verus Iudaeus, nec vera circumcisio in manifesto, sed in occult cordis, quid ergo amplius est Iudaeo? Id est, quid amplius

Above, Aquinas employed the Galatians 5:2 reference “circumcision renders Christ of no advantage” to interpret the Pauline statement that circumcision is “indeed of value” and defined that value as something in the past, before the passion of Christ. In chapter three he takes up greater space to explain the positive theological status of the prerogatives of Israel in the era *after* grace. Indeed, Aquinas sees the doctrine of outward or external Judaism as sitting in tension with a more positive statement by Paul that circumcision has value “much in every way.”

This becomes clear when he raises the question of its value once again and directly after he raises the question regarding the advantage of the Jew in the present. He clarifies Paul’s rhetorical question “Then what advantage has the Jew?” by asking: “Or what is the value of circumcision, i.e., outward? It seems from his previous teaching [on outward Judaism] that there is no value.”<sup>72</sup> This “it seems” is phrase used to introduce a scholastic objection. That Aquinas uses the phrase to introduce the latter part of the objection shows he thinks there is a disagreement between these two perspectives on outward circumcision. In his response to the objection that it seems there is no value, Aquinas shifts away from the official position that circumcision no longer has status after the passion of Christ. Indeed, he appeals to Paul’s answer to the rhetorical question in order to reject the idea that circumcision in the era after grace is superfluous.<sup>73</sup>

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datum est quam caeteris? Videtur quod nihil.”

<sup>72</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.247: “Aut quae utilitas circumcisionis, scilicet exterioris? Videtur ex praemissis quod nulla....”

<sup>73</sup> Boguslawski’s discussion of Aquinas’s view of circumcision in the commentary leaves one with the impression that Aquinas stops at his discussion of “external Judaism” and is content to simply state that it was insufficient for salvation. “He maintains that an interior Judaism and an interior circumcision, perceived by God, prevail over exterior signs or judgment of people. In this regard, Paul and Thomas are heirs of a long and prophetic tradition decrying Israel’s infidelity metaphorically portrayed as uncircumcision of the heart. This

For Aquinas, Paul answers his own objection (“Then what advantage has the Jew?” Or what is the value of circumcision, i.e., outward?) in Romans 3:2: “Much in everyway!!” Aquinas writes, “Then when he says ‘Much in every way’ he answers the objection.”<sup>74</sup> In the same way that the statement “circumcision is indeed of value” seemed to present Aquinas with the opportunity to attribute a value to the ceremonial law in its capacity to remove original sin in the past, the “Much in everyway!” of Romans 3:2, affords him a chance to explain with more force how it is possible that the rites could possess a theological status in the era after grace. It is this view of the positive value of circumcision in the era after grace that seems to compel Aquinas to embark on a lengthy defense of the advantage of external Judaism.

Indeed, in this second time around with the teaching that circumcision is superfluous (in the form of the objection: It seems there is no value.) Aquinas is concerned to state the positive theological status of this Jewish rite *in the present tense*. In an extended reflection that mirrors the positive description of the privileged state of the Jews as a light to the nations, Aquinas defends the advantage of being a Jew even after the passion of Christ. His reply to the objection consists of an affirmation of the present tense status of Jewish election, which he sees as tied to circumcision, even now, in the era after grace: “But this [idea that there is no advantage to the Jew] is not fitting, since the Lord had said: ‘The Lord, your God,

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‘spiritualization’ of carnal circumcision is evident in the commentary (This sense will eventually predominate in Thomas’s later writings.) In CRO, however, spiritual circumcision has yet to eclipse this distinctive Jewish prerogative.” Yet Boguslawski does not point out the first and second defenses of the prerogatives of Israel in the commentary, which include a rather vigorous defense of external Judaism. This is evident especially in chapter 3, *lectio* 1, when Aquinas asks, after considering external Judaism, whether there is any advantage to being a Jew, i.e. an “outward” one, and answers in the affirmative. Boguslawski, 94.

<sup>74</sup> *Ad Romanos* 3.1.248: “Deinde cum dicit Multum quidem, solvit praemissam obiectionem.”

has chosen you to be a people for his own possession' Dt 7:6.”<sup>75</sup> The idea that there is no advantage is stopped first by Paul's words that circumcision is an advantage “much in everyway” and then linked to the doctrine of election—that the Jewish people are God's special possession. For Aquinas, the election of Israel is the first reason that there is advantage to the Jew. The advantage is grounded in the theological claim that God has chosen this people. However, Aquinas offers a second reason concerning God's command to practice circumcision. On this second point, Aquinas not only affirms the election of this chosen people but goes a step further by connecting the doctrine of election with circumcision. This is made clear when he immediately restates the question “What advantage has the Jew?” with a question he sees as getting to the heart to the matter: “Or what is the value of circumcision?” It seems...there is no value.” The advantage of the name Jew and the ceremonial law are intimately linked here. Aquinas answers by saying that the idea that there is now no value in circumcision is, once again, not fitting. It is “not fitting since it was imposed by God, Who says: “I am the Lord, your God, who teaches you unto profit. Is 48:17.”<sup>76</sup> Aquinas thinks that circumcision is of value in the era after grace because it was imposed by God to distinguish this particular chosen people.

Aquinas then adds another theological defense against the idea that there is “no advantage” to the Jew. His reply can be considered a rather detailed comment on the meaning of Paul's phrase “Much in every way!” He understands these words to solidly defeat the objection that there is no advantage to the Jew and no longer a theological value in

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<sup>75</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.247: “Et hoc est inconueniens, cum Dominus dixerit Deut. C. VII, 6: *Te elegit Dominus Deus tuus, ut sis ei populus peculiaris.*”

<sup>76</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.247: “...quod est inconueniens, cum sit a Deo tradita, qui dicit Is. XLVIII, 17: *Ego Dominus docens te utilia.*”

circumcision. Aquinas explains that “when [Paul] says ‘Much in every way!’ he answers the objection: first, in regard to Judaism’s prerogative; secondly, in regard to the value of circumcision....” He then goes onto explain and elaborate at length upon the advantage of the prerogatives of the Jews in the present.

For Aquinas, Judaism’s prerogative or advantage is great: “The advantage is both quantitative, which is indicated when he says, ‘much,’ and numerical, which is indicated when he says, ‘in every way.’”<sup>77</sup> He then outlines several advantages. The first advantage listed is in “contemplating divine matters.” The second advantage is in “the provision of temporal things.” The third advantage is “further advantages relating to their ancestors.” He then defines further advantages as “the promises to their offspring” and cites Romans 9:4 in support of these: “They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenant.” Rom 9:4.<sup>78</sup> Here, again, Aquinas appeals to the theme of election by citing Romans 9:4, which explicitly refers to Israel and the covenant in the present tense.<sup>79</sup> By doing so he connects his reflection on the prerogatives to his positive comments upon the law as a present spiritual benefit in Romans 9.

“In each of these,” Aquinas comments, “there is no small advantage, but great and important ones, which are summed up when he says, ‘much.’”<sup>80</sup> Among these great and

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<sup>77</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.249: “Dicit ergo primo. Quesitum est quid amplius sit Iudaeo, est autem ei amplius et quantum ad quantitatem, quae significatur cum dicit multum, et quantum ad numerum, qui significatur cum dicit per omnem modum.”

<sup>78</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.249: “Habent enim amplius aliquid et in contemplatione divinorum, secundum dispositionem temporalium, Ps. CXLVII, 20: *Non fecit taliter omni nationi*. Habent etiam amplius quantum ad patres, quantum ad promissiones, et quantum ad prolem. Infra IX, 4: *Quorum est adoptione filiorum Dei et Gloria, et testamentum*.”

<sup>79</sup> This citation of the present election of Israel is the second, Dt. 7:6 was the first.

<sup>80</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.249: “Et in quolibet eorum non est parva excellentia sed magna et praecipua, quod pertinent ad id quod dicit multum.”

important advantages Aquinas specifies a *praecipue amplius* or chief advantage. The “chief advantage” is that to “them are entrusted the oracles of God, being His friends: ‘I have called you friends’ Jn 15:15.”<sup>81</sup> The chief advantage in being a Jew is expressed in their closeness to God. This is because man’s “greatest good lies in knowing and clinging to God and being instructed by God.”<sup>82</sup> Aquinas describes each advantage of the Jews in the present, and not in the past.

Next, Aquinas goes beyond affirming and elaborating the prerogatives of Israel in the era after grace. Aquinas makes the theological argument that God’s faithfulness would actually be compromised if the prerogatives of Israel were taken away or annulled. He does this when he considers an objection he understands Paul to raise regarding the advantage of the Jew. The objection is represented by the words “what if some were unfaithful?”<sup>83</sup> The unfaithfulness of Israel seems manifest in their ingratitude and lack of belief in God. Would not such unbelief mean the annulment of their prerogatives?<sup>84</sup> Aquinas elaborates upon the

<sup>81</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.250: “Deinde, cum dicit Primum quidem, etc., manifestat quod dixerat, dicens: Primum quidem, id est praecipue amplius est Iudaeis quia eloquia Dei sunt tradita illis, quasi amicis, Io. XV, 15: *Vos dixi amicos*.” To cite John 15:15 to support the idea that the Jews are friends of God seems to raise the theological status of Israel after the era of grace to a level not commonly affirmed in the history of Christian theology. Indeed, Aquinas seems to move well beyond Augustine’s negative yet protective statement “slay them not” and constructs a more permanent theological ground for the Jewish people: the Jews as friends of God after the passion of Christ. Nevertheless, the question of how such friendship exists in the era of grace seems to linger in the background here since *that which was once was the means for the Jews to “cling” to God* (i.e. the ceremonial law) *has become, in the era of grace* (according to Aquinas’s official view), *the means by which the Jews now cut themselves off from God*. To put it simply, the official view is that observance of the ceremonial law was a profession of faith in Christ but after the passion it is only a profession of unbelief in Christ.

<sup>82</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.249: “Maximum enim bonum hominis est in Dei cognition....”

<sup>83</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.251: “Deinde cum dicit Quid enim si quidam, excludit objectionem.”

<sup>84</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.253. Aquinas’s description of this objection seems rather reminiscent of the punitive supersessionism of the *adversus Iudaeos* tradition. Again, Soulen defines punitive supersessionism as follows: “According to punitive supersessionism, God abrogates God’s covenant with Israel on account of Israel’s rejection of Christ and the gospel.” See Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, 30. Paula Fredriksen’s summary of Tertullian’s view of the Jews reveals a sharp contrast between the punitive

objection and explains that someone could belittle the Jews' prerogative on the basis that they were ungrateful to God's message and lack belief: "Someone could belittle the Jews' prerogative by citing their ingratitude, through which they would seem to have set aside the value of God's message. Hence he says, 'what if some were unfaithful?' Does this show that the Jew has no advantage?"<sup>85</sup> Aquinas then sharpens this objection by pointing out that the grave nature of the unbelief assumed by such objection. This unbelief is not only lack of belief in God's message, but also lack of belief in the mediators of the message: the Lawgiver himself, the prophets, and even the Son of God. Aquinas supports the objection by stringing together several scriptures about unbelief: "For they did not believe the Lawgiver: 'They had no faith in his promises' Ps 106:24 or the prophets: they are a rebellious house Ez 2:6." The objection becomes more pointed with the last citation of the words of Christ to the Jews regarding their unbelief: "...Or the Son of God: 'If I tell the truth, why do you not

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supersessionism of the *adversus Judaeos* tradition and Aquinas's argument against such logic: "By continuing in their fleshly observances—even after the resurrection of Christ, whom their own prophets had said they would murder; even after the punitive destruction of their city and their Temple, the only place where they could enact most of their wrong-headed ancestral practices; even after being driven out of their native land in punishment for their rejection of God's son—the Jews confirmed all the reasons why God had given them the Law to begin with. They were stiff-necked, stubborn, belligerent, utterly unrepentant. Accordingly, concluded Tertullian, Israel was punished forever with exile. Indeed, their permanent displacement had been instigated by Christ himself, who in the Psalms had demanded of his Father, 'Scatter them in your might.' (Psalm 59:12; *Against Marcion* 3.23, 1-4)." Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (Doubleday Religion, 2008), 226. For a summary of the view see A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2012). Ironically, however, Aquinas's rejection of punitive supersessionism in *Ad Rom.* 2.4.253 contradicts statements he will make later in the commentary when discussing the fall or trespass of the Jews, as well as other places in the commentaries. Indeed, Aquinas even cites the same Psalm as Tertullian to support the notion that the Jews' fall (which he thinks is due to their trespass in killing Christ and ongoing impenitence) includes being scattered among the nations. He of course adopts the idea to the Augustinian doctrine of witness: "As a result Christ and the Church had from the books of the Jews testimony to the Christian faith helpful in converting the Gentiles, who might have suspected that the prophecies concerning the testimony of the Jews; hence it says in Ps 59.10 *Let me look in triumph on my enemies*, i.e. the Jews. *Slay them not*.... *Ad Rom.* 11.2.881.

<sup>85</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.252: "Posset aliquis praerogativae Iudaeorum derogare, opponendo ingratitude eorum, per quam viderentur dignitatem eloquiorum Dei amisisse. Unde dicit Quid autem si quidam illorum non crediderunt; numquid per hoc excluditur quod nihil amplius sit Iudaeo?"



believe me?”<sup>86</sup>

In his reply to this sharp objection Aquinas begins to unpack a rather robust theology of God’s promise to Israel. His reply to the objection that the prerogative of Israel is threatened by their unfaithfulness to God is based on Paul’s words “Does their unfaithfulness nullify the faithfulness of God? Let it not be!” He explains Paul’s “Let it not be!” by appealing to the faithfulness of God: “God is faithful in keeping His promises: ‘He who promised is faithful.’ Heb. 10:23.”<sup>87</sup> Aquinas sees God’s faithfulness as directly tied to the advantage of the Jews as a chosen people even in the face of unbelief in the Son of God: “[God’s] faithfulness would be nullified, if it happened that the Jews had no advantage, just because some have not believed. For God promised to multiply that people and make it great: ‘I will multiply your descendants’ Gen 22:16.”<sup>88</sup> He states again that God’s faithfulness cannot be nullified because “it is unfitting for God’s faithfulness to be nullified on account of men’s belief.”<sup>89</sup>

Aquinas then goes on to explicitly state that the prerogatives cannot be taken away without compromising God’s faithfulness. For Aquinas, the perpetuity attributed to the promise and prerogatives of Israel is wrapped up with the very faithfulness of God. Aquinas

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<sup>86</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.252: “Non crediderunt autem, primo quidem, legislatori. Ps. CV, 24: *Non crediderunt in verbo eius.* – Secundo non crediderunt prophetis. Ez. II, 6: *Increduli et subversores sunt tecum.* – Tertio non crediderunt ipsi Filio. Io c. VIII, 45: *Si veritatem dico vobis, quare non creditis mihi?*”

<sup>87</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.254: “Deinde cum dicit Absit, est autem, ostendit hoc esse inconueniens, quod fides Dei evacuaretur propter hominum incredulitatem.” *Ad Rom.* 3.1.253: “Alio modo potest intelligi. Uno modo de fide qua Deus fidelis est implens promissa. Hebr. X, 23: *Fidelis enim est qui repromisit.*”

<sup>88</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.253: Haec autem fidelitas evacuaretur, si propter quorundam incredulitatem accideret quod nihil amplius esset Iudaeo. Promisit enim Deus populum illum multiplicare et magnificare, ut patet Gen. XXII 16: *Multiplicabo semen tuum.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.254: “Deinde cum dicit Absit, est autem, ostendit hoc esse inconueniens, quod fides Dei evacuaretur propter hominum incredulitatem.”

understands Paul to exclude the objection that there is now, in the era after grace, no longer an advantage to the Jew by showing what he calls “the unsuitable conclusion it engenders.” Aquinas states:

For if the Jews’ prerogative were abrogated (*praerogativa Iudaeorum tolleretur*) on account of the unbelief of some, it would follow that man’s unbelief would nullify God’s faithfulness—which is an unacceptable conclusion.”<sup>90</sup>

For Aquinas, to hold that the prerogatives of Israel are annulled is “an unacceptable conclusion” because it nullifies the promise of God and calls into question the faithfulness of God.

Here, it becomes clear that Aquinas’s defense of the prerogatives expands the theology of God’s promise to Israel beyond the temporal definition afforded it in the Hebrews *lectura*. In the Hebrews *lectura*, the promise to Israel is described as limited to the physical and temporal. Here, in the Romans *lectura* the promise to Israel is connected to the promise that the Jews be a people that will be multiplied and made great. Aquinas attributes to the Jews’ advantage a perpetual quality that was absent from the Hebrews *lectura*. The promise, of course, includes the Davidic promise for an eternal kingdom, which Aquinas understands as fulfilled in Christ’s kingdom.<sup>91</sup> But the fulfillment of the promise through the eternal priesthood of Christ does not also entail the evacuation and rendering void of theological status of carnal Israel.

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<sup>90</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.253. [Emended]: “Deinde cum dicit Numquid incredulitas, excludit dictam obiectionem ducendo ad inconveniens, quia si propter incredulitatem aliquorum praerogativa Iudaeorum tolleretur, sequeretur quod incredulitas hominis fidem Dei evacuet, quod est inconveniens.” Larcher translates *tolleretur* as “taken away” but it can also mean abrogate. *Tolleretur* is the singular imperfect subjunctive passive form of *tollo*, which, for Aquinas, can also mean “to take off, carry off, make away with, kill, destroy, to abolish, annul, abrogate, cancel.” For the meanings of the term in Aquinas see Roy J Deferrari, *A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas Based on the Summa Theologica and Selected Passages of His Other Works* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1948), 1043.

<sup>91</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.256; 258.

Indeed, in *lectio* one of chapter three, Aquinas provides what I would refer to as an alternative and unofficial theology of fulfillment. Here, Aquinas articulates a rather succinct argument that problematizes the logic behind punitive and economic supersessionist views of the prerogatives of Israel.

First, recall that punitive supersessionism is the idea that Israel's prerogatives are abolished due to the sin of unbelief and God then replaces Israel with the Church as the new elect people. Here, Aquinas clearly refutes punitive supersessionism since this view holds that God abolishes the prerogatives of Israel as punishment for the rejection Christ.<sup>92</sup> Aquinas says this is an unacceptable conclusion because it nullifies God's faithfulness.

Second, recall that economic supersessionism assumes that since the signs of circumcision and law are fulfilled, God abolishes these signs and replaces Israel with the Church, the people defined by the new signs. The unspoken premise of Aquinas's above argument is that the prerogatives of Israel, which include circumcision and law, remain a present benefit to the Jewish people in the era after grace.<sup>93</sup> This premise contradicts the economically supersessionist claim that the ceremonial law has been rendered void.

Therefore, while Aquinas's argument here in 3.1.253 *explicitly* denies the logic of punitive supersessionism, which would annul the prerogatives as punishment for Jewish unbelief, it also *implicitly* denies the logic of economic supersessionism, which demands the annulment of the prerogatives due to a change of time. Both punitive and economic forms of supersessionist logic require the evacuation of the prerogatives. But according to Aquinas,

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<sup>92</sup> Though Aquinas argues against this position here, he does hold a punitive supersessionist view in other places in the *lectura*, which reinforces my argument that there is a tension in the commentary.

<sup>93</sup> As I shall demonstrate below, Aquinas explicitly states in his comments upon Romans 9:4-5 that the ceremonial law is a *present spiritual benefit*.

such an abrogation would actually annul (*evacuo*) God's faithfulness.

Aquinas's argument against the abrogation of the *praerogativa Iudaeorum* calls the traditional logic of replacement into serious question. The sort of fulfillment theology that entails the voiding of the prerogatives, such as the type found in the Hebrews *lectura*, seems as if it is contradicted by this part of the Romans *lectura*.<sup>94</sup> God's promise to the Jews is defined in such a way that the covenant cannot be transferred from one regime to another without calling into question God's justice.

Here, amidst what I would refer to as Aquinas's second and more theologically robust defense of the prerogatives of Israel in the Romans *lectura* (the third takes place in chapter 9), he brings into focus in a surprisingly contemporary way an objection to supersessionism based on the faithfulness and fairness of God. For Aquinas, God keeps God's promises: "God's justice, which involves keeping His promises, is not changed on account of sin."<sup>95</sup> "Touching on this," writes Aquinas, "... 'All the words of my mouth are righteous.' Pr 8:8; 'The Lord is faithful in all his words.' Ps 145:13."<sup>96</sup> Because a premise of the economic supersessionist view amounts to saying that God has broken God's promises to carnal Israel it is, on Aquinas's own terms, unacceptable. For Aquinas, God's promise to Israel regarding their prerogatives is a promise that God will keep because God does not lie.

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<sup>94</sup> Ironically, in 3.1.253, Aquinas uses the same verb, *evacuo* (in the imperfect active subjunctive form, *evacuaret*) to describe the unacceptable effect that the nullification of the prerogatives would have on God's faithfulness that he uses to describe the nullification of the imperfect Priesthood and ceremonial law in the Hebrews *lectura*: the perfect renders the imperfect *evacuo*: *Secunda ratio probat quod etiam ipsum evacuate, quia perfectum evacuate imperfectum. Ad Hebraeos 7.3.349*. In the Romans *lectura*, however, to *evacuo* the ceremonial law is to *evacuo* the faithfulness of God.

<sup>95</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.257: "Primo quidem, quod propter peccatum eius non mutatur iustitia Dei, ad quam pertinent ut suos sermones impletet."

<sup>96</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.257: "Et quantum ad hoc dicit ut iustificeris in sermonibus tuis, id est ut ex hoc appareas in sermonibus tuis, iustus, quia propter mea peccata eos non praeteris. – Prov. VIII, 8: *Recti sunt omnes sermones mei*. Ps. CXLIV, 13: *Fidelis Dominus in omnibus verbis suis*."

## 2.4 The Ceremonial Law as “Fulfilled and Upheld”

At the close of chapter three and throughout chapter four, Aquinas returns to the theme that the ceremonial law could not confer grace and justify. He discusses circumcision in greater detail, emphasizing both its literal and prefiguring functions. In doing so, he once again sets his high view of the prerogatives of Israel in tension with the idea that these rites only had value in the past, before the passion of Christ.

The subject of the prefiguring function of the rites emerges following a discussion of the literal ratio of circumcision. Aquinas says the rite was instituted for four purposes that had to do with divine worship. The first reason for the institution of circumcision was to signify the faith and obedience by which Abraham submitted to God. This was done “so that those who accepted the circumcision of Abraham should observe his faith and obedience.”<sup>97</sup> The second reason was to express in bodily sign “something that was to occur spiritually, namely, just as superfluous skin was removed from the organ of reproduction, which is the chief servant of concupiscence, so every superfluous desire should be removed from man’s heart....”<sup>98</sup> The third reason, according to Aquinas, was to distinguish the people worshipping God from all other people. This is why God commanded circumcision for the children of Israel, who were to dwell among the other nations....<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *Ad Rom.* 4.2.347: “Et secundum hoc circumcision habet triplicem institutionis causam, quarum prima est ad significandum fidem et obedientiam qua Abraham se Deo subiecit....”

<sup>98</sup> *Ad Rom.* 4.2.347: “Secunda est ad exprimendum in signo corporali id quod spiritualiter erat faciendum, ut scilicet sicut a membro generationis, quod principaliter concupiscentiae deservit, abscindebatur superflua pellicula, ita etiam a corde hominis omnis superflua concupiscentia tolleretur, secundum illud...”

<sup>99</sup> *Ad Rom.* 4.2.347: “Tertia est ut per hoc signum populus ille Deum colens, ab omnibus aliis populis distingueretur. Et inde est quod mandavit Dominus circumcidi filios Israel, qui inter alias nationes errant habitaturi, qui prius in deserto solitarii manentes circumcise non errant.” Aquinas consistently maintains a high view of the distinction of the Jews from the Gentiles. In the Romans *lectura* Aquinas seems to understand the distinction between Jew and Gentile to remain after the passion of Christ. For Aquinas, “No distinction between Jew and Gentile” does not mean there is no distinction at all. At the beginning of the *lectura* it becomes clear

Aquinas then lists a fourth and most important purpose: “The other purpose of circumcision and all the ceremonies is based on a relation to Christ, to whom they are compared as the figure to the reality and as the members to the body.”<sup>100</sup> It is from this relation to Christ that the rite was able to remove original sin. Aquinas explains that it is better to say “*ex opera operato*” circumcision did not have effective power either to remove guilt or produce righteousness. It was merely a sign of righteousness, as the Apostle says here. But through faith in Christ, of which circumcision was a sign, it removed original sin and conferred the help of grace to act righteously.”<sup>101</sup>

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that Aquinas is well aware of the prominent place of the Jewish people in the history of salvation. The people that the epistle concerns are Jews and Gentiles, and especially the Jews since Paul writes that salvation is “to the Jews first and also to the Gentiles.” Although this phrase is from Romans 3:19, Aquinas draws it into the discussion on the power of the gospel in chapter one, namely its power to save these two groups of people. Yet, Aquinas anticipates an objection to the priority of Jewish salvation based the idea that salvation is supposed to be universal. “But since he says below (10:12) There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, why does he say here that the Jew is first?” Aquinas writes, “The answer is that there is no distinction as far as the goal of salvation to be obtained is concerned, for both obtain an equal reward, just as in the vineyard the early and the late workers received one coin in Matt 20:10. But in the order of salvation the Jews are first, because the promises were made to them, as is said below in chapter 3:2, whereas the Gentiles were included in their grace like a branch grafted into a cultivated olive tree, as is said in chapter 11:24. Also, our savior was born from the Jews: *Salvation is from the Jews*. Jn 4:22.” *Ad Rom.* 1.6.101.

<sup>100</sup> *Ad Rom.* 4.2.348: “Alia autem ratio circumcisionis et omnium caeremonialium accipitur per comparationem ad Christum, ad quem comparator, sicut figura ad veritatem et membra ad corpus, secundum illud Col. II, 17: *Quae sunt umbra futurorum, corpus autem Christi*.” In 5.6.463, Aquinas also states that the ceremonial precepts were multiplied to prevent the Jews from cultivating alien gods. The law operated at two levels: for the proficient, who are called *mediocres*, or ordinary people; and for the perfect. The ceremonial law had the affect of restraining the people in divine worship, and with respect to moral precepts, by which they were advanced toward justice. For the perfect, on the other hand, the ceremonies functioned as a sign.

<sup>101</sup> *Ad Rom.* 4.2.349: “Et ideo melius dicendum est quod circumcisio ex ipso opera operato non habebat virtutem effectivam, neque quantum ad remotionem culpae, neque quantum ad operationem iustitiae: sed erat solum iustitiae signum, ut hic Apostolus dicit, sed per fidem Christi, cuius circumcisio signum erat, auferebatur peccatum originale et conferebatur auxilium gratiae ad recte agendum.” Regarding the power of circumcision to confer grace and remove original sin, Aquinas explains the multiple views on the question. He lists the positions and explains problems with each one. It should be noted that Aquinas does not always hold that circumcision did not have effective power to remove guilt *ex opera operato*, as he does here. Andrew Hofer, O.P., has shown that in the *Scriptum super Sententiis* Aquinas holds that circumcision removed original sin: “Thomas no longer speaks in the *Summa* of the power of circumcision as “*ex opera operato*” as he did in the *Scriptum*. Moreover, baptism confers grace ‘more abundantly’ than circumcision and, in contrast to it, imparts a character that incorporates the recipient into Christ.” Andrew Hofer, “The Circumcision of the Lord: Saving Mystery” (Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception of the Dominican House of Studies, 2003), 63. I am grateful to Fr. Hofer for sharing with me his unpublished dissertation. See also Richard Schenk, “Covenant Initiation:

Aquinas then explains why baptism is more fitting than circumcision and refers again to the figurative *ratio* for the rite:

...It is clear from what has been said, why circumcision had to be changed. For it was a sign of something to come. But the same sign does not suit the present, past and future. Therefore, baptism, as the sign of present grace, produces a more copious and more beneficial effect of grace, because the closer the agent is in time and place, the more effectively it works.<sup>102</sup>

Circumcision *was* a sign of something to come but baptism *is* a sign of what has come, which is present grace. The Law bears witness to Christ's justice "by foretelling and prefiguring it."<sup>103</sup> Because it is a sign from the past, circumcision does not suit the present and therefore had to be changed.

It is clear from these references that Aquinas assumes that the ceremonial law is a figure of Christ in the Romans *lectura*. Despite the positive language about the prerogatives of Israel not being annulled or taken away, Aquinas also says that the sign has no status after Christ (2.4.238) and no longer suits the present (4.2.350).

The concept of the fulfillment of the *figura* also surfaces when Aquinas comments

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Thomas Aquinas and Robert Kilwardby on the Sacrament of Circumcision," in *Ordo Sapientiae Et Amoris: Image Et Message De Saint Thomas d'Aquin À Travers Les Récentes Études Historiques, Herméneutiques Et Doctrinales: Hommage Au Professeur Jean-Pierre Torrell OP À L'occasion De Son 65e Anniversaire*, ed. Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveira (Fribourg, Suisse: Editions universitaires, 1993).

<sup>102</sup> *Ad Rom.* 4.2.350: "Circa tertium vero manifestum est iam ex dictis, quare oportuit circumcisionem mutari. Nam circumcisio erat signum futuri. Non autem idem signum convenit praesenti, sive praeterito et future: et ideo baptismus est signum praesentis gratiae qui copiosorem et utiliore effectum habet gratiae, quia quanto agens est propinquius et praesentius, tanto efficacius operatur." Brian Davies offers one of the most succinct summaries of Aquinas's view of the importance of the new sacraments: "For Aquinas, however, the important sacraments are 'the sacraments of the New Law,' by which he means the Christian sacraments. Why? Because, so he thinks, these cause grace while the sacraments of the Old Law did not. The sacraments of the Old Law, he argues, predated the death of Christ by which justifying grace comes, and they were signs representing faith in Christ only in the sense that they anticipated what was to come. They looked forward to something which was not yet. The sacraments of the New Law, on the other hand, signify something actually present. The sacraments of the Old Law 'fulfilled the function of prefiguring grace' while those of the New Law 'are appropriate as manifestations of a grace that is already present.'" Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1993), 354.

<sup>103</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.2.301.

upon Paul's rhetorical question "Do we therefore overthrow the law?" Aquinas explains that "someone might claim that he is overthrowing the aforementioned Law... in as much as we say that men are justified without the works of the Law?"<sup>104</sup> However, he understands Paul to avoid this. Rather, Aquinas argues that Paul is faithful to Jesus' words in Matt 5:18 and cites his words "Not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law." "On the contrary," writes Aquinas, "we uphold the law, i.e., by faith we complete and fulfill the Law, as Matt 5:17 says, 'I have come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it.'"<sup>105</sup> Aquinas then explains how the faith of Christ completes and fulfills both the ceremonial and moral precepts of the law:

This is true as regards the ceremonial precepts because, being figures, they were upheld and fulfilled by the fact that the truth signified by them is shown forth in the faith of Christ. This is also true as regards the moral precepts, because the faith of Christ confers the help of grace to fulfill the moral precepts of the Law and even adds special counsels, through which moral precepts are more safely and securely kept.<sup>106</sup>

The ceremonial precepts are described as "being figures" that were "upheld and fulfilled".<sup>107</sup> Here Aquinas says the ceremonial precepts are not destroyed as he does in the Hebrews *lectura* and, as I shall demonstrate, in the lectures on Galatians and Ephesians.

Yet the idea that the observance of the ceremonial law is a sin in the era after grace does seem to be implied in 4.2.357. Aquinas comes closest to stating the official position that the law is deadly when he discusses the different senses in which the Law brought wrath and

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<sup>104</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.4.321.

<sup>105</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.4.321.

<sup>106</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.4.321: "Diende cum dicit Legem ergo, excludit quamdam obiectionem. Posset enim aliquis dicere quod praedictam legem destrueret, et ideo quaerit dicens legem ergo destruimus per fidem, ex hoc scilicet quod dicimus homines iustificari sine operibus legis. Et respondet absit, secundum illud Matth. c. v, 18: *Non praeteribit iota unum, aut unus apex*, etc. Subdit autem sed legem statuimus, id est per fidem legem perficimus et adimplemus, secundum illud Matth. v, 17: *Non veni solver legem, sed adimplere.*"

<sup>107</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.4.321: "Et hoc quantum ad praecepta caeremonialia, quae cum essent figuralia, per hoc statuuntur et adimplentur, quod veritas significata per ea, in fide Christi exhibetur..."



increased transgression. Aquinas states that the wrath of the Law is expressed in the fact that it commands but does not confer grace. And, when making his point, he implies that the observance of the ceremonial law brings wrath in the era after grace:

But someone might suppose that the Law brings wrath as far as legal ceremonies observed in the era of grace are concerned, in line with Gal 5:2 “If you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.” However, what is stated here refers even to moral precepts, not because they command something which makes its observers deserving of God’s wrath, but because the Law commands and does not confer the grace to fulfill, according to 2 Cor 3:6 *The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life*, namely, because *the Spirit helps us inwardly in our weakness*.<sup>108</sup>

Here, Aquinas implies that the observance of legal ceremonies brings wrath, but he also extends this claim to observers of moral precepts. This is because even *doers of the law* do not obtain sanctifying grace.

However, where the prefiguring function is affirmed, along with the corollary idea that it has no present theological status after its figuring function is fulfilled, the hard consequences for the observant Jew in the era after grace *do not* surface. What Aquinas *does not say* here speaks volumes when considered against the backdrop of the official position as stated in the Hebrews *lectura*. Aquinas does not take the time to argue for the distinction between how the moral precepts remain and the ceremonial become void, and then dead and deadly in the era after grace. Indeed, nowhere in the Romans *lectura* does Aquinas argue that the law is destroyed or dead, nor does he state the more negative conclusion that the observances are *mortifera*. A telling example of this is Aquinas’s treatment of the Pauline

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<sup>108</sup> *Ad Rom.* 4.2.357: “Posset autem aliquis intelligere quod lex iram operatur quantum ad caeremonialia tempore gratiae observata, secundum illud Gal. v, 2: *Si circumcidamini, Christus nihil vobis proderit*. Sed quod hic dicitur, intelligendum est etiam quantum ad moralia, non Dei efficiat, sed occasionaliter, quia praecipiant aliquid, quod qui observant dignos ira Dei efficiat, sed occasionaliter, quia praecipit et gratiam adimplendi non praebet, secundum illud II Cor. III, 6: *Littera occidit, spiritus autem vivificat, quia scilicet interius adiuvat infirmitatem nostrum*, ut dicitur infra VIII, 26.”

statement “For the end of the law is Christ,” in Romans 10:4. When commenting upon this verse in the Romans *lectura* Aquinas only comments upon how the law could not bring to perfection (i.e. it could not bring sanctifying grace) and its prefigurative function.<sup>109</sup>

Nevertheless, the internal tension between the idea that the ceremonial law is an advantage to Israel is in tension with the claim that appears early in the commentary that the rite longer possesses a theological status after the passion of Christ. Aquinas’s vigorous theological defense of the prerogatives of Israel becomes more pronounced in chapter 9 of the *lectura*, where Aquinas comments upon the prerogatives of Israel for the third time and explicitly argues that the ceremonial law is a *present* spiritual benefit (*praesentis spiritualis beneficii*).

## 2.5 The Prerogatives of Israel as a “Present Spiritual Benefit”

Aquinas comments upon the prerogatives of Israel after the grace of Christ for the third time in chapter 9 of the Romans *lectura*. When he encounters Paul’s words about the present tense prerogatives and dignity of Israel in Romans 9:4-5, he once again contradicts the official view that the observance of the ceremonial law is now dead and deadly. In 9:4-5 Aquinas interprets Jewish observance of the Mosaic Law as the second of two *present* spiritual benefits that *confers dignity* on the Jews, rather than brings about spiritual death. These *present* spiritual benefits are described as God’s blessings and are considered under the category of the *dignitatem* or greatness of that *gentis* or race. Their *dignitatem* is demonstrated in three ways: First, their dignity is from “their face” as Israelites. Second, they enjoy a dignity from the benefits of God (*ex Dei beneficiis*), which Aquinas considers in three ways: 1) “from their race,” 2) “God’s blessings (which include “two spiritual blessings;

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<sup>109</sup> *Ad Rom.* 10.1.819.

two figural, present spiritual benefits; and a blessing of future glory”; and 3) their origin “in the flesh” from their ancestors.<sup>110</sup>

The first way in which Paul shows their greatness is from God’s election of their race. Aquinas states: “First, from their face when he says: ‘They are Israelites,’ i.e., descending from the stock of Jacob who was called Israel Gen 32:28. This pertains to their greatness, for it says in Dt 4:7: ‘Neither is there any nation so great as to have their gods coming to them...’<sup>111</sup> Again, Aquinas acknowledges God’s choice of this particular people and names it as a benefit in the present.

The second category, referred to broadly as “God’s blessings,” includes five things. Blessings 1-2 include present and future spiritual benefits. The first spiritual benefit is Israel’s sonship: “*to them belongs the sonship*: hence it says in Ex (4:22): *Israel is my son, my firstborn.*”<sup>112</sup> The blessing is that this particular people is considered the firstborn son of God.<sup>113</sup> The second blessing from God is a future spiritual benefit. Aquinas explains “Another spiritual blessing refers to the future when he says: *the glory*, namely, of the sons of God promised to them. A reference to this is found in Ex 40:32: *The glory of the Lord filled*

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<sup>110</sup> The third way that Aquinas lists, which is their “origin in the flesh” is much like the first and can thus be included in this first category. Aquinas understands Paul to do this when he says “to them belong the Patriarchs, because they were begotten according to the flesh by those ancestors who were especially acceptable to God...” *Ad Rom.* 9.1.745.

<sup>111</sup> *Ad Rom.* 9.1.743: “Ostendit autem eorum dignatatem tripliciter. Primo quidem quantum ad suam gentem, cum dicit qui sunt Israelitae, id est, a genere Iacob descendentes, qui est dictus Israel, Gen. XXXII, 28, et II Cor. XI, 22: *Israelitae sunt, et ego*. Et hoc ad dignatatem pertinet. Dicitur enim Deut. IV, 7: *Non est alia nation tam grandis*, etc.”

<sup>112</sup> *Ad Rom.* 9.1.744: “Secundo ostendit dignatatem illius gentis ex Dei beneficiis, inter quae primo ponit spiritualia beneficia, quorum unum respicit praesens; et quantum ad hoc dicit quorum est adoption filiorum Dei; unde dicitur Exod. c. IV, 22: *Primogenitus meus Israel.*”

<sup>113</sup> In particular, it is their sonship as opposed to the other nations: “the spiritual men who arose among that people: but as to worldly men he stated above (8:15) that they received the spirit of slavery in fear.” The sonship therefore refers to the distinction of these “spiritual men” (Israel) from what Aquinas sees as “worldly men” or nations that were in slavery and in fear.

*the tabernacle.*<sup>114</sup>

Blessings 3-5 are what Aquinas refers to as “other, figural benefits, of which there are three figures of present spiritual benefit (*figura praesentis spiritualis beneficii*).”<sup>115</sup> This third blessing that is a figure of present spiritual benefit is “the covenant, i.e., the pact of circumcision given to Abraham, as is recorded in Gen 17....”<sup>116</sup> The fourth blessing from God is the second figure of present spiritual benefit: the Law given through Moses. The fifth blessing from God is the benefit of divine worship.<sup>117</sup>

Here, the entire edifice of the Mosaic Law, including ceremonial law, is affirmed as a present spiritual benefit given by God.<sup>118</sup> In chapter 9 of the Romans *lectura*, Jewish observance of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ is therefore viewed as a sign of the greatness of the Jews, a spiritual blessing, and a *present* benefit rather than a mortally sinful act that is offensive to Christ’s sacrifice and that must be renounced.

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<sup>114</sup> *Ad Rom.* 9.1.744.

<sup>115</sup> *Ad Rom.* 9.1.744 [Emended]: “...*beneficia figuralia, quorum tria sunt figura praesentis spiritualis beneficii*...” Larcher translates these benefits as “were figures of present spiritual benefit” rather than “are figures of present spiritual benefit.” However, the Italian Dominican Study Edition of the Romans commentary translates these benefits in the present tense. See Tommaso d’Aquino (san), *Commento al Corpus Paulinum (expositio et lectura super epistolas Pauli apostoli) vol. 1-3 - Seconda Lettera ai corinzi-Lettera ai galati* (ESD-Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 2006), 601. I am indebted to James Stroud for pointing this out to me.

<sup>116</sup> *Ad Rom.* 9.1.744: “Deinde ponit alia beneficia figuralia, quorum tria sunt figura praesentis spiritualis beneficii. Et horum primum est testamentum, id est, pactum circumcisionis Abrahae datum.” Aquinas considers the possibility that Paul might be referring not to the covenant with Israel but to the New covenant: although this could be referred to the new covenant preached first to the Jews. Hence, the Lord Himself said: *I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel* (Mt 15:24); and *Jer (31:31): I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel.*” Despite the alternative interpretation Aquinas offers regarding the reference to the covenant—that it “could be” the new covenant—he does say circumcision is a viable interpretation.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> In a footnote Boguslawski explains that the “law” in the above quotation clearly means the Mosaic legislation and that cult signifies the exclusive worship of God in contrast to pagan idolatry Boguslawski, 108. About the *beneficia figuralia* Boguslawski says “symbolic benefits are types of *present spiritual benefits*, namely, covenant, law, and cult.” Boguslawski, 88. [emphasis mine]

Here, Aquinas not only melds the election of the Jewish people with the ongoing significance of Torah and cultic worship as present benefits.<sup>119</sup> In chapter 11 he once again secures the perpetuity of the elect people of God by grounding it in God's promise when he comments on Paul's famous words, "For the gifts and the call of God are without repentance."<sup>120</sup> In particular, he does this when he responds to an objection he raises to the idea that God's call can change.<sup>121</sup> Indeed, he comments, God's call seems to be changed sometimes: "Furthermore, God's call seems to be changed sometimes, since it is written Many are called but few are chosen Mt 22:14."

In his reply, Aquinas explains that the election of Israel is secured by the nature of God's promise, which is a promise that is, because of God's predestination, "as good as given." Aquinas says, "But it should be noted that 'gift' is taken here for a promise made according to God's foreknowledge or predestination, and 'call' is taken for election." Aquinas then explains that, "Because both are so certain, whatever God promises is as good as given and whomever He elects is somehow already called."<sup>122</sup> God's promise to carnal Israel is perpetual and transcends human notions of promise. For Aquinas, God's promise to

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<sup>119</sup> Boguslawski was the first to notice that Aquinas melds the election of the Jewish people with the prerogatives. Commenting upon how Aquinas melds the election of the Jews with these prerogatives or "symbolic" benefits, Boguslawski writes: "Thomas cites 44:1 ('And now listen my servant Jacob, and Israel whom I have chosen...') and thereby illustratively melds divine prerogatives with divine election." Nevertheless, he misses how this causes tension between other statements in the *lectura* that there is no status for circumcision after the passion of Christ. Boguslawski, fn. 11, p. 48.

<sup>120</sup> *Ad Rom.* 11.4.926: "Et tamen ipsum temporale Dei donum et temporalis vocation, non irritator per mutationem Dei quasi poenitentis sed per mutationem hominis, qui gratiam Dei abiicit...."

<sup>121</sup> In the Hebrews *lectura* Aquinas argued for the opposite when drawing upon Augustine. He argued that God's providence is different than God and that while God does not change, his providence can. The difference between these two texts is that in the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas is more aware of the robust depth and perpetuity of the promise to carnal Israel while in the Hebrews *lectura* the promise is defined narrowly: temporally and physically.

<sup>122</sup> *Ad Rom.* 11.4.926: "Et tamen ipsum temporale Dei donum et temporalis vocation, non irritator per mutationem Dei quasi poenitentis sed per mutationem hominis, qui gratiam Dei abiicit...."

Israel is “as good as given.”<sup>123</sup>

### 3. The Emerging Tension Between the Official and Unofficial View of the Prerogatives of Israel in the Pauline Commentaries

It has been said that Boguslawski’s study of chapters 9-11 of the Romans *lectura* shows that “Thomas finds here a positive role for Judaism in the future as well as in the present.”<sup>124</sup> If one reads Aquinas’s commentary on Romans 9-11, especially chapter 9:1-5, in isolation from the rest of the lecture, not to mention the organic unity Aquinas understood Paul’s epistles to possess, this positive role might seem as if it is representative of his view. However, when read in context, the picture is more complex.

When read in the context of the Romans *lectura*, and the Hebrews *lectura*, it becomes clear that the *present* role of the Jewish people in Aquinas is not simply “ongoing” as Boguslawski argues. Aquinas does not simply “avoid supersessionism.” Rather, in the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas shifts away from the standard view that the ceremonial law no longer has status and argues at length that the circumcision possesses theological significance in the era after grace. When read against the background of Aquinas’s words about the ceremonial law in the Hebrews *lectura*, major portions of the Romans *lectura* contradict the more negative and official view. Reading Aquinas in context of these two lectures highlights a tension: How can Aquinas hold that the ceremonial law is a present spiritual benefit to Israel and at the same time that which causes spiritual death of Torah observant Jews? How can the rites by which the Jews are made the friends of God also serve to cut them off from God?

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<sup>123</sup> *Ad Rom.* 11.4.926.

<sup>124</sup> John E. Lynch, preface, *Aquinas on the Jews*, xii.

In the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas's defense of the prerogatives of Israel undermines the official teaching that the observance of the ceremonial law is superfluous and a mortal sin after the passion of Christ. In fact, he says the very opposite. Aquinas states that circumcision possesses a theological value; that law, and cult are a present spiritual benefit to the Jewish people; and that these cannot be abolished without compromising God's faithfulness. Aquinas's extended reflections on Israel's present tense prerogatives may even have pushed him to leave out the negative conclusion of the official view: that observance of the ceremonial law is now a mortal sin. Despite frequent references to the old law in the age of grace, nowhere does Aquinas say that its observance brings spiritual death. This unofficial view represents a departure from the Galatians 5:2 claim that circumcision no longer has a status after the passion of Christ.

The present tense of Paul's words—"they are Israel"—provides Aquinas with three opportunities to step away from the official view that the ceremonial law is dead and deadly to the Jews after the passion of Christ. The first step away takes place in 2.4.224, where Aquinas affirms the prerogative of the Jewish people as a light to the nations. The second step away from the official view takes place in 3.1.248 and 3.1.253, where Aquinas affirms the great value of Jewish election and circumcision and presents the argument that to take away or abrogate the prerogatives of Israel would nullify God's promise and undermine God's justice, which is "an unacceptable conclusion." The third is in 9.1.744, where the covenant with Israel, which is said to include rite of circumcision, is a blessing from God and a present spiritual benefit. In each case Aquinas allows what Soulen has referred to as the "priority of the present tense" descriptions of Israel to shape his view of the prerogatives of the Jewish people in a way that allows for a more benevolent view of the ceremonial law in

era after grace that might be referred to as “fulfilled and upheld.”

Although the tension between the unofficial and official views present difficulties for making sense of Aquinas’s thought, the unofficial view is a remarkable statement of continuity between Israel and Church, not to mention a robust theological defense of the prerogatives of Israel in the era after grace. Next, I examine whether Aquinas views the ceremonial law as mortally sinful acts, or whether he understands the rites to also retain a theological value after the passion of Christ in the Galatians *lectura*.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### *MORTUA ET MORTIFERA:* THE CEREMONIAL MOSAIC LAW IN AQUINAS'S GALATIANS *LECTURA*

In this chapter I once again answer whether Aquinas views the ceremonial law solely as Christological prefigurements that become *mortua et mortifera* after the passion of Christ or whether the rites retain a theological value.<sup>1</sup> Before discussing the organization of the chapter it is first necessary to remind readers why my treatment of the Galatians *lectura* appears here.

Aquinas views Paul's letters as a teaching on grace in the Church and understands Paul to have carried this teaching to three groups: the Gentiles, the prelates, and the sons of Israel.<sup>2</sup> My study of Aquinas's view of Paul's teaching to these groups focuses upon the theme of the ceremonial law. The subject of the law appears most frequently in the letters addressed to the first and third groups: the sons of Israel (Hebrews) and the Gentile *ecclesia* (Romans, Galatians, Ephesians).<sup>3</sup> In the theological structure Aquinas attributes to these letters, Galatians follows Romans and comes before Ephesians. Therefore, I examine the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.1.2. all English translations are from Fabian Larcher's translation of the commentary on Galatians, entitled *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* by St. Thomas Aquinas (Albany, N.Y.: Magi Books, 1966). I will indicate any changes to Larcher's translations with "[emended]." To facilitate ease of referencing the commentary the citations of the text of *Ad Galat.* will use the Marietti numbers, which includes the chapter, *lectio*, and paragraph numbers. Citations will therefore include three numbers, which correspond to the chapter number, *lectio* number in that chapter, and Marietti paragraph number. For example, *Ad Galat.* 1.2.17.

<sup>2</sup> For Aquinas, each of Paul's epistles is organized, in part, according to these three groups as each one relates to the origin and manifestation of grace in the Church. First, the letter to the Hebrews treated the existence of grace in Christ and for the sons of Israel. Second, the epistles to the prelates or kings include I Timothy and II Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Third, Aquinas devotes the largest amount of material to the Gentile *ecclesia*, which includes epistles: Romans, 1 and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and I and II Thessalonians. See chapter two for a more detailed treatment.

<sup>3</sup> I leave out the following epistles from the third group (1 and II Corinthians, Philippians, and Colossians, and I and II Thessalonians) due to the lack relevant material on Israel and the law. I do not treat the epistles to the "prelates" or kings (I Timothy and II Timothy, Titus, and Philemon) for the same reason.

Galatians *lectura* here and the Ephesians *lectura* in chapter six. After the Ephesians *lectura* I turn to a final chapter on what Marshall has referred to as the “official position” on the ceremonial law in *Summa theologiae* and compare it with the unofficial view of the law emerging from this study of the Pauline commentaries.

My examination of the Galatians *lectura* proceeds in four steps. In the first section I explain the themes and division of the *lectura*. In the second section I present Aquinas’s understanding of how Christ’s fulfillment of the ceremonial law brings about its cessation as well as its destruction. In the third section I discuss Aquinas’s comments upon the Jerusalem conference, the dispute between Peter and Paul at Antioch, and the controversy between Augustine and Jerome on the Jewish apostles’ observance of the ceremonial law. Finally, in the fourth section I discuss whether and to what extent Aquinas’s view of the relationship between Israel and the Church is characterized by economic supersessionism. For Aquinas, Paul teaches that the coming of the new sacraments requires the casting off of the ceremonial law or old sacraments. My aim is to show that Aquinas thinks 1) that Paul declared the old sacraments superfluous and 2) these laws become mortally sinful not only for Gentile and Jewish Christians but *for all* those who observe these sacraments after the grace of Christ, including the Jewish people.

### 1. Themes and Division of the Galatians *Lectura*

In this section I explain Aquinas’s view of Paul’s purpose in writing the letter as well as the primary theme of the Galatians *lectura*. I then outline the subject of each chapter and highlight the chapters that contain Aquinas’s view of the ceremonial law.

Aquinas divides Galatians into two parts, the greeting (1.1.1-1.1.15) and the body

(1.2.16-6.5.380). The greeting contains Paul's defense of his apostleship and authority.<sup>4</sup>

The *prologus* and the greeting indicate that the cessation and abandonment of the ceremonial law<sup>5</sup> after the passion of Christ is a major theme.<sup>6</sup> Aquinas's selection of Leviticus 26:10 as the interpretive key of Paul's message makes this especially clear: "The new coming on, you shall cast away the old."<sup>7</sup> Aquinas understands this verse to express the teaching in Paul's letter to the Gentile Christians at Galatia. For Aquinas, these Gentile Christians had fallen into the same error as the Jewish Christians in the letter to the Hebrews: "These words befit the present epistle in which the Apostle reproves the Galatians who had been so deceived by false teachers as to observe at once the rites of the Law and those of the Gospel."<sup>8</sup> For Aquinas, the problem in both cases was that believers in Christ were seeking to

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<sup>4</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.1.6.

<sup>5</sup> Like Aquinas's use of term *legalia* in the Hebrews *lectura*, he does not define the rites in detail. *Ad Hebraeos, Prologus*, 5. In general, he uses *legalis* to refer to the law, human law, or the law of the Old Testament. See Roy J. Deferrari, *A Latin-English Dictionary of St. Thomas Aquinas, Based on The Summa Theologica and Selected Passages of His Other Writings* (St. Paul Editions, 1986). In this context it is of course the law of the Old Testament to which he refers. According to Deferrari, Aquinas's use of the phrase *observatio legalis* refers to the "observance of the prescriptions of the Old Testament." As explained earlier, he is more than likely referring to three specific rites or "legal observances" that can be considered under the broader category of *caeremoniae veteris legis* (or ceremonies of the old law): these rites include the sacraments of circumcision and Passover, and observance of dietary regulations. In Ia-IIae q. 101.4, "observances" are only one category of *caeremoniae veteris legis* or ceremonies of the old law. As explained earlier, Aquinas divides the ceremonies of the old law into four categories: 1) *sacrificia* or sacrifices; 2) *sacra* or sacred things; 3) *sacramenta* or sacraments; and 4) *observantias* or observances. All of these categories are referred to together as *caeremoniae veteris legis*. Associating "legal observances" with these rites in particular seems justified by a reading of the Aquinas's description of the Antioch dispute between Paul and Peter, in which Aquinas discusses ceremonial law as rites at length (*Ad Galat.* 2.1). As I show below Aquinas understands the decision among the apostles at Acts 15 as a decree on not observing the rites of the law.

<sup>6</sup> Aquinas uses "insufficiency," "cessation," and "abandonment" a number of times to describe the ceremonial law. *Ad Galat.* 1.1.15: "insufficientiam legalium"; 1.1.2: "...epistola ad Galatas, in qua agitur de cessation sacramentorum veteris testamenti"; "...si observantia legalium dimissa, observantiae Evangelii Christi ferventer insistamus."

<sup>7</sup> *Ad Galat.*, 1.1.1: "Vetera, novis supervenientibus, proicietis."

<sup>8</sup> Recall that in the Hebrews *lectura* Aquinas states that the purpose of the letter was to address the error of converts from Judaism: "The Apostle wrote this epistle against the errors of some who, having

observe the ceremonial law along with the gospel.<sup>9</sup> Aquinas therefore understands the letter to address not simply the cessation of the rites of the law. Rather, the teaching is that these old sacraments must be cast away because of the grace available in the new sacraments of the Church.<sup>10</sup>

That the theme of the *lectura* is the cessation of the old sacraments due to the arrival of the new and better sacraments is indicated by Aquinas's view of the place of Galatians after the Corinthian letters in the canon of the New Testament:

The order of this epistle is fitting in that, after the two epistles to the Corinthians, in the first of which is a question of the sacraments of the Church, and in the second of the ministers of these sacraments, there should necessarily follow the epistle to the Galatians, treating of the termination of the sacraments of the Old Testament.<sup>11</sup>

For Aquinas, Hebrews treats the origin of grace in Christ the head of the Church. Romans treats the manifestation of the grace of Christ in the Church. The Corinthian letters treat the new sacraments of the Church and its ministers. Galatians treats the teaching that these new sacraments must not be observed along with the old:

...the Apostle plainly is arguing that if the death of Christ is the sufficient cause of our salvation, and if grace is conferred in the sacraments of the New Testament, which have their efficacy from the passion of Christ, then it is superfluous to observe, along with the New Testament, the rituals of the Old Law in which grace is not conferred nor salvation acquired, because the Law has led no one to perfection, as is

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converted from Judaism to the faith of Christ, wanted to keep the legal observances along with the Gospel, as if the grace of Christ did not suffice unto salvation." *Ad Heb.* 1.1.6.

<sup>9</sup> However, this does not mean that Aquinas's teaching does not also apply to Jews, a point I attempt to make clear below.

<sup>10</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.1.2: "...sacramentorum veteris testamenti." Aquinas also considers 1 and II Corinthians to treat the nature of the sacraments as these relate to the grace of Christ, although his comments on the old sacraments are rather sparse, and will therefore be included in this treatment of Galatians. In I Corinthians, Aquinas briefly comments upon the sacraments of the "old people" and the "new people," and the paschal lamb as a figure of Christ. In II Corinthians Aquinas states that the veil over the face of Moses was another figure of Christ.

<sup>11</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.1.2: "Ordo autem huius epistolae congruus est, ut post duas epistolas ad Corinthios, in quarum prima agitur de sacramentis Ecclesiae, in secunda de ministris horum sacramentorum, necessarie sequatur epistola ad Galatas, in qua agitur de cessatione sacramentorum veteris testamenti."

had in Hebrews (7:19).<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, for Aquinas, the primary theme of the letter is Paul's teaching that the coming of the new sacraments renders the old sacraments *superfluum*.

Aquinas organizes his lecture on Galatians as follows. Chapter one treats Paul's apostleship and authority and he refutes the error of the Galatians.<sup>13</sup> Chapter two treats the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15, the dispute between Peter and Paul at Antioch, and the controversy between Jerome and Augustine on the Jewish apostles' observance of the ceremonial law. Chapter three treats the insufficiency of the law to deliver from sin; how Christ's power sets humankind free from the curse of the law; and the idea that the ceremonial law must no longer be observed. Chapter four treats the preeminence of the dignity of grace over the old sacraments. Chapter five treats Paul's admonishment for the Galatians to remain steadfast in faith and charity. Finally, chapter six treats how Christians ought to behave toward one another, and heretics, and how Paul glories in the cross of Christ. Aquinas's view of why the ceremonial law as superfluous is scattered throughout these chapters. Since the great majority of the content is found in chapters one through four, my thematic examination of the *lectura* focuses there.

## 2. The Ceremonial Law as Fulfilled and Destroyed

Aquinas's view of Paul's claim that it is now superfluous to observe the ceremonies *along with the New Testament* seems to indicate that Aquinas understands Paul to rebuke

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<sup>12</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.1.14: "Ex quo manifeste apostolus arguit contra eos, quod si mors Christi est sufficiens causa salutis nostrae, et in sacramentis novi testamenti, quae efficaciam habent ex passione Christi, confertur gratia, quod sit superfluum simul cum novo testamento servari legalia, in quibus gratia non confertur, nec salus acquiritur, quia *neminem ad perfectum adduxit lex*, ut habetur Hebr. VII, 19."

<sup>13</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.1.7.

believers in Christ who thought the observance of the ceremonial law was necessary for salvation. For the most part, the *lectura* does consist of Aquinas's comments on what he views as Paul's response to the particular error of Gentile Christians at Galatia who, under pressure from Peter and Jewish converts, had stubbornly left the faith and sought "to be preserved by carnal observances...."<sup>14</sup> In Aquinas's view, the Galatian Gentile believers' abandonment of the new sacraments for the old amounted to turning away from Christ and to another gospel. However, as I briefly mentioned above, I intend to show that Aquinas also thinks that Paul and the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15 declared that the old sacraments were superfluous in the apostolic age, and deadly thereafter, *not only* for Gentile and Jewish Christians, but *for all* who observe the old sacraments, including Jews.<sup>15</sup>

In this second section my aim is to walk the reader through the main contours of Aquinas's view of the fulfillment of the ceremonial law and how it is rendered superfluous in the apostolic age. First, I discuss the temporality of the ceremonial law and the promises. Second, I show that Aquinas views the ceremonial law as a prefigurement of Christ but also underscores its historical purpose in securing the Jewish people against the danger of idolatry. Third, I argue that Aquinas understands the ceremonial law to not only have been "fulfilled and completed" by Christ, but also destroyed (*destruxi*) by Paul.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.2.125: "Circa primum sciendum est quod isti Galatae deserentes quod magnum erat, scilicet spiritum sanctum, adhaeserunt minori, scilicet carnali observantiae legis, et hoc stultum est. Et ideo dicit *sic stulti estis*, adeo *ut cum coeperitis* instinctu sancti spiritus, id est, initium perfectionis vestrae habueritis a spiritu sancto, *nunc*, dum perfectiores estis, *consummamini carne*, id est, quaeratis conservari per carnales observantias legis, a qua nec initium iustitiae potest haberi?" That Aquinas thinks Jewish converts, rather than Jews, are the false brethren is clear from 4.5.239: "...certain false brethren, converted from Judaism, went about the churches of the Gentiles, preaching the observance of the Law."

<sup>15</sup> As I explain below, Aquinas understands the old sacraments as "dead" or superfluous during the Jewish apostles' lifetime but soon after the "promulgation of grace," these sacraments become deadly to all those who observe them, including the Jews.

## 2.1 “Before the Faith the Jew was Greater”: The Temporality of the Law and Promises

As mentioned above, Aquinas understands Paul’s reference to the Gentile Christians turning to “another gospel” to mean their observation of the old sacraments. However, when Aquinas explains the evil of this act he is careful to once again guard against the Marcionite idea that the old law is in and of itself evil.<sup>16</sup> The old law, explains Aquinas, is not evil because it is “a good message....” However, it is only good in a qualified sense. The law is good “only insofar as it does announce some good things, namely, temporal and carnal...”<sup>17</sup> The old law is not perfect because it only announces goods that are *parva et minima* or small and slight. The new law, on the other hand, announces goods that are *perfecta et maxima* or the perfect and greatest. The reason the goods of the new law are the “perfect and greatest” is because these goods are not carnal but spiritual. “The New Law,” says Aquinas, “is perfectly and in the full sense a Gospel, i.e., good message, because it announces the greatest goods, namely, heavenly, spiritual and eternal.”<sup>18</sup>

Aquinas then anticipates an objection to this imperfect gospel. Since the law seems to have accomplished so little, what purpose did it actually serve? Aquinas then cites Paul’s rhetorical question from Romans. For Aquinas, to ask what purpose the old law served is similar to Paul’s question in Romans 3:1: “What advantage then hath the Jew; or what is the profit of circumcision?”<sup>19</sup> His *respondeo* reveals a stark difference between his view of the

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<sup>16</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.19. He relies upon the imperfect/perfect distinction to avoid what he identified in the Hebrews *lectura* as the Marcionite view the Old Testament is evil.

<sup>17</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.19. “Unde dicit *in aliud Evangelium*, id est, veteris legis, quae Annuntiatio bona est inquantum annuntiat quaedam bona, scilicet temporalia et carnalia.”

<sup>18</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.19: “Sed lex nova est perfecte et simpliciter Evangelium, id est, bona Annuntiatio, quia annuntiat maxima bona, scilicet caelestia, spiritualia et aeterna.”

value of circumcision in the Galatians *lectura* versus that of the Romans *lectura*.

Aquinas says that this question is solved by explaining how the fourfold purpose of the law corresponds to the four consequences of sin enumerated by Bede: wickedness, weakness, passion, and ignorance. First, the old law restrained men from the wickedness of sin by forbidding it and punishing it. Second, the old law disclosed human weakness because “men gloried in two things: knowledge and power.”<sup>20</sup> Third, the old law was given to tame the “concupiscence of a wanton people” in order that they would be “worn out by various ceremonies” so they would not fall into idolatry.<sup>21</sup> Fourth, the old law was given as a “figure of future grace.” Indeed, the law was significantly “interposed...between the Law of nature and the law of grace.”<sup>22</sup>

Although Aquinas goes on to argue that the law “was a pedagogue” and the Jews “were benefited” his explanation of the purposes of the law certainly lacks the theological defense of the advantage for the Jew after the grace of Christ prominently displayed in the Romans *lectura*.<sup>23</sup> The ways in which law benefited the Jews are consistently described in the past tense, *before* faith came. “What benefits did the Jews derive from the law before faith came by grace?”<sup>24</sup> His second answer is much like his earlier defense of the historical

<sup>19</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.7.163: “Similis dubitatio proponitur Rom. III, 1 ubi sic dicitur: *quid igitur amplius Iudaeo, et cetera.*”

<sup>20</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.7.165: “Homines enim de duobus praesumebant. Primo quidem de scientia, secundo de potentia.” Aquinas is also careful to explain that the old law did not cause sin. It entered that sin might increase not in a causal sense but in a sequential sense.

<sup>21</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.7.165: “Tertio, data est lex ad domandam concupiscentiam populi lascivientis, ut diversis caeremoniis fatigati neque ad idololatriam, neque ad lascivias declinarent.”

<sup>22</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.7.165: “Unde signanter dicit *posita est*, quasi debito ordine collocata inter legem naturae et legem gratiae.”

<sup>23</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.8.175: “Et primo ponit obsequium Iudaeorum...” See also 3.8.178-9.



purposes of purpose of the law: The Jews were protected from idolatry by being kept under the law (*custodiebamur sub lege*). Unlike his replies to the “What advantage then hath the Jew?” in the Romans *lectura*, there is no mention of the present theological value of the law as a light to the nations or present spiritual benefit to Jews after the grace of Christ.

When Aquinas comments upon the famous statement in Galatians 3:28 “...there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female...” he returns to the rhetorical question of Romans 3.1 once more.<sup>25</sup> First, Aquinas paraphrases his interpretation of what Paul might have thought about the meaning of the verse 28: “as if to say: truly have I said, that as many of you as have been baptized in Christ Jesus have put on Christ, because there is nothing in man that would exclude anyone from the sacrament of the faith of Christ and from baptism.”<sup>26</sup> For Aquinas, “There is neither Jew nor Greek” means: “Since you have been baptized in Christ, the rite from which you came to Christ, whether it was the Jewish or Greek, is no ground for saying that anyone occupies a less honorable place in the faith.”<sup>27</sup> Then he presents a possible objection to his interpretation of the claim that “there is neither Jew nor Greek” by drawing once again upon Romans 3:1: “What advantage then hath the Jew? Much in every way.”<sup>28</sup> It seems there is no advantage to the Jew if there is no distinction between Gentile and Jew in Christ. In the *respondeo* Aquinas says that Jews

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<sup>24</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.8.176: “...si Scriptura, id est, lex scripta, detinuit omnia sub peccato, quas utilitates habebant Iudaei ex ege antequam veniret fides ex gratia?”

<sup>25</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.9.186. He also cites Romans 10:12 as well, which states “There is no distinction of the Jew and Greek; for the same is Lord over all.” “Et Rom. X, 12: *non est distinctio Iudaei et Graeci*, et cetera.”

<sup>26</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.9.185: “...quasi dicat: vere dixi, quod quicumque in Christo Iesu, et cetera. Quia nihil potest esse in hominibus, quod faciat exceptionem a sacramento fidei Christi et Baptismi.”

<sup>27</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.9.186: “...ex quo in Christo Iesu baptizatus est, non est differentia, quod propter hoc sit indignior in fide, ex quocumque ritu ad eam venerit, sive ex ritu Iudaico sive Graeco.”

<sup>28</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.9.186: “Sed contra est quod dicitur Rom. III, 1: *quid ergo amplius est Iudaeo? Multum quidem per omnem modum.*”

and Greeks

can be considered...according to the *state in which they were before faith*. In this way, the Jew *was greater* because of the benefits he derived from the Law. In another way, according to the state of grace; and in this way, the Jew is not greater. And this is the sense in which it is taken here.”<sup>29</sup>

Here, Aquinas is commenting directly upon the advantage of the Jews after the passion of Christ. He does not take the opportunity, as he did in the Romans *lectura*, to advance an argument that there is a value to circumcision based on the idea that God commanded it or that God chose the Jewish people as his elect people. Rather, he restricts Jewish advantage to something in the past or something that *was*: “Before the faith, the Jew was greater.”

Whereas, in the Romans *lectura*, the “Much in every way” of Romans 3:1 compels Aquinas to argue at length for the Jews’ advantage (*amplius*) even after grace, in the Galatians *lectura*, he concludes that the theological advantage to the Jew is something in the past. Overall, the picture of the law that emerges from the *lectura* is that it was imperfect but beneficial for the Jews *only in the time before the coming of the new law*.

Aquinas’s view of the temporality of the law is also expressed in the idea that it can be changed due to the fact that the source of its authority is angels, not the begotten Son. Aquinas explains that there are three kinds of teachings each with different forms of authority. The first is that of the philosophers who arrive at knowledge of their doctrine with their own reason guiding them.<sup>30</sup> The second *doctrina* is “that which has been delivered by

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<sup>29</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.9.186: “Sed contra est quod dicitur Rom. III, 1: *quid ergo amplius est Iudaeo? Multum quidem per omnem modum*. Respondeo. Dicendum est, quod Iudaei et Graeci possunt considerari dupliciter: uno modo secundum statum in quo erant ante fidem; et sic amplius fuit Iudaeo propter beneficium legis. Alio modo quantum ad statum gratiae, et sic non est amplius Iudaeo; et de hoc intelligitur hic.”

<sup>30</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.25.

angles, as the old law.”<sup>31</sup> The old law, explains Aquinas, was not issued by a human will but by angels. The third *doctrina* “was given immediately by God Himself, as the teaching of the Gospel.”<sup>32</sup> Aquinas then quotes Hebrews 1:2: “In these days He hath spoken to us by his Son” and explains why the first and second type of teaching can be “changed and revoked” because these are not given directly from God:

Now, a teaching passed on by a man can be changed and revoked by another man who knows better, as one philosopher refutes the sayings of another, or by an angel who has a more penetrating knowledge of the truth. Even a teaching handed down by one angel could be supplanted by that of a higher angel or by God. But a teaching that comes directly from God can be nullified neither by man nor angel.<sup>33</sup>

The Gospel teaching has come directly from God and is therefore so great that “if a man or even an angel preached another Gospel...he is anathema, i.e., must be rejected and expelled.”<sup>34</sup> The old law, on the other hand, is given by angels and can therefore be changed. Although the law is higher than man it is not grounded in the same authority as the new. The old law “had a time fixed by God determining how long it was to endure and how long the heir, i.e., the Jewish people, were to be under it.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.25: “Quaedam alia doctrina est, quae est tradita per Angelos, sicut lex vetus.”

<sup>32</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.25: “Quaedam vero doctrina tradita est a Deo immediate, sicut doctrina Evangelii.”

<sup>33</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.25: “Doctrina etiam quae traditur per Angelum posset forte removeri per alium Angelum superiorem, seu per Deum. Sed contra doctrina quae immediate a Deo traditur, non potest neque per hominem, neque per Angelum irritari. Et ideo si contingat quod homo vel Angelus diceret contrarium illi quae per Deum tradita est, dictum suum non est contra doctrinam, ut per hoc irritetur et repellatur...”

<sup>34</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.25: “Et ideo dicit apostolus quod dignitas doctrinae evangelicae, quae est immediate a Deo tradita, est tantae dignitatis, quod sive homo, sive Angelus evangelizet aliud praeter id, quod in ea evangelizatum est, est anathema, id est, abiiciendus et repellendus est.”

<sup>35</sup> *Ad Galat.* 4.1.196: “...ponit temporis congruitatem, cum dicit *usque ad praefinitum tempus a patre*, quia sicut haeres secundum determinationem patris praefinito tempore sub tutoribus est, ita et lex determinatum tempus habuit a Deo, quamdiu deberet durare, et quamdiu haeres, scilicet populus Iudaeorum, esset sub ea.”

## 2.2 Christ and the New Covenant as God's Promise to Abraham

Aquinas argues that the promises of the old law are different from those of the new. While the two testaments are the same when it comes to figure and reality, they are different in regard to the promises. The testaments are "...different in the promises, but not in the figure, because the same thing is contained in the Old Testament and in the New: the Old, indeed, as in a figure, but in the New as in the express reality."<sup>36</sup> The continuity between the Old and New Testament is therefore maintained by the prefiguring function of the ceremonial law and this also protects the status of the new covenant: "The same thing is contained so far as the inward understanding is concerned...yet if the old is embraced after accepting the new, that is seen to show that the new is not perfect, and that the one is different from the other."<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, God's covenant with Abraham is defined primarily according to the spiritual goods that the covenant prefigures: Christ's justification of all by faith. At first, it seems Aquinas understands Paul's language about the promise to Abraham to consist of many things: "He says promises, using the plural, because the promise that his seed would be blessed contained a number of things."<sup>38</sup> Aquinas points to the following scriptures:

In thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed (Gen 12:3); Look up to heaven and number the stars if thou canst. So shall thy seed be (Gen 15:5). Again: To thy seed will I give this land (Gen 15:18). I will bless thee and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven (Gen 22:17).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.19: "Est enim aliud in promissis, sed non est aliud in figura, quia idem continetur in veteri testamento et in novo: in veteri quidem ut in figura, in novo vero ut in re et expresse."

<sup>37</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.20: "Quia, licet idem contineatur quantum ad interiorem intellectum per vetus et novum testamentum, ut dictum est, tamen si post susceptionem novi testamenti reiteratur vetus, videtur ostendi quod novum non sit perfectum, et quod illud sit aliud ab isto."

<sup>38</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.6.157: "Dicit autem *promissiones* pluraliter, quia promissio de benedicendo semine multa continebat."

However, all these promises are a decree “concerning the inheritance to be given to Abraham and his seed.”<sup>40</sup> The multiple promises are therefore interpreted as concerning essentially one particular inheritance.

For Aquinas, the content of this particular inheritance is explained by Paul when he says “He saith not: ‘And to his seeds, as of many; but as of one.’” This one seed refers to Christ who is “the only one through whom and in whom all could be blessed.”<sup>41</sup> Aquinas understands the promise to Abraham as an inheritance that comes only through Christ. “What God promised to Abraham” was “that he would obtain an inheritance” and then Aquinas cites Jeremiah 31:31: “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Juda.”<sup>42</sup> Here, Aquinas seems to understand God’s covenant with Abraham (citing Genesis 22:16: “By my own self have I sworn”) only as a promise to fulfill the new covenant declared in Jeremiah.

That aspect of the promise that is the nations being blessed (through the the seed of Abraham, which is the seed of Christ) consists in the Gentiles coming to faith. Gentile justification in Christ fulfills “what Abraham was told beforehand...in his seed all nations

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<sup>39</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.6.157: “Sicut Gen. c. XII, 3, *in te benedicentur universae cognationes terrae*; item XV, 5, *suscipe caelum, et numera stellas*, etc.; item eodem: *semini tuo dabo terram hanc*, etc.; item XXII, 18: *benedicam tibi et multiplicabo semen tuum sicut stellas caeli*.”

<sup>40</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.6.157: “Istae ergo promissiones sunt quasi testamentum Dei, quia est quaedam ordinatio de haereditate danda Abrahae et semini suo.”

<sup>41</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.6.158: “*Christus*, quia ipse solus est per quem et in quo omnes poterunt benedici.”

<sup>42</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.6.159: “Dicit ergo, quod hoc promisit Deus Abrahae, sed hoc est *testamentum*, scilicet ista promissio de haereditate adipiscenda. Ier. XXXI, 31: *feriam domui Israel et domui Iuda foedus novum*, et cetera.”

would be blessed.”<sup>43</sup> The nations are blessed “in thee” (i.e. in Abraham) as follows: “God told unto Abraham before that in thee, i.e., in those who in your likeness will be your sons by imitating your faith, shall all nations be blessed...”<sup>44</sup> Abraham’s relationship to the promise is therefore defined primarily in a spiritual way that seems to exclude the concept of the carnal children of Israel. The promise is that his sons will be made numerous, but these sons will be sons “by imitating your faith.”<sup>45</sup>

Aquinas also points out that the law is not part of the fulfillment of Abraham’s promise. Indeed, the law poses a threat to the fulfillment of the promise. If this inheritance promised to Abraham were of the law, it would actually nullify the promise to Abraham, a promise concerns justification of the sons of Abraham by faith:

Then when he says, ‘For, if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise,’ he shows how from the foregoing it follows that the Law would nullify the promises, if the Law were necessary for justification or for the blessing to come to the Gentiles.<sup>46</sup>

The idea that the law would be necessary for justification or for the blessing to come to Gentiles threatens to nullify the Gospel.

Aquinas’s view of God’s promise to Abraham in the Galatians *lectura* is therefore defined in a way that creates distance between the law and the covenant with Abraham. The promise to Abraham does not include the multiplication of the people identified by the

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<sup>43</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.3.132: “Consequenter cum dicit *providens autem Scriptura*, etc., ponit maiorem, quae scilicet est, quod Abrahae praenuntiatum est quod in semine suo benedicerentur omnes gentes.

<sup>44</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.3.132: “Et hoc est quod dicit *providens autem Scriptura*, inducens Deum loquentem Abrahae dicit Gen. XII, 3, quod *Deus praenuntiavit Abrahae* quod *in te*, id est, in his qui ad similitudinem tuam filii tui erunt imitatione fidei, *benedicentur omnes gentes*. Matth. VIII, 11: *multi venient ab oriente et occidente*, et cetera.”

<sup>45</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.3.132: “quod *Deus praenuntiavit Abrahae* quod *in te*, id est, in his qui ad similitudinem tuam filii tui erunt imitatione fidei...”

<sup>46</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.6.161: “Deinde, cum dicit *nam si ex lege*, etc., ostendit quomodo sequatur ex praemissis, quod lex evacuet promissiones, si lex necessaria esset ad iustificationem sive benedictionem gentium.”

ceremonial rites as it did in the Romans *lectura*. Therefore, Abraham's promise does not include Abraham's sons in the flesh but the sons of faith. Whereas in the Romans commentary, the law is described as prerogatives of the circumcised Jewish people and included in the covenant as a promise from God, in the Galatians *lectura* the law is separated from the covenant and viewed as undermining God's promise to Abraham to fulfill the new covenant.<sup>47</sup>

### 2.3 The Prefiguring Function of the Ceremonial Law

In addition to the temporality of the law, the prefiguring function of the old law is stressed throughout the Galatians *lectura*. Aquinas understands Christ's words in Matthew 5:17 to mean that the figures of the old law are now fulfilled.<sup>48</sup> To observe the ceremonial law after the passion is "absurd and the greatest of troubles."<sup>49</sup> This is because "a thing ought to be converted into that to which it is ordained."<sup>50</sup> To observe the ceremonial law after the passion is to cling to an old sign after having already arrived at the destination to which it

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<sup>47</sup> Recall Aquinas's view of God's promise to Abraham includes the blessing of the circumcised flesh of the people of Israel in *Ad Romanos* 3.1253-4. Aquinas affirms the election of this chosen people by connecting the doctrine of election with fleshly circumcision. This is made clear when he restates the question *What advantage has the Jew?* with a question he sees as getting to the heart to the matter: "*Or what is the value of circumcision?* It seems...there is no value." Aquinas answers by saying that the idea that there is now no value in circumcision is not fitting. It is "not fitting since it was imposed by God, Who says: *I am the Lord, your God, who teaches you unto profit Is 48:17.*" Furthermore, the advantage of the Jew and the ceremonial law are then intimately linked with election and God's faithfulness. Aquinas sees God's faithfulness as directly tied to the advantage and greatness of the Jews as a people even in the face of unbelief in the promises of God, and God's Son: "[God's] faithfulness would be nullified, if it happened that the Jews had no advantage, just because some have not believed. For God promised to multiply that people and make it great: *I will multiply your descendants Gen 22:16.*" Here, his citation of the promise to Abraham in Genesis 22 is clearly broader than its use in the Galatians *lectura*. In the Romans *lectura*, the Christological fulfillment of the new covenant and justification of Gentiles by faith does not require the subtraction of the Sinai covenant and the flesh of Israel and reduction of the promise to Abraham.

<sup>48</sup> *Ad Galat.* 4.1.200.

<sup>49</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.21: "absurdum et turbatio maxima."

<sup>50</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.21: "In illud enim debet aliquid converti ad quod ordinatur;"

pointed, which is to misuse it:

But the New Testament and the Gospel of Christ are not ordained to the Old, but contrawise, the Old Law is ordained to the New Law, as a figure to the truth. Consequently the figure ought to be converted into the truth, and the Old Law to the Gospel of Christ, not the truth into the figure, or the Gospel of Christ into the Old Law.<sup>51</sup>

To illustrate this point, Aquinas draws upon an analogy about the relationship between a man and an image of a man: “This is plain from the way we ordinarily speak; for we do not say that a man resembles the image of a man, but contrawise, that the image resembles the man....”<sup>52</sup> He then cites the Leviticus text once more: “the new coming on, you shall cast away the old.”<sup>53</sup> For Aquinas, to observe the ceremonial law after the passion is an attempt to turn the Gospel into the Old Law. To do so is the crime (*criminis*) committed by the Galatians.<sup>54</sup>

Aquinas also argues that the words that encapsulate the apostolic message of the letter, “The new coming on, you shall cast away the old,” indicate a rationale for a casting away of the ceremonial law based on its “oldness”: “In these words the Lord suggests a fourfold oldness (*quadruplicem vestustatem*).<sup>55</sup> The first and second forms of oldness are

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<sup>51</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.21: “...novum autem testamentum et Evangelium Christi non ordinatur ad vetus, sed potius e contrario lex vetus ordinatur ad legem novam, sicut figura ad veritatem; et ideo figura converti debet ad veritatem, et lex vetus in Evangelium Christi, non autem veritas in figuram, neque Evangelium Christi in legem veterem....”

<sup>52</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.21: “...quod patet ex ipso usu loquendi. Non enim dicimus quod homo sit similis imagini hominis, sed potius e converso, imago est similis homini.”

<sup>53</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.2.21: “...quod patet ex ipso usu loquendi. Non enim dicimus quod homo sit similis imagini hominis, sed potius e converso, imago est similis homini. Ier. XV, 9: *ipsi convertentur ad te*, etc.; et Lev. XXVI, 10: *novis supervenientibus*, et cetera.”

<sup>54</sup> It does not seem to be the case that Aquinas would refer to the Jewish observance of the ceremonial law as a crime, although he does still hold that observation of the rites by Jews is a mortally sinful act. He reserves the harshest language for the Gentile Christians who practice the ceremonial law along with the gospel.



directly related to the rationale behind the casting away of the ceremonial law.<sup>56</sup> The first oldness is that which Isaiah referred to in Isaiah 26:3: “The old error is passed away.”<sup>57</sup> This *doctrinae Christi* removes the error of the old. The second oldness of the law refers to the *figurae* of the rites which, for Aquinas, is their prefiguring of the new covenant announced in Jeremiah 31:22: “Behold, the days shall come, saith the Lord; and I will perfect, unto the house of Israel and unto the house of Judah, a new testament not according to the testament which I made to their fathers.” Aquinas explains that, “Here he shows first of all that the first testament is old and that it is made new by the newness of grace or of the reality of Christ’s presence.”<sup>58</sup> Aquinas’s use of the Jeremiah text functions in the same way it does in the Hebrews *lectura*: to refer to the change of time, when the grace of the new covenant appears in Christ. It is because of this *gratia novi testamenti*, Aquinas explains, that “the Old Testament should be cast out, so that with the fulfillment of the truth, the figure may be abandoned, and with the attainment of these two, grace and truth, one may arrive at the truth of justice and glory.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Ad Galat. Prologus*, 1: “...quod apostolus improprie eis in verbis praemisissis, dicens *vetera, novis supervenientibus, proicietis*. In quibus verbis innuit dominus quadruplicem vetustatem.”

<sup>56</sup> The third oldness is of guilt. Aquinas understands this guilt as a result of “not confessing...sins” but this is made new by “the newness of justice.” Although he does not spell out this justice, it is safe to assume he means the sanctifying justice that comes only through Christ. The fourth oldness is punishment of sin in the body, which the newness of glory will remove. *Ad Galat. Prologus* 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Ad Galat. Prologus*, 1: “Prima vetustas est erroris, de qua Is. XXVI, 3: *vetus error abiit*, et haec remota est per novitatem doctrinae Christi.”

<sup>58</sup> *Ad Galat. Prologus*, 1: “Secunda vetustas est figurae, de qua Hebr. c. VIII, 8: *consummabo super domum David, et super Iuda testamentum novum, non secundum testamentum quod feci patribus eorum*. Ubi primo ostendit primum testamentum esse vetustum, et hoc renovari per novitatem gratiae, seu veritatis praesentiae Christi.”

<sup>59</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.1.2: “Scribit ergo apostolus Galatis hanc epistolam, in qua ostendit, quod, veniente gratia novi testamenti, debet proici vetus testamentum, ut impleta veritate deseratur figura, quibus duabus, scilicet gratia et veritate, adeptis, perveniatur ad veritatem iustitiae et gloriae. Acquiruntur autem illa duo, si observantia legalium dimissa, observantiae Evangelii Christi ferventer insistamus.”

## 2.4 The Cessation of the Ceremonial Law

As stated above, Aquinas not only sees the old sacraments as fulfilled but he also understands them to terminate with the coming of Christ.<sup>60</sup> The prefiguring function of the law therefore also points toward the law's cessation and replacement by better sacraments. As in the Hebrews and Romans *lectura* the sacraments of the old law are described as "weak and needy" because they cannot provide sanctifying grace.<sup>61</sup> If the old law justified, it was only because it prefigured Christ: "Again, if there were any in the old law who were just, they were not made just by the works of the Law but only by the faith of Christ...although some who observed the work of the Law in times past were made just, nevertheless, this was effected only by the faith of Jesus Christ."<sup>62</sup> The difference between the sacraments is essentially a matter of when and how they are configured to the appearance of the grace of Christ: "Hence the sacraments of the old law were certain protestations of the faith of Christ, just as our sacraments are, but not in the same way, because those sacraments were configured to the grace of Christ as to something that lay in the future; our sacraments, however, testify as things containing grace that is present."<sup>63</sup> Now that justifying grace is present in the new sacraments, the prefiguring function of the old sacraments as figure of the

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<sup>60</sup> Aquinas makes the distinction between the permanent moral precepts and the temporary ceremonial law in *Ad Galat.* 2.4.94.

<sup>61</sup> Aquinas does say that one can be made just in a certain sense by observing the moral laws, a point he also makes in the Romans *lectura*. A person can be made just by observing the moral laws of the old law in so far as the execution of justice is concerned. *Ad Galat.* 2.4.94; see also 4.4.223.

<sup>62</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.4.94: "Si qui autem in veteri lege iusti erant, non errant iusti ex operibus legis, sed solum ex fide Christi...quia etsi olim aliqui servantes opera legis iustificarentur, non tamen hoc erat nisi per fidem Iesu Christi."

<sup>63</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.4.94: "Unde et ipsa sacramenta veteris legis non fuerunt nisi quaedam protestationes fidei Christi, sicut et nostra sacramenta, sed differenter, quia illa sacramenta gratiam Christi configurabant quasi futuram; nostra autem sacramenta protestantur quasi continentia gratiam praesentem."

future reality is exhausted and no longer necessary.

Because the old law pointed forward to Christ, observing the law after Christ is “something that cannot be done without sin.”<sup>64</sup> However, there is a difference in the gravity of the sin for those that observe the law. Aquinas uses harsh language to describe the error of Gentile observance of the ceremonial law.<sup>65</sup> The termination of these rites is especially serious for the Galatians who were Gentile believers. If the foolish Galatians would read the law they would realize that it should be abandoned: “You have either read the Law or not. If you have read it, you ought to know the things written in it. But those things prove that it should be abandoned.”<sup>66</sup> In Aquinas’s view the law contains “certain things which clearly indicate that the Law must not be retained.”<sup>67</sup> To assume the burden of the law is “a mark of exceeding stupidity” as is clear from the fact that the apostles themselves abandoned the law at the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15:10.<sup>68</sup> The Galatians’ sin in observing the law is so great that it is “somewhat on par with Pilate who outlawed Christ, i.e., condemned him.” Aquinas says Paul’s words “...Christ hath been set forth, crucified among you...” means that “in believing that Christ does not suffice to save them, they are made to be sinners similar to Christ’s executioners who hung Him on the cross, condemning Him to a most shameful death

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<sup>64</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.5.100: “*Iesus Christus minister peccati est?* Ut scilicet mandaverit homines post suam passionem legalia observare, quod sine peccato fieri non potest.”

<sup>65</sup> That Aquinas thinks the Galatians are Gentiles is clear in 3.1.123.

<sup>66</sup> *Ad Galat.* 4.7.248: “Sed si legistis, scire debetis ea quae in ea scripta sunt: sed ipsa probat se dimittendam; si autem non legistis, non debetis recipere quod nescitis.”

<sup>67</sup> *Ad Galat.* 4.7.249: “...ideo quaero an legistis legem, quia in ipsa continentur quaedam, quae manifeste dicunt legem non esse tenendam.”

<sup>68</sup> *Ad Galat.* 4.7.248: “...sed subire grave onus, sicut est onus legis, magnae stultitiae signum esse videtur. Aquinas once again cites 15:10 as the apostolic rejection of the ceremonial law: “This is a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear.” I will treat Aquinas’s view of the Jerusalem conference below.

and killing Him...the Galatians sinned against Christ Jesus as did Pilate and those who crucified Christ.”<sup>69</sup>

## 2.5 The Apostle’s Pious Destruction of the Carnal Law

Lastly, Aquinas views Paul as one who destroyed (*destruxi*) the ceremonial law. Paul “destroyed the Law understood carnally by judging and teaching it spiritually.”<sup>70</sup> Yet Aquinas sees how such an idea seems to contradict the claim that the law is good and not evil: “...one might regard [Paul] as a destroyer of the Law and consequently impious according to Psalm 118:126: They have squandered thy law...”<sup>71</sup> Aquinas replies by saying that Paul did not destroy the ceremonial law in an impious way. Rather, Paul shows how he actually destroys the law without being impious. He argues that when anyone destroys a law by means of the law itself, he is indeed a prevaricator of the law, but not impious: “For a law is destroyed by means of the law when the law itself contains some local or temporary precept, such that the law should be observed for such a time or in such a place and no other, and this fact is expressed in the law.”<sup>72</sup> If someone were to *not* use that law after the said time

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<sup>69</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.2.121: “Potest, et quarto modo, exponi secundum Glossam, ut per hoc designet apostolus gravitatem culpae eorum, quia in hoc quod Christum deserunt legem observantes, aequaliter quodammodo peccabant Pilato, qui Christum proscripsit, id est, damnavit. Ut dum insufficientem Christum credunt ad salvandum, similes in peccando crucifixoribus Christi sint, qui ipsum in lingo suspenderunt, morte turpissima condemnantes et afficientes. Aequalitas tamen est accipienda ex parte eius, in quem peccatur, quia in Christum Galatae peccabant, sicut Pilatus et crucifixoires Christi.”

<sup>70</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.5.100: “ego *destruxi* legem carnaliter intellectam, spiritualiter iudicando et docendo. Unde si iterum vellem aedificare carnalis legis observantias, essem praevaricator legis spiritualis.

<sup>71</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.6.103: “Quia ergo apostolus dixerat *si enim quae destruxi*, etc., quod intelligitur de veteri lege, posset enim ab aliquo reputari legis destructor, et per consequens iniquus, secundum illud Ps. CXVIII, 126: *dissipaverunt iniqui legem tuam*...” [emended]

<sup>72</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.6.103: “Dissipatur autem lex per legem, quando in lege datur aliquod praeceptum locale seu temporale, ut scilicet lex illa tali tempore, seu tali loco servetur, et non alio, et hoc ipsum exprimitur in lege.”

and place, explains Aquinas, then he “destroys the law by means of the law itself...”<sup>73</sup>

“In this way,” says Aquinas, “the Apostle destroyed the law.” Aquinas paraphrases his view of Paul’s thinking on the matter: “I somehow destroyed the Law, but by means of the Law; because through the Law I am dead to the Law, i.e., by the authority of the Law I have rejected the Law, as being dead to the Law.”<sup>74</sup> This authority, according to Aquinas, is “cited in many places in Sacred Scripture,” chief of which is Jeremiah 31:31: “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel....”<sup>75</sup> In a sense, the “terms” for the abolishment of the old covenant are therefore included in that same old covenant. For Aquinas, the old testament is therefore abolished by the new testament because this old covenant clearly foretold such abolishment. It is through this twofold movement of prefiguring of the new covenant and fulfilling of the new covenant that the old covenant is destroyed.

In the next section I present Aquinas’s view of the apostolic authority for Paul’s teaching on the ceremonial law and how this law is not dead and deadly only for Gentile Christians but also for the Jewish people in the era after grace.

### 3. Aquinas on the Jerusalem Conference, Antioch Incident, and Controversy Between Jerome and Augustine

In Aquinas’s view, the dispute between Peter and Paul at Antioch (frequently referred to as the Antioch incident) raises the issue of apostolic authority and the unity of the gospel as it relates to the observance of the ceremonial law. He begins his comments on the Antioch

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<sup>73</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.6.103: “Si quis tunc in illo tempore, seu in illo loco lege non utitur, destruit legem per ipsam legem, et hoc modo apostolus destruxit legem.”

<sup>74</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.6.103: “Unde destruxi, inquit, quodammodo legem, tamen per legem, quia ego *mortuus sum legi per legem*, id est, per auctoritatem legis ipsam dimisi, quasi legi mortuus.”

<sup>75</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.6.103: “Auctoritas enim legis, per quam mortuus est legi, in multis sacrae Scripturae locis habetur; Ier. XXXI, 31, tamen sub aliis verbis: *confirmabo testamentum novum super domum Israel*, etc.;

incident by first highlighting Paul's commendation of the authority of the gospel as it relates to the other apostles in matters "where they opposed his teaching."<sup>76</sup> For Aquinas, Galatians reveals how Paul demonstrated that he not only instructed Peter regarding the implications of the gospel for the observance of the ceremonial law, but that he did so on apostolic grounds.<sup>77</sup> Before Aquinas even begins to comment on the dispute between Peter and Paul he takes the time to explain the authoritative basis of Paul's rebuke.

In the subsections that follow I explain Aquinas's view of the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15, which he understands as the apostolic basis for Paul's rebuke of Peter at Antioch. I then discuss Aquinas's view of the dispute between Peter and Paul, and his understanding of Jerome and Augustine's position that the ceremonial law is dead and deadly for all those who observe it in the era after grace.

### 3.1 Fulfilled and Completed: The Jerusalem Conference and the Apostolic Decree that the Ceremonial Law is No Longer of Value

Aquinas explains the circumstances of the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15 in detail.<sup>78</sup> He takes the time to do so not only because Paul famously references the conference (in Galatians 2:1) when he retells his confrontation with Peter, but also because Aquinas understands Paul to have established and defended his authority.<sup>79</sup>

In Aquinas's view, the apostolic decree on the value of circumcision serves as the

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<sup>76</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.1.51: "...secundo ostendit quod libere reprehendit alios apostolos in his quae contraria suae doctrinae dicebant, ibi *cum venisset Petrus*, et cetera."

<sup>77</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.76.

<sup>78</sup> Larcher translates *collatione* as "conference" or "discussion."

<sup>79</sup> Aquinas explains that the Galatians had been so deceived by false teachers that they believed that Paul did not "enjoy the same authority as the other apostles, as having neither been taught by Christ nor lived with Him, but sent by them as their minister." See *Ad Galat.* 1.1.6.

ground of Paul's rebuke of Peter's error at Antioch.<sup>80</sup> Aquinas understands Paul's words in Galatians 2 to report the time, place, witnesses, and motive of the apostolic conference of Acts 15. Though he views Paul and the apostles as equals in the Church, he privileges Paul as *the* apostle who taught the others and not vice versa. The other apostles greatly benefit from Paul's perfect conversion, which included direct instruction by Christ.<sup>81</sup> Paul "neither received the Gospel from man nor learned it by man."<sup>82</sup>

However, Aquinas also views all the apostles as called from out of the synagogue to a shared faith in the Gospel. The "conversion" of the apostles from the synagogue is mentioned in 2.1.66. And when Aquinas comments upon the possible meanings of Paul's words that God "separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace," he explains that the "womb" is the "college of Pharisees." The Pharisees trained Paul in Judaism. "Therefore," says Aquinas, "...the synagogue was his mother...its womb are the Pharisees. And from this womb he was separated by the Holy Spirit unto faith in the Gospel..."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> It is unclear to me whether Aquinas actually sides with Augustine on the question of Peter's error. Augustine believed Peter observed the law because of his Judaism but Jerome thought Peter acted under a pretense. Aquinas describes Peter's observance of the law as "pretending."

<sup>81</sup> "Furthermore, his conversion was perfect with respect to his understanding, because he was so instructed by Christ that there was no need to be instructed by the apostles; hence he says, *Neither went I to Jerusalem*, i.e., to be instructed by them." *Ad Galat.* 1.4.44. Aquinas is aware of Paul's stay with the apostles in Damascus and Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 9 and includes this fact as an objection to his position that Paul was *not* instructed by the apostles but received his teaching directly from Christ. His reply is simply that Paul, although he did go to Jerusalem to see Peter, he did not go for instruction. Aquinas repeats this in 1.4.47 in order to reinforce the idea that Paul did not seek instruction from Peter but obtained his teaching from Christ. He states in his own words what he believes Paul meant to say: "Although I did not go to the apostles to be instructed by them in the beginning of my conversion, because I had already been instructed by Christ, yet, being moved by a feeling of charity, *after three years*, i.e., after my conversion, I went to Jerusalem, because I had long desired to see Peter, not to be taught by him but to visit him..."

<sup>82</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.2.69: "licet essent magnae auctoritatis, tamen nil addiderunt doctrinae meae nec potestati, quia, sicut supra dictum est neque ab homine accepi Evangelium, neque per hominem didici."

<sup>83</sup> *Ad Galat.* 1.4.41: "Vel: *ex utero matris meae*, scilicet synagogae, cuius uterus est collegium Pharisaeorum, qui nutriebant alios in Iudaismo. Matth. XXIII, v.15: *circuitis mare et aridam, ut faciatis*, et cetera. Sic ergo mater sua fuit synagoga. Cant. c. I, 5: *filiis matris meae pugnauerunt contra me*, et cetera. Uterus

Paul's teaching on faith in this Gospel was then confirmed at the Jerusalem conference where he conferred with Peter, James, and John, among others. Paul conferred with these senior apostles on the Gospel and the observance of the law.<sup>84</sup> The discussion concerned the teaching of Jewish Christians, who are described as "false brethren." The false brethren "said that you cannot be saved without circumcision."<sup>85</sup> Paul, on the other hand, had always taught that faith is of value but "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision profits anything...."<sup>86</sup> In the context of the Jerusalem conference, Aquinas explains that after Paul's conversion he began to preach that the ceremonial law was not to be observed by Gentiles: "immediately after his conversion [he] began to preach things odious to the Jews, especially the vocation of the Gentiles and that they should not observe the justifications of the Law. So, then, he conferred about the Gospel."<sup>87</sup>

Therefore, Aquinas understands Paul's teaching on the Gospel to include a prohibition of the observance of the ceremonial laws (or legal justifications) as *a* specifically Gentile vocation. Paul's teaching on the Gospel is that *the Gentiles* must not be compelled to observe the rites of the Law. Jews and Jewish Christians, on the other hand, *can* observe the

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eius sunt Pharisei. Ex hoc ergo utero est segregatus per spiritum sanctum ad fidem Evangelii. Rom. I, 1: *segregatus in Evangelium Dei.*"

<sup>84</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.1.56: "Materia de qua contulit, fuit Evangelium. Et ideo dicit *contuli cum illis Evangelium Dei*, et cetera. Personae cum quibus contulit sunt maiores et excellentiores inter apostolos *seorsum autem cum his*, et cetera."

<sup>85</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.1.62. "Et hoc *ut veritas Evangelii permaneat apud vos*, quasi dicat: in nullo cessimus eis propter hoc, ne scilicet occasionem daremus eis qui sine circumcisione dicebant vos non posse salvari, quod est contra veritatem Evangelii quod praedicavi vobis."

<sup>86</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.1.63: "nec circumcisio aliquid confert, neque praeputium, sed fides."

<sup>87</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.1.57: "Apostolus enim quia non fuerat conversatus cum Christo, nec edoctus ab apostolis, sed statim post conversionem suam incepit praedicare quae erant odiosa Iudaeis, et specialiter de vocatione gentium, et quod non debebant servari legalia. Sic ergo contulit Evangelium."



legal ceremonies, at least at this time.<sup>88</sup>

Indeed, when Aquinas weighs in on the question of why Paul allowed Timothy, a Jew, to be circumcised but not Titus, a Gentile, he makes this point explicitly clear:

But the special reason why Timothy was circumcised and Titus not, was that Timothy was born of a Gentile father and Jewish mother, whereas Titus' parents were both Gentiles. *And the opinion of the Apostle was that those born of a Jewish parent on either side should be circumcised*, but those born entirely of Gentile parents should on no account be circumcised.<sup>89</sup>

For Aquinas, it appears Paul's teaching allows for Jewish Christians to continue to observing the ceremonial law in the apostolic age because of their commitment to Judaism.<sup>90</sup> Aquinas thinks that Paul taught believers in Christ born of a Jewish parent should be circumcised and

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<sup>88</sup> This observance is only allowed in what Augustine calls the "middle period" or the apostolic age.

<sup>89</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.1.63: "Fuit autem specialis causa quare Timotheus circumciscus fuit, et non Titus, quia Timotheus fuit ex patre gentili et matre Iudaea, Titus vero ex utroque parente gentili. Et sententia apostoli erat quod qui ex aliquo parente Iudaeo nati fuerant, circumciderentur; qui vero totaliter ex gentilibus parentibus nati essent, nullo modo debeant circumcidi." On this question Aquinas mentions an alternative reading provided by Ambrose, with which he disagrees. Ambrose thought, according to Aquinas, that Timothy was circumcised under the pressure of false brethren but also because observance of the rites no longer mattered i.e. Christian freedom: "...to the false brethren we therefore yielded in the hours of subjection in the matter of circumcision by circumcising Timothy, in order that the truth of the gospel might continue with you, i.e., the Gospel which teaches that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision profits anything, but the faith." Aquinas's Paul, at least here, circumcises Timothy not because of the pressure of false brethren or Christian freedom (the observance of the law is simply a matter of indifference) but because of the ceremonial law. Paul allows Timothy to be circumcised in Acts 16:3; Titus is refused circumcision by Paul in Galatians 2:3-5.

<sup>90</sup> Aquinas's position is, for the most part, like Augustine's. Augustine also thought the Jewish Christians observed the ceremonial law without sinning. But Aquinas and Augustine seem to differ slightly in their reasons that Jewish Christians should observe the law. Augustine thought the law should be observed "in case Jews might think Gentile converts to Christ rejected circumcision in the same way as idolatry had to be condemned; whereas, in fact, God had commanded men to practice circumcision, while it was Satan who persuaded men to idolatry." For Augustine, Paul operates on the same logic in Galatians 2:3-5 because "it is clear that he had understood their intentions and so he did not do what he had done in the case of Timothy because he felt free to show that those sacraments should neither be required as necessary nor condemned as sacrilegious." Their intentions in the case of Timothy refers to the false brethren's desire for Titus to be circumcised as a means of salvation. Augustine thinks that in Timothy's case the intentions of the Jews—who he thinks are Timothy's Jewish mother's friends—might think that Gentile converts to Christ rejected and condemned circumcision in the same way as idolatry. In Titus's case the rationale to not circumcise is the rejection of the doctrine that circumcision is necessary for salvation for Gentiles, such as Titus. In Timothy's case the rationale to circumcise is to avoid sending the wrong message to the Jews that the law is condemned. The assumption in both cases, for Augustine, is that the ceremonial law is a matter of indifference for the Jewish Christian—it can be observed as an expression of Christian freedom and respect for the ancient customs but is not necessary. Aquinas, however, grounds the rationale for the circumcision of Timothy in the law when he says Timothy was circumcised because of his Jewish mother. Augustine Ep. 82, cited in White, 153.

uses the language of vocation to describe the specifically Gentile requirement to not observe the justifications. From Aquinas's perspective, therefore, Paul's teaching did not prohibit Jewish believers from observing the ceremonial law. Aquinas also refers to Jewish believers as an *ecclesia* led by Peter. He views Peter as a pillar of what he calls the *Ecclesia Iudaeorum fidelium* or "Church of the Jewish believers."<sup>91</sup>

Recall that this same teaching is mentioned in the *prologus* to Hebrews *lectura*, and once in the Romans *lectura*. Here, in the Galatians *lectura*, the biblical and theological foundation of this Pauline teaching is finally explained. According to Aquinas's reading, Paul's aim at the conference was to gain apostolic support for this teaching. Paul "wanted to confer with them, in order that when his hearers heard that his teaching was in agreement with that of the other apostles and approved by them, they would hold to it more firmly."<sup>92</sup> The result of the conference, in Aquinas's view, is that Paul's teaching is approved rather than the opinion of the false brethren. At the Jerusalem conference Paul won apostolic approval of his controversial teaching that was "odious to the Jews." Aquinas paraphrases Paul's view of on the outcome of conference as follows: "contrary to the opinion of the adversaries who came up to Jerusalem to oppose me in this matter, it was I that the Apostles approved."<sup>93</sup> Aquinas therefore views the decision to approve Paul's teaching as the apostolic decree of Acts 15.

However, when Aquinas describes the apostle's decree to approve Paul's teaching he

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<sup>91</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.2.74-5.

<sup>92</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.1.59: "et ideo voluit conferre cum eis, ut dum scirent auditores, quod doctrina sua concordaret cum doctrina aliorum apostolorum, et approbaretur ab eis, firmitus eius doctrinam tenerent, et sic quantum ad eos non in vanum curreret."

<sup>93</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.2.71. "...sed potius, contra opinionem adversariorum, qui ascenderant contra me in Ierusalem ad apostolos pro ipsa quaestione, me ipsi apostolic approbaverunt...."

does not mention that Paul's teaching was that nonobservance of the rites was the particular vocation of Gentiles. Rather, Aquinas's description of the apostolic decree seems to implicitly broaden the application of Paul's teaching of nonobservance from Gentiles to include all who observe the rites.

Aquinas explains the outcome of the conference as follows: "The discussion occasioned the decree handed down by the apostles on not observing the rites of the law, as is had in Acts (15:28)."<sup>94</sup> Immediately after describing the terms of the decree Aquinas explains the rationale for the decision that the rites are "not to be observed" by appealing to John Chrysostom's view of circumcision as a sign of the promise with Abraham that was fulfilled and completed by the passion of Christ:

The reason why these rites were not to be observed after the passion of Christ is assigned in the following way by Chrysostom: 'For it is evident that the instrument drawn up for any promise or pact binds only until the pact and promise are fulfilled; but when fulfilled, the instrument no longer binds on that point.' Now circumcision is an instrument of the promise and pact between God and believing men. Hence it was that Abraham underwent circumcision as a sign of the promise, as is said in Genesis (11:26). And because the promise was fulfilled and the pact completed by the passion of Christ, neither the pact holds after the passion nor is circumcision of any value.<sup>95</sup>

Here, Aquinas states the terms of the apostolic decree as a decision on "not observing the rites of the law" in general, with no mention of the qualification of Gentile vocation.

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<sup>94</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.1.61: "Unde tunc data est sententia ab apostolis de legalibus non observandis, sicut habetur Act. XV, 28."

<sup>95</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.1.61: "cum eis de doctrina Evangelii, quod ex hoc secutum est, quod doctrina mea et sententia firma permansit, scilicet de legalibus non observandis, sic quod gentiles non cogerentur ad servandum legalia, intantum quod *neque Titus, qui mecum erat, cum esset etiam gentilis, compulsus est*, rationibus eorum, *circumcidi*, sed susceptus est ab apostolis in societatem incircumcisis. Unde tunc data est sententia ab apostolis de legalibus non observandis, sicut habetur Act. XV, 28. Ratio autem quare post passionem Christi non debent servari legalia, assignatur a Chrysostomo talis: manifestum est enim quod instrumentum quod fit de aliqua promissione seu foedere tenet tantum quousque compleatur foedus et promissio, quibus completis, instrumentum praedictum in hoc non tenet. Circumcisio autem est quoddam instrumentum promissionis et foederis inter Deum et fideles homines; unde et Abraham accepit circumcisionem in signum promissionis, ut dicitur Gen. XVII. Et quia Christi peracta passione, soluta fuit promissio et completum foedus, ideo post passionem non tenet, nec valet circumcisio."

The description of the decree and Paul's teaching on nonobservance of the rites for Gentiles seem quite different. Chrysostom's view that circumcision is no longer of value is significantly different from Paul's teaching that the Gentiles should not observe the law. Nevertheless, Aquinas still argues that Paul's teaching is vindicated at the conference and even that his preaching "was not changed nor did the apostles add to it." For Aquinas, the Jerusalem conference's decision did not alter Paul's teaching, which "remained unaltered concerning the non-observance of legalism, i.e., the Gentiles would not be compelled to observe the rites of the Law...."<sup>96</sup> Aquinas synthesizes Paul's teaching on nonobservance of the rites as a Gentile vocation with his view of the consequences of the decree: circumcision is no longer of any value.

Overall, the recounting of the conference and its decision is part of what Aquinas views Paul successfully defending his authority and the authentic Gospel message.<sup>97</sup> Though he asserts there was no change made to Paul's teaching, Aquinas's view of Paul's teaching against the observance of the rites as a Gentile vocation is different than his exposition of the meaning of the decree handed down by the apostles at the Jerusalem conference. While his exposition of Paul's teaching points out that his prohibition of the observation of the ceremonial law (circumcision) is a Gentile vocation, this significant condition of the teaching is left out of his description of the Acts 15 decree since it is described in rather general terms, as a decision on "not observing the rites of the law." Furthermore, the rationale of the apostles, which Aquinas explains by relying upon the citation of Chrysostom, explicitly

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<sup>96</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.1.61: "Dicit ergo: dico quod ita contuli cum eis de doctrina Evangelii, quod ex hoc secutum est, quod doctrina mea et sententia firma permansit, scilicet de legalibus non observandis,"

<sup>97</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.1.60.

states that the observance of the ceremonial law is no longer of value. Aquinas's reliance upon Chrysostom's description of the rationale indicates that he thinks the decision of the apostles' is that the ceremonial law is dead for all. As the quote from Chrysostom made clear, circumcision *was a sign* of the promise. Now, after the passion, the pact is fulfilled and completed. The passion completes the promise and the rites are no longer of value. For Aquinas, therefore, the decree of the Jerusalem conference was that circumcision and the sacraments of the Old Law are superfluous after the passion. I now turn to Aquinas's treatment of the debate between Jerome and Augustine on Paul's confrontation of Peter, which reveals how Aquinas views the Jewish apostles' relationship to the ceremonial law and how the observance of the ceremonial law is transformed from superfluous to deadly.

### 3.2 From Completed and Superfluous to Deadly: Aquinas's View of the Antioch Incident

After establishing Paul's authority on both Christological and apostolic grounds, Aquinas comments upon Paul's rebuke of Peter at Antioch. For Aquinas, Paul shows how he "helped Peter by correcting him."<sup>98</sup> Aquinas summarizes Paul's narration as follows. After regularly eating the food of the Gentiles, Peter withdrew from the Gentiles when certain Jews arrived. Peter "adhered to the Jews alone and mingled among them."<sup>99</sup> Peter did so, reasons Aquinas, because he feared the Jews. Although this fear was not "a human or worldly fear but a fear inspired by charity, namely, lest they be scandalized, as is said in a Gloss."<sup>100</sup> Peter

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<sup>98</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.76. Aquinas sides with Augustine, who also viewed Peter as being in the wrong for withdrawing from Gentile table fellowship.

<sup>99</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.79-80: "Quid autem faciebat, ostendit hic Paulus dicens, quod cum erat cum Iudaeis, subtrahebat se a consortio fidelium qui fuerant ex gentibus, adhaerens Iudaeis tantum, et congregans se cum eis."

<sup>100</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.80: "...non quidem timore humano sive mundano, sed timore charitatis, ne scilicet scandalizarentur, sicut dicitur in Glossa." He goes onto explain that Peter "became to the Jews as a Jew,

“became to the Jews as a Jew, pretending that he felt the same as they did in their weakness.”<sup>101</sup> “What resulted from this pretense,” says Aquinas, is “the rest of the Jews consented who were at Antioch, discriminating between food and separating from the Gentiles.”<sup>102</sup> “Prior to this act,” explains Aquinas, “...they would not have done this.” In order to avoid scandalizing the Jews, Aquinas says Peter pretended to feel the same way the Jews did and observe the laws. The Gentiles were then compelled to observe the legal justifications and the truth of the gospel was being undone.<sup>103</sup>

For this, Peter is described by Aquinas as *reprehensibilis*.<sup>104</sup> Paul’s rebuke is just and fitting, explains Aquinas, because “in cases where danger is imminent, the truth must be preached openly and the opposite never condoned through fear of scandalizing others...”<sup>105</sup>

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pretending that he felt the same as they did in their weakness. Yet he feared unreasonably, because the truth must never be set aside through fear of scandal.” Aquinas’s reference to Peter’s “fear of scandal” motivated by charity actually resembles Jerome’s view of the reason for Peter’s fear. Peter Gorday explains: “[Jerome] took the tack of interpreting the ‘fear’ felt by Peter ‘of those from the circumcision’ mentioned by Paul (Gal. 2:14) as a reference not to cravenness on Peter’s part but to a fear that he would lose his Jewish converts if he acted unwisely in the crisis (Ep. 112, 8). He enters not into a lie, contended Jerome, but into ‘honest diplomacy’ intended to display the wisdom of the apostles....” Gorday points out that the idea that Peter caved to the circumcision group out of a craven fear is actually from the anti-Jewish tradition of the Marcionite prologues. Peter J. Gorday, “Jews and Gentiles, Galatians 2:11-14, and Reading Israel in Romans: The Patristic Debate,” in *Engaging Augustine on Romans: self, context, and theology in interpretation*, eds. Daniel Patte and Eugene TeSelle, (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002), 215.

<sup>101</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.88: “Et ideo factus est Iudaeis tamquam Iudaeus, simulans se cum infirmis idem sentire...”

<sup>102</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.81: “Quid autem ex hac simulatione sequebatur, subdit dicens, quod *simulationi eius*, scilicet Petri, *consenserunt caeteri Iudaei*, qui erant Antiochiae discernentes cibos, et segregantes se a gentibus, cum tamen ante simulationem huiusmodi hoc non fecissent.”

<sup>103</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.83: “Et ideo dicit: sic Petrus reprehensibilis erat, sed ego solus, *cum vidissem quod non recte ambulant illi qui sic faciebant ad veritatem Evangelii*, quia per hoc peribat veritas, si cogerentur gentes servare legalia, ut infra patebit.” Aquinas’s presentation of Peter seems influenced by Jerome’s position that the Jewish apostles acted under a pretense.

<sup>104</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.83.

<sup>105</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.83: “Quod autem recte non ambulant, ideo est quia veritas, maxime ubi periculum imminet, debet publice praedicari, nec fieri contrarium propter scandalum aliquorum.”

Aquinas understands Peter to have a divine obligation to not compel the Gentiles to eat such foods. This is because Aquinas thinks Peter was instructed by God to no longer live as the Jews do: “he had been instructed by God that although he had previously lived as the Jews do, he should no longer discriminate among foods: ‘That which God has cleansed, do not thou call common’ (Acts 10:15).”<sup>106</sup> Paul’s rebuke of Peter is restated and then paraphrased by Aquinas with echoes of Acts 10 in the background:

If thou, being a Jew, by nature and race, livest after the manner of the Gentiles and not as the Jews do, i.e., if you observe the customs of Gentiles and not of Jews, since you know and feel that discriminating among foods is of no importance, how dost thou compel the Gentiles, not indeed by command, but by example of your behavior, to live as do the Jews?<sup>107</sup>

In Aquinas’s view the idea that the ceremonial law is no longer to be observed is a teaching revealed to Peter by God in Acts 10:15.<sup>108</sup> In Aquinas’s view, Peter did not observe the rites prior to the arrival of the Jews and ate with Gentiles because “the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Who had said to him: “‘That which God hath cleansed, do not thou call common,’ as is had in Acts 10:15.”<sup>109</sup> Aquinas’s Peter is therefore aware that the ceremonial law is of no importance and need not be observed.

While Aquinas’s understanding of Peter’s observance of the law is rather

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<sup>106</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.85: “In hoc ergo Paulus reprehendit Petrum, quod cum ipse esset instructus a Deo, cum Iudaice prius viveret, ne postea amplius cibos discerneret Act. X, 15: *quod Deus sanctificavit, tu ne commune dixeris*, ipse contrarium simulabat.”

<sup>107</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.85: “...*si tu Iudaeus cum sis*, etc., quasi dicat: o Petre, *si tu cum Iudaeus sis*, natione et genere, *gentiliter et non Iudaice vivis*, id est, gentium et non Iudaeorum ritum servas, cum scias et sentias discretionem ciborum nihil conferre, *quomodo cogis gentes*, non quidem imperio, sed tuae conversationis exemplo, *iudaizare?*”

<sup>108</sup> As far as I can tell, in his exchange with Jerome, Augustine does not use Acts 10:15 to argue that Peter knew the law was no longer important.

<sup>109</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.79: “et hoc faciebat ex instinctu spiritus sancti, qui dixerat ei *quod Deus sanctificavit, tu ne commune dixeris*, ut habetur Act. X, 15....”

straightforward (he did not observe it after his dream; he did observe it when under pressure from Jewish Christians), his view of Paul's position on the law is more complex. As I show below, Aquinas departs from Augustine on this important point: whether Paul actually observed the ceremonial law and taught that Jews could observe it in the apostolic age.

### 3.3 Aquinas on the Controversy Between Jerome and Augustine

Aquinas says that Paul's rebuke of Peter "occasioned no small controversy between Jerome and Augustine...."<sup>110</sup> The controversy concerned the proper interpretation of Galatians 2:11-14.<sup>111</sup> The discussion dominated a series of letters exchanged between these Church fathers "from opposite ends of the Latin-speaking Roman Empire," sometime between 394 and 419.<sup>112</sup> "As their writings clearly show," explains Aquinas, "they are seen

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<sup>110</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.86: "Sciendum est autem quod occasione istorum verborum, non parva controversia est orta inter Hieronymum et Augustinum."

<sup>111</sup> Peter Gorday points out that the controversy between Jerome and Augustine centered upon finding answers to lingering questions about the Antioch incident: "To be sure, on one level Paul's narrative posed no problem for Augustine and Jerome. They were quite clear in their agreement about the final implications for faith and practice of the encounter between the two apostles at Antioch. Christians may on no account feel bound to observe Jewish ritual law as a required, inherent part of their discipleship. In Christ, the law has been dethroned as the means of salvation. On another level, however, questions remained about what had really been going on in the encounter between the two apostles. Was it a straightforward matter of the clash of two opposed points of view, in which one man was right and the other wrong? Was the outcome a simple submission of one to the other? Further, was Peter not only theologically wrong but also morally flawed in his behavior? Was Paul arrogant, or worse, inconsistent, in administering the rebuke? Was there a triumph here of the Gentiles' understanding and practice of the gospel over that of their Jewish fellow believers? Or were there deeper, hidden dimensions of the meeting of Peter and Paul, in which a more fundamental unity, even concord, was more significant than their opposition? Furthermore, and more basically, was the abrogation of the law as the means of salvation a simple, straightforward matter? Why then did not only Peter but [also] Paul...continue on occasion to observe its requirements? The answers arrived at by Jerome and Augustine to these questions, based in part on their historical reconstructions of the special circumstances affecting Paul's theology, then enabled them to arrive at somewhat different understandings of the continuing significance of the law of Moses in the history of salvation." Gorday, "Jews and Gentiles, Galatians 2:11-14," 205-6.

<sup>112</sup> Augustine wrote the first letter in the exchange after he read a copy of Jerome's commentary on Galatians (written in 388). Augustine believed Jerome had given an unsatisfactory and dangerous interpretation of Galatians 2:11-14. The danger, for Augustine, was that Jerome suggested that the Jewish apostles had acted under a pretense in observing the ceremonial law, which would mean the biblical authors sometimes lie. Carolinne White provides a helpful overview of the letters exchanged: "It was his disagreement on this point in particular which was to lead to the famous controversy, prolonged because their letters were often lost or



to disagree on four points.”<sup>113</sup> Aquinas then lists and comments upon each of the four disagreements.

First, Augustine and Jerome disagreed as to the time of the justifications, namely when they should be observed. Jerome distinguishes two periods for the observation of the legal justifications: 1) *before the passion of Christ* and 2) *after the passion*. For Jerome, explains Aquinas, “the legal justifications were living before the passion of Christ, i.e., had validity, inasmuch as original sin was removed through circumcision, and God was pleased with sacrifices and victims.”<sup>114</sup> After the passion, explains Aquinas, Jerome held that the legal justifications were “not only not living i.e. dead (*mortua*), but what is more, they were deadly (*mortifera*), so that whoever observed them after the passion of Christ sinned mortally.”<sup>115</sup>

Augustine, on the other hand, distinguishes three periods. The first period is 1)

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delayed and because of Jerome’s refusal to reply to the question at issue; the discussion of the critical passage of Galatians is restricted to Ep. 28 (which never reached Jerome), Ep. 40 (largely a repetition of Ep. 28), Jerome’s lengthy Ep. 112 and Augustine’s final answer in his Ep. 82 – the other letters written while the dispute raged are largely devoted to expressions of love and respect or indignation and to the question of the extent to which criticism is permissible between Christian friends.” Augustine writes letter 40 only because there is no response to the first letter, 28. For an introduction and English translation of the letters see White, *The correspondence (394-419), between Jerome and Augustine of Hippo* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1990), 2-3; 120-32. For a concise summary of the debate see 43-7. See also Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 209. For a more comprehensive treatment of the differences between Jerome and Augustine as well as their relevance for contemporary exegesis and theology see Peter Gorday’s excellent chapter “Jews and Gentiles, Galatians 2:11-14,” 199-236; See also Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1993), 293; Mark D. Nanos, “Peter’s Hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-21) in the Light of Paul’s Anxiety (Rom. 7),” in *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul’s Letters* (Fortress Press, 1996), 337–371.

<sup>113</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.86: “Sciendum est autem quod occasione istorum verborum, non parva controversia est orta inter Hieronymum et Augustinum. Et secundum quod ex eorum verbis aperte colligitur, in quatuor discordare videntur.”

<sup>114</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.86: “Vult ergo Hieronymus quod legalia ante passionem Christi viva essent, id est, habentia virtutem suam, in quantum scilicet per circumcisionem tollebatur peccatum originale, et per sacrificia et hostias placabatur Deus.”

<sup>115</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.86: “Sed post passionem non solum dicit ea non fuisse viva vel mortua, sed, quod plus est, ea fuisse mortifera, et quod quicumque post passionem Christi ea servavit, peccavit mortaliter.”

*before the passion of Christ.* Here, and in agreement with Jerome, the legal justifications were living before the passion. The second period is 2) that time “*immediately following the passion of Christ, before grace was promulgated....*”<sup>116</sup> Aquinas describes Augustine’s view of this “time of the apostles in the beginning” as follows:

During this period, says Augustine, the legal justifications were dead (*mortua*) but not yet deadly (*mortifera*) to the converted Jews, so long as the ones observing them placed no hope in them. Hence the Jews observed them during that period without sinning. But had they placed their trust in them when observing them after their conversion, they would have sinned mortally; because if they had placed their trust in them so as to believe that they were necessary for salvation, then, as far as they were concerned, they would have been voiding the grace of Christ.<sup>117</sup>

In the time of the apostles the law is therefore dead for all Jews or of no value. However, it is not yet deadly and converted Jewish Christians as well as Jews observed the ceremonial law during this time. These “Jews observed them during that period without sinning,” says Aquinas.<sup>118</sup> In order to explain how these Jews observed the law without sinning, Aquinas relies upon what I refer to as the “two ways” of observing the ceremonial law in the middle period or apostolic age.

Jewish Christians could have observed the rites of the law in the time of the apostles without having sinned so long as they did not “place their trust in them so as to believe that they were necessary for salvation.”<sup>119</sup> Here, Aquinas makes a distinction between 1)

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<sup>116</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.86: “Aliud tempus est post passionem Christi immediate, ante gratiam divulgatam (sicut tempus apostolorum in principio).”

<sup>117</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.86: “in quo tempore dicit Augustinus legalia mortua fuisse, sed tamen non mortifera Iudaeis conversis, dummodo ipsa servantes, spem in eis non ponerent, ita quod etiam ipsi Iudaei ea servantes tunc non peccarent.”

<sup>118</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.86.

<sup>119</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.86: “Si vero in eis spem posuissent, quicumque conversi ea servantes, peccassent mortaliter, quia si posuissent in eis spem, quasi essent necessaria ad salutem, quantum in eis erat, evacuassent gratiam Christi.”

*observing the law* and 2) *being of the law*. “Observing the law” is simply one who fulfills or obeys the law, “so that one who fulfills is not under a curse.” However, to be “of the works of the Law” is to place trust and hope (*confidere et spem*) in these works.<sup>120</sup>

It is this latter form of observance—being “of the works of the law”—that Aquinas, following Augustine’s view, believes is unacceptable. This distinction allows Aquinas to say that it is not the law in and of itself that suddenly becomes sinful but rather the one who believes the law saves them: “Therefore, inasmuch as the Law begets a knowledge of sin and offers no help against sin, they are said to be under a curse, since they are powerless to escape it by those works.”<sup>121</sup>

For Aquinas, this “two ways” of observing the law in the apostolic age (or middle period) also functions to explain how Christ himself observed the law. Aquinas says that “a difficulty comes to mind” concerning Christ and the law when Paul’s says “If you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law” in Galatians 5:18.<sup>122</sup> The difficulty is that “if Christ is not only spiritual but the giver of the Spirit, it seems unbecoming to say that He was made under the Law.”<sup>123</sup> Aquinas’s *respondeo* relies upon the “two ways” of rightly observing the law in the middle period. He explains that “to be under the Law” can be taken in two ways: “under” can denote mere observance of the Law, which is the sense in which Christ was made under the law, because he was circumcised and presented in the temple.” Aquinas then

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<sup>120</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.4.136; see also 5.5.318.

<sup>121</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.4.136: “Inquantum ergo lex cognitionem peccati facit, et non praebebat auxilium contra peccatum, dicuntur esse sub maledicto, cum nequeant illud per ipsa opera evadere.”

<sup>122</sup> *Ad Galat.* 4.2.208: “*si spiritu ducimini, non estis sub lege.*”

<sup>123</sup> *Ad Galat.* 4.2.208: “Si ergo Christus non solum est spiritualis, sed etiam dator spiritus, inconvenienter videtur dici quod sit factus sub lege.”

cites Matthew 5:17 “I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.” And “under” can also denote oppression, in the sense that one is oppressed by fear of the Law. “But neither Christ nor spiritual men are said to be under the Law in this way.”<sup>124</sup> For Aquinas, the “mere observance” of the law, without trust in it, by Christ can therefore be considered a form of “fulfillment” of the law. This middle period is the only time in which the ceremonial law can be observed by Jews and Jewish Christians after the passion of Christ.

Lastly, Aquinas explains that Augustine posits a third period: 3) *after the grace of Christ had been proclaimed*. It was during that period, according to Augustine, that these legal justifications became both “dead and deadly” *to all* who observed them.<sup>125</sup> The “reasoning that underlies these statements,” explains Aquinas, is that

if the Jews had been forbidden the legal observations right after their conversion, it might have seemed that they had previously been on equal footing with idolaters, who were immediately forbidden to worship idols, and that just as idolatry had never been good, so to the legal observances. Therefore, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the legal observances were condoned for a short time for the reason given, namely, to show that the legal observances had been good in the past. Hence says Augustine, the fact that the legal justifications were not forbidden right after the passion of Christ showed that the mother, the synagogue, was destined to be brought in honor to the grave. But whosoever did not observe them in that manner would not be honoring the mother, the synagogue, but disturbing her grave.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> *Ad Galat.* 4.2.208: “Respondeo. Dicendum est quod esse sub lege dicitur dupliciter. Uno modo, ut ly sub, denotet solam observantiam legis, et sic Christus fuit factus sub lege, quia circumcisisus fuit et in temple praesentatus. Matth. V, v. 17: *non veni legem solvere*, et cetera. Alio modo, ut ly sub, denotet oppressionem. Et hoc modo ille dicitur esse sub lege, qui timore legis opprimitur et hoc modo nec Christus, nec viri spiritalis dicuntur esse sub lege.”

<sup>125</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.86.

<sup>126</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.86 [emphasis mine]: “Ratio autem dictorum est, quia si Iudaei statim post conversionem fuissent prohibiti ab observantiis legalium, visum fuisset eos pari passu ambulare cum idololatriis, qui statim ab idolorum cultura prohibebantur, et legalia non fuisse bona, sicut nec idololatriam. Et ideo instinctu spiritus sancti permissum est, ut legalia modico tempore servarentur ea intentione quae dicta est, ut per hoc ostenderetur legalia tunc bona fuisse. Unde dicit Augustinus quod per hoc ostendebatur quod mater synagoga cum honore deducenda ad tumulum erat, dum non statim post passionem Christi legalia prohibita sunt. Quicumque vero non eo modo ipsa servaret, non honoraret matrem synagogam, sed eam extumularet.”

In order to avoid any semblance of the Marcionite idea that the legal observances were evil, a special condoning of the legal observances is declared for the apostolic age. By allowing for the observance of the ceremonial law in the apostolic age the Church shows its respect for the ancient customs. The sacraments of the synagogue are honored and respected in this way but are nonetheless, in Augustine's view, destined for the grave. To observe the ceremonial law after this time is to "disturb the grave" of the synagogue.

It is important to emphasize that Aquinas understands the observance of the ceremonies after the promulgation of grace as a mortal sin for Jews and not Jewish Christians. As I argued in chapter one, the reason Matthew Levering misses the primary concern in Wyschogrod's critique of Aquinas is because he thinks Aquinas's teaching that the observance of the ceremonial law is a mortal sin after the passion applies *only to baptized Jews*. For Levering, Aquinas *does not* condemn Jewish observance of the law: "Aquinas does not condemn the observance of Torah by Jews who do not believe in Jesus Christ."<sup>127</sup>

Levering fails to recognize the consequence of Aquinas's adoption of Augustine's teaching that after the final period (after the grace of Christ had been proclaimed), the observance of legal observances is deadly for all. Aquinas clearly states the consequences of observing the law after the middle period in 5.1.278: "*To observe the legal ceremonies after grace had been preached is a mortal sin for the Jews*. But during the interim, i.e., before the preaching of grace, they could be observed without sin even by those who had been converted from Judaism, provided they set no hope on them."<sup>128</sup> There is no question in

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<sup>127</sup> Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple*, Matthew Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation According to Thomas Aquinas* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 161fn60,.

<sup>128</sup> *Ad Galat.* 5.1.278: "Secundum Augustinum vero, ut supra dictum est, circa legalium observantias triplex tempus distinguitur, scilicet tempus ante passionem, ante gratiam divulgatam, et post gratiam

Aquinas's mind that the legal observances were always sinful for Gentile Christians, and after the promulgation of the gospel, are forbidden for Jewish Christians and Jews.

The second point on which Jerome and Augustine differed was on whether the apostles actually observed the ceremonial laws.<sup>129</sup> Jerome argues that the apostles only observed the rites out of pretense. For example, they did not really observe the Sabbath, but simply rested. Augustine, on the other hand, argues that the apostles *definitely intended to observe the legal justifications*. However, they did so without putting their trust in them as though they were necessary for salvation.

Aquinas explains Augustine's rationale once more. In the apostolic age, both Jews and Jewish Christians can safely observe the ceremonial laws: "This was lawful for them to do, because they had been Jews. Nevertheless, they observed them before grace was proclaimed. Hence just as certain other Jews could safely observe them at that time without putting any trust in them, so too could the apostles."<sup>130</sup> Again, both Jews and Jewish

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divulgatam. Post ergo gratiam divulgata servare legalia est peccatum mortale, etiam ipsis Iudaeis. Sed in tempore medio, scilicet ante gratiam divulgatam, poterant quidem absque peccato etiam illi, qui ex Iudaeis conversi fuerant, legalia servare, dum tamen in eis spem non ponerent...."

<sup>129</sup> The third and fourth points of the disagreement between Augustine and Jerome are less relevant to my argument that Aquinas thinks the law is now dead and deadly for all Jews and thus will be included here. The third point on which Jerome and Augustine differ is the sin of Peter. Jerome, explains Aquinas, claims Peter did not sin because he withdrew from the Gentiles out of charity not mundane fear. Aquinas, however, claims that Peter sinned venially. He sinned on account of a lack of discretion by leaning toward the Jews in order to avoid scandalizing them. Finally, the fourth point which Jerome and Augustine differ is on Paul's rebuke. Jerome claims that Peter pretended to observe the legal justifications and Paul pretended to rebuke him. Jerome said this was done by mutual consent, explains Aquinas, so that each might exercise his care over their respective mission, Gentiles and Jews. Augustine, however, claims Peter really sinned by observing the justifications because this action was a source of scandal to the Gentiles. Paul did not sin in rebuking him because no scandal followed from his rebuke.

<sup>130</sup> *Ad Galat. 2.3.87*: "Et hoc quidem licebat eis, quia fuerunt ex Iudaeis. Ita tamen quod haec servarent ante gratiam divulgatam; unde sicut eo tempore alii Iudaei conversi sine periculo servare poterant, absque eo quod in eis spem ponerent, ita et ipsi." Aquinas's view that the Jewish apostles actually practiced the ceremonial law and his view of the three periods is basically the same as Augustine. Augustine writes, concerning Paul's observance of the ceremonial law: "Paul was without doubt a Jew and when he became a Christian he did not give up the practices of the Jews which that people had accepted as being lawful and

Christians could observe these rites before grace had been proclaimed. Aquinas explains, therefore, that “just as certain other Jews could safely observe them at that time without putting any trust in them, so too could the apostles.”<sup>131</sup>

However, Aquinas’s view of Paul’s nonobservance of the law departs from Augustine’s thought in a way that seems to undermine the Jewish Christianity of the apostles. As is clear from his presentation of Augustine’s view, Aquinas understands Augustine to hold that the Jewish apostles observed the law without sinning in the middle period. Moreover, for Augustine, Paul really observed the ceremonies. For Jerome the apostles observed the ceremonies under pretense. As Daniel Boyarin observes, Augustine differed from Jerome in his rejection of the “notion that the apostles dissimulated when they kept Jewish practices,” suggesting that their ‘Jewish Christianity’ was legitimate.<sup>132</sup>

Recall that Aquinas holds that Paul’s opinion was that the child of a Jewish parent should be circumcised (e.g. Timothy). However, Aquinas also claims that Paul lived without the law himself, and that he taught Jews to do so as well. Aquinas emphasizes that Paul in

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suitable for the times. That is why he undertook to perform these things although he was already an apostle of Christ: he did so in order to show that they were not harmful to those who wished to observe them in the way they had received them from their parents by means of the law even after they had come to believe in Christ. He wanted to show that Christians ought not to set their hope of salvation in these things because the salvation which was signified by those sacraments had already come through the Lord Jesus. And so he judged that they were in no way to be imposed upon the Gentiles because such a heavy and unnecessary burden might repel them, unaccustomed as they were, from the faith. Consequently, Paul was not rebuking Peter for observing the traditions of his fathers which could be performed without deceit or inconsistency if Peter wished (for although these customs were now superfluous they were not harmful); but he criticized him for forcing the Gentiles to live as Jews, which he could only do by himself observing these traditions as if they were still necessary for salvation even after the coming of the Lord.” Augustine, Ep. 40, in White, 77-8.

<sup>131</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.3.87. In 2.4.94, however, Aquinas says that Paul viewed himself as a Jew “by nature” but having “left the Law” because of faith in Christ. Again, in 2.4.95 he says Paul concludes that “the apostles...gave up the works of the Law.” These texts combined with his view of the Holy Spirit converting Paul out of the synagogue seems to indicate that Aquinas thought the Apostles left Judaism behind, which would be a departure from Augustine’s view. However, Aquinas may be using “works of the Law” to only refer to a certain view of the works of the law in which these are necessary for salvation. See 2.4.96.

<sup>132</sup> Boyarin, 209.

particular had abandoned a life of the law. When Paul admonishes the Galatians to “Be ye as I,” Aquinas describes Paul’s thinking as follows: “‘Be ye as I,’ i.e. live without the Law, because I, who had the Law and was born in the Law, am now as you formerly were, namely, without the Law.”<sup>133</sup> Aquinas seems to want to say that the Jewish apostles, in general, ceased to observe the law upon their conversion from the synagogue.

In 5.2.295, Aquinas argues that Acts 21:21 shows that Paul was suffering Jewish persecution because he taught that the legal ceremonies *should not be observed* even in the apostolic age. “For the Jews persecuted Paul precisely *because he taught that the legal ceremonies should not be observed.*” He then cites James’ report to Paul in Acts 21:21 of what the Jews were saying about Paul’s teaching: ‘They have heard of thee that thou teaches those Jews who are among the Gentiles to depart from Moses; saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor walk according to custom.’”<sup>134</sup> Augustine interprets the charge reported by James against Paul as *falsely* describing Paul’s teaching. Aquinas, on the other hand, thought James’s report was an accurate description of what Paul was teaching.<sup>135</sup>

Ultimately, Aquinas seems to hold contradictory views of Paul. He says that that Paul both taught against Jewish observance of the law (as demonstrated by his interpretation of the

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<sup>133</sup> *Ad Galat.* 4.4.227: “...*estote sicut ego, scilicet sine lege viventes, quia ego, supple: qui legem habui, et in lege natus sum, modo sum sicut vos, supple fuistis, scilicet sine lege.*”

<sup>134</sup> *Ad Galat.* 5.2.295: “Nam Iudaei specialiter propter hoc persequabantur Paulum, quod praedicabat legalia non debere servari. Act. XXI, 21, dicit Iacobus Paulo: *audierunt de te quia discessionem doceas a Moyse eorum, qui per gentes sunt Iudaeorum, dicens eos non debere circumcidere filios, et cetera.*” [emphasis mine]

<sup>135</sup> Augustine writes, in Epistle 82: “It is clear, in my opinion, that James gave this advice so that those Jews who had continued to be zealous for the law after coming to believe in Christ should know that what they had been told about Paul was false, namely that the commandments prescribed by God and granted to their fathers by Moses should be regarded as condemned as sacrilegious by the teaching of Christ... Plotting to rouse hatred and persecution against him, they accused him of being an enemy of the law and the divine commandments and the only way Paul was able to avoid the hatred awakened by their false accusation was by himself performing these rites, which he was thought to condemn as sacrilegious.” See Augustine, Epistle 82, in White, 150-1.



report about Paul by James), and that he was of the opinion that Jewish Christians (such as Timothy) should be circumcised because of their Jewish parents. Yet, Aquinas's conflicting views of Paul's teaching on the observance the law in the middle period may not have been that important since he also believed that Jewish Christians were a religious group not destined to endure. Because of his adoption of Augustine's interpretation of the middle period, Aquinas assumed that the Church of the circumcision was simply not meant to continue. His view of the destiny of the Jewish Christians is mentioned in passing when he comments on the meaning of the Jewish Christian Church's (or Church of the circumcision) practice of selling their goods. He argues that since such a place was "not destined to endure," such a practice was allowed.

Now the reason why the custom prevailed in the early Church for those in the Church of the circumcision to sell their goods and not those in the Church of the Gentiles was that the believing Jews were congregated in Jerusalem and in Judea, which was soon to be destroyed by the Romans, as later events proved. Hence the Lord willed that no possessions were to be kept in a place not destined to endure. But the Church of the Gentiles was destined to grow strong and increase, and therefore, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it came about that the possessions in it were not to be sold.<sup>136</sup>

Aquinas's view of the destiny of the Church of the circumcision operates as an extension of the Augustinian idea that the Holy Spirit allowed believing Jews and Jews to observe the ceremonial law for a time. After this period those who observe the ceremonies were not destined to grow strong and increase.

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<sup>136</sup> *Ad Galat.* 2.2.75: "Ratio autem quare consuetudo primitivae Ecclesiae de venditione possessionum servabatur in Ecclesia ex circumcisione, et non in Ecclesia ex gentibus, haec est, quia fideles Iudaei congregati erant in Ierusalem, et in Iudaea quae destruenda in brevi a Romanis erat, ut postmodum rei probavit eventus; et ideo voluit dominus ut ibi possessiones non reservarentur ubi permansuri non erant. Ecclesia vero gentilium firmanda erat et augenda, et ideo consilio spiritus sancti factum est, ut in ea possessiones non venderentur."

#### 4. Fulfilled, Destroyed, and Deadly: The Economic Supersessionism of the Galatians *Lectura*

In the Galatians *lectura*, Aquinas clearly views the ceremonial law as dead in the apostolic age and deadly thereafter. Although he acknowledges the historical value of the law in securing the Jewish people against the danger of idolatry, and serving as a pedagogue that provided knowledge of sin, this value is lost once the prefiguring function of the law is fulfilled by the reality that it prefigured. Therefore, the fulfillment of the ceremonial law also brings about its completion, and it is a completion that requires what Aquinas refers to as the “destruction” of the ceremonial law.

Aquinas thinks Paul’s message about the sinfulness of observing the ceremonial law is directed toward the Gentile Christians of Galatia. However, he also thinks Paul’s teaching also applies to all who observe the law after the passion of Christ, including Jews. This is clear from Aquinas’s approval of Augustine’s “middle period” where the ceremonial law becomes dead and deadly for all after the promulgation of grace. Aquinas, like Augustine, thought that both Jews and Jewish Christians could observe the ceremonial law in the apostolic age without sinning so long as they did not put their trust in the law for salvation. The circumcision and presentation of Christ in the Temple are examples of this sort of observance of the ceremonial law in the middle period. Aquinas’s view of the ceremonial law in the *lectura* therefore represents what Marshall has referred to as Aquinas’s “official view” of the law.

Another significant aspect of Aquinas’s view of the law in the Galatians *lectura* is how it differs from Augustine’s view. Aquinas’s position is different than Augustine’s since Aquinas views the cessation of the ceremonial law to have begun almost immediately with

Paul and Peter's conversions. Aquinas seems to interpret Paul and Peter as having been suddenly called out by the Holy Spirit from the synagogue and into a "life without the law." Aquinas even understands James' report of the charges against Paul in Acts 21:21 as an indication that Paul taught against Jewish observance of the law.

More importantly, though, Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the Galatians *lectura* is at odds with his positive theological view of the law in the era after grace in the Romans *lectura*. In the Romans commentary, Aquinas takes the time to articulate a theologically positive answer to the question "What is the value of circumcision?" His replies state that the ceremonial law (including circumcision) is an advantage for the Jew in the present tense, and a fundamental aspect of God's promise to Abraham. Moreover, in the Galatians *lectura*, Aquinas argues that observance of the ceremonial law after the promulgation of grace is a mortal sin, yet in the Romans *lectura*, he describes it as a present spiritual benefit.

The conflicting visions of the ceremonial law that emerge from Romans and Galatians amount to what I would call rival versions of fulfillment. On the one hand, Aquinas's Romans *lectura* represents a view of fulfillment that emphasizes continuity between Israel and Church and views the ceremonial law as "fulfilled and upheld." In the Romans *lectura*, the law does not described as mortally sinful. Rather, it is approved as possessing a theological value after the passion. On the other hand, the Galatians *lectura* represents a view of fulfillment that could be referred to as "fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly." In this latter form of fulfillment, the law is not declared as superfluous, abandoned, and then deadly to anyone who observes the rites in the era after grace.

In the next chapter I examine Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the Ephesians

*lectura*, which emphasizes the unity between the Jew and the Gentile in Christ. I intend to discover whether Aquinas understands the law in the unofficial sense of “fulfilled and upheld,” or in the more official sense of “fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly.”

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE REPLACEMENT OF ISRAEL AS THE *SOCIETATEM SANCTORUM*: THE CEREMONIAL LAW IN AQUINAS'S EPHESIANS *LECTURA*

In this chapter I answer whether Aquinas views the ceremonial law in the Ephesians *lectura* solely as a Christological prefigurement that becomes *mortua et mortifera* after the passion of Christ or whether the rites retain a theological value.<sup>1</sup> Answering this question will help determine whether or to what extent Aquinas's view of the relationship between Israel and the Church in the Ephesians *lectura* is characterized by economic supersessionism.

My examination of the commentary proceeds in four steps. In the first section I identify the theme and primary division of the *lectura* as well as outline its chapters. In the second and longest section of the chapter I present Aquinas's view of Paul's identity and Aquinas's teaching on the unity Christ establishes between Jew and Gentile. This section includes a discussion of Aquinas's view of the condition of the Jews as a "society of saints" who enjoyed the special election as God's people. I then examine Aquinas's comments upon how Christ brings about a convergence between Jews and Gentiles by destroying the ceremonial law and uniting the two groups together into one body, the Church of believers.

In the third section I discuss Aquinas's view of how the Gentiles have now become co-heirs of the promises of Israel. In the fourth and final section I show that Aquinas's affirmation of the prerogatives of Israel as promises of God and his language about the Gentiles as co-heir of their promises is undermined by his argument that Christ's passion is

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<sup>1</sup> All English translations of the *lectura* are from Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* trans. Matthew L. Lamb, Aquinas Scripture Commentaries 2 (Albany, N.Y.: Magi Books, 1966). Lamb's translation is based on a combined reading of the Parma edition and the Marietti. In order to maintain uniform citations with other chapters in the study and because the HTML version of Lamb's translation lacks page numbers I once again rely upon the Marietti numbers, which includes the chapter, *lectio*, and paragraph numbers. Citations will include three numbers, which correspond to the chapter number, *lectio* number in that chapter, and the Marietti paragraph number. For example, *Ad Ephesios* 1.1.3. A copy of Lamb's translation is available at <http://www.josephkenny.joyeurs.com/CDtexts/SSEph.htm>

the material cause of the destruction of the ceremonial law and his description of the Jews' promises after the passion as things of the past.

### 1. Themes and Division of the Ephesians *Lectura*

In this first section I identify Aquinas's view of Paul's purpose in writing Ephesians, and the primary theme of the epistle. I also outline the subject of each chapter of the *lectura* and identify the texts that contain material on the relationship between Jews and Gentiles and ceremonial law.

In Aquinas's view, Paul's epistle is meant to fortify the Ephesians in their faith. According to Aquinas, the Ephesians had not succumbed to false doctrine. For this reason, they were entitled to encouragement. Therefore, unlike the epistles to the Hebrews and Galatians, Aquinas says this epistle has a "tone of reassurance and not rebuke."<sup>2</sup> Aquinas understands Paul's intention as strengthening the faith of the Ephesian believers.<sup>3</sup> Paul selects Psalm 75:4, "I have strengthened its pillars," as the theme verse of the epistle in order to emphasize Paul's aim of building up ecclesial unity among Jews and Gentiles as one body.<sup>4</sup> For Aquinas, these "pillars" represent the Jewish and Gentile believers in the Church. Christ's establishment of unity between these two groups is the primary theme of the *lectura*.

Aquinas divides the six chapters of Ephesians into two parts: chapters 1 through 3 and 4 through 6. Matthew Lamb's excellent introduction to his English translation of the commentary provides a concise and detailed outline of the chapters. Overall, chapters one through three concern the divine blessings of God through which the Church's unity is

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<sup>2</sup> *Ad Eph.* 1.1.1: "Ideo Paulus eis non increpatoriam, sed consolatoriam scribit epistolam."

<sup>3</sup> *Ad Eph. Prologus*, 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Eph. Prologus*, 1: "Ego confirmavi columnas eius"

established and preserved. Chapters four through six consist of Paul's admonishment to the Ephesians to maintain this unity.

In chapter one, Aquinas treats the centrality of the power of Christ for the salvation of humankind.<sup>5</sup> Through Christ, we are predestined, and adopted as God's children, "worthy to partake of eternal beatitude and bodily resurrection."<sup>6</sup> Aquinas explains how this "life-giving mystery, proclaimed by the Apostles, is the advent of God in Christ and the recapitulation of everything in him."<sup>7</sup> Aquinas also explains how the exultation of Christ "exercises a supreme fullness of power over the entire universe."<sup>8</sup>

In chapter two, Aquinas comments upon the effects of Christ's supreme power, including how it destroys slavery to sin and the "alienation between Jew and Pagan." This separation was "completely annihilated by the over-powering unification of mankind affected by the God-man."<sup>9</sup> The result of Christ's power is that all races have access, by Christ, in the Spirit, to the Father. This forms "a new community of men...whose foundation is Christ."<sup>10</sup>

In chapter three Aquinas discusses the apostolic mission concerning the mystery of Christ and how faith consists in affirming the divinity and humanity of Christ. In chapter four

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<sup>5</sup> My outline of the chapters draws upon Lamb's overview and detailed outline of the chapters. Lamb, 30; 32-4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

through six, Aquinas comments upon Paul's moral exhortations, which are necessary for strengthening ecclesial unity effected by Christ and established by his gifts.<sup>11</sup>

As Christopher Baglow has observed, for Aquinas, the relationship between Jewish and Gentile Christians becomes the major theme of chapter two but also serves as a concrete pole that bounds his exposition of the entire epistle.<sup>12</sup> Chapter two, as well as chapter three, *lectio* one, contains the majority of Aquinas's comments on the ceremonial law and the Jews and Gentiles before and after their convergence in the Church. Therefore, this chapter mainly focuses on the second chapter of the *lectura*. I now turn to an examination of one of most important effects of Christ's power for the salvation of humankind: the convergence of the Jews and Gentiles into one body, which Aquinas treats in chapter two through chapter three, *lectio* one, of the Ephesians *lectura*.

## 2. The Convergence of Jews and Gentiles into the Temple of Christ's Body

In chapter one, Aquinas discusses how Paul recounted the general way in which Christ powerfully bestowed blessings upon the Ephesian believers. In chapter two, he comments on how Paul expounded upon these blessings. In particular, Paul expounded upon the convergence of the Jews and Gentiles and their assimilation into Christ's body. Aquinas

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Christopher T Baglow, "*Modus Et Forma*": *A New Approach to the Exegesis of Saint Thomas Aquinas with an Application to the Lectura Super Epistolam Ad Ephesios*, *Analecta Biblica* 149 (Roma: Pontificio Istituto biblico, 2002), 165. Baglow's study is the only comprehensive treatment of the content of the Ephesians commentary. The only other treatment of this *lectura* is Mark Edwards's brief chapter, "Aquinas on Ephesians and Colossians," in *Aquinas On Scripture: An Introduction To His Biblical Commentaries* John P. Yocum and Daniel A. Keating, (T. & T. Clark Publishers, 2005), 149-65. However, Edwards's chapter seems as if it is more of an apologia for the value of Aquinas's exegetical methods than a treatment of Aquinas on Ephesians.



views Paul as having discussed the condition of Gentiles and Jews before their convergence into Christ, as well as their actual assimilation into the Body of Christ.

In this second and largest section I treat the process of this convergence.

First, I discuss how Aquinas's comment on the Jewish and Christian aspects of Paul's identity. Second, I examine what Aquinas sees as the Jews' and Gentiles' sinful condition before their "conversion" into one body. Third, I examine Aquinas's view of the people of Israel as a *societatem sanctorum*, or society of saints, and how the Gentiles were at one time considered aliens and strangers of God's promises to Israel. In both the second and third sections, therefore, I treat Aquinas's view of the condition of both Jews and Gentiles *before* their convergence into Christ. Fourth, I explain how Aquinas understands the blessing of justification to bring about the actual convergence between the Jews and Gentiles through Christ's "breaking down the middle barrier of partition," which is the ceremonial law.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.1 Paul's Jewish Nationality

Aquinas's opening comments on Paul's Jewish Christian identity indicate that the theme of Jew and Gentile is a prominent one throughout the *lectura*. In the first section of the first lecture, Aquinas begins by commenting upon Paul's identity as a Christian in religion (*religione*) and a Jew in nationality (*natione*). As I argue below, these two aspects of Paul's identity seem to correspond to the Gentile Christian and Jewish pillars of the Church: "Of the Church at Ephesus he rightfully can claim: I have strengthened its pillars—I who am an Israelite in nationality, a Christian in religion, an Apostle in dignity."<sup>14</sup> Paul's identity as

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<sup>13</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.112.

<sup>14</sup> *Ad Eph.* 1.1.1: "ut ipse loquens de Ecclesia Ephesiorum, vere possit dicere: *ego confirmavi columnas eius*; ego videlicet, Israelita natione, Christianus religione, apostolus dignitate."

Israelite and Christian functions as a sort of microcosm of the Jewish and Gentile

Ephesian believers and foreshadows the sort of convergence these two groups will exhibit when they are unified by Christ into one body.

Although Aquinas refers to Paul's Christian religion and his Jewish nationality as present parts of his identity, he is also careful to guard against the idea that Paul's Judaism is from any observance of the ceremonial law. Citing 2 Corinthians 11:22, Aquinas says that Paul, is a Jew by birth because he "sprung from Abraham's seed in the tribe of Benjamin."<sup>15</sup> The caveat he adds to this citation hints at what sort of Judaism Aquinas imagines to exist in the Church in the age of grace. Aquinas argues that though Paul is a Jew by birth, his Christian faith also means he is dead to the law: "A Jew by birth, for I am an Israelite sprung from Abraham's seed...A Christian in religion, 'for I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I may live to God...'"<sup>16</sup> For Aquinas, Paul's Judaism is a nationality and not a religion. It is based on his birth but no longer has anything to do with the observance of the law. Here, Aquinas's view of Paul's Judaism seems as if it is an extension of the picture of the apostle's identity that emerged from the Galatians *lectura*: Paul is viewed as having been called out of the synagogue to faith in Christ, no longer observing the rites of the law after conversion.

In addition to Judaism as a nationality, Aquinas also mentions a second attribute of Paul's Judaism. Paul's Judaism is also characterized by the contemplation of God: "Everyone who proclaims saving wisdom, like Paul, must be an Israelite in his contemplation of God, a

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<sup>15</sup> *Ad Eph.*, 1.1.1 "Israelita dico natione; *nam et ego Israelita sum, ex semine Abrahae de tribu Benjamin* II Cor. XI, 22."

<sup>16</sup> *Ad Eph.*, Prologus, 1: "Israelita dico natione; *nam et ego Israelita sum, ex semine Abrahae de tribu Benjamin* II Cor. XI, 22. Item Christianus religione. Gal. II, 19 s.: *ego enim per legem mortuus sum legi, ut Deo vivam...*"

Christian in his religious faith, an Apostle in his function's authority."<sup>17</sup> Although Aquinas views Paul as having left the works of the law behind, here, he still views Paul as Jewish. He maintains a twofold connection to Paul's Judaism through the idea of "nationality" as well as the "contemplation of God."

A Jew who becomes a Christian in religion can remain Jewish or "be an Israelite" in their contemplation of God and in their nationality. Aquinas therefore posits a sort of nonreligious Judaism that is not dependent upon the law. Aquinas's view of Paul's identity may suggest a sort of archetype for the particular type of Jewish Christians he envisions as so crucial to the unity of Jew and Gentile discussed in the Ephesians *lectura*. Aquinas will eventually argue that Jews are built along with Gentiles as two walls of the temple that is the body of Christ. Therefore, in the Ephesians *lectura*, Aquinas describes a different type of Jewish Christian than the Jewish Christian (or "Church of the Jews") presented in the Galatians *lectura*. The Jewish Christians of Galatians observed the law and were therefore destined not to endure after the expiration of the Augustinian middle period.<sup>18</sup> However, as I show below, the Jews in the Ephesians Church are united to the Gentile believers and both are viewed as central to the formal cause of the Church being unified and increasing. I return to this idea of different types of Jewish Christians in section four. Next, I discuss the state of Jews and Gentiles before their convergence into the body of Christ.

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<sup>17</sup> *Ad Eph., Prologus*, 1: "Talis debet esse praedicator sapientiae salutaris, scilicet Israelita quo ad contemplationem Dei, Christianus quo ad religionem fidei, apostolus quo ad auctoritatem officii."

<sup>18</sup> Recall Aquinas's view of the Church of the Jewish believers in Galatians: "Now the reason why the custom prevailed in the early Church for those in the Church of the circumcision to sell their goods and not those in the Church of the Gentiles was that the believing Jews were congregated in Jerusalem and in Judea, which was soon to be destroyed by the Romans, as later events proved. Hence the Lord willed that no possessions were to be kept in a place not destined to endure. But the Church of the Gentiles was destined to grow strong and increase, and therefore, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it came about that the possessions in it were not to be sold." *Ad Galatas* 2.2.75.

## 2.2 The Sinful Condition of Jews and Gentiles Before their Convergence into the Temple of Christ's Body

Before touching upon the blessings of the unity established between Jews and Gentiles by Christ, Aquinas outlines the condition of both groups before their conversion. For Aquinas, Paul taught that Jews and Gentiles were in a state of “sin and paganism” before they received the blessings of Christ.<sup>19</sup> All are under sin. Yet Aquinas does *not* think Jews were pagans. He explains that the Jews and Gentiles were in a state of sin in different ways: “Nevertheless, a difference should be noted.”<sup>20</sup> According to Aquinas, Paul designated two causes for Gentile sin. Gentiles were in sin because of “worldly causes,” and because of the demons they worshiped. These demons tempt “the children of despair” away from faith in eternal realities. While the Gentiles sin from both worldly causes and the worship of idols, Jews sin only from worldly causes.<sup>21</sup>

The worldly causes of sin affecting both groups are threefold: sins of the heart, sins of action, and original sin.<sup>22</sup> The “sins of the heart” consist of the “carnal desires of our flesh”

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<sup>19</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.1.72. When commenting upon Paul's statement “when you were dead in your offenses and sins” Aquinas says Paul explains this state “so well.” Sin is the worst type of death: spiritual death “Sin,” explains Aquinas, “termed a death because by it man is separated from God who is life: ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6).’” See 2.2.74: “Necessitatem vero huius beneficii ostendit, cum dicit *cum essetis mortui*, et cetera. Ubi optime describit eorum culpam. Primo quantum ad multitudinem, *quia cum essetis mortui*, scilicet morte spirituali, quae pessima est. Ps. XXXIII, 22: *mors peccatorum pessima*. Peccatum enim mors dicitur, quia per ipsum homo a domino, qui est vita, separatur. Io. XIV, 6: *ego sum via, veritas, et vita*.”

<sup>20</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.1.80: “Attendenda est tamen differentia circa hoc...”

<sup>21</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.1.80: “Attendenda est tamen differentia circa hoc, quia apostolus, agens de culpa gentilium, assignavit duas causas culpae fuisse. Unam scilicet ex parte mundi, aliam ex parte Daemonum, quos colebant. Quia ergo Iudaei erant similes gentilibus in statu culpae, quantum ad primam causam, non autem quantum ad secundam, ideo apostolus non facit mentionem de culpa eorum, nisi quantum ad causam quae est ex parte mundi.”

<sup>22</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.1.80: “Primo commemorat eorum culpam quantum ad peccatum cordis; secundo quantum ad peccatum operis; tertio quantum ad peccatum originis.”

by which Aquinas means “inner concupiscence.”<sup>23</sup> The “sins of action” are “nothing else than a manifestation” of the sins of the heart, or inner concupiscence.<sup>24</sup> The last worldly cause of sin is original sin, and Aquinas thinks Paul hinted at this with the phrase “and we were by nature children of wrath.”<sup>25</sup> Both Gentile and Jew suffer from original sin.<sup>26</sup> However, the Jews enjoyed cleansing from original sin through circumcision. In the Ephesians *lectura*, Aquinas states his early view on circumcision: it instrumentally cleansed the individual from original sin. He does not specify, as he does in his mature thought, that the cleansing power of circumcision comes *only* because implicit or explicit faith in Christ.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.1.81: “Peccatum vero cordis insinuat per desideria carnis, et quantum ad hoc dicit *in quibus*, scilicet peccatis seu delictis, *nos omnes*, scilicet Iudaei, *aliquando conversati sumus*, agentes vitam nostram, *in desideriis carnis nostrae*, id est, carnalibus.”

<sup>24</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.1.82: “Peccatum vero operis nihil aliud est quam expressio interioris concupiscentiae.” These sins of action amount to “doing what the flesh delights in” especially in food, and sexual relations. Another manifestation of the sin of action is in the thoughts or appetitive faculty of the soul. The sins of action in the appetitive faculty include: ambition for honors and for one’s own excellence.

<sup>25</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.1.82: “Peccatum vero originis insinuate dicens *et eramus natura filii irae*.”

<sup>26</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.1.82: “Quod quidem peccatum ex primo parente non solum in gentiles, sed etiam in Iudaeos transfunditur. Rom. V, 12: *sicut per unum hominem in hunc mundum peccatum intravit, et per peccatum mors; ita et in omnes homines mors pertransivit, in quo omnes peccaverunt*.”

<sup>27</sup> In Pim Valkenberg’s concise words this “latter” view was that “the sacraments of the old law *cannot* be said to cause grace by themselves, but only as much as they prefigure Christ.” The late view appears in *Summa theologiae* III 62.6 ad 3; 70.4 and *ad Romanos* 4.2 and consists of specific retractions of his early position. As far as I can see, the late view includes two changes to the early view. According to Richard Schenk, Aquinas’s late view is “that the rite was never an instrumental cause of grace, but, like non-covenantal religious practices, at best an occasion of the implicit (or even explicit) faith in Christ. It was by this Christological faith alone that the rite of circumcision had mediated grace....” The second point was made clear for me by Andrew Hofer: “Aquinas subscribes to the sacrament of circumcision the grace that removes all sin and enables one to resist all sin.” has Aquinas’s early view (*Libri Sententiarum* IV d. 8, q. 1, a. 2, qua. 5) was that circumcision removed original sin in and of itself. Valkenberg writes, “Old Testament circumcision removes original sin and is a sign of Christian spiritual circumcision. It is not just a sign of future removal of sin, it is not only valued as a prefiguration of the Christian dispensation, but it really removes original sin even before the passion of Christ.” Andrew Hofer, “The Circumcision of the Lord: Saving Mystery After Modern Oblivion,” *Nova Et Vetera* 3, no. 2 (2005): 259–278. See Richard Schenk, “Covenant Initiation: Thomas Aquinas and Robert Kilwardby on the Sacrament of Circumcision,” in *Ordo Sapientiae Et Amoris: Image Et Message De Saint Thomas d’Aquin À Travers Les Récentes Études Historiques, Herméneutiques Et Doctrinales: Hommage Au Professeur Jean-Pierre Torrell OP À L’occasion De Son 65e Anniversaire*, ed. Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveira (Fribourg, Suisse: Editions universitaires, 1993), 555-93. Pim Valkenberg and Henk Schoot, “Thomas

### 2.3 Israel as a *Societatem Sanctorum* and Gentiles as Strangers to God's Promises

When Aquinas comments upon Paul's words that the Gentiles were formerly at a disadvantage because they were alien to "Israel's way of life" he takes the time to outline the good things of Israel in which the Gentiles had no share. In doing so, Aquinas positively affirms the covenants of Israel as the promises of God in very much the same way that he does in the Romans *lectura*. However, it should become clear as the chapter unfolds, that the positive affirmation of the covenants of Israel as the promises of God in *lectura* fades after the passion, and is ultimately relativized when their election is described only as something formerly held.

Paul "recounts the good things" of which the Gentiles were deprived. Overall, in their sinful state the Gentiles were deprived of two things: 1) a "share in the sacraments," and 2) a "knowledge of God."<sup>28</sup> According to Aquinas, the greatest injury the Gentiles suffered was their ignorance of the knowledge of God.<sup>29</sup> However, Aquinas only mentions the former deprivation in passing. He spends more time lecturing upon "three sacraments" of Israel that the Gentiles did not have.<sup>30</sup> When Aquinas uses the term *sacramenta* in the context of the old

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Aquinas and Judaism," in *Aquinas in Dialogue: Thomas for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Jim Fodor and Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt (Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 58-9.

<sup>28</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.105: "Deinde cum dicit *qui eratis illo in tempore*, etc., commemorat bona quibus privabantur, et primo participation sacramentorum; secundo Dei cognitione, ibi *et sine Deo in hoc mundo*."

<sup>29</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.107. Aquinas is careful to maintain a distinction between the natural knowledge of God and the knowledge of God that we have by faith: "'And without God in this world' means without the knowledge of God. 'God has shown himself in Judah' (Ps 76:2), but not among the Gentiles: 'Not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles that do not know God' (1 Thes 4:5). This must be understood of the knowledge obtainable through faith, for Romans 1 (21) speaks of their natural knowledge: 'Although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor give him thanks.'" He also asserts, however, in *Ad Hebraeos*, that such Gentile knowledge of God is only a knowledge of God from God's effects. God "is not able to be comprehended by a creature except through His effects." *Ad Heb.* 9.1.422.

<sup>30</sup> Aquinas's positive description of Israel's sacraments is reminiscent of the treatment of the prerogatives in *Ad Romanos* 3.1.

law, he is usually referring to circumcision.<sup>31</sup> But here, Aquinas employs the term in a broad way that includes both the promises of the old and new covenants.

The first sacrament of Israel the Gentiles lacked was the “the fundamental truth of Christ” or the “promise of a Christ.” Though he does not use the term covenant, Aquinas seems to have in mind the Davidic covenant since he cites “I will raise up for David a just branch; and a king shall reign and shall be wise.”<sup>32</sup> Here, Aquinas does *not* define the promise of a Christ as the promise to Abraham’s singular seed alone as he did in the Galatians *lectura*. Rather he treats Abraham’s promise as a third and separate sacrament that I will outline below.

The second sacrament seems to consist of two covenants enjoyed by Israel, or the people whom he refers to as a *societatem sanctorum* or “society of the saints.” Aquinas takes note of the fact that Paul refers to testaments in the plural and chooses to interpret this as meaning the old and the new covenants: “He says testaments in the plural since the old

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. *Ad Romanos* Prol. 12 and *Ad Galatas* 1.1.2. In Ia-IIae q. 101.4, Aquinas’s of sacramenta usually occurs, in the context of the old law, as one aspect of the ceremonial law. He divides the ceremonies of the old law into four categories: 1) *sacrificia* or sacrifices; 2) *sacra* or sacred things; 3) *sacramenta* or sacraments; and 4) *observantias* or observances. All of these categories are referred to together as *caeremoniae veteris legis*. The 1) *sacrificia* include sacrificial animals offered by the Levite priesthood. 2) *Sacra* include instruments such as the temple, tabernacle and the vessels. 3) *Sacramenta* include circumcision, “without which no one was admitted to the legal observances” (102.5) and the eating of the paschal banquet. Aquinas actually refers to the paschal banquet as an observance but it is treated in the same article on sacraments, indicating that the Passover, for him, may fit into both *sacramenta* and *observantias* categories. 4) *Observantias* mostly refers to dietary regulations, which include the prohibition of blood and fat of animals. According to Aquinas, the latter two precepts, which are the 3) sacrament of circumcision and 4) observances both function together to consecrate the Jewish people to the worship of God. Indeed, in Ia-IIae q. 102.6 Aquinas affirms the literal, rational cause for the *observantiae* of the law as “a special prerogative of that people.” All of these precepts are ceremonial in character in the sense that they give public expression to divine worship.

<sup>32</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.106. Aquinas references Jeremiah 23:5: “I will raise up for David a just branch; and a king shall reign and shall be wise.”

testament was offered to the Jews and the new was promised.”<sup>33</sup> When Aquinas cites Sirach 44:25, he makes clear that the first covenant of the second sacrament of Israel is the old covenant established by God: “The Lord made his covenant rest upon the head of Jacob” which he says, “can be understood of the old testament.”<sup>34</sup> Throughout this section of his *lectura*, Aquinas insists upon pointing toward the old covenant in a way that emphasizes the Jews as God’s elect people. He cites Deuteronomy 7:2-3 “You shall not make any league with them, nor show them mercy. Neither shall you make marriages with them.”<sup>35</sup> Aquinas then cites John 4:9: “Jews do not communicate with Samaritans” to reinforce that no other people were chosen from among the nations in this way. Aquinas says that Gentiles were deprived because they were not part of this society and did not enjoy its covenants.<sup>36</sup> He also comments upon how even Gentile proselytes were still not considered to have equal citizenship, since, if they became proselytes of this society, they were still accepted to partake of God’s covenants as “strangers of the testaments” rather than as citizens.<sup>37</sup>

Aquinas mentions the second covenant of the second sacrament of Israel when he cites Baruch 2:35 “And I will make an everlasting covenant with them” and then Romans 9:4 to connect this promise to the Israelites: “the latter [or new covenant] was granted to those ‘to

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<sup>33</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.106: “Dicit autem *testamentorum* in plurali; quia Iudaeis vetus testamentum erat exhibitum, et novum erat promissum...”

<sup>34</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.106: “Dicit autem *testamentorum* in plurali; quia Iudaeis vetus testamentum erat exhibitum, et novum erat promissum; quia, ut dicitur Eccli. XLIV, 25: *testamentum suum confirmavit super caput Iacob*; quod potest intelligi de veteri testamento.”

<sup>35</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.106: “Deut. VII, 2-3: *non inibis cum eis foedus, non misereberis eorum, neque sociabis cum eis coniugia*, et cetera.”

<sup>36</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.106: “Secundo tangit societatem sanctorum, qua privabantur quamdiu in gentilitate permanebant...”

<sup>37</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.106: “...quasi dicat: huiusmodi proselyti, quando convertebantur ad Iudaeos et fiebant proselyti, non sicut cives sed sicut hospites recipiebantur ad percipiendum testamenta Dei.”



whom belong to the adoption as children, the glory and the giving of the Law.’”<sup>38</sup> Thus

far, Aquinas has identified two of three sacraments of Israel to which Gentiles did not have access as citizens of the society.

The third sacrament that the Gentiles were deprived of is what Aquinas refers to as “another blessing” for Israel.<sup>39</sup> Aquinas then references Paul’s words that the Gentiles had no “hope of the promise,” which he defines as “the hope of future goods.”<sup>40</sup> Aquinas then cites Galatians 3:16 “To Abraham were the promises made and to his seed.”<sup>41</sup> This hope of the promise of future goods is Abraham’s seed.

What Aquinas *does not* say about Abraham’s seed is significant. Aquinas’s use of the Galatians 3:16 reference to God’s promise to Abraham’s seed is different than his use of the same verse in the Galatians *lectura*. In the Galatians *lectura* the promise to Abraham’s seed is defined exclusively as the promise for the new covenant justification of all peoples in Christ.<sup>42</sup> In the Ephesians *lectura*, however, the promise for Christ is not associated with

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<sup>38</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.106: “Promiserat enim Deus dare aliud testamentum. Bar. II, 35: *statuam illis testamentum alterum sempiternum*. Hoc autem reddidit illis, quorum *adoptio est filiorum Dei et gloria et testamentum*, ut dicitur Rom. IX, 4.” Here, Aquinas reads Romans 9:4 as an exclusive reference to the new covenant promised to Israel and not the old. Aquinas’s use of the Romans 9:4 text in the Romans *lectura* differs from his use here. In the Romans *lectura*, he not only mentions Israel’s “sonship” or adoption, and the glory, and giving of the law, but he also mentions the “covenant.” The covenant is mentioned by Paul before ‘giving of the Law.’ Secondly, in the Romans *lectura* he offers two definitions of this covenant that indicates it can be either the new or the old covenant. Even if it is taken as the old, Aquinas says these are “figures of present spiritual benefit.” He then offers the two interpretations of the Israelite covenant: “...the covenant [is] the pact of circumcision given to Abraham, as is recorded in Gen. 17, although this could be referred to the new covenant first preached to the Jews.”

<sup>39</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.106: “...aliud beneficium...”

<sup>40</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.106: “Ponit etiam aliud beneficium quo privabantur, scilicet spem futurorum bonorum, cum dicit *promissionis spem non habentes*; quia, ut dicitur Gal. III, 16, *Abraham dictae sunt promissiones, et semini eius*.”

<sup>41</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.3.106: “...Abraham dictae sunt promissiones, et semini eius...”

<sup>42</sup> Aquinas also does this in III 70 a. 1-2. Valkenberg summarizes Aquinas’s view from this question of the promise made to Abraham as a promise for Christ: “Through circumcision Abraham differentiated himself

Abraham but with the Davidic covenant and promise for a King. The new covenant is even listed as a distinct sacrament (the second sacrament of Israel) from the promise to Abraham's seed (third sacrament of Israel). Aquinas's choice to distinguish between Abraham's promise of future goods and the new covenant despite his appeal to the Galatians 3:16 text is one sign that in the Ephesians *lectura* there is more interest in God's multiple promises to Israel—an interest that was absent in both *ad Galatas* and *ad Hebraeos*.

In the Ephesians *lectura*, Paul's language about the Gentiles living as strangers of the plural promises and covenants seems to influence Aquinas to define the promise to Abraham in broader terms. Aquinas adopts a more expansive view of Israel's covenants that includes affirmation of aspects of the literal meaning of the covenants: enclosing Israel in the knowledge and worship of the one God. God's promises and covenants to Israel are not limited exclusively to a Christological interpretation. This is not to say that Aquinas thinks that the covenant with Abraham does not prefigure Christ or is something separate from the future and eternal good that is Christ. It is to say that, here, Aquinas affirms the promise of Christ as a Davidic promise to Israel without replacing or redefining the other covenants and promises to Israel in a way that spiritualizes their literal meaning. The sacraments of Israel, the society of saints, are presented as a matrix of God's covenants that include the explicit promise of Christ's kingdom, the benefits of the old law, the promise of a new covenant, and undefined "future goods" for Abraham's seed.

However, as I show below, Aquinas highlights the special election of the Jew not because his aim is to offer an expanded definition of God's promise to Abraham. Rather, his main intention is to follow what he views as Paul's teaching on how Christ unifies these two

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as a believer from the non-believers, moving out from his homeland and his family, on the promise of God that in and through his offspring, which is Christ, all nations of the earth would be blessed." Valkenberg, 58.

estranged groups that are Jews and Gentiles and the idea that the law, which separated these two peoples, is now destroyed by Christ. I now turn to Aquinas's comments upon how Christ justifies the Jews and Gentiles and causes their convergence into one body through the destruction of the ceremonial law.

## 2.4 Christ's Deconstruction of the Ceremonial Law

In addition to presenting the conditions of Jew and Gentile before faith in Christ, Aquinas also treats of the justification of Jews and Gentiles and the blessing of being assimilated into Christ.<sup>43</sup> After discussing what Baglow has referred to as God's "vertical" blessing of justification, Aquinas moves on to treat how such justification overcomes the hostility between Jews and Gentiles.<sup>44</sup> Here, Aquinas elaborates upon what Baglow terms the "horizontal element" of the blessing of justification: the establishment of unity between Jews and Gentiles.<sup>45</sup>

Aquinas understands Paul to show how Gentiles "have converged with the Jewish people" and "are drawn close to God."<sup>46</sup> Aquinas comments upon how Paul teaches that

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<sup>43</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.2.88: "ausa vero exemplaris beneficii est, quia in Christo collata est. Et quantum ad hoc dicit *cum essemus mortui peccatis, convivificavit nos in Christo*, et cetera. Ubi tangit triplex beneficium, id est: iustificationis, resurrectionis a mortuis, et ascensionis in caelum, per quae tria Christo assimilamur."

<sup>44</sup> God's mercy is the efficient cause of the blessing of justification. The exemplary cause of the blessing of God's mercy is the life of Christ. Aquinas then explains that the final cause or purpose of the blessing granted in Christ for Jews and Gentiles can be taken in two ways, depending upon how one interprets "ages to come." Aquinas says the phrase "age to come" can mean "in this age" or "the one to come." If one takes it to mean "this age," the text means God shows the blessings of Christ in the age to come by giving gifts of grace to the early saints in order that "later generations would more easily be converted to Christ." However, the final cause or purpose of the blessing of God can also be taken to mean God's purpose in showing the "abundant riches of his grace." This mercy even exceeds the mercy and grace God has bestowed in the world in the interim. God's purpose in the blessing of the grace of justification can therefore be to bring to perfection "the next life" or the eternal age. *Ad Eph.* 2.2.89-90.

<sup>45</sup> Baglow, 171.

<sup>46</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.4.110: "Primo ostendit qualiter appropinquaverunt populo Iudaico; secundo qualiter propinquiores facti sunt Deo, ibi *ut reconciliet ambos*, et cetera."

Gentiles are now partakers of the goods previously denied them. These goods include the covenants that consisted of Israel's way of life. Because of the blessing of the grace of justification, Gentiles now participate and share in the covenants of Israel *not as strangers but citizens*.<sup>47</sup> Aquinas then outlines the 1) cause, 2) method, and 3) purpose of the convergence of Jew and Gentile.

As he proceeds to discuss these elements of how the Gentiles “share” in the covenants with the Jews, it becomes increasingly clear that Aquinas means “share” in covenants with Jewish Christians. He does not address the theological status of Israel's way of life in the era after grace, amidst the building up of the spiritual edifice of the Church. As he describes the deconstruction of the ceremonial law and the building of the walls of the Church, the *societatem sanctorum* slowly fades out of view and is replaced by the new community of believers.

First, the cause of the convergence of the Jew and Gentile is Christ, who Aquinas says, is the cause of peace. When commenting upon Paul's phrase, “For he is our peace, who has made both one,” Aquinas says “this is an emphatic way of speaking to better express the reality, as though he said: “Rightly do I say that you are drawn near each other, but this occurs through Christ since he is the cause of our peace.”<sup>48</sup> The result of this convergence is that Christ made both Gentiles and Jews one: “he has made both one, joining into unity both

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<sup>47</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.4.109.

<sup>48</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.111: “Et est emphatica locution ad maiorem rei expressionem, quasi dicat: bene dico quod facti estis prope, sed hoc factum est per Christum, quia *ipse est pax nostra*, id est causa pacis nostrae.”

the Jews who worshiped the true God and the Gentiles who were alienated from God's cult."<sup>49</sup>

Next, Aquinas spends a great deal of time explaining the method of convergence of Jew and Gentile, which is indicated by Paul's words "breaking down the middle barrier of partition."<sup>50</sup> According to Aquinas, Christ's method in unifying Jews and Gentiles in one body involves "removing what is divisive" or that which prevented Jews and Gentiles from mixing together in the past.<sup>51</sup> Aquinas then presents an analogy in order to explain the phrase "breaking down the middle barrier of partition." Before Christ came this wall was a high barrier separating the two peoples:

To understand the text we should imagine a large field with many men gathered on it. But a high barrier was thrown across the middle of it, segregating the people so that they did not appear as one people but two. Whoever would remove the barrier would unite the crowds of men into one multitude, one people would be formed.<sup>52</sup>

Aquinas's illustration provides a picture of the relationship between the ceremonial law and Christ and the Church. Here, Aquinas provides us a picture of the ceremonial law as it undergoes the change that is arrival of the new law. He does this by explaining the meaning of the field, the barrier, and its removal.

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<sup>49</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.111: "Sequitur *qui fecit utraque unum*, quia scilicet Christus utrumque populum, videlicet Iudaeorum colentium Deum verum et gentilium, ab huiusmodi Dei cultura alienatorum, coniunxit in unum."

<sup>50</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.112. "Modus autem appropinquationis ostenditur cum subdit *et medium parietem*,"

<sup>51</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.112: "Hic autem modus est per remotionem eius quod dividebat."

<sup>52</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.112: "Debemus autem ad intellectum litterae imaginari unum magnum campum, et multos homines ibi congregatos, in quo quidem per medium protendatur et elevetur unus paries dividens eos, ita quod non videatur populus unus, sed duo. Quicumque ergo removeret parietem, coniungeret illorum hominum congregationem in turbam unam, et efficeretur populus unus."

First, he explains that the field represents the world crowded with men. Next, the barrier that runs down this middle of the field of men is explained as the carnal observances of the old law: “the old law can be termed such a barrier, its carnal observances kept the Jews confined....”<sup>53</sup> The people segregated by the observances are Jews and Gentiles.

Aquinas gives two reasons why the carnal observances were a barrier of partition. First, Aquinas explains that he uses *parietem dico maceriae* or “barrier of partition” and not a *muri* or a “wall,” for a reason.<sup>54</sup> The old law was a barrier because it was not “mortared together with charity, which is, as it were, the cement unifying individuals among themselves and everyone together with Christ.”<sup>55</sup> Rather, as Augustine holds, the old law is a law of fear that persuades by threats and those who kept it out of love “belonged by anticipation...to the New Testament which is the law of love.”<sup>56</sup> It is for this reason that the barrier of partition was not meant to last permanently but only for a definite time: “A barrier of partition,” says Aquinas, “is one in which the stones are not mortared together with cement; it is not built to last permanently but only for a specified time.”<sup>57</sup>

In addition to the barrier as a symbol for the ceremonial law that temporarily separated these two peoples, the barrier also possesses a Christological meaning. The barrier

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<sup>53</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.112: “...hic autem paries potest dici lex vetus secundum carnales observantias, in qua Iudaei conclusi custodiebantur, ut dicitur...”

<sup>54</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.113: “Parietem dico *maceriae*, non *muri*.”

<sup>55</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.113: “Primo quia non conglutinabatur charitate, quae est quasi cementum conglutinans singulos sibi invicem, et omnes simul Christo.”

<sup>56</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.113: “Vetus enim lex est lex timoris, inducens homines per poenas et comminationes ad observantias mandatorum. Et si qui, illo tempore legis, eam ex charitate observabant, iam pertinebant ad novum testamentum, ut dicit Augustinus, quod est lex amoris.”

<sup>57</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.113: “Tunc enim est paries *maceriae*, quando lapides in eo non conglutinantur cemento, nec ad hoc erigitur, ut duret in perpetuum, sed usque ad tempus praefinitum.”

of partition figured Christ. Aquinas writes, “Christ was figured (*figurabatur*) through the Old Law: “Behold he standeth behind our wall (Cant. 2:9)”<sup>58</sup> “Christ, however, has put an end to this barrier,” writes Aquinas.<sup>59</sup> The ceremonial law, which prefigured Christ, is also a barrier between the Jews and the Gentiles. For Aquinas, Christ has made these two people one by the method of “breaking down the middle barrier.”<sup>60</sup>

Aquinas is keenly aware that this interpretation of Paul’s words “breaking down the barrier of partition” that is the ceremonial law might appear contrary to Christ’s own words about fulfilling but not destroying the law in Matthew 5:17. He says, “A problem arises here since [Paul] says ‘breaking down the barrier of partition’ and, on the contrary, Matthew 5:17 states: ‘Do not think that I have come to destroy the law (*solvere legem*) or the prophets. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill.’”<sup>61</sup>

Aquinas’s reply explains the meaning of “I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill” by relying upon the idea that the law Christ said he did not come to destroy was the moral commandments: “I reply. The old law contained both moral and ceremonial precepts. The moral commandments were not destroyed (*non solvit*) by Christ but fulfilled in the counsels he added and in his explanations of what the Scribes and Pharisees had wrongly

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<sup>58</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.113: “Cant. II, v. 9: *ipse stat post parietem nostrum*; quia videlicet Christus per veterem legem figurabatur. [emended]

<sup>59</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.113: “Christus autem hunc parietem removit, et ita cum nullum remaneret interstitium, factus est populus unus Iudaeorum et gentium.”

<sup>60</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.113: “Et hoc est quod dicit: dico quod *fecit utraque unum*, hoc modo scilicet *solvens medium parietem*.”

<sup>61</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.114: “Sed hic incidit quaestio quia dicit *parietem maceriae solvens*, contrarium dicitur Matth. V, 17: *non veni solvere legem, sed adimplere*.”

interpreted.”<sup>62</sup> Christ fulfilled (*adimplevit*) the moral commandments when he said “your justice must abound more than the Pharisees” and then cites Christ’s commandment to love enemies (Matthew 5:43-44). However, regarding the ceremonial precepts, Christ “fulfilled them with regard to what they prefigured.” Christ’s fulfillment of carnal law added “what was symbolized to the symbol.”<sup>63</sup>

This fulfillment though, also brings about the cessation of the literal end of the ceremonial law: “He abolished the ceremonial precepts with regard to what they were in themselves.”<sup>64</sup> Yet Aquinas views Christ as not only breaking down the observance of the law in and of itself but also destroying the enmity Aquinas says the commands caused between Jew and Gentile. Aquinas says, “It should be understood, therefore, that in saying breaking he refers to the observance of the carnal law. To break down this barrier of partition is to destroy the hostility between the Jews and Gentiles.”<sup>65</sup> The hostility was the result of anger and jealousy that had sprung up between these two peoples. By abolishing the carnal law (*legis carnalis*) Christ has also abolished this animosity.<sup>66</sup> Christ, abolished this barrier in his incarnation and death or his “assumed” and “immolated” flesh. “In fulfilling the old

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<sup>62</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.114: “Moralia quidem praecepta Christus non solvit, sed adimplevit, superaddendo consilia, et exponendo ea quae Scribae et Pharisei male intelligebant.”

<sup>63</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.114: “Caeremonialia vero praecepta solvit quidem quantum ad eorum substantiam, sed adimplevit quantum ad illud quod figurabant, adhibens figuratum figurae.”

<sup>64</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.114: “Caeremonialia vero praecepta solvit quidem quantum ad eorum substantiam, sed adimplevit quantum ad illud quod figurabant, adhibens figuratum figurae.”

<sup>65</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.114: “Est ergo intelligendum quod hic dicit *solvens*, scilicet quantum ad observantiam legis carnalis. Et solvere hoc, scilicet parietem maceriae, est solvere inimicitias quae erant inter Iudaeos et gentiles...”

<sup>66</sup> Aquinas says Christ destroys the ceremonial law and not only the hostility between the Jew and the Gentile. Baglow’s interpretation of Aquinas’s view makes this point quite clear: “The barrier of religious custom, so often in human history a cause for division, is torn down by Christ who fulfills the end of religious custom by achieving what it attempted.” Baglow, 176.



testament figures, he killed the hostility that had arisen through the law between Jews and Gentiles.”<sup>67</sup>

The result of the destruction of the barrier of partition is that all the sacrifices “were fulfilled and came to an end.”<sup>68</sup> “Christ was symbolized through the old law...Christ, however, has put an end to this barrier....”<sup>69</sup> In addition to the fulfillment and destruction of the carnal observances, there is a third result: there is now a cessation of the ceremonial law. Through the precepts of the New Testament “the law was cut off.”<sup>70</sup> “It is as if Paul said: I affirm that Christ in his flesh was ‘making void the law of commandments’ as the imperfect is made void by the perfect and the shadow by the truth.”<sup>71</sup> Faith in Christ is “the truth of those symbols.”<sup>72</sup>

After discussing this method of the destruction of the carnal law at length, Aquinas then treats the purpose of the convergence. Because Christ took the place (*succedens*) of the law the two people can be reconciled into “one new man, making peace.” The purpose of the convergence is the same as the purpose of the grace of justification: that the two peoples would be formed into one people. The two peoples are joined by the union of the Holy

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<sup>67</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.119: “Et hoc fecit *per crucem*, interficiens inimicitias in semetipso, quia Iudaeorum et gentilium, quae erant per legem, inimicitias interfecit, implens figuras veteris testamenti...”

<sup>68</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.114: “In quo quidem sacrificio impleta sunt omnia illa sacrificia, et cessaverunt.”

<sup>69</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.112: “...quia videlicet Christus per veterem legem figurabatur. Christus autem hunc parietem removet, et ita cum nullum remaneret interstitium, factus est populus unus Iudaeorum et gentium.”

<sup>70</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.115: “Et hoc *decretis*, id est, praeceptis novi testamenti, per quae excluditur lex.” [emended] Lamb translates *excluditur*, which Aquinas uses only once in the *lectura*, as “was annulled” but a more precise translation would be “was excluded”, “was cut off”, or “was removed.”

<sup>71</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.115: “*Evacuans* dico, sicut imperfectum evacuatur per perfectum, et umbra per veritatem.”

<sup>72</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.116: “Christus autem in lege succedens, et fides eius (sicut veritas figurae) eos in semetipso condidit.”

Spirit.<sup>73</sup> Because Christ put an end to the barrier of the ceremonial law, “the Jews and Gentiles became one people.”<sup>74</sup> This union is possible only because that which divided the two peoples has been destroyed: “...since the law divided they could not be united in that law.”<sup>75</sup> In Baglow’s terms, the carnal law poses a “dilemma” to the unity of the human race.<sup>76</sup>

Throughout his description of Christ’s destruction of the carnal law, Aquinas emphasizes the prefiguring function of the rites. This is clear from Aquinas’s exposition of the symbolic meaning of the barrier of partition, as well as from his description of the “novelty” of Christ. Aquinas explains that this novelty, or newness, is expressed in both the manner of Christ’s conception and his command “love one another as I have loved you.”<sup>77</sup> The newness is also expressed in the grace he bestows, and Aquinas then cites Galatians

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<sup>73</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.121.

<sup>74</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.112: “...quia videlicet Christus per veterem legem figurabatur. Christus autem hunc parietem removet, et ita cum nullum remaneret interstitium, factus est populus unus Iudaeorum et gentium.”

<sup>75</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.116: “Quae autem uniuntur, oportet uniri in aliquo uno, et quia lex dividebat, non poterant in lege uniri...”

<sup>76</sup> Baglow, 174. The idea that religion and ritual is what divides us seems to have much in common with contemporary secular and atheistic views of religion as *the* source of humanity’s division and hatred. Although this is irrelevant to the present concern of the study I wonder if the secular view of ritual and religion as *the* source of division and hostility may actually be a secularized version of the Church’s tendency to spiritualize circumcision.

<sup>77</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.5.116 “Et hoc in uno novo homine faciens pacem, id est in semetipso Christo, qui dicitur novus homo propter novum modum suae conceptionis. Ier. XXXI, 22: *creavit dominus novum super terram, foemina circumdabit virum*. Item propter novitatem gratiae quam contulit. Gal. VI, 15: *in Christo enim Iesu neque circumcisio aliquid valet, neque praeputium, sed nova creatura*. Infra IV, 23: *renovamini spiritu mentis vestrae, et induite novum hominem, qui*, et cetera. Item propter nova mandata quae attulit. Io. XIII, 34: *mandatum novum do vobis, ut diligatis invicem*, et cetera.”

6:15: “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any meaning, but a new creature.”<sup>78</sup>

After the destruction of the law, the grace of Christ renders circumcision superfluous.

### 3. The Foundation and Construction of the Temple of Christ’s Body

After indicating how the Gentiles have “been admitted to spiritual blessings together with the Jews” by the removal of the barrier, Aquinas says Paul goes on to teach that the new blessing enjoyed by the Gentiles is not of less eminence than the Jews.<sup>79</sup> Aquinas is referring to the share of blessings in Christ in the Church. Each group has “equal access to Christ’s blessings.” This is why Paul says that the Gentiles are “no more strangers and foreigners.” Both are conformed to the whole Trinity and in no way lack a share in spiritual goods.<sup>80</sup> Aquinas explains this equal access by drawing upon two analogies used for the growth and increase of the faithful in scripture: the Church as a building with Jews and Gentiles as its two walls.

#### 3.1 The Gentile and Jewish Walls of the Temple of Christ’s Body

To understand Paul’s words that Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners to Israel’s promises and covenants, Aquinas says one must realize “that the community of the

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<sup>78</sup> 2.5.116: “Item propter novitatem gratiae quam contulit. Gal. VI,15.: *in Christo enim Iesu neque circumcisio aliquid valet, neque praeputium, sed nova creatura.*”

<sup>79</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.6.122: “Ostenso supra quod ad spiritualia beneficia simul admissae sunt gentes cum Iudaeis hic ostendit quod in illis beneficiis gentiles non sunt minoris dignitatis quam sunt ipsi Iudaei, sed aequae plenarie ad Christi beneficia sint admissi.”

<sup>80</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.6.123: “primo quidem ex hoc quod ambo coniuncti, sunt Deo reconciliati; secundo quod ambo habent accessum in uno spiritu ad patrem. Quia ergo simul sunt configurati toti Trinitati: patri ad quem habent accessum, filio per quem, spiritui sancto in quo uno accedunt, in nullo ergo deficiunt a spiritualium bonorum participatione.”

faithful are sometimes referred to as a house in the Scriptures.”<sup>81</sup> Aquinas briefly comments about the ways in which a Church can be compared to a city and a house.<sup>82</sup> But he spends more time commenting upon how the Church is a “building” (*aedificio*) and his use of this metaphor makes clear his view of the promises of Israel after the passion of Christ in the Ephesians *lectura*.<sup>83</sup>

Aquinas’s treatment of the building metaphor expresses well the theme of the Ephesians *lectura*. This is because he uses it primarily to elaborate upon how Christ establishes unity between Jew and Gentile. Aquinas understands Paul to teach that the Ephesians can be likened to a building or *aedificio*, based on Paul’s words, “built upon the foundation of the Apostles.”<sup>84</sup> In Aquinas’s view, Paul’s use of the metaphor is meant to clarify his teaching about how the Church is constructed. This “building” consists of two key parts, a foundation and two walls. First, Aquinas explains what he terms the primary and secondary foundations of the building.<sup>85</sup> The secondary foundation of the building is made up of the apostles of the new testament and the prophets of the old testament. It becomes clear as Aquinas explains the relationship between these two pieces of the secondary foundation that

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<sup>81</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.6.124: “Ad intellectum autem litterae sciendum est, quod collegium fidelium quandoque in Scripturis vocatur domus, secundum illud I Tim. III, 15: *ut scias quomodo in domo Dei oporteat te conversari, quae est Dei Ecclesia.*”

<sup>82</sup> Aquinas briefly comments upon how the Church is like a city in its public acts of faith, hope, and love, and how it is like a home in that it is ruled by the Father. He quotes 1 Timothy 3:15: “that you may know how to behave thyself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God.” At other times the community of the faithful (*collegium fidelium*) is called a city, and Aquinas cites Psalm 121:3: “Jerusalem, which is built as a city.”

<sup>83</sup> Aquinas uses “prerogatives” to reference his earlier discussion of the three sacraments of Israel. He therefore seems to use “sacraments,” “promises,” and “prerogatives” as interchangeable terms. See *Ad Eph.* 3.1.142

<sup>84</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.6.126: “Consequenter cum dicit *superaedificati*, etc., manifestat propositum.”

<sup>85</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.6.126: “Primo proponit huius aedificii fundamentum...”

Aquinas thinks that the formal cause, or the entity formed by God's commanding (old law given through prophets) and God's helping grace (new law given through apostles) is the Church. He even correlates prophets and apostles as they relate to the prefigurement of Christ in Israel's worship and Christ's fulfillment of that worship as proclaimed by the apostles. Aquinas writes, "What the prophets foretold was to come, the apostles proclaimed as accomplished."<sup>86</sup> There is a unity or "harmony between the two"<sup>87</sup> that is clearly Christological. Each relates to Christ through their respective function of either prefiguring Christ or announcing Christ's fulfillment of the figure. The one who was to come, or the truth of the figure, is therefore the primary or "principal foundation" that supports and unites the prophets and apostles.<sup>88</sup> For Aquinas, the foundation of the Church is the unity of Israel's law and the apostles preaching as these relate to Christ's coming or having come. According to Aquinas, the reason why Christ is "called a cornerstone" is precisely on account of the convergence of both [Jews and Gentiles]. He writes, "As two walls are joined at the corner, so in Christ the Jewish and Gentile peoples are united."<sup>89</sup> This building grows into a "holy temple" when the number of the disciples multiplies greatly as it did in Acts 6:7 and when its members make progress in good works. However, the "perfection and completion" is achieved when the two walls of the temple, Jews and Gentiles, "are built together," into a

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<sup>86</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.6.128: "Nam quod prophetae praedixerunt futurum, apostolic praedicaverunt factum."

<sup>87</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.6.128: "Item ut ostendat concordiam inter utramque, alterius ad alteram, dum idem est utriusque fundamentum."

<sup>88</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.6.129: "Principale vero fundamentum tantum est Christus Iesus, et quantum ad hoc dicit *ipso summo*, et cetera."

<sup>89</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.6.129: "...nam ut in angulo duo parietes uniuntur, sic in Christo populus Iudaeorum et gentium uniti sunt."

holy temple.<sup>90</sup> This takes place through what Aquinas describes as a sharing in the covenants and promises of Israel.

### 3.2 They Were Set Apart: The Special Election of Israel as a Thing of the Past

When Aquinas comments upon Paul's statement that the Gentiles are now "fellow heirs" he returns once again to the subject of Israel's threefold sacraments but this time uses the term "prerogatives" to describe the three sacraments of the Jews, and how these have now also been received by Gentiles. When Aquinas says Jews share the covenants and are co-partners with Gentiles, he means Jewish Christians. However, unlike his view of the prerogatives in the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas describes the prerogatives of the Jews in the past tense, as things the Jews formerly held. Aquinas begins by saying, "it should be recognized that the Jews enjoyed three prerogatives with respect to the Gentiles."<sup>91</sup>

The first prerogative he mentions is justification through faith: "*they had* the promised inheritance: 'For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world; but through the justice of faith (Rom. 4:13).'"<sup>92</sup> It appears that the third sacrament mentioned above which pertained to the promise Abraham's and "future goods" is defined here according to Rom. 4:13 as the justice brought by Christ. The second prerogative of the Jews is their special election (*specialem a gentibus aliis distinctionem et electionem*). "Another [prerogative] was their special election, they were set

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<sup>90</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.6.132: "Consequenter cum dicit *in quo et vos*, etc., ostendit quomodo gentiles facti sunt participes huius aedificii, dicens *in quo*, scilicet aedificio, non solum supraedificantur Iudaei, sed etiam vos Ephesii *coaedicamini*, id est ad similitudinem aliorum aedicamini."

<sup>91</sup> *Ad Eph.* 3.1.142: "Consequenter cum dicit *esse gentes*, etc., manifestat quid sit illud sacramentum. Circa quod sciendum est quod Iudaei triplicem praerogativam habebant respectu gentilium..."

<sup>92</sup> *Ad Eph.* 3.1.142: "scilicet promissionis haereditatis. Rom. c. IV, 13: *non enim per legem promissio Abrahae, aut semini eius, ut haeres esset mundi, sed per iustitiam fidei.*"

apart from the Gentiles: ‘The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be his peculiar people of all peoples that are upon the earth Deut. 7:6).’<sup>93</sup> Finally, they had “the promise of Christ” and Aquinas then cites God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that “in thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed.”<sup>94</sup>

At one time, these three prerogatives were promises and covenants that the Jews had and that Gentiles did not enjoy. Aquinas reiterates this when he cites Ephesians 2:12, concerning the notion that the Gentiles were aliens and strangers.<sup>95</sup> However, Gentiles have now been made the co-heirs of the prerogatives, including the special election. The Gentiles “have received them,” that is, received each prerogative by faith.<sup>96</sup> Again, Aquinas lists each prerogative received by the Gentiles. First, when Paul says that the Gentiles are “fellow heirs” (*cohaeredes*) with the Jews, this refers to the heavenly inheritance of justification by faith.<sup>97</sup> Next, and most importantly, when Paul says “of the same body” Aquinas says this refers to the fact that Gentiles are also fellow heirs to the election of “the chosen community of believers” (*speciale collegium fidelium*).<sup>98</sup> But Aquinas immediately states that this same

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<sup>93</sup> *Ad Eph.* 3.1.142: “Circa quod sciendum est quod Iudaei triplicem praerogativam habebant respectu gentilium ... Item per specialem a gentibus aliis distinctionem et electionem. Deut. VII, 6: *te elegit dominus Deus tuus, ut sis ei populus peculiaris de cunctis populis qui sunt super terram.*” Aquinas’s discussion of each of the prerogatives appears in a list of things they held. Lamb’s translation emphasizes this.

<sup>94</sup> *Ad Eph.* 3.1.142: “*in te benedicentur universae cognationes terrae.*”

<sup>95</sup> *Ad Eph.* 3.1.142: “Haec autem tria gentes non habebant. Supra II, 12: *qui eratis illo tempore sine Christo, alienati a conversatione Israel.*”

<sup>96</sup> *Ad Eph.* 3.1.142: “Haec autem tria gentes non habebant. Supra II, 12: *qui eratis illo tempore sine Christo, alienati a conversatione Israel.* Sed ad haec tria recepti sunt per fidem.”

<sup>97</sup> *Ad Eph.* 3.1.142: “Primo quidem, quantum ad participationem haereditatis, et, quantum ad hoc, dicit *cohaeredes*, scilicet ipsis Iudaeis in haereditate caelesti.”

<sup>98</sup> *Ad Eph.* 3.1.142: “Secundo ad speciale collegium fidelium, et, quantum ad hoc, dicit *et concorporales*, id est in unum corpus.”

body is “one body,” by which he means the body of Christ. Third, Gentiles are admitted to a participation in the promised grace and this is clear from when Paul says they are “co-partners of his promise, the promises made to Abraham.”<sup>99</sup> Gentiles have received justification, admission to the chosen community of believers, and because of this, they are co-partners of the promise. The promises of Israel now belong to the community of believers. The inheritance has been passed along to the new community of those justified in Christ. The society of the saints that is Israel is described as having had these promises in the past.

#### 4. Aquinas’s View of the Israel and the Church in the Ephesians *Lectura*

In conclusion, I offer two observations about Aquinas’s view of Israel and the Church after the passion of Christ in the *lectura*. The first pertains to the relationship between the view of the ceremonial law in the Ephesians *lectura* and my study of the law in the other Pauline commentaries. The second pertains to how Aquinas’s argument that the passion of Christ destroys the ceremonial law undermines his positive affirmation of the special election of Israel as a promise of God, as well as his attempt to say how Jewish Christians exist as the second wall of the temple that is the body of Christ.

##### 4.1 The Relationship Between Aquinas’s View of the Ceremonial Law in the Ephesians *Lectura* and the View of the Ceremonial Law in the Commentaries on Hebrews, Romans, and Galatians

Aquinas’s view of the law in the Ephesians *lectura* shares characteristics with the commentaries on Hebrews, Romans, and Galatians. Ephesians is similar to the official view as it is expressed in the lectures on Hebrews and Galatians in its description of Christ’s destruction of the ceremonial law. Aquinas insists that the ceremonial law is a barrier to the

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<sup>99</sup> *Ad Eph.* 3.1.142: “tertio, ad participationem gratiae repromissae, et quantum ad hoc dicit *et participes*, scilicet promissionum quae factae sunt Abrahae.”



unification of Jew and Gentile. The destruction of the ceremonial law in Christ's immolated and resurrected Jewish flesh is the method by which Christ removes the barrier of the Jewish rites and unites Jew and Gentile. Circumcision is declared of no value after the blessing of the justification of the grace of Christ.

Ephesians is similar to the Romans *lectura* in two ways. In the Ephesians *lectura*, Aquinas affirms the special election of Israel and melds the election with the covenants as promises from God. The special election of the Jewish people is a covenant or promise from God. He even refers to Israel as a *societatem sanctorum*. Second, although Aquinas understands Christ as destroying the ceremonial law, *he does not say* that the law is now deadly or that its observance by Jews is a mortal sin despite one of the most extended and detailed treatments of how Christ "tears down" the cessation of the observances, as Baglow puts it. There is also no mention of the Augustinian middle period in Ephesians and in the Romans *lectura*.

The view of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ in the Ephesians *lectura* can therefore be said to represent somewhat of a middle position between Aquinas's view in Romans and his view in Galatians and Hebrews. In the Ephesians *lectura*, the ceremonial law is *not* affirmed as "fulfilled and upheld" (i.e. Romans) but it is also *not* declared "fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly" (i.e. Galatians and Hebrews). Rather, the view in Ephesians is that the ceremonial law is "fulfilled and destroyed" after the passion of Christ.

#### 4.2 Fulfillment as the Replacement of Israel as the *Societatem Sanctorum*

Aquinas's argument that the passion of Christ fulfills and destroys the ceremonial law undermines 1) his positive affirmation of the special election of Israel as a promise of God as

well as 2) his attempt to say how Jewish Christians exist as a second wall of the temple of the body of Christ.

Aquinas's argument that Christ has destroyed the ceremonial law, when considered in the context of two other claims, implies that God has broken God's promise to Israel to be a special people and has replaced the *societatem sanctorum* with the community of believers who have received Israel's promised Christ. Aquinas's teaching that Christ completely destroys the ceremonial law, combined with his description of the Jews' special election as a thing of the past, and the notion that Jewish and Christian believers have received Israel's special election and promises implies that Israel is no longer the elect. Rather, the fellow heirs of the election are the Jewish and Christian believers united in the one body of Christ. After the passion of Christ, the body of Christ becomes the "the chosen community of believers" (*speciale collegium fidelium*).<sup>100</sup> Taken together, these claims imply that the promise of the special election of Israel as a *societatem sanctorum* now applies to the body of Christ.

Aquinas's teaching on the replacement of Israel with the Church also problematizes his comments upon the Jews and Christians of the Ephesian Church as the two walls of the temple of Christ's body. When Aquinas refers to Jews and Gentiles as co-heirs of the promises, he means that there is now a convergence between Jewish believers in Christ and Gentile believers in Christ. These believing Jews and Gentiles are the elect co-heirs of the promises of Israel.

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<sup>100</sup> *Ad Eph.* 3.1.142: "Secundo ad speciale collegium fidelium, et, quantum ad hoc, dicit *et concorporales*, id est in unum corpus."

Yet it is not clear how the Jewish wall of the temple of Christ's body, which is built together with the Gentile wall, can be said to be a Jewish wall. It may seem that the Jewish Christians of Ephesians practice the law but only during the middle period and without placing their hope in this law—Aquinas chooses to adopt this view of the Jewish Christians in the Galatians *lectura*. But such a middle period is absent in the Ephesians *lectura*. The Jewish Christian described in the Ephesians *lectura* is foundational to the unity and growth of the Church. The Jewish Christians of Ephesians are described as a fundamental aspect of the Church's very construction and growth as they are united together with Gentiles into one body. In the Galatians *lectura*, on the other hand, Aquinas adopts Augustine's view that after the middle period expires, the observance of circumcision becomes deadly. The Jewish Christian of the Galatians *lectura* is not permanent. The Jewish Christian believers of Galatians, which he refers to there as the Church of the circumcision, or *ecclesia Iudaeorum fidelium* (Church of the Jewish believers)<sup>101</sup> observe the law and are viewed by Aquinas as “not destined to endure.”<sup>102</sup>

When Aquinas speaks of the Jewish wall of the temple of Christ's body he does *not* have in mind the Church of the circumcision of the Galatians *lectura*. If Aquinas did adopt the Galatians view of the Jewish Christian it would seem one wall of the temple of Christ's

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<sup>101</sup> *Ad Galatas* 2.2.74-75.

<sup>102</sup> Again, recall Aquinas's view of the Church of the Jewish believers in Galatians is that the Holy Spirit does not intend this form of Jewish Christian to endure: “Now the reason why the custom prevailed in the early Church for those in the Church of the circumcision to sell their goods and not those in the Church of the Gentiles was that the believing Jews were congregated in Jerusalem and in Judea, which was soon to be destroyed by the Romans, as later events proved. Hence the Lord willed that no possessions were to be kept in a place not destined to endure. But the Church of the Gentiles was destined to grow strong and increase, and therefore, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it came about that the possessions in it were not to be sold.” *Ad Galatas* 2.2.75.

body was not destined to endure. In the Ephesians *lectura*, with its emphasis on the unity of Jewish and Christian believers in the Church, there is no mention of the middle period nor is there a discussion of how Jewish Christians could observe the law without putting their trust in it, i.e. without sinning. In what way then is the second wall of the temple of the body of Christ a Jewish wall in the Ephesians *lectura*?

Aquinas's understanding of Paul's Jewish nationality may provide an answer to this question.<sup>103</sup> It seems that when Aquinas speaks of the Jewish Christian that exists as a permanent part of the Church of the Ephesians, he may have in mind the idiosyncratic Judaism he attributed to Paul at the outset of the *lectura*. Paul is only Jewish in "nationality" and "contemplation."<sup>104</sup> And this Judaism is dead to the law. It could be the case that for Aquinas, the Jewish believers of the Ephesian Church are also Jewish only "from birth" and no longer observe the ceremonial law after Christ destroyed this barrier to unity.

Nevertheless, even if Aquinas's peculiar Pauline Judaism is the form of Judaism shared by all the Jewish believers of the Ephesian Church, it is still not clear how the Jewish wall of the Church remains a permanent ecclesiological reality since it is not clear how one remains Jewish without circumcision. Both versions of Aquinas's New Testament Jewish Christian seem impermanent. One is explicitly impermanent since the law-observant Jewish believer of the Galatians *lectura* is permitted to observe the law in the middle period but is not destined to endure. The other is implicitly impermanent since the nonobservant Jewish believer of Ephesians would, without the law, soon be absorbed into the Gentile wall of the Church.

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<sup>103</sup> *Ad Eph. Prologus*, 1.1.1.

<sup>104</sup> *Ad Eph. Prologus*, 1.1.1.

In the next and final chapter I turn my attention to the *Summa theologiae* and compare Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ in the commentaries on Paul's epistles with his teaching on the fulfillment and cessation of the law in the *Summa theologiae*.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### IT SEEMS THERE IS NO VALUE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AQUINAS'S TEACHING ON THE CEREMONIAL LAW AFTER THE PASSION OF CHRIST IN THE SUMMA THEOLOGIAE AND PAULINE COMMENTARIES

The goal of this dissertation is to provide a more comprehensive account of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ in the theology of Thomas Aquinas in order to illuminate the contemporary discussion over whether his theology is economically supersessionist. In this final chapter, I achieve this goal by comparing my analysis of Aquinas's three views of the fulfillment of the ceremonial law in his Pauline commentaries with his view of the theological status of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ in the *Summa theologiae*.<sup>1</sup> As I mentioned in chapter two, scholars are increasingly attempting the difficult task of comparing key themes in Aquinas's biblical commentaries with those same themes in the *Summa theologiae* in an effort to produce clearer pictures of Aquinas's theology. I follow this development in Thomistic studies and aim to provide a clearer picture of Aquinas's thought on the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ in his commentaries on Hebrews, Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and the *Summa theologiae*, in order to answer whether or to what degree these works can be described as economically supersessionist.

This chapter unfolds in four steps. In the first section I set the stage for the primary task of comparing Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law after Christ in the *Summa theologiae* with his teaching on the law in the commentaries by revisiting the contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> All Latin citations of the *Summa theologiae* are from *Sancti Thomae de Aquino, Opera omnia*. vol. 4-12 Leonine edition (Rome, 1888-1906). English translations are from the Benziger edition unless otherwise noted. *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger, 1948). Citations of the *Summa theologiae* will appear in the text and footnotes as: Ia-IIae q. 103.2 ad. 1, where "Ia-IIae" stands for *Prima Secundae* etc., "q. 103" stands for question 103, "2" for the article, and "ad." for "reply objection."

discussion over the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology. My study provides a an account of Aquinas's thought on the ceremonial law after Christ in the commentaries that is lacking in the discussion over the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology. In this first section I argue that this more complete picture of Aquinas's thought on the ceremonial law, when coupled with the secondary task of the analyzing the teaching on the ceremonial law after Christ in the *Summa theologiae*, helps reveal whether or to what degree these works of Aquinas are supersessionist as well as how several scholars in the debate overlook a significant difference in how Aquinas interprets the teaching on Galatians 5:2: "If you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you."<sup>2</sup>

In the second major section, I take up the secondary task of the chapter and analyze Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law after Christ in Ia-IIae q. 103.2-4, which directly concerns the duration of the ceremonial law and its status after Christ's passion. This analysis of Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law sets the stage for the comparative analysis of the teaching in the *Summa theologiae* and the Pauline commentaries in the next section of the chapter.

In the third section, I show how my analysis of the Pauline commentaries in chapter three through six of this study enhances my reading of the teaching on the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae*. I show how my reading of the commentaries on the value of the ceremonial law after Christ, combined with the analysis of the *Summa theologiae* on that

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<sup>2</sup> *Ad Galatas* 5.1.280: "...The Apostle declared to them that 'if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.' For it followed from this that they did not correctly estimate Christ, to signify Whom circumcision was given: 'That it may be a sign of the covenant between me and you' (Gen 17:11). Therefore, those who submitted to circumcision believed that the sign was still in vogue and that the one signified had not yet come." "...ideo dicit eis apostolus *si circumcidimini*, et cetera. Sequebatur enim ex hoc, quod non reputarent Christum, in cuius signum data fuit circumcisio. Gen. XVII, 11: *ut sit in signum foederis inter me et vos*, et cetera. Qui ergo circumcidebantur, credebant adhuc signum durare, et tunc signatum nondum venisse."

same subject, makes two contributions to the contemporary discussion on whether or to what degree Aquinas's theology is supersessionist by demonstrating the following two points.

First, the dissertation makes a contribution to the contemporary discussion by demonstrating whether or to what degree these works of Aquinas contain supersessionist elements. I show whether or to what degree the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ in the *Summa theologiae* shares characteristics with the views of fulfillment I argued exist in Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law in the commentaries.<sup>3</sup> I then compare the teaching in the *Summa theologiae* to the economically supersessionist views in the commentaries as well as the significant post-supersessionist views in the commentaries.

In this third section I also show how my analysis of the ceremonial law after Christ in the commentaries, and in the *Summa theologiae*, makes a second contribution to the contemporary discussion by demonstrating the precise source of the tension in Aquinas's thought between the economically supersessionist "fulfilled, destroyed, deadly" view of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ and the more post-supersessionist "fulfilled and upheld" view. I argue that the precise source of the tension is Aquinas's contradictory readings of what he sees as authoritative Pauline statements concerning Galatians 5:2, the key text in Paul's epistles that he understands to mark the era in salvation history when circumcision no longer has a value. Aquinas understands Paul to teach both that circumcision is of no advantage in the era after grace and that circumcision is advantageous in the era after grace. In the fourth and final section of the chapter I end the study by offering a summary of

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<sup>3</sup> "Fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly" in *ad Galatas* and *ad Hebraeos* vs. "fulfilled and upheld" of *Ad Rom.*; and "fulfilled and destroyed" of Ephesians corresponds to both of these views and is the clearest point of tension in so far as it exists in one commentary.



my conclusions and identify areas for further research.

### 1. Revisiting the Contemporary Discussion Over the Question of Supersessionism in Aquinas's Theology

The aim of this section is to set the stage for my analysis of Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law after Christ in the *Summa theologiae* by revisiting the contemporary discussion over the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology.

I proceed in three steps. In the first subsection, I remind the reader of the limitations in the contemporary discussion over the question of supersessionism in Aquinas's theology. I remind the reader of the necessity of this study of the commentaries and how it provides a clearer picture of Aquinas's thought on the ceremonial law after Christ than is currently available to scholars in the debate.

In the second subsection, I take the first step toward clarifying the relationship between the Pauline commentaries and the *Summa theologiae* by returning to the work of three scholars who have addressed the relationship between Aquinas's Pauline commentaries and the *Summa theologiae* on the question of supersessionism. I evaluate how Steven Boguslawski and Bruce Marshall characterize the relationship between Aquinas's Romans *lectura* and the *Summa theologiae* as these works relate to the question of supersessionism. I show that although these scholars provide helpful comparisons of the *Summa theologiae* and the Romans *lectura* on the subject of the election of Israel they either 1) do not attend to the teaching on the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae* or 2) do not attend to precisely how the negative view of the law in Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law after Christ in the *Summa theologiae* relates to the positive view of the law in the Romans *lectura*, not to mention other Pauline commentaries. I argue that my reading of Aquinas's views of the

ceremonial law after Christ in the Pauline commentaries, and my analysis of that same teaching in the *Summa theologiae* in the section helps bring to light a particular conflict between two Pauline statements on the value of circumcision after the passion of Christ. At the end of this section I suggest that a clearer picture of the relationship between the teaching on the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae* and the Romans *lectura* emerges by attending to the ways Aquinas interprets what he views as the Pauline claim that circumcision after Christ is superfluous in the Galatians *lectura*, the *Summa theologiae*, and his lecture on Romans.

In the third subsection, I take a third step toward clarifying the relationship between the Pauline commentaries and the *Summa theologiae* by evaluating Levering's view of the relationship between the commentaries and the *Summa theologiae* on the fulfillment of the law. I hope to make clear why an analysis of Aquinas's teaching on the duration of the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae* in light of my reading of the commentaries can illuminate the precise point of tension between the commentaries and the *Summa theologiae* as well as whether or to what degree the works are supersessionist.

### 1.1 Revisiting the Limitations of the Contemporary Discussion Over the Question of Supersessionism in Aquinas's Theology

In chapter one I claimed that the discussion over the question of supersessionism in the theology of Aquinas was plagued by three problems. First, the discussion suffers from a lack of clarity concerning the language of supersessionism. By drawing upon the work of Terence L. Donaldson and R. Kendall Soulen I attempted to clarify the language of supersessionism and presented a definition of economic supersessionism as the twofold claim that 1) God no longer wills that carnal Israel maintain its elect status through the observance

of circumcision and *Torah* because these practices have been made obsolete and 2) the Church has replaced the Jews as God's elect community.

The second problem with the discussion over the question of supersessionism in the theology of Aquinas is the selective nature of scholars' treatment of Aquinas's texts, including the neglect of his lectures on Hebrews, Galatians, and Ephesians, which contain extended comments upon Israel and the ceremonial law. The third problem is that the selective nature of scholars' treatment of Aquinas's texts obscures tensions in Aquinas's view of the theological status of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ.

In chapter one I also argued that Marshall's work highlights tensions between positive and negative views of the Jewish people in Aquinas's thought.<sup>4</sup> Yet in my view this tension becomes clear when Boguslawski's claims about the positive view of the Jews in the Romans *lectura* and *Summa theologiae* are read in light of the Michael Wyschogrod's critique of Aquinas's view of the Jews in the *Summa theologiae*.<sup>5</sup> Drawing upon Aquinas's teaching on the Jewish people in *ad Romanos* and the *Summa theologiae*, Boguslawski claims that Aquinas avoids "Augustinian supersessionism,"<sup>6</sup> which he defines as deconstructing Israel's prerogatives to Christological prefigurements. Additionally, Matthew Levering also claims that Aquinas avoids supersessionism. Both Levering and Boguslawski understand the Romans *lectura*, as well as the *Summa theologiae*, to provide a positive theological view of

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<sup>4</sup> Bruce Marshall, "Quasi in Figura: A Brief Reflection on Jewish Election, After Thomas Aquinas," *Nova Et Vetera* 7, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 523–28; "Postscript and Prospect," *Nova Et Vetera* 7, no. 2 (2009): 523–4.

<sup>5</sup> Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading of St. Thomas Aquinas," in *Understanding Scripture: Explorations of Jewish and Christian Traditions of Interpretation*, ed. Clemens Thoma and Michael Wyschogrod (Paulist Press, 1987), 125–38.

<sup>6</sup> Steven C. Boguslawski, *Thomas Aquinas on the Jews: Insights into His Commentary on Romans 9–11* (Paulist Press, 2008), xvi.

the Jewish people that avoids supersessionism.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Michael Wyschogrod, whose work also focuses on the *Summa theologiae*, claims that Aquinas's prefiguration hermeneutics strains Christianity's relationship with Judaism. Mark Kinzer and Marshall agree that the teaching in the *Summa theologiae* undermines the doctrine of Jewish election.<sup>8</sup>

As I explained in chapter one, Marshall was the only scholar to recognize both the positive view in the Romans *lectura* and what he saw as the more negative aspect of Aquinas's thought in the *Summa theologiae*. For this reason, I suggested that his thought represented the most promising path forward since he sought to attend to what seemed like clear tensions between the Romans *lectura* and the *Summa theologiae*. Nevertheless, I did not examine the relationship between the teaching in the *Summa theologiae* and the views of the ceremonial law in the Romans *lectura* not to mention the relationship between the *Summa theologiae* and the other Pauline commentaries.<sup>9</sup> I set aside the task of comparing the *Summa theologiae* and the Pauline commentaries on the question of economic supersessionism for this last chapter of the study.

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<sup>7</sup> Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation According to Thomas Aquinas* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 9. Boguslawski, xvi.

<sup>8</sup> As I mentioned in chapter one, Marshall views Aquinas's teaching that the law is deadly as a theological problem on multiple levels. Marshall thinks supersessionism is a problem because it implies that God may be lying when God makes promises. Economic supersessionism is the problem that I am addressing because it is the same problem underlying Wyschogrod's challenge to Aquinas regarding the permanence of Israel's election and law. It was this challenge that started the entire discussion over whether Aquinas's theology is supersessionist. However, as I explained in chapter one, Marshall thinks the problem of supersessionism points to another, deeper problem concerning our knowledge of the temporal realities that God wills. Marshall, "Postscript and Prospect," 528.

<sup>9</sup> Marshall also suggested tensions on the status of Jewish rites after Christ existed in Aquinas's thought: "To say that there is ambiguity in Aquinas's position may be something of an understatement." I noticed the tension between Wyschogrod's view of the prefiguring hermeneutics and Boguslawski's "positive view" that avoids supersessionism. When I read Marshall I realized that he noticed the same tension between a positive and negative view in the *Summa theologiae*. Like Boguslawski, Marshall also recognizes the Romans *lectura* as affirming the election of Israel and repudiating supersessionism. I show below how my study complements and builds on Marshall's thought.

Rather, in chapters three through six, I aimed to discover whether a tension between an official and unofficial view exists in Aquinas's Pauline commentaries, which have been neglected especially as a theological unit. In other words, I sought to test whether there was an official and unofficial view of the ceremonial law after Christ in Aquinas's thought but applied this test *only* to his neglected commentaries on Paul's epistles. I did so in the hope that such an analysis might provide a more comprehensive picture of Aquinas's thought on the theological status of the ceremonial law after the passion and that this analysis could then serve as a resource to clarify whether or to what degree the *Summa theologiae* and the Pauline commentaries could be described as supersessionist.

In my analysis of the commentaries I asked whether Aquinas consistently teaches that the ceremonial law becomes *mortua et mortifera* or whether he attributes some sort of theological value to the rites after the passion of Christ? I discovered three views of fulfillment of the ceremonial law in the relevant Pauline commentaries: 1) fulfilled, destroyed, deadly (Hebrews and Galatians); 2) fulfilled and destroyed (Ephesians); and 3) fulfilled and upheld (Romans). These three views from Aquinas's commentaries, when combined with the definition of supersessionism, that I suggested based on the systematic reflection on the term in the work of Donaldson and Soulen, serve as helpful tools for analyzing whether or to what degree Aquinas's theology is supersessionist with a more comprehensive scope than methods employed in the contemporary discussion thus far. My study of Aquinas's commentaries on Paul supplies a perspective for comparing the *Summa theologiae* not only as it relates to the Romans *lectura*, which a few scholars have done, but also to the commentaries on Hebrews, Galatians, and Ephesians. My hope is that such a comparison can further illuminate Aquinas's thought on the ceremonial law after Christ and

help answer whether or to what degree his theology can be identified as economically supersessionist.

In the next subsection I evaluate the work of the only three scholars that have commented upon the relationship between the *Summa theologiae* and a Pauline commentary (Romans) on the question of supersessionism in order to demonstrate the necessity for a closer reading of the teaching on the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae* with attention to how it might relate to the teaching in the commentaries on Paul's epistles.

### 1.2 Revisiting the Work of Steven Boguslawski and Bruce Marshall on the Relationship Between the Romans *lectura* and the *Summa theologiae*

Since my primary task in this chapter is a comparison of Aquinas's thought on the ceremonial law after Christ in the commentaries and the *Summa theologiae* it is necessary to engage the three scholars who have, with varying degrees of detail, commented upon the relationship between the *Summa theologiae* and Romans *lectura*.<sup>10</sup> In what follows I present how Boguslawski and Marshall characterize the relationship between Aquinas's teaching on the law in the *Summa theologiae* and in the Romans *lectura*. In the next subsection (1.3), I treat Matthew Levering's view of how Romans influences Aquinas's view of fulfillment of the law. I show that although these scholars provide illuminating comparisons of the *Summa theologiae* and the Romans *lectura* they either 1) do not attend to the teaching in the *Summa theologiae* on the cessation of the ceremonial law (Boguslawski) or 2) overlook the particular point in Aquinas's teaching on the duration of the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae* that directly corresponds to his teaching on the ceremonial law in his Galatians and Hebrews

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<sup>10</sup> To date, no scholar has attempted a comparison of Aquinas's thought on the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae* with the other commentaries (Hebrews, Galatians, Ephesians). I attempt this task for the first time in section three of this chapter.

lectures, and directly contradicts his teaching on the ceremonial law in the Romans *lectura* (Marshall).

As I argued in chapter one, the work of Marshall and Boguslawski directly acknowledges the problem that the language of supersessionism is most helpful for identifying both the idea that the observance of circumcision becomes obsolete and the idea that the Church replaces the Jewish people as God's elect. Each scholar understands that the challenge that must be faced in overcoming economic supersessionism is the positive affirmation of the permanent election of Israel. Moreover, each scholar recognizes the importance of the election of Israel as well as the law.<sup>11</sup> This is why both scholars are concerned to show that Aquinas holds a positive view of the Jewish people in the Romans *lectura* and that he does not, to use Boguslawski's terms, "deconstruct" the historical practices of circumcision and Torah to "prefigurements of the Christian dispensation."<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, when it comes to explaining how the view of the Jewish people that avoids supersessionism in the Romans *lectura* is related to Aquinas's teaching in the *Summa theologiae*, Marshall and Boguslawski depart in significant ways. Whereas Boguslawski views the teaching in the *Summa theologiae* as complimenting the positive view of Jewish

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<sup>11</sup> Marshall writes, "The permanent election of Israel seems to require that the identifiable existence of the Jewish people also be permanent. Israel's election would be void if the biological descendants of Abraham indeed received God's promised blessing, but had ceased to be identifiable as Abraham's descendants, that is, as Jews. The permanence of Israel's election thus entails the permanence of the distinction between Jew and Gentile." Marshall, "Christ and the Cultures: the Jewish People and Christian Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, ed. Colin E. Gunton (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 91. Boguslawski, although he is not as explicit in his concern for the connection between law and election, argues against what he refers to as the Augustinian supersessionism that "deconstructs" the historical practices of circumcision and Torah to "prefigurements" of Christ. For Boguslawski, supersessionism is "relegating Israel's divinely ordained prerogatives to prefigurements of the Christian dispensation." Boguslawski, *Thomas Aquinas on the Jews*. xv. Both Thomistic scholars take the permanent election of Israel seriously and therefore provide, as I argued in chapter one, the most promising path forward for engaging Wyschogrod's challenge to Thomistic studies.

<sup>12</sup> Boguslawski, xv.

election in the Romans *lectura*, Marshall thinks that the teaching in the *Summa theologiae* actually undermines the positive view of Jewish election in the Romans *lectura*. Next, I evaluate Boguslawski and Marshall's views of the relationship between Romans *lectura* and *Summa theologiae* on the question of supersessionism.

Boguslawski rightly argues that Aquinas's commentary on Romans 9 through 11 provides a positive view of the Jews and avoids Augustinian supersessionism, which he defines as the deconstruction of Israel's prerogatives to Christological prefigurements.<sup>13</sup> As I argued in chapter four, Aquinas's view of the fulfillment of the ceremonial law in the Romans *lectura* can be referred to as "fulfilled and upheld." Nevertheless, as I pointed out in chapter one, Boguslawski's argument that Aquinas also avoids supersessionism in the *Summa theologiae* is not convincing. This is the case despite his arguments that there is a "positive view" of the Jews in the *Summa theologiae*. Boguslawski points out several positive aspects concerning the high view of the Jewish people in the *Summa theologiae*. Boguslawski points to Aquinas's position on the toleration of Jewish worship, which he describes as: "Jewish rites ought to be tolerated, not as an evil suffered but for the good derived."<sup>14</sup> Aquinas also teaches, explains Boguslawski, that Christians retain the right of association with Jews...and that Jews may even employ Christians."<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the most positive connection, according to Boguslawski, is how Aquinas's view of predestination and election in the *Summa theologiae* mirrors his positive teaching on the prerogatives of the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., xv.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



Jewish people in his commentary on Romans 9 through 11.<sup>16</sup> Through the doctrine of predestination and election, Aquinas “safeguards the integral role of the Jewish people and delineates their relationship to the Peoples newly incorporated into the faith of Israel.”<sup>17</sup> Boguslawski therefore characterizes the relationship between the *Summa theologiae* and the Romans *lectura* in a way that suggests these two works are complimentary. Nevertheless, while it is clear that this special delineation for the Jewish people exists in Aquinas’s Romans *lectura*, it is not clear from Boguslawski’s presentation how such a delineation exists in the *Summa theologiae* in light of the teaching on the cessation of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ.<sup>18</sup>

As I explained in chapter one, Boguslawski does not address Aquinas’s teaching on the fulfillment and cessation of the ceremonial law after Christ in Ia-IIae q. 103.4. There is no treatment of Aquinas’s tripartite division of the Mosaic Law, or the teaching that the law becomes *mortua et mortifera* after the passion of Christ despite Boguslawski’s frequent emphasis on the idea of a perpetual and ongoing role of the prerogative of the Jews in salvation history.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, although Boguslawski highlights positive aspects of Aquinas’s

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<sup>16</sup> The definition of predestination that Aquinas utilizes in *Ad Rom.* 43 mirrors that found in Ia 23.1. Boguslawski bases his argument on what he refers to as the contemporaneous production of Ia q. 23.1-6 and Aquinas’s first lectures on Romans. *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Ia-IIae q. 103.4. Boguslawski, 38. The attention to the teaching on the law in the *Summa theologiae* is scant. Besides a brief discussion of the law as prefiguring Christ, the only other reference to the law in the *Summa theologiae* mentioned by Boguslawski concerns Aquinas’s pedagogical view of the law which he ties to Paul: this view of the law is “neither harsh nor negative (but Pauline); the Law led imperfect people to God through the temporal things to which they are intrinsically inclined.” The pedagogical function of the ceremonial law, which was to direct Israel to the worship of the one God, is now complete at the coming of Christ.

<sup>19</sup> Boguslawski writes, “An exhaustive discussion of Thomas’ understanding of the judicial and ceremonial precepts of the Mosaic Law is well beyond the scope of the current study. What is essential to the present discussion however, is the superior status and role of the Jews considered historically and exegetically

views concerning the teaching on the Jewish people in the *Summa theologiae*, it is not clear that these aspects “overcome supersessionism.” Indeed, as I show below, in my examination of the treatise on law, Aquinas’s teaching in the *Summa theologiae* actually strengthens Augustine’s view that the law is dead after the passion of Christ by buttressing it with Pauline authority. Despite Boguslawski’s account it is difficult to see how the *Summa theologiae* and the Romans *lectura* can be considered complementary on the question of supersessionism.

Unlike Boguslawski, who views the relationship between the relationship between the *Summa theologiae* and the Romans *lectura* as works of Aquinas that share complimentary views of Israel and the law that avoid supersessionism, Marshall thinks the Romans *lectura* is in tension with the teaching on the ceremonial law as well as a text in the *Summa theologiae*: IIa-IIae q. 10.11.

Marshall’s account of the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae* largely corresponds to what I have described above as the “fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly” view of the ceremonial after the passion of Christ.<sup>20</sup> And Marshall thinks there is a tension between the negative teaching that the figurative function of the ceremonies ceased (Ia-IIae q. 103.4)

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by Aquinas....” Boguslawski, fn. 11, p. 48. It is difficult to see how the status and role of the ceremonial precepts after the passion of Christ is not essential to Aquinas’s own view of the old covenant in salvation history not to mention Boguslawski’s argument that Aquinas avoids Augustinian supersessionism that deconstructs the rites to Christological prefigurements.

<sup>20</sup> Marshall says Aquinas’s view of the Mosaic Law “hardly seems as if it could serve as a resource for a post-supersessionist Christian theology since Aquinas regards the observance of the Torah after Christ as fatal.” Marshall writes, “Thomas clearly regards the continued observance of the Torah after Christ as fatal. That is, the vast bulk of Mosaic legislation, everything in the ‘old law’ which Aquinas considers distinctively Jewish (everything, that is, except the ten commandments), has been set aside by the coming of Christ. More than that: everything which pertains to the worship of God in Israel, the totality of the Levitical cult—what Aquinas calls the ‘ceremonial law’—is now not only useless, but destructive. After Christ these laws are not simply dead (*mortua*), but deadly (*mortifera*); those who continue to observe them ‘now sin mortally.’ Marshall, “*Quasi in Figura*,” 479.

and brief mention of the figurative function of the rites in Aquinas's discussion on unbelief in *Ia-IIae* q. 10.11. In article eleven of this question, Marshall argues that Aquinas seems to suggest that the ceremonial law after Christ could still figure Christ in some way, even after the passion. In article 11, Aquinas considers the question of whether the worship of infidels and "unbelievers" (those not of the Catholic faith) should be tolerated by Christians. Among those included in the category of unbelievers are the Jews, who Christians should not hinder in their worship. Here, explains Marshall, Aquinas relies on the Augustinian doctrine for his rationale. He then goes beyond Augustinian rationale in what Marshall describes as "an unexpected turn." Aquinas says, according to Marshall, that when the Jews practice their rites, even after Christ, "this represents to us what we ourselves believe, in a kind of figure... or *quasi in figura*." Marshall's reading suggests that the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae* retains some sort of figuring function even after the prefiguring function is exhausted by the consummation of Christ's ministry.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Marshall's discovery represents a post-supersessionist resource in Aquinas's thought since it attributes some sort of a theological value to the ceremonial law even after the passion.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Ia-IIae* q. 103.4

<sup>22</sup> Marshall, "*Quasi in Figura*," 483. I do not see any connection between this small but significant post-supersessionist strand in the *Summa theologiae* and the *Romans lectura* or the other Pauline commentaries. This text, which I first mentioned in chapter one, is included here because it represents a place in Aquinas's thought in the *Summa theologiae* where the ceremonial law is described as having some type of theological value. This idea appears to me as a welcome resource for those who seek to construct a solution to the theological problem of supersessionism. However, I hope to incorporate Aquinas's view here into a more constructive future project. I think, unlike Marshall, that the rites may still be able to figure Christ's ministry if that ministry is understood to include the abundance of grace which Christ pours out upon all people, including the Jews, in the age to come. It can therefore be used to construct a post-supersessionist theology. Marshall, however, does not see how, on Aquinas's terms, the rites could "grant access to Christ." "It can no longer serve as a *figura* of Christ, a sacramental means by which human beings draw near to him in faith." Marshall, "Postscript and Prospect," 527–8.

Boguslawski also asserts a similar view but it is not persuasive. He seems to understand that in the *Summa theologiae*, the *prefiguring* function of the Jewish prerogatives remain even after the passion. He cites Aquinas's teaching on how the Jewish people "occupy an intermediate position between Christians and pagans

Indeed, the more important tension in Marshall's view is between the teaching in the *Summa theologiae* that the ceremonial law is *mortua et mortifera* and Aquinas's affirmation of the election of Israel in the Romans *lectura*. As I mentioned in chapters one and four, Marshall, like Boguslawski, argues that the Romans *lectura* contains an affirmation of Jewish election similar to my view.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Marshall takes a step further than Boguslawski in recognizing that Aquinas even understands this election "according to the flesh" and in a way that repudiates supersessionism.<sup>24</sup> Marshall rightly sees how the teaching in the *Summa theologiae* that the law is *mortua* is a particular problem for the affirmation of the election of Israel:

...it seems impossible that the Jews can abide until the end of time as a people distinct from the nations without the practice of Judaism. So if God wills the election of Israel irrevocably (as Thomas asserts), it seems that he must also will the practice of Judaism—of the 'old law'—irrevocably (which Thomas denies).<sup>25</sup>

Marshall rightly recognizes how the teaching that the law is dead in the *Summa theologiae* sits in tension with the affirmation of the election of Israel in the Romans *lectura*. Nevertheless, he does not provide an in-depth analysis of Romans or go as far as to locate how the precise source of the tension in these two works of Aquinas has to do with contradictory interpretations of a key claim based in Galatians.<sup>26</sup>

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precisely because they prefigure the truth." Boguslawski seems to use *prefigure* and *figure* interchangeably, ignoring that prefigure was only the function of the old rites. He does not say how this possession of the gospel *in figura* differs from the prefiguring function of the rites that cease after Christ. Marshall explains with greater clarity how the *figura* mentioned in IIa-IIae q. 10 might continue to figure "in a way," but he also acknowledges this is different from the old rites and that there is a tension between this idea and the teaching in Ia-IIae 103 q. 4, which states that the ceremonial law is dead and deadly after Christ. Marshall provides a more solid argument for the idea that the rites continue to figure Christian faith somehow. See Boguslawski, 39; 45.

<sup>23</sup> Marshall, "Postscript and Prospect," 523.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 525.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

Recall that, in my reading of the Romans *lectura* in chapter four of this study I discovered that Aquinas shifts (within the Romans *lectura*) from the view that circumcision was of *no value* after the passion of Christ to the view that circumcision (or outward Judaism) remains a theological value—“Much in every way!”—even after the passion of Christ.<sup>27</sup> This shift directly concerned Aquinas’s interpretation of Galatians 5:2, which I argued operates in Aquinas’s thought as a marker for a change in time from the era before grace to the era after grace—a time in which the observance of the sign of circumcision no longer has status due to the arrival of the One signified by the sign.<sup>28</sup> As I show below, Aquinas’s argument for the cessation of the law in the *Summa theologiae* cites this very same text in Galatians in a way that contradicts Aquinas’s teaching in *Ad Romanos* 3.1.247.<sup>29</sup> Without attending to the differences between Aquinas’s teaching on the fulfillment of the ceremonial law as it relates to this text from Galatians in the *Summa theologiae*, and how he

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<sup>26</sup> In many positive ways, Marshall’s work moves beyond the question of supersessionism in Aquinas and begins articulating fruitful questions and avenues for dealing with what he sees as vexing questions for post-supersessionist Catholic theology: the tension between the affirmation that Christ is unsurpassable and the affirmation that the election of Israel is unsurpassable. This study, however, is focused on the question of whether Aquinas’s theology is economically supersessionist and seeks to describe his thought in relation to this question rather than building constructive solutions to the tension. Although I suggest post-supersessionist resources in Aquinas’s thought I do not focus on proposing post-supersessionist solutions to the tension between universality of Christ and permanent election of Israel. *Ibid.*, 527-8.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Ad Rom.* 2.4.238; *Ad Rom.* 3.1.247. The first time he references Galatians 5:2 he interprets it according to the official view. Circumcision was a benefit only in the past. The second time he references it he actually presents it as an objection to the claim that circumcision is an advantage as outward Judaism. He then follows that affirmation with an extended explication on the prerogatives and advantages of outward Judaism.

<sup>28</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.238: “However, the Apostle’s statement in Gal 5:2 that *if you receive circumcision, Christ will be no advantage to you* refers to the era after grace; but now he is referring to the time before the passion of Christ, when circumcision had status.” *Ad Galatas* 5.1.280: “...The Apostle declared to them that ‘if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.’ For it followed from this that they did not correctly estimate Christ, to signify Whom circumcision was given: ‘That it may be a sign of the covenant between me and you’ (Gen 17:11). Therefore, those who submitted to circumcision believed that the sign was still in vogue and that the one signified had not yet come.”

<sup>29</sup> My study verified that Marshall’s unofficial and more positive undercurrent existed not only in the Romans *lectura* but also in the Ephesians *lectura* as well. There, Israel is referred to as a “society of saints” and their special election is even referred to as a promise and “sacrament.”

views that same Galatians text in the Romans *lectura*, the source of the tension between the *Summa theologiae* and the Romans *lectura* remains obscure.

In the next subsection I take a third step in clarifying the source of the tension in Aquinas's thought between the *Summa theologiae* and the Romans *lectura* by evaluating Levering's account of the sources of Aquinas's teaching on the fulfillment of the law in the *Summa theologiae* in general and how Pauline texts influence Aquinas's view of the fulfillment of the law in particular.

### 1.3 Levering on How Aquinas's Teaching on Christ's Fulfillment and Transformation of Israel's Law is Influenced by Pauline Texts

Levering has shown that the concept of the fulfillment of the old law plays an incredibly significant role in Aquinas's theology of salvation. He provides a helpful summary of the historical reasons why Aquinas attended to the old law and how he did so with originality. Drawing upon the work of M.D. Chenu and Beryl Smalley, Levering rightly explains that Aquinas's interest in the Mosaic Law was influenced by a "growing enthusiasm for the old law among medieval theologians."<sup>30</sup> Levering points out that one sign of the growing importance of the old testament is a shift that occurs in Aquinas's theology of salvation between his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1256) and his *Summa theologiae* (early

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<sup>30</sup> This surge of interest lay in a number of factors, which include "combat with the Catharist heresy, which rejected the Old Testament, to the development of increasingly complex legal and political institutions." Levering relies upon Marie-Dominique Chenu, "The Old Testament in Twelfth-Century Theology," in *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, ed. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1997). The *Summa Fratris Alexandri*, whose completion preceded the *Summa theologiae* by little more than a decade, influenced Aquinas's interest in the old law. The treatment of the Mosaic Law in the *Summa Fratris Alexandri* was a collaborative effort on the part of Franciscan theologians, among them Alexander of Hales and his students John of la Rochelle, and William of Middleton. Matthew Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation According to Thomas Aquinas* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 6.

1270s).<sup>31</sup> Levering points out that there is almost no discussion of the old law in the *Sentences*. However, by the time Aquinas writes the *Summa theologiae* he includes a massive and detailed treatment of the old law.

Levering explains that Aquinas's treatment of the fulfillment of the law in the *Summa theologiae* mirrors an important source: the *Summa Fratris Alexandri*. The *Summa Fratris Alexandri* proposes three classes of precepts: moral, judicial, and ceremonial. Each set of precepts functioned to "confer goodness in accord with the 'branches of charity': love of neighbor in the moral precepts; punishment of evildoers in judicial precepts; and preparation for worship of God in the ceremonial precepts."<sup>32</sup> Most significantly, argues Levering, the *Summa Fratris Alexandri* views each set of precepts as being fulfilled in different ways by Christ: Christ fulfills the moral laws by perfect knowledge of the good; perfect execution of the good; and perfect revelation of the good after the fall.<sup>33</sup> Christ fulfills the judicial laws by teaching not to resist evil rather than exacting retribution. Christ fulfills the ceremonial laws as the "end or term" of the ceremonial laws. In this way, Levering writes, Christ shows what they prefigure, and he manifests their inner meaning. Aquinas adopts from *Fratris Alexandri* the threefold division of the Mosaic Law and the claim that Christ fulfills the law. However, Levering points out that the novelty of Aquinas's position is that "Christ fulfills the Old Law *precisely* in his passion or suffering on the cross."<sup>34</sup> Christ's passion is the perfect and

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. [emphasis mine]

supreme act of obedience and that fulfills the old law.<sup>35</sup>

According to Levering, Aquinas's systematic exposition of Christ's fulfillment of the law by the passion is influenced by his reading of Pauline texts. Indeed, Levering points out that the commentaries "assisted his mature theological expression."<sup>36</sup> Levering identifies the Commentary on John as an influence upon Aquinas's view, and Augustine's *Contra Faustum* as a key source.<sup>37</sup>

Although Levering does not mention an explicit theory for how the Pauline commentaries function in Aquinas's view of Christ's fulfillment of the law, he does imply that the most determinative verse for Aquinas is Romans 3:31. In particular, Levering argues that Aquinas's interpretation of this verse in his Romans *lectura* influences his view of

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<sup>35</sup> Levering shows how the fulfillment of the law should be interpreted in light of Israel's threefold office of prophet, priest, and king. I unfortunately do not have the space to present Levering's detailed account of all the ways in which Aquinas understands the fulfillment of the law in the *Summa theologiae*. It should suffice for my purposes to note that Christ's act of obedience in the passion is what fulfills the ceremonial precepts. Christ's act of obedience flows from the supernatural grace that infused Christ's soul at the moment of the hypostatic union. Levering explains that Christ's perfect act of obedience simultaneously fulfills all three aspects of the old law. Christ fulfilled the moral law because his perfect charity, displayed in his love of the Father and love of his neighbor. Christ perfectly fulfilled the ceremonial precepts in the self-sacrifice that he offered upon the cross. Finally, Christ perfectly fulfilled the judicial precepts by taking upon himself the suffering due to others. *Ibid.*, 70-9.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* Levering points out that although Aquinas commented upon Matthew, his treatment of Matthew 5:17 is lost. Levering also explains that "the *Catena Aurea* demonstrates that the key patristic source for Aquinas's theology of fulfillment is Augustine's *Contra Faustum*, Book 19, to which his debt is enormous, although his thought develops rather than merely recapitulates Augustine's." Levering says that the view that the *Catena Aurea* is a major source is from Pim Valkenberg, *Words of the Living God*, 188. Levering 150n38. *Catena Aurea*, vol. 1, St. Matthew, trans. Mark Pattison (Albany, NY: Preserving Christian Publications, 1995 [1842]), 170. However, Levering does not say how *Contra Faustum* influences Aquinas, especially on the question of the cessation of the law. He explicitly says Aquinas follows Augustine on the following: that the traces of martyrs' scars may remain in their resurrected bodies on 105; that sacraments are important for unity in religion on 121; the relationship between sacrifice and sin offering on 55-56; that Christ becomes sin and that Christ is a priest on 77; that God is author of scripture on 90. Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment*, 150, fn. 39. The works of Augustine that Levering says Aquinas follows are cited throughout the above notes: *De Trinitate*, *De Civitate Dei*, *De Doctrina Christiana*. Despite *Contra Faustum* being the key source, however, it is only mentioned in the note explaining that it is key (150n.39). As I show below, one way in which *Contra Faustum* functions in Aquinas's view of fulfillment of the law is the teaching in Ia-IIae q. 103.4 that the law ceases after the passion of Christ. Another major influence is Augustine's debate with Jerome. Aquinas synthesizes Augustine's views from both of these works with Galatians and Hebrews to say that ceremonial law is fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly.



Christ's fulfillment of the law. In particular, Levering points to Aquinas's interpretation of Romans 3:31 ("Do we then, destroy the law through faith? God forbid! But we establish the law."). Here, in the Romans *lectura*, Levering rightly sees that Aquinas interprets Romans 3:31 in light of Matthew 5:17 and understands it "to mean that the Mosaic Law is established (*statuimus*) by being perfected and fulfilled (*perficimus et adimplemus*) by Christ."<sup>38</sup> Levering then adds that this fulfillment of the law is "not a revocation" because Aquinas's comment on Romans 11:29 on shows that he does not think the covenant is revoked.

Here, the first text that Levering points out as a Pauline source for Aquinas's view of the fulfillment of the law is actually the same text (*Ad Romanos* 3.4.321) that I argued represented the unofficial view of fulfillment of the law as "fulfilled and upheld."<sup>39</sup> In chapter four of this study, I argued that in the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas does not teach that the ceremonial law is destroyed, nor does he include the teaching that Jewish observance of the law is now a mortal sin after the passion of Christ. In this text, which is representative of the unofficial view of fulfillment, Aquinas indeed argues that Paul is faithful to Jesus' words in Matthew 5:18 ("Not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law."), and does not destroy the law. "On the contrary," writes Aquinas, "we uphold the law, i.e., by faith we complete and fulfill [*perficimus et adimplemus*] the Law, as Matt 5:17 says, 'I have come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it.'"<sup>40</sup>

However, when Aquinas discusses Christ's fulfillment and cessation of the old law in

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<sup>38</sup> He cites *Ad Rom.* 3.4.321.

<sup>39</sup> See section 2.4 of chapter four of this study.

<sup>40</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.4.321.

the *Prima Secundae* he does not use either of these verses from Romans or Matthew.

Indeed, Matthew 5:17 and Romans 3:31 are left out of Aquinas's treatment of the fulfillment of the law in the treatise on law altogether.<sup>41</sup> Rather, as I shall demonstrate below, the primary sources for Aquinas's view of the fulfillment and cessation of the law in the treatise on law are Hebrews and Galatians. Aquinas's account of the fulfillment and cessation of the law in the treatise on law is shaped not by the positive view of fulfillment in Romans, but by Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in his lectures on Hebrews and Galatians, or the view which I referred to as "fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly."

Levering's account of the fulfillment of the law does not include the more negative aspect of Aquinas's reliance upon the Pauline texts which he understands to teach that the law is not fulfilled and transformed but rather that this law is fulfilled, rendered void, and destroyed.<sup>42</sup> This is clear from Levering's handling of the influence of both Hebrews and Galatians on Aquinas's view of fulfillment.

When discussing how Christ fulfills the old law as priest of Israel, Levering helpfully points out that Aquinas follows the focus of Hebrews on how the passion takes place in "the context established by Israel's law." Christ, as God, who was already the principal legislator of the law of which Moses was the promulgator, "fulfills and transforms Moses' law." This perspective, according to Levering, is present in the *Summa theologiae*, as well as in Aquinas's commentary on Hebrews. However, Levering misses the fact that in the Hebrews commentary, Aquinas says that the old law is not fulfilled and transformed but fulfilled and

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<sup>41</sup> As far as I can see, the only citation of Matthew is 5:11 and 5:22. Ia-IIae 100.3 "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, etc."; Ia-IIae q. 100.9: "Whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment."

<sup>42</sup> Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment*, 54.

then rendered void.<sup>43</sup> This is because Hebrews assumes the cessation of the law is a consequence of the change of time brought about by the advent of Christ, as I argued in chapter three.

Indeed, the *cessatio legalium* (cessation of the law) after Christ's fulfillment of these precepts is also included in Aquinas's teaching on the *Summa theologiae*. That the influence of this common medieval doctrine is overlooked in Levering's account of fulfillment becomes especially clear when one examines Aquinas's reliance upon Pauline texts from Galatians. In particular, Aquinas takes what he views as Paul's teaching on how the ceremonial law renders the grace of Christ of no benefit and synthesizes it with themes from Hebrews to support the common medieval doctrine of the *cessatio legalium* in Ia-IIae q. 103.4.

Levering understands this teaching from Galatians 5:2, which states, "If you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you" to function as a teaching *only* for Jewish converts to Christianity and *not* Jews.<sup>44</sup> In a footnote he remarks that Aquinas does not take this verse to mean Jews should not observe the law: "In this crucial discussion, Aquinas does not state, that Jews, who have not accepted Christ, sin by continuing to observe the Torah's ceremonial precepts."<sup>45</sup> As I briefly mentioned in chapter five, which focused on the

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<sup>43</sup> *Ad Hebraeos*. 7.3.361.

<sup>44</sup> Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment*, 160n64. Levering mentions two other Galatians texts in two footnotes. He also understands Aquinas to follow Galatians 3:16 when Aquinas argues that the promise to Abraham signified the future birth of the Savior from among the descendants of Abraham. Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment*, 193, fn. 20. The third place Levering notes Galatians influence is when he rightly says that Aquinas frequently describes the law "as a pedagogue (he cites Ia-IIae, q. 91.5). Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment*, 193, fn. 24.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 161. Levering even criticizes Otto Pesch for leaving out the context of Aquinas's response, which he says is only talking about Jewish Christians and not Jews. However, if one were to take into consideration the full context of Ia-IIae q. 103.4, one would also have to attend to the debate between Jerome and Augustine, which clearly shows that, for both of these church fathers, and Aquinas, the law is no longer to

Galatians *lectura*, Levering misinterprets Aquinas's view of this text and in so doing, he misses how the text fundamentally influences Aquinas's view of Christ's fulfillment of the ceremonial law. As I show in the next section, for Aquinas, Galatians 5:2 marks the middle period in which Israel's old sacraments becomes superfluous. And, the verse is used as a hermeneutical device to connect Aquinas's view of Paul's teaching on the law after Christ to his view of Augustine's interpretation of the Antioch incident in Galatians 2. Because Levering misses how this key text functions in Aquinas's account of fulfillment, he does not see why it is problematic on Aquinas's own terms to assert that the Jewish law is positively transformed, or elevated, rather than ceased, abolished, or negated, after the passion.<sup>46</sup>

Next, I examine whether Aquinas appeals to texts from Romans or other Pauline epistles in his teaching on the ceremonial law after Christ in the *Summa theologiae*.

## 2. Aquinas's Teaching on the Ceremonial Law After the Passion of Christ in the *Summa theologiae*

In this second section of the chapter I examine Aquinas's use of Pauline texts in his teaching on the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ in Ia-IIae q. 103. In the third section, which follows this one, I then compare my findings with Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the Pauline commentaries. An examination of Aquinas's teaching on the

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be observed after the middle period by both Jews and Gentiles. Not only does a reading of the article clearly show that Aquinas adopts Augustine's position on the matter, but the Galatians commentary shows this as well. See chapter five of this study.

<sup>46</sup> When commenting upon Christ's role of prophet, Levering writes, "Aquinas conceives of the content of the New Law as fulfillment, *not a destruction*, of the Old Law." "Christ *does not abolish* the commandments; rather, he shows how they can be truly obeyed in light of the supernatural destiny that he reveals." Ibid., 76. Levering reiterated this view of "fulfillment and not negation" in his recent essay on Aquinas's view of the Old Testament entitled, "Ordering Wisdom: Aquinas, the Old Testament, and Sacra Doctrina." He writes, "Christ's fulfillment of the Torah reveals the 'whole divine pedagogy of God's saving love.' Since this fulfillment is not a negation, the Old Testament remains 'a storehouse of sublime teaching on God and of sound wisdom on human life.'" See Hütter and Levering, 91.

ceremonial law after Christ in the *Summa theologiae* should provide a more comprehensive picture of Aquinas's thought on the ceremonial law after Christ and help clarify the source of the tension between his official and unofficial views of the ceremonial law. Because of the great size of Aquinas's treatment of the ceremonial law, my analysis must be limited to the same scope of inquiry that has guided the study throughout: whether the ceremonial law becomes *mortua et mortifera* or retains a theological status after the passion of Christ. Aquinas addresses this question directly in Ia-IIae q. 103.1-4.<sup>47</sup>

This section unfolds in two steps. First, I introduce the reader to the setting of Aquinas's treatment of the duration of the ceremonial law in the *Prima Secundae* in order to demonstrate that Aquinas views the old law in general and ceremonial precepts in particular as a crucial subject for theology. Second, I present my analysis of Aquinas's use of Pauline texts in his teaching on the ceremonial law in Ia-IIae q. 103.1-4.

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<sup>47</sup> As I explain below, Aquinas's treatment of the old law is the largest part of the treatise on law and contains some of the longest articles in the entire *Summa theologiae*. I do not have the space to discuss scholars who have commented upon the theological sources of the old law in relation to Paul in general. For Aquinas's theology of the old law see the following sources. In my view, reading Aquinas's inaugural lectures is the best way to introduce a reader to Aquinas's theology of the old law. See Thomas Aquinas, *Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings*, trans. and ed. Ralph McInerney (Penguin Classics, 1999); Matthew Levering, "Ordering Wisdom: Aquinas, the Old Testament, and Sacra Doctrina," in *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life: Essays in Honor of Romanus Cessario, O.P.*, ed. Reinhard Hüter and Matthew Levering (Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 80–91. For scholarly treatments of how Paul influences Aquinas's view of the old law in general see John Y. B. Hood, *Aquinas and the Jews* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), and Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity*, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 1999). For scholarly treatments of how Paul influences Aquinas's theology in general see the following resources: The Proceedings of the IX Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, entitled, *Saint Thomas's Interpretation on Saint Paul's Doctrines* (Vatican City: The Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, 2009); Christopher T Baglow, "Modus Et Forma": *A New Approach to the Exegesis of Saint Thomas Aquinas with an Application to the Lectura Super Epistolam Ad Ephesios*, Analecta Biblica 149 (Roma: Pontificio Istituto biblico, 2002); Pim Valkenberg, *Words of the Living God: Place and Function of Holy Scripture in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Publications of the Thomas Instituut Te Utrecht new ser., v. 6 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000); For a view of how Paul informs Aquinas's "theology of Christian love" see Levering's chapter "Aquinas," in Stephen Westerholm, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, 1st ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); Otto Pesch's classic lecture is also a good starting point: Otto Hermann Pesch, "Paul as Professor of Theology: The Image of the Apostle in St. Thomas's Theology," *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 584–605.

## 2.1 The Setting of Aquinas's Treatment of the Ceremonial Law After the Passion of Christ in the *Summa theologiae*

M.D. Chenu observes that, towards the end of Aquinas's life, he became aware that the two forms of university teaching, *lectio* (commentary on texts) and *quaestio disputata* (disputed question), could not satisfactorily meet the requirements of theological education. According to Chenu, these two forms of teaching failed to provide beginning students with a *summa*, or summary of theology, which he defines as “organic presentation of the whole of sacred wisdom.”<sup>48</sup> A *summa* consisted of a concise exposition of the teaching of theology adapted for students and constructed in a way that made clear “the internal relationships of the objects under consideration.”<sup>49</sup> Like other medieval theologians, Aquinas sought to make clear the crucial interrelationship between the old and the new covenant in his *Summa theologiae*.<sup>50</sup> David Braine has observed that the opening of the *Summa theologiae* “makes it plain that Aquinas is speaking as a theologian, giving an exposition of sacred doctrine,

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<sup>48</sup> Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Aquinas and His Role in Theology* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2002), 137. That Aquinas is concerned to teach “beginners” is clear from the preface to the *Summa theologiae*.

<sup>49</sup> Chenu, *Aquinas and His Role in Theology*, 137.

<sup>50</sup> See Marie-Dominique Chenu, “The Old Testament in Twelfth-Century Theology,” in *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, ed. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1997); Beryl Smalley “William of Auvergne, John of La Rochelle and St. Thomas Aquinas on the Old Law,” in *Studies in Medieval Thought and Learning From Abelard to Wyclif* (Hambleton Continuum, 1981); Richard Schenk, “Covenant Initiation: Thomas Aquinas and Robert Kilwardby on the Sacrament of Circumcision,” in *Ordo Sapientiae Et Amoris: Image Et Message De Saint Thomas d'Aquin À Travers Les Récentes Études Historiques, Herméneutiques Et Doctrinales: Hommage Au Professeur Jean-Pierre Torrell OP À L'occasion De Son 65e Anniversaire*, ed. Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveira (Fribourg, Suisse: Editions universitaires, 1993), 555–93; “Views of the Two Covenants in Medieval Theology,” *Nova Et Vetera* 4, no. 4 (2006): 891–916. Of course exploring “the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament in light of Christ and the New Testament” is not simply a medieval theological tradition but the traditional approach to the Hebrew Bible for Christian theologians. See Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture: Volume 1* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), ix.

intending to speak of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”<sup>51</sup> Aquinas consistently defended the claim that both testaments were from the good God of Israel and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>52</sup> Aquinas discusses the commandments of the good God of Israel in the context of his treatment of the interrelationship between law and humankind’s return to God as “destiny and goal” in the *Prima Secundae*.<sup>53</sup> It is within this overarching context of God’s instruction of humankind through law in general that the first discussion of the ceremonial law appears in his treatise on law.<sup>54</sup>

The old law is only one form of law in the treatise on law.<sup>55</sup> However, even a cursory reading of the treatise makes clear that Aquinas exerts an enormous effort to explicate its details with great care. The discussion on the old law is comprised of a total of forty-six

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<sup>51</sup> David Braine, “Aquinas, God and Being,” in *Analytical Thomism: Traditions in Dialogue*, ed. Craig Paterson and Matthew S. Pugh (Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 1.

<sup>52</sup> “The Old Law was given by the good God, Who is the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ia-IIae q. 98.2. In *ad Hebraeos* 1.1.19, Aquinas says Paul’s words about how God spoke in “times of past” refers to the Old Testament, and that such divine speech rules out the view of the Manicheans: “By this he shows against the Manichaeans that the author of the Old and the New Testaments is the same.” See also *Hic est Liber*, where Aquinas says the Old Law and the New Law bring life to humankind yet mediate that life in two ways. His view of the relation between the Old and New Law is held together by John 1:17: “Both of these” writes Aquinas, “are touched on in John 1:17: ‘For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.’” See *Hic est liber*, 2.

<sup>53</sup> Chenu, *Aquinas and His Role in Theology*, 137. The *Prima Secundae* treats broadly of human actions in order to “know which ones lead us to happiness and which ones prevent our attaining it.” Ia-IIae q. 6 Prol. The entire structure of the *Summa theologiae* reflects this broad theological vision of salvation history: the emanation of creatures from God and made in God’s image in the *Prima Pars*; the return of creatures made in God’s image in the *Prima Secundae* and *Secunda Secundae*; and the union of creation with Christ in the *Tertia Pars*.

<sup>54</sup> Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Aquinas’s Summa: Background, Structure, and Reception* (Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 33.

<sup>55</sup> The treatise on law includes a discussion of four laws: 1) the eternal law, which is God’s own wisdom or reason; 2) the natural law, which is the participation of creatures in eternal law; 3) the human law, which aids in specifying the natural law and establishes friendship among humankind; and 4) the divine law, which establishes friendship between humankind and God. Aquinas divides divine law into new and old, with the old coming through Moses to Israel, and new coming through Christ to both Israel and Church. Ia-IIae q. 91. See also Torrell, *Aquinas’s Summa*, 34.

articles. Indeed, the number of articles on the old law exceeds the number of articles on eternal law, natural law, human law, and new law, combined.<sup>56</sup> As noted by several scholars, the articles dealing with the ceremonial law in particular are some of the longest in the entire *Summa*.<sup>57</sup> The length of the articles on the ceremonial law suggests that Aquinas takes the history and purpose of the Jewish rites quite seriously.<sup>58</sup> As Jean-Pierre Torrell has observed,

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<sup>56</sup> The other forms of law contain an average of three questions with four articles each. Aquinas devotes eight questions with a total of 46 articles to the old law. My count of the articles in the treatise on law in the *Summa theologiae* is as follows: The eternal law contains three questions (q. 90-92), with a total of *twelve articles* distributed among the questions (q. 90.1-4; q. 91.1-6; q. 92.1-2). The natural law contains one question (q. 94) with a total of *six articles* distributed among the questions (94.1-6). The human law contains three questions (q. 95-97) with a total of *fourteen articles* distributed among the questions (q. 95.1-4; q. 96.1-6; q. 97.1-4). The old law contains eight questions (q. 98-105) with a *total of 46 articles* distributed among the questions (q. 98.1-6; q. 99.1-6; q. 100.1-12; q. 101.1-4; q. 102.1-6; q. 103.1-4; q. 104.1-4; q. 105.1-4). The New Law contains three questions (q. 106-108) with a total of *twelve articles* distributed among the questions (q. 106.1-4; q. 107.1-4; q. 108.1-4).

<sup>57</sup> John Y. B. Hood, Aquinas and the Jews, 40; Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading," 126; Edward Synan, "Some Medieval Perceptions on Jewish Law," 120; Coolman points out that Ia-IIae q. 102.3 ad. 5 runs for more than 8,000 words. Holly Taylor Coolman, "Christological Torah," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 5, no. 1 (2010): 5.

<sup>58</sup> A comparison of Aquinas and Kant on the significance of Jewish practices suggests there may be greater theological significance to Aquinas's efforts to ground Jewish rites in historical and theological ends in the treatise on law than has been realized. Kant saw the particularities of Jewish faith as a corruption of Christianity's universal nature, which was, in his view, rational religion. The idea that only one people would worship God seems to Kant unreasonable and against the true nature of religion of reason: "...if the question How does God wish to be honored? Is to be answered in a way universally valid for every human being, each considered simply as a human being, there is no second thought that the legislation of his will might not be simply *moral*. For a statutory legislation (which presupposes a revelation) can be regarded only as contingent, as something that cannot have reached, nor can reach, every human being, hence does not bind all human beings universally. Thus, 'not they who say Lord! Lord! But they who do the will of God,' those, therefore, who seek to become well-pleasing to him, not through loud praises of him (or of his envoy, as a being of divine origin) *according to revealed concepts which not every human being can have*, but through a good life conduct, regarding which everyone knows his will – these will be the ones who offer to him the true veneration that he desires." [emphasis mine]. Immanuel Kant, *Kant: Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason: And Other Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 114. Kendall Soulen observes that, for Kant, "Christianity falls short of moral religion just insofar as it retains rudiments of Jewish belief, while it approximates to true religion just insofar as it breaks in principle with the Israelite dimension of traditional Christian faith. The true service of religion in the Christian church, therefore, consists in expelling the vestiges of Judaism from the body of Christian divinity. The task begun by the abolition of circumcision, the mark of Jewish flesh, must be completed by the abolition of the Hebrew Scriptures, the mark of the Jewish spirit." R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 57–68. As I show below, Aquinas resists the spiritualization of Judaism at its source ("the abolition of circumcision") when, in the Romans *lectura*, he argues for the permanent theological value of Jewish flesh after the passion of Christ.



Aquinas examines the law of Moses “in minute detail.”<sup>59</sup> And yet, the length of the articles found in the old law may also indicate, as Michael Wyschogrod pointed out years ago, that Aquinas faced a degree of difficulty in his analysis of the old law: “The number of pages he devotes to the problem of the old law (over 150 in the *Blackfriars* edition) may signal a greater turbulence than appears on the surface.”<sup>60</sup> In Ia-IIae q. 99 Aquinas undertakes a detailed treatment of the diverse precepts of the old law, which he divides into moral, ceremonial, and judicial precepts. He takes up the discussion of the ceremonial law in Ia-IIae q. 101-3.

In the next subsection I present an analysis of Aquinas’s teaching on the duration of the ceremonial law in Ia-IIae q. 103.1-4. I hope to show that in the treatise on law, Aquinas appeals to Paul’s teaching as the primary authority in his argument that the Jewish rites cease after the passion. He does not appeal to the more positive texts in Romans. In particular, I show that Aquinas relies primarily upon Paul’s epistle to the Galatians to support his claim.

## 2.2. The *Cessatio Legalium* as a Crucial Concept in Twelfth-Century Accounts of Fulfillment

A more complete picture of Aquinas’s notion of Christ’s fulfillment and cessation of the law in the *Summa theologiae* comes into view with the help of Chenu’s historical treatment of twelfth-century medieval theological views of the relationship between the new

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<sup>59</sup> Torrell, *Aquinas’s Summa*, 34. He also states that the treatise on the old law “deserves to be known better.”

<sup>60</sup> Wyschogrod, “A Jewish Reading of St. Thomas Aquinas,” 126. Bourke and Littledale (the editors of the *Blackfriars* edition) of the volume on the old law, comment that the length of the articles shows that Aquinas “had to strain the characteristic ‘article’ structure almost to the bursting point.” Unfortunately, however, they seem to attribute this difficulty to an inherent flaw in the Hebrew Bible: “[Aquinas] has, in fact, to some extent fallen victim to the intransigent untidiness of the Old Testament, which, as more recent scholars have increasingly come to recognize, is not so much a book as a bundle of traditions, heterogeneous in age, provenance and subject matter, which has been accumulated over many troubled centuries.” Bourke and Littledale, introduction to Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume 29, The Old Law: 1a2ae. 98-105*, trans. David Bourke and Arthur Littledale (Cambridge University Press, 2006), xxvi.

and the old covenants.<sup>61</sup> In what follows, I briefly present Chenu's views of this period in order to fill in what might be called the historical theological background of some of the key claims about the old law in Ia-IIae 103.4.

According to Chenu, the twelfth-century theological world understood fulfillment of the Old Law within a dialectic between the two poles: 1) continuity with the old law and 2) break with the old law.<sup>62</sup> Chenu explains that this century experienced an increasingly positive attention to figures in the old covenant and did not treat it as a bygone and defunct stage. Rather, theologians sought to elaborate upon how it might illuminate various aspects of Christendom.<sup>63</sup> It was thought that the new lies enveloped in the old and thus typological exploration of the old abounded.<sup>64</sup> Chenu explains that for these theologians, "History was thought to unfold as a divine plan and it contained stages whose continuity and breaks one had to observe with equal attention."<sup>65</sup> Attending to the two poles of what Chenu refers to as the "textual continuum" was "intrinsic to the progress of the economy of salvation, a progress that anticipated its final course through prefigurations of the future."<sup>66</sup> Continuity with biblical history was encapsulated in Christ's words "I have not come to destroy the

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<sup>61</sup> Chenu, "The Old Testament."

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>63</sup> Just a few of the examples Chenu offers are prophets as figures for the monastic life and old testament kings as ideas for the Christian prince. The true model of political society was furnished by the old testament: "It was clearly in the Old Testament that the crusade, that distinctive enterprise of all Christendom, found its inspiration, its basis, its rules, and all the ambiguities concerning worldly messianism that form a usual part of the imagery of prophetic books. The 'Lord of hosts' became not only the mystical but the earthly triumphant conqueror in that holy war." Ibid., 147; 150-1; 158.

<sup>64</sup> Chenu, "...More than the lifting of particular figures and ideas from the Old Testament, which the theology of the great masters balanced with texts from the New, was a whole manner of presenting arguments, a whole turn of style and thought, a whole cast of mind that revealed this envelopment of the New Testament in the Old—*Novum in veteri latet* (the New lies enveloped in the Old)." Ibid., 158.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

Law.” And yet breaks with this same biblical history were encapsulated in Christ’s words

“but I say to you.”<sup>67</sup>

However, increased attention to the old covenant was also accompanied by an awareness of progress. Among twelfth-century theologians there remained a “sufficient awareness” of what Chenu refers to as the “irreversible progress” of the new dispensation. Exemplifying this progress, according to Chenu, was the *cessatio legalium* (cessation of the law) tradition that characterized the notion of fulfillment of Israel’s law. Chenu observes that fulfillment and cessation was expressed by a particularly common analogy of the Church displacing the synagogue:

Men of the Middle Ages recognized and proclaimed the *cessatio legalium* (cessation of the Law). In contrast to the figure of Ecclesia with her open and radiant countenance stood the figure of *Synagoga* portrayed as a conquered queen, her crown fallen, her face veiled or her eyes blindfolded. This allegory popularized in art a theme found in polemics against the Jews; namely that the fulfillment offered by the New Covenant displaced the dead letter of the Law...as Gratian phrased it: “Under the Old Law many things were permitted which today have been abolished by the perfection of grace.”<sup>68</sup>

The teaching on the *cessatio legalium* was, as Richard Schenk has pointed out, “almost universally affirmed by medieval Christian authors.”<sup>69</sup>

Schenk points out that this teaching can be traced to the much-discussed controversy between Jerome and Augustine.<sup>70</sup> Schenk observes that the dispute between Augustine and

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>69</sup> Schenk, “Views of the Two Covenants,” 895.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. The teaching can also be traced to Augustine’s *Contra Faustum* as well. Augustine mentions that these laws cease after the passion several times. However, he also attempts to say that the law is not “destroyed,” which seems quite different than the more extreme view that Aquinas expresses in his commentaries on Galatians, Hebrews, and parts of Ephesians. *Contra Faustum* 19.16-17. For the debate between Jerome and Augustine see Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*

Jerome on the cessation of the ritual law was, “a principal theological focus that fascinated and preoccupied medieval authors.”<sup>71</sup> Indeed, “after the inclusion of the controversy by Peter Lombard in his *Sentences*,” observes Schenk, “no Catholic theologian until Trent could easily pass over the questions framed by the patristic debate about the relationship of Christianity and Judaism.”<sup>72</sup>

Aquinas was very much aware of the teaching on the cessation of the law as is evidenced by his own inclusion of a detailed description of the debate between Jerome and Augustine in both the Galatians *lectura* and the treatise on law in the *Prima Secundae*. Aquinas situates the debate precisely within his discussion of the duration of the ceremonial law and against the backdrop of Christ’s fulfillment of the old sacraments in the context of salvation history.

### 2.3 Aquinas’s Teaching on the *Cessatio Legalium* in Ia-IIae q. 103

Aquinas’s inclusion of the debate between Jerome and Augustine appears Ia-IIae q. 103. However, before examining question 103, it is necessary to highlight a theme that is especially prominent in articles 3 and 4, where Aquinas states explicitly that the ceremonial law is dead and deadly. Taking notice of the theme is important because it appears again in the Romans *lectura*, but Aquinas handles it differently, as I show in the next section.

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(University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 205-6; 209; Carolinne White, *The Correspondence (394-419), Between Jerome and Augustine of Hippo* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1990); Peter J. Gorday, “Jews and Gentiles, Galatians 2:11-14, and Reading Israel in Romans: The Patristic Debate,” in *Engaging Augustine on Romans: Self, Context, and Theology in Interpretation*, ed. Daniel Patte and Eugene TeSelle (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002), 199–236; Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1993), 293. See also Mark D. Nanos, “Peter’s Hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-21) in the Light of Paul’s Anxiety (Rom. 7),” in *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul’s Letters* (Fortress Press, 1996), 337–371.

<sup>71</sup> Schenk, “Views of the Two Covenants,” 910.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

Aquinas draws upon the debate between Jerome and Augustine to reconcile the apparent tension between biblical support for two contradictory ideas: the idea that the ceremonial law is permanent or eternal and the idea that the ceremonial law is impermanent or temporal. For Aquinas, the fact that the good God of Israel commanded the law, and that Christ and the apostles observed this law indicates the permanence of the law. On the other hand, Paul taught that the law as has no value and that it renders the justifying power of the passion of Christ void. Aquinas also understands the apostles to have affirmed this teaching at the Jerusalem conference.<sup>73</sup> These texts indicate the impermanence of the ceremonial law. These two pictures of the theological status of the ceremonial law after Christ appear in stated objections and in Aquinas's replies Ia-IIae q. 103.2-4. Texts that support the permanence of the law are cited in the objections. Texts that support cessation are cited in Aquinas's replies.<sup>74</sup> He consistently defends the claim that the ceremonial law is impermanent against biblical texts cited in the objections that suggest its permanence.<sup>75</sup> Next, I answer how Aquinas understands Paul's teaching on the ceremonial law to function in articles 2-4, which directly address the status of the law after Christ.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> See chapter five of this study.

<sup>74</sup> I do not mean to imply that these "two pictures" of the status of the ceremonial law after Christ represent an anomaly in Aquinas's thought which is usually an airtight system. Indeed, the scholastic method consisted of addressing precisely such apparent tensions that may arise from a reading of the sacred page. The method also included finding solutions to these tensions by appealing to authorities. "Whenever conflicting statements appeared, either because of some apparent contradiction in the text of Scripture or in the comment of some ecclesiastical authority, the arguments from both sides would be debated briefly and a solution found." James A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Work*, 1st ed. (Doubleday, 1974), 116-7.

<sup>75</sup> I show below that in his official view in the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas affirms the theological permanence of the ceremonial law.

<sup>76</sup> The first question does not pertain to the end of the law as much as the other three because it answers "Whether the precepts were in existence 'before the law, to which Aquinas answers that though some ceremonies existed they were not legal ceremonies established by Mosaic legislation but rather prompted by a heavenly instinct. Because the legal ceremonies are designated for divine worship this question addresses the

In the second article of question 103, Aquinas addresses “Whether, at the time of the law, the ceremonies of the old law had any power of justification?” Aquinas begins his argument (in the *sed contra*) with Paul as the primary authority.<sup>77</sup> He synthesizes two Galatians texts: Galatians 3:21 “For if there had been a law given which could give life, verily justice should have been by the law”; and Galatians 2:21 “For if justice be by the law, then Christ died in vain.” Aquinas synthesizes these texts into one Pauline axiom: “If there had been a law given which could justify, Christ died in vain, i.e., without cause.” In the *respondeo*, Aquinas argues that the ceremonial law had no power to cleanse from sin because expiation from sin comes only through Christ’s Incarnation and passion, which had not yet taken place. The old sacraments, explains Aquinas, did not have “a power flowing from Christ already incarnate and crucified, such as the sacraments of the New Law contain.”<sup>78</sup> Next, Aquinas cites Hebrews 10:4 to explain that the old sacraments were not efficacious as the new: “it was impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sin should be taken away.” He then cites Galatians 4:9 to reinforce the point that these sacraments, in and of themselves, were “weak and needy elements.” Aquinas closes by adding the caveat he repeats throughout his treatment on the old law: that these old sacraments were not as efficacious as the new does not mean they were not good. Before Christ, observance of the ceremonies could bring justification because the rites served as “a sort of profession, inasmuch as they foreshadowed Christ.” As I examine the next two articles, it should become clear that Paul’s epistle to the

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apparent problem that worship (ceremonies) existed before Moses received the law (i.e. some leaders were gifted with the spirit of prophecy).

<sup>77</sup> Torrell explains that, “Usually, the *sed contra* is an ‘authority,’ such as scripture or one of the Fathers of the Church. Torrell, *Aquinas’s Summa*, 67.

<sup>78</sup> Ia-IIae q. 103.2.

Galatians is the primary authority that Aquinas consistently cites to say the law has now ceased after Christ. And, though Aquinas does not mention Augustine as an authority in Ia-IIae q. 103.2-3, the Augustinian idea that the rites served as a sort of profession operates in the background of Aquinas's replies and finally surfaces in an explicit way when he explains how the rites become deadly after the passion of Christ in Ia-IIae q. 103.4.

In the Ia-IIae q. 103.3, Aquinas addresses "Whether the ceremonies of the old law ceased at the coming of Christ?"<sup>79</sup> In the *sed contra*, Aquinas once again appeals to Paul as his authority for the reply. He begins with two citations from Paul, each of which emphasizes what I argued in chapter three (concerning the Hebrews *lectura*) was the theme of Aquinas's view of the teaching in Hebrews: "the shadow of the law's night."<sup>80</sup> Aquinas cites Colossians 2:16-17: "Let no man...judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of festival day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come." He then appeals to Hebrews 8:13 to which states that because the new things come, the old decay and then end: "In saying a new (testament), he hath made the former old: and that which decayeth and groweth old, is near its end."<sup>81</sup> Here, Aquinas argues that the ceremonies had to cease at the advent of the new sacraments because these new sacraments are now "the means of obtaining heavenly goods." The new sacraments are no longer things to come (as they were in the state of the old law), but these new sacraments are actually the things now present in the state of

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<sup>79</sup> Ia-IIae q. 103.3.

<sup>80</sup> "The time of the New Testament is called the day," Aquinas states, "because it repels the shadow of the Law's night." *Ad Heb.* 3.2.173: "Tempus est hodie, scilicet tempus diei. Tempus enim legis veteris dicebatur nox, quia erat tempus umbrae. Infra X, 1: umbram enim habens lex futurorum bonorum. Sed tempus novi testamenti, quia repellit umbram noctis legis, dicitur dies. Rom. XIII, 12: *nox praecessit, dies autem appropinquavit*...."

<sup>81</sup> Ia-IIae q. 103.3

the New Law.

The first objection (Ia-IIae q. 103.3 ad. 1) that Aquinas lists against this explanation of the cessation of the law is that it seems the ceremonial law in the Old Testament is permanent or “said to be forever” (citing Baruch 4:1). Here, as in the commentaries on Paul, Aquinas is aware of the biblical notion that the ceremonial law is said to be permanent. He even grounds the objection in an Old Testament text.<sup>82</sup> His reply to this objection relies upon the division of permanent aspect of the law (moral law) from the impermanent (ceremonial and judicial). Aquinas takes the standard medieval view and argues that the old law is “absolute” (*aeternum*) *only* in regard to moral precepts, but “as regard to the ceremonial precepts it lasts for ever in respect of the reality which those ceremonies foreshadowed.”<sup>83</sup>

The second objection (Ia-IIae q. 103.3 ad. 2) is that law must be permanent because Christ observed the ceremonial law himself. In ad. 2 it is clear that Aquinas is aware of the Jewish identity of Christ and his observance of the legal ceremonies. Aquinas responds to the objection by claiming that Christ’s observance was before the passion: “Hence, before Christ’s passion, while Christ was preaching and working miracles, the Law and the Gospel were concurrent, since the mystery of Christ had already begun, but was not as yet consummated. And for this reason Our Lord, before His passion, commanded the leper to observe the legal ceremonies.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> In his Romans *lectura*, Aquinas notices that the permanence of the ceremonial law is actually affirmed by Paul’s “Much in every way.”

<sup>83</sup> Ia-IIae q. 103.3 ad. 1. Aquinas also draws upon his interpretation of a few texts from the Gospels: John 19:30, where Christ says “it is finished” and Matthew 27:51 where the temple is rent. “Hence, before Christ’s passion, while Christ was preaching and working miracles, the Law and the Gospel were concurrent, since the mystery of Christ had already begun, but was not as yet consummated. And for this reason Our Lord, before His passion, commanded the leper to observe the legal ceremonies.” Ia-IIae q. 103.3 ad. 2.

<sup>84</sup> Ia-IIae q. 103.3 ad. 2.



In Aquinas's view, the stronger objection to the idea of the cessation of the law is that the apostles' observed the ceremonies, which he discusses in Ia-IIae q. 103.4: "Whether since Christ's passion the Legal Ceremonies Can be Observed without Committing Mortal Sin?" That the apostles' observed the law even after the "mystery of Christ...was consummated" seems to problematize Aquinas's above reply for why Christ observed the law. Aquinas defeats the objection by appealing to Augustine in ad. 1. Before citing the debate between Jerome and Augustine, Aquinas's reply begins by claiming Paul's letter to the Galatians as his authority, revealing that the letter is the primary authority for his defense of the cessation of the law: "The Apostle says (Galatians 5:2): 'If you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.'"

Aquinas then attempts to attach Augustine and Jerome's premise that the ceremonial law is a mortal sin to what Aquinas views as the Pauline idea of Christ being unprofitable to those who observe circumcision: "nothing save mortal sin hinders us from receiving Christ's fruit. Therefore since Christ's passion it is a mortal sin to be circumcised, or to observe the other legal ceremonies."<sup>85</sup> For Aquinas, Galatians 5:2 serves as a marker for Paul's apparent teaching that the observance of circumcision *after* the passion makes the grace of Christ void. It is no longer beneficial *at this particular time*: "the Apostle's statement in Gal. 5:2 that *if you receive circumcision, Christ will be no advantage to you* refers to the era after grace...."<sup>86</sup> Only mortal sin can void Christ's grace. Therefore, Paul's teaching is taken to mean that circumcision is a mortal sin.

Aquinas views Paul's teaching that circumcision brings no advantage to one in the era

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<sup>85</sup> Ia-IIae q. 102.4.

<sup>86</sup> Aquinas makes this comment about Galatians 5:2 in the Romans *lectura*. *Ad Rom.* 2.4.238.

after grace and uses this claim to support the Augustinian argument that the old sacraments are now false professions. After the middle period expires, the observance of the ceremonial law functions as a false profession. The Augustinian rationale is as follows: All ceremonies are professions of faith. Professions of faith are made in deeds and words. If such professions in word or deed are false professions, then the one making such a profession sins mortally. Since Christ *has* already come, it is false to declare that he *will* come. Therefore, the one observing a sacrament *for* declaring he will come (prefiguring Christ's passion), makes a false profession and sins mortally. Aquinas's reply is as follows:

Now, though our faith in Christ is the same as that of the fathers of old; yet, since they came before Christ, whereas we come after Him, the same faith is expressed in different words, but us and by them. For by them it was said: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, where the verbs are in the future tense: whereas we express the same by means of verbs in the past tense, and say that she conceived and bore. In like manner the ceremonies of the Old Law betokened Christ as having yet to be born and to suffer: whereas our sacraments signify Him as already born and having suffered. Consequently, just as it would be a mortal sin now for anyone, in making a profession of faith, to say that Christ is yet to be born, which the fathers of old said devoutly and truthfully; so too it would be a mortal sin now to observe those ceremonies which the fathers of old fulfilled with devotion and fidelity. Such is the teaching of Augustine....<sup>87</sup>

Aquinas adopts Augustine's teaching from *Contra Faustum* on the idea that a sacrament is a false profession of faith synthesizes it with Galatians 5:2.<sup>88</sup> Aquinas then records the debate between Jerome and Augustine on when the cessation of the law took place. The main point

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<sup>87</sup> Ia-IIae q. 103.4.

<sup>88</sup> Aquinas cites Augustine's *Contra Faustum* Book 19:16: "It is no longer promised that He shall be born, shall suffer and rise again, truths of which their sacraments were a kind of image: but it is declared that He is already born, has suffered and risen again; of which our sacraments, in which Christians share, are the actual representation." Augustine writes, in 19.11: "The very intention of the observances was to prefigure Christ. Now that Christ has come, instead of its being strange or absurd that what was done to prefigure His advent should not be done any more, it is perfectly right and reasonable. The typical observances intended to prefigure the coming of Christ would be observed still, had they not been fulfilled by the coming of Christ."

of disagreement between these Fathers was the motive and purpose for the Jewish apostles' observance of the legal ceremonies after the passion. According to Aquinas, the objection runs as follows:

It would seem that since Christ's passion the legal ceremonies can be observed without committing mortal sin. For we must not believe that the apostles committed mortal sin after receiving the Holy Ghost: since by his fullness they were *endued with power from on high* (Luke 24:49). But the apostles observed the legal ceremonies after the coming of the Holy Ghost: for it is stated (Acts 16:3) that Paul circumcised Timothy: and (Acts 21:26) that Paul, at the advice of James, took the men, and...being purified with them, entered into the temple, giving notice of the accomplishment of the days of purification, until an oblation should be offered for everyone of them. Therefore the legal ceremonies can be observed since the passion of Christ without committing mortal sin.<sup>89</sup>

Aquinas's summary of the controversy between Jerome and Augustine takes up the majority of the article. In Ia-IIae q. 103.4 ad. 1 he cites Augustine's Epistle 82 and then sides with Augustine's solution to the problem of distinguishing three periods, or the *tria tempora* doctrine: The Holy Spirit allowed Jews to observance the rites immediately after the passion, in the middle period, but not after the promulgation of the gospel. The rites become dead and deadly after this time.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Ia-IIae q. 103.4 *obj.* 1.

<sup>90</sup> Ia-IIae q. 103.4 ad. 1: "On this point there seems to have been a difference of opinion between Jerome and Augustine. For Jerome (Super Galat. 2, 11, seqq.) distinguished two periods of time. One was the time previous to Christ's passion, during which the legal ceremonies were neither dead, since they were obligatory, and did expiate in their own fashion; nor deadly, because it was not sinful to observe them. But immediately after Christ's passion they began to be not only dead, so as no longer to be either effectual or binding; but also deadly, so that whoever observed them was guilty of mortal sin. Hence he maintained that after the passion the apostles never observed the legal ceremonies in real earnest; but only by a kind of pious pretense, lest, to wit, they should scandalize the Jews and hinder their conversion. This pretense, however, is to be understood, not as though they did not in reality perform those actions, but in the sense that they performed them without the mind to observe the ceremonies of the Law: thus a man might cut away his foreskin for health's sake, not with the intention of observing legal circumcision.

But since it seems unbecoming that the apostles, in order to avoid scandal, should have hidden things pertaining to the truth of life and doctrine, and that they should have made use of pretense, in things pertaining to the salvation of the faithful; therefore, Augustine (Epist. 82) more fittingly distinguished three periods of time. One was the time that preceded the passion of Christ, during which the legal ceremonies were neither deadly nor dead: another period was after the publication of the Gospel, during which the legal ceremonies are both dead and deadly. The third is a middle period, viz. from the passion of Christ until the publication of

I will not rehearse the differences in Augustine and Jerome's views since I treated Aquinas's view of their positions at length in chapter five.<sup>91</sup> What is most important for my purposes here is to point out two things. First, Aquinas adopts the Augustinian *tria tempora* doctrine in the treatise on law to explain Christ's fulfillment of the law as a fulfillment that also brings about a cessation of the ceremonial law, as well as its becoming *mortua et mortifera*. Second, Aquinas relies on Paul's teaching on the law in Galatians, which he understands to dovetail with Augustine's view of the old sacraments in *Contra Faustum* and Epistle 82.

In the next section of the chapter my aim is to identify which elements of Aquinas's works are supersessionist. I attempt to achieve this goal through a comparison of Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law after Christ in the treatise on law with the findings from my study of the commentaries on Hebrews, Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians. I hope to show that this more comprehensive picture helps not only to provide an answer to the question of the study (Whether or to what degree Aquinas's theology is economically supersessionist?) but also allows me to identify the precise location of the tension between the unofficial and official views of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ.

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the Gospel, during which the legal ceremonies were dead indeed, because they had neither effect nor binding force; but were not deadly, because it was lawful for the Jewish converts to Christianity to observe them, provided they did not put their trust in them so as to hold them to be necessary unto salvation, as though faith in Christ could not justify without the legal observances. On the other hand, there was no reason why those who were converted from heathendom to Christianity should observe them. Hence Paul circumcised Timothy, who was born of a Jewish mother; but was unwilling to circumcise Titus, who was of heathen nationality.

The reason why the Holy Ghost did not wish the converted Jews to be debarred at once from observing the legal ceremonies, while converted heathens were forbidden to observe the rites of heathendom, was in order to show that there is a difference between these rites. For heathenish ceremonial was rejected as absolutely unlawful, and as prohibited by God for all time; whereas the legal ceremonial ceased as being fulfilled through Christ's passion, being instituted by God, as a figure of Christ."

<sup>91</sup> See also *Ad Galatas* 2.3.86.

### 3. Rival Versions of Fulfillment: The Economic Supersessionism in Aquinas's Theology in Tension with Post-Supersessionist Resources

In this third section of the chapter I answer how Aquinas's teaching on the law in his treatment of the duration of the ceremonial law after Christ in the *Summa theologiae* compares to his commentaries on Hebrews, Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians.

Recall that I argued that there exist three views of the fulfillment of the ceremonial law after Christ in the commentaries: "fulfilled and upheld" in Romans; "fulfilled and destroyed" in Ephesians; and "fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly" in Galatians. In the next two subsections I ask whether or to what degree Aquinas's account of the ceremonial in the *Summa theologiae* shares characteristics with these views of fulfillment.

First, I argue that Aquinas's view of Paul's teaching on the ceremonial law in Ia-IIae 103.2-4 shares key features of his view of Paul's teaching in his commentaries on Hebrews and Galatians. Second, I then show how Ephesians *lectura* shares certain economically supersessionist elements found in Hebrews, Galatians, and the *Summa theologiae*. Yet I also show how the Ephesians *lectura* contains a post-supersessionist resource that sits alongside and in tension with economically supersessionist views of the ceremonial law and Israel. The Ephesians *lectura* is the clearest picture of the tensions in Aquinas's thought, as these tensions exist in one commentary.

Third, I demonstrate the precise point of the tension in Aquinas's thought between the more negative view of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ and the more positive view. I argue that the precise source of the tension is Aquinas's two contradictory readings of Romans 3:1-2. Aquinas understands the permanent value of the ceremonial law to hang on whether Paul teaches that circumcision is "superfluous" (Galatians 5:2) or "advantageous"

(Romans 3:1-2) to the Jewish people in the era after grace. I show that Aquinas's attention to this difficult question and his answer in the Romans *lectura* calls into question the *ceassatio legalium* tradition and departs in significant ways from the "fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly" view of the *Summa theologiae*. Additionally, Aquinas's resistance to the relativization of circumcision is instructive for contemporary post-supersessionist theology in that it suggests the importance of attending with great care to the challenge of interpreting Paul's teachings on the positive value of the law when attempting to explain how Christ is universal and the Jewish people remain God's elect unto the end of time.

### 3.1 Fulfilled, Destroyed, and Deadly: The Economic Supersessionism in Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* and Commentaries on Hebrews and Galatians

Aquinas's teaching on the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ in Ia-IIae q. 103 overlaps with his lectures on Galatians and Hebrews. The primary Pauline source for the teaching on the cessation of the law in the *Summa theologiae* is Aquinas's view of Paul's teaching in Galatians. A secondary influence is his commentary on Hebrews, which emphasizes the ceremonial law as a shadow that passes with the advent of Christ.

Aquinas's position on the cessation of the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae* also explains the logic of Augustine's teaching with brevity and precision. He synthesizes Augustine's views with Paul's teaching on the "superfluous sacrament" from Galatians. Indeed, it is this view of Paul's teaching on the law that Aquinas thinks dovetails with Augustine's teaching on the *tria tempora* and the idea that the law is dead and deadly in the third era. Aquinas extends Augustine's thought on the cessation of the law in the *Prima Secundae* by buttressing these Augustinian doctrines with his reading of Paul's epistles to the Galatians and Hebrews. In this sense, one can say that Aquinas's reading of Paul does not

overcome Augustinian supersessionism, as Steven Boguslawski holds, but actually strengthens it.

Recall that Aquinas expresses a view of fulfillment in the Hebrews and Galatians lectures that could be referred to as “fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly.” In this official form of fulfillment of the ceremonies, the law is declared superfluous by Paul and the apostles (at the Acts 15 conference); “destroyed” by both Christ and Paul; and thereafter it becomes deadly to anyone who observes it in the era after grace. This version of fulfillment requires the destruction of the law. The observance of the law in the era of grace is an offense to Christ’s passion and it must be renounced. Anyone who observes the rites after the passion is guilty of mortal sin. Aquinas teaches that circumcision is no longer of value since to say otherwise threatens to evacuate the novelty of the gospel: the justification comes only through the grace of Christ’s passion. Therefore, Aquinas’s view of the fulfillment and cessation of the ceremonial law in the treatise on law directly corresponds to the “fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly” view of fulfillment in Galatians and Hebrews. Both visions of fulfillment are economically supersessionist.<sup>92</sup>

Jean-Pierre Torrell’s description of the law after it is fulfilled is representative of Aquinas’s view of the ceremonial law after Christ in the treatise on law, and in the commentaries on Hebrews and Galatians. Torrell thinks Aquinas relativizes the value of the law because God is not content with this teaching. Torrell remarks that although Aquinas’s treatment of the old law in the *Summa theologiae* is a “magnificent apologia for the law,” he

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<sup>92</sup> This is not to say that Romans does not shape Aquinas’s view of the fulfillment of the law. Aquinas draws upon the notion that the law is good but imperfect in several places throughout his discussion of the old law. However, when Aquinas teaches that the law is fulfilled and then becomes dead and deadly he does not appeal to texts in Romans or Matthew 5:17. Romans is not the primary Pauline source of Aquinas’s view of the cessation of the law in the *Summa theologiae*.

“radically relativizes” the law:

While Thomas highlights the great educative value of the law for personal freedom and stresses its necessary role in service to the common good, he also radically relativizes it, since its usefulness is only pedagogical and disappears once its service is completed. God is not content with instructing us from the exterior by law.”<sup>93</sup>

Torrell’s language about the radical relativization and corresponding disappearance of the law resembles the first premise of the twofold process of economic supersessionism outlined in chapter one: the first premise of economic supersessionism is that God no longer wills that Israel observe circumcision and *Torah* because these practices have been made obsolete. The treatise on law and the commentaries on Hebrews and Galatians make clear that Aquinas understands Paul to teach that the old sacraments have been relativized and replaced by the new sacraments.

If one considers these texts as representative of Aquinas’s view of Paul’s teaching on the ceremonial law, his theology can be described as economically supersessionist. The people constituted by the new sacraments have replaced the people of the superfluous sacraments. This new body of the community of faith is heir to the promise that was, only in the time before the passion of Christ, Israel’s sacrament of special election. However, in the next two subsections on Aquinas’s lectures on Ephesians and Romans, I show how elements of Aquinas’s theology depart from the official view.

### 3.2 Fulfilled and Destroyed: Economic Supersessionism in Tension with Post-Supersessionist Resources in the Ephesians *Lectura*

My study of the commentaries demonstrates that Aquinas does not consistently hold to the teaching that the ceremonial law is fulfilled, destroyed, and dead after the passion of Christ. This is not simply due to the fact that some of Paul’s epistles do not address the

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<sup>93</sup> Torrell, *Aquinas’s Summa*, 34.



subject of the Jews and the lectures simply reflect this fact. On the contrary, the teaching that the ceremonial law is deadly to the observant Jew after the passion of Christ is left out of two of the commentaries that contain some of the most extensive comments upon the Jews in the era of grace: Romans and Ephesians.

In what follows, I discuss the relationship between Aquinas's teaching in the Ephesians *lectura* and the economically supersessionist view of Hebrews, Galatians, and the *Summa theologiae*. In the subsection after this, I draw a similar comparison between these latter three works and the Romans *lectura*.

In the Ephesians *lectura*, Aquinas teaches the law is dead, or destroyed by Christ, but he does not say it is deadly. Indeed, in the Ephesians *lectura* Aquinas defines the election of Israel as a promise of God and a sacrament of the society of saints. For this reason, the *lectura* can be considered as a step away from theme so prominent in the tradition of the *cessatio legalium* that emphasizes the law as an impermanent shadow.

However, in the Ephesians *lectura*, these post-supersessionist resources exist alongside and in tension with economically supersessionist views of the ceremonial law and Israel. Ephesians shares certain economically supersessionist elements found in Hebrews, Galatians, and the *Summa theologiae*. First, Aquinas's view of Paul's teaching in Ephesians is similar to the official view in that it describes Christ's destruction of the ceremonial law. The Ephesians *lectura* expresses a view of the law as "fulfilled and destroyed," but *not* deadly. Second, in the Ephesians *lectura*, Aquinas describes the promise of the special election of Israel, the *societatem sanctorum*, as a thing of the past. The body of Christ has inherited the promise. A tension exists in the Ephesians *lectura* between the positive affirmation of the prerogatives of the Jews and the claim that Christ destroys those same

prerogatives. For this reason, it can be said that the *lectura* represents one of the clearest pictures of the tensions in Aquinas's thought: the prerogatives of the Jewish people are described as God's promises to *this* special people and yet God also destroys that aspect of the promise that maintains what is special about "special election": the law or "the barrier of partition."

### 3.3 Fulfilled and Upheld: The Post-supersessionist Resources in Aquinas's Romans *Lectura*

In the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas's teaching that Christ fulfilled the ceremonial law does not also render the law void, destroyed, or deadly. However, the absence of this teaching is not what is most significant about his view of the ceremonial law in the Romans *lectura*. Rather, what is most significant is what Aquinas *does say* about the prerogatives of Israel in the era after grace, including the theological value of circumcision even after the passion. Aquinas's affirmation of the theological value of the ceremonial law as a prerogative of Israel and spiritual benefit after the passion of Christ in the Romans *lectura* departs from the official economically supersessionist view of the law in ways that provide post-supersessionist resources for Christian theology. In what follows, I revisit my discussion of Aquinas's treatment of Romans 3 and argue that Aquinas clearly resists the radical relativization of the value of the "exterior" Jewish law and in doing so, he undermines the logic of the *cessatio legalium* tradition.

In his Romans *lectura*, Aquinas places Jewish rites on a higher theological ground than he does in the treatise on law and the other Pauline commentaries. Even as Aquinas insists upon the priority of the Christological prefiguring function of the Jewish rites before Christ, he also defends their literal meaning but with a different theological argument than he

uses in the *Prima Secundae*.<sup>94</sup> As I argued in chapter four, Aquinas anchors the literal meaning of the Jewish rites in a theological account of God's faithfulness to the Jewish people. In particular their election is anchored in the idea that God does not lie. Moreover, Aquinas's high view of the theological status of the Jewish rites after Christ is most clearly evident in his handling of the question of "outward" Judaism in *Ad Romanos* 2-3. It is in his defense of "outward" Judaism, which he takes to mean circumcision, that Aquinas undermines the *cessatio legalium* tradition and resists the radical relativizing force of Galatians 5:2, which he thinks teaches that circumcision is superfluous.

Recall that in *Ad Romanos* 2.4, Aquinas discusses the idea of the "inward Jew" and the "external Jew." Aquinas says that circumcision profits *only* if the law, i.e., the moral precepts, are observed. This keeping of the moral law is defined as "inward Judaism." An outward Jew is one who only keeps the ceremonial law but neglects the moral law. Aquinas then explains that "he is truly a Jew who is one inwardly, i.e., whose heart is possessed by the precepts of the Law, which the Jews professed."<sup>95</sup> The inward character of Judaism, which again, is observing the moral precepts, is therefore obtainable by both the Jew and the

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<sup>94</sup> This may indicate some development in Aquinas's thought on the ceremonial law from the *Prima Secundae* to the commentary on Romans, as well as the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa*. It is possible that Aquinas's thought on the ceremonial shifts from a "fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly" view in the *Prima Secundae*, to a "fulfilled and upheld" view in the *Romans lectura*, which he edited himself in the last years of his life. Schenk argues that Aquinas strived to maintain the historical and literal integrity of the meaning of the law, but increasingly emphasized its Christological meaning. Schenk even refers to this development as a "shift" and also uses the term "phase" to describe Aquinas's thought. The first phase emphasizes the twofold end of the ceremonies: literal and prefigurative. The second phase increasingly emphasizes the prefigurative with a fading interest in the literal end. Schenk, "Views of the Two Covenants," 911. However, Schenk rightly points out that the dates for the editions of Aquinas's works on Paul are still "unresolved." He points to Jean-Pierre Torrell, Saint Thomas Aquinas, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), esp. 250-57.

<sup>95</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.244.

Gentile alike. Here, inward Judaism and circumcision “prevail over the outward.”<sup>96</sup>

However, after explaining this idea of the superiority of inward Judaism, Aquinas immediately follows with an objection from Paul in defense of the ongoing value of external Judaism, or the value of circumcision even after the passion of Christ.<sup>97</sup> Here, it becomes evident that Aquinas’s awareness of what might be referred to as the problem of Paul’s “two views of circumcision” ultimately prevents him from relativizing the theological value of “outward” Judaism or observance of the ceremonies. Aquinas takes note of how Paul seems to say, on the one hand, that ceremonial law possesses a permanent theological value, and that the ceremonial law is, on the other hand, impermanent or superfluous after Christ.<sup>98</sup> It seems that Aquinas was preoccupied with the problem of two views of circumcision (as advantageous or as superfluous) in three places in his work: the Galatians *lectura*; the Romans *lectura*; and in Ia-IIae q. 103.2-4.

Recall that in the Galatians *lectura*, Aquinas raises a possible objection to the Pauline claim that “there is neither Jew nor Greek” in the era of grace by citing Romans 3:1-2: “What

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<sup>96</sup> *Ad Rom.* 2.4.245.

<sup>97</sup> Schenk holds that Aquinas’s statement in *Ad Rom.* 2.4 concerning inward Judaism is evidence of a spiritualization of the older covenant as a covenant of faith in Christ in the manner he detects in the *Tertia Pars*. “Views of the Two Covenants,” 911. He seems to miss Aquinas’s attentiveness to Paul’s objection to the idea of inward Judaism and his argument that the advantage of the Jew is remains “Much in every way.”

<sup>98</sup> Edward A. Synan has noticed Aquinas’s struggle with impermanent and permanent notions of the law. Synan observed that the fact that the *Summa theologiae* represents Aquinas’s mature thought combined with the extreme length of the articles on the old law reveal that a particular tension in the law “preoccupied” Aquinas to the end of his life: “That the enigma of laws, announced by Holy Scripture to be *both permanent and passing*, preoccupied him to the end is visible in the extreme length of the Summa articles on the issue.” Synan does not demonstrate his thesis regarding Aquinas’s preoccupation with what might be referred to as the “permanence and impermanence of the ceremonial law” in scripture. Synan mentions it briefly, and on the way to making the point that, at the end of the day, Aquinas’s conscience would not permit him to defend the persistence of the Jewish ceremonial laws. Synan, “Some Medieval Perceptions on Jewish Law,” 120-1.

advantage then hath the Jew? Much in every way.”<sup>99</sup> Here it is clear that Aquinas views this verse from Romans as an objection to the view that circumcision no longer has status. In the *respondeo* Aquinas says that Jews and Greeks

[C]an be considered...according to the *state in which they were before faith*. In this way, the Jew *was greater* because of the benefits he derived from the Law. In another way, according to the state of grace; and in this way, the Jew is not greater. And this is the sense in which it is taken here.”<sup>100</sup>

Here, Aquinas is commenting directly upon the advantage of the Jews after the passion of Christ. He does not take the opportunity, as he does in the Romans *lectura*, to advance an argument that there is a value to circumcision based on the idea that God commanded it or that God chose the Jewish people as his elect people. Rather, he restricts Jewish advantage to something in the past or something that *was*: “Before the faith, the Jew was greater.”

Whereas, in the Romans *lectura*, the “Much in every way” of Romans 3:2 compels Aquinas to argue at length for the Jews’ advantage (*ampilus*) even after grace, in the Galatians *lectura*, he concludes that the theological advantage to the Jew only existed before Christ’s passion.

In the Romans *lectura* Aquinas once again sets two statements from Paul on circumcision against each other: one that seems to support the advantage of the Jew after grace, and another that supports the disadvantage of the Jew after grace. Aquinas discusses the more positive Pauline teaching on circumcision based in Romans 3:1-2—this is the same teaching Aquinas thinks supports the advantage of Jews, *but only in the past*, in the Galatians

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<sup>99</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.9.186: “Sed contra est quod dicitur Rom. III, 1: *quid ergo amplius est Iudaeo? Multum quidem per omnem modum.*”

<sup>100</sup> *Ad Galat.* 3.9.186: “Sed contra est quod dicitur Rom. III, 1: *quid ergo amplius est Iudaeo? Multum quidem per omnem modum.* Respondeo. Dicendum est, quod Iudaei et Graeci possunt considerari dupliciter: uno modo secundum statum in quo erant ante fidem; et sic amplius fuit Iudaeo propter beneficium legis. Alio modo quantum ad statum gratiae, et sic non est amplius Iudaeo; et de hoc intelligitur hic.”

*lectura*. In the Romans *lectura*, however, Aquinas reads Romans 3:1-2 as referring to *the present advantage*. It becomes clear that Aquinas understands Paul's rhetorical question in Romans 3:1 "What advantage has the Jew?" and the answer in 3:2 "Much in every way!" as an objection and a reply to a question. He rephrases Paul's question so that it more directly addresses the issue of the theological status of circumcision: "What advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision, i.e. outward?"<sup>101</sup> Aquinas even translates Paul's rhetorical question into the form of a scholastic objection: "*It seems* from his previous teaching that there is no value." Aquinas then understands Paul to provide the answer: "Then when he says 'Much in every way' he answers the objection."<sup>102</sup> Aquinas explains that "Much in every way!" refers first to Judaism's prerogative; and second, "to the value of circumcision."<sup>103</sup> But it is not reduced to a value that was only in the past. Here, Aquinas sees the Galatians 5:2 teaching that circumcision is superfluous after Christ as problematized by Paul's strong language in Romans 3:1. Aquinas understands the Romans 3:2 "Much in every way!" to refute the claim based in Galatians 5:2 that circumcision no longer has status. For Aquinas, when Paul says "Much in every way!" he answers the objection and affirms the permanent value of outward Judaism and circumcision.<sup>104</sup>

In addition to affirming circumcision as an advantage even after the passion of Christ, Aquinas makes three other positive claims about the theological status of the law after Christ:

- 1) As I showed in chapter four, Aquinas then begins connecting the value of circumcision in

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<sup>101</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.247.

<sup>102</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.248.

<sup>103</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.248.

<sup>104</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.248.

the era after grace to the prerogatives of Israel as promises of God.<sup>105</sup> Aquinas makes the theological argument that God's faithfulness would actually be compromised if the prerogatives of Israel were taken away or annulled. Aquinas secures the permanent theological status of the Jewish rites after Christ as a matrix of prerogatives that cannot be taken away because they are wrapped up in the faithfulness of God's promises to the Jewish people: "For if the Jews' prerogative were abrogated on account of the unbelief of some, it would follow that man's unbelief would nullify God's faithfulness—which is an unacceptable conclusion."<sup>106</sup> Here, "outward" Judaism, or, to use Wyschogrod's term, "carnal" Judaism's prerogative is secured *in the era after grace* (not only at the second coming) by the authority of Paul and by the nature of God and God's promise to these elect people.<sup>107</sup> 2) Aquinas affirms that circumcision only mediated grace in so far as it prefigured

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<sup>105</sup> As I argued in chapter four, Aquinas sees Paul's "much in every way" as an authoritative justification for an extended exposition of multiple aspects of the prerogatives of Israel in the present tense. For Aquinas, Judaism's prerogative or advantage is great: "The advantage is both quantitative, which is indicated when he says, *much*, and numerical, which is indicated when he says, *in every way*." He then outlines several advantages. The first advantage listed is in "contemplating divine matters." The second advantage is in "the provision of temporal things." The third advantage is "further advantages relating to their ancestors." He then defines further advantages as "the promises to their offspring" and cites Romans 9:4 in support of these: *They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenant. Rom 9:4*. Here, again, Aquinas appeals to the theme of election by citing Romans 9:4, which explicitly refers to Israel and the covenant in the present tense. By doing so he connects his reflection on the prerogatives to his positive comments upon the law as a present spiritual benefit in Romans 9. "In each of these," Aquinas comments, "there is no small advantage, but great and important ones, which are summed up when he says, *much*." Among these great and important advantages Aquinas specifies a *praecipue amplius* or chief advantage. The "chief advantage" is that to "them are entrusted the oracles of God, being His friends: *I have called you friends Jn 15:15*." The chief advantage in being a Jew is expressed in their closeness to God. This is because man's "greatest good lies in knowing and clinging to God and being instructed by God." Aquinas consistently describes each advantage of the Jews in the present, and not in the past. *Ad Rom.* 3.1.249.

<sup>106</sup> *Ad Rom.* 3.1.253. [Emended]: "Deinde cum dicit Numquid incredulitas, excludit dictam obiectionem ducendo ad inconveniens, quia si propter incredulitatem aliquorum praerogativa Iudaeorum tolleretur, sequeretur quod incredulitas hominis fidem Dei evacuet, quod est inconveniens." Larcher translates *tolleretur* as "taken away" but it can also mean abrogate.

<sup>107</sup> Both Boguslawski and Holly Taylor Coolman assume that the positive contribution of the Romans *lectura* concerning the election of Israel is Aquinas's view that the Jews are predestined to salvation at the second coming. This is not the most distinctive view in the *lectura*, since the salvation of the Jews at the eschaton was a commonplace medieval doctrine. Rather, Marshall's view is more significant. He rightly points

Christ, but he also chooses to leave out the negative conclusion of the Christological prefiguration of the rites: the Augustinian teaching that the law is dead and deadly; 3) Aquinas affirms the rites as a “present spiritual benefit.” In making these moves, Aquinas avoids the relativizing of the Jewish rites that takes place in the treatise on law, and the commentaries on Galatians, Hebrews, and Ephesians.

Nevertheless, Aquinas’s defense of circumcision in the Romans *lectura* becomes more significant when viewed against the backdrop of my analysis of the Galatians *lectura* and especially the *Summa theologiae*. It is in this context of the latter works that it becomes clear how Aquinas understands Galatians 5:2 to function in his theology as a marker for the idea that the ceremonial law is now superfluous and that it cuts one off from Christ. Indeed, the Galatians 5:2 teaching from which Aquinas departs in the Romans *lectura*, is the same authority used in the *Summa theologiae* for the argument for the *ceassatio legalium*. That Aquinas would find and support an argument against this view seems rather radical. When viewed in this context of the other commentaries and the *Summa theologiae*, the “Much in everyway!” not only represents a tension between a positive teaching in the Romans *lectura* and the more negative view of the Jewish rites in the Galatians *lectura* and *Summa theologiae*. In the Romans *lectura* Aquinas thinks Paul actually defeats the objection that circumcision is superfluous—an objection Aquinas rephrases as “It seems circumcision has no value.” In the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas’s view of the ceremonial law after the passion of

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out that the carnal election of the Jewish people is tied to the promise of God. However, he does not seem to notice how Aquinas’s affirmation of the value of circumcision represents a direct contradiction with Galatians 5:2 in the treatise on law. See Marshall, “Postscript and Prospect,” 524. Steven C. Boguslawski, *Thomas Aquinas on the Jews: Insights into His Commentary on Romans 9-11* (Paulist Press, 2008); Holly Taylor Coolman, “Rereading Aquinas on the Jews,” *Unpublished Article*.



Christ reflects what Kendall Soulen refers to as the “shock of the present tense.”<sup>108</sup> The present tense descriptions of Israel compel Aquinas to construct an argument for the theological value of circumcision that undermines a significant premise in the logic of the Augustinian *cessatio legalium* tradition: the premise that circumcision has no value after Christ.

When viewed in light of my reading of Aquinas’s argument for the cessation of the law in the *Summa theologiae*, and the other Pauline commentaries, Aquinas’s reply to the objection that circumcision is superfluous expresses a hesitancy about this Pauline teaching that is reminiscent of a statement by Karl Rahner: “There are theological problems involved in this transition from Jewish to Gentile Christianity, problems that are by no means so simple as people think, theologically difficult problems still to be worked out correctly; it is not yet reflectively clear to us what Paul ‘brought about’ when he declared circumcision and everything connected with it superfluous for non-Jews (and perhaps only for them). . . .”<sup>109</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

I would argue that my study indicates that the question of “Whether there is a tension in Aquinas’s Pauline commentaries on the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ?” can be answered in the affirmative. There exist rival versions of the fulfillment of the ceremonial law in Aquinas’s commentaries on Paul’s epistles. My examination of Aquinas’s

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<sup>108</sup> Soulen, R. Kendall, “‘They are Israelites’: The Priority of the Present Tense for Jewish-Christian Relations,” in Florian Wilk, J. Ross Wagner, and Frank Schleritt, eds., *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9-11 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament)*, 2010.

<sup>109</sup> Rahner cited in Edward Synan, “Some Medieval Perceptions of the Controversy on Jewish Law,” in *Understanding Scripture: Explorations of Jewish and Christian Traditions of Interpretation*, ed. Michael Wyschogrod and Clemens Thoma (New York: Paulist Press, 1987).

commentaries on Paul's epistles shows that this tension is most pronounced when comparing, on the one hand, the teaching from the commentaries on Galatians and Hebrews, and the *Summa theologiae*, which states that the ceremonial law is *mortua et mortifera* after the passion of Christ, and on the other hand the teaching from Romans *lectura*, which states that the ceremonial law is a present spiritual benefit that retains a theological value as a prerogative of the Jewish people that cannot be annulled or declared superfluous without compromising the faithfulness of God.

When Aquinas speaks of the novelty of the grace of Christ, the law is described as a temporal phenomenon and disconnected from the perpetuity of God's promises to Israel. It becomes dead and deadly after the symbol that it symbolized arrives. Both Christ and Paul are viewed as destroyers of the ceremonial law. In Hebrews and Galatians, Aquinas emphasizes the former view of fulfillment: the law is described as fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly after Christ's passion.

When Aquinas speaks of the novelty of God's covenant and law with Israel, especially in terms of "prerogatives" as in (Romans or Ephesians) the law is attached to a concept of perpetuity and considered an aspect of God's promises to Israel, the society of saints. In Romans and Ephesians, Paul's emphasis on the goodness of God's plural covenants and promises to Israel pushes Aquinas to affirm the perpetuity of the rites. In the lectures on Romans and Ephesians, law and covenant are melded together as prerogatives of the Jewish people. In the Ephesians *lectura*, Jewish Christians are even given a foundational place in Christ's Church as one of two "walls of the Temple."<sup>110</sup> Here, Jewish Christians are spoken of as part of the formal cause of the increase and growth of the Church with no mention of the

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<sup>110</sup> *Ad Ephesios* 2.6.129.

law becoming deadly after the Augustinian middle period, or that the Church of the Jews was “not destined to endure.”<sup>111</sup>

Moreover, in the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas defends the perpetuity of the prerogatives with an argument based on the theological claim that God is faithful to God’s promises. Aquinas argues that to take away or remove the prerogatives of Israel, which includes Israel’s covenant *and* law, would actually nullify the faithfulness of God and call into question the theological claim that God does not lie. In the commentary on Romans, this theological defense of the prerogatives can be considered an explicit argument against the logic of what Soulen refers to as punitive supersessionism, and an implicit argument against what Soulen refers to as economic supersessionism. Moreover, Aquinas’s reply to the objection that circumcision is of no value in the era after grace represents a rejection of a key premise in the logic of traditional fulfillment theologies that assume the *cessatio legalium* as normative.

Based on this unofficial view of the ceremonial law in the era after grace I argued that an alternative view of the fulfillment of the ceremonial law (“fulfilled and upheld”) emerges from the Romans *lectura*, and that this alternative view undermines the view contained in the commentaries on Hebrews, Galatians, and the *Summa theologiae* (“fulfilled, destroyed, and deadly”) and aspects of the view in Ephesians (fulfilled and destroyed).

The “fulfilled and upheld” view of the ceremonial law after Christ represents an alternative and post-supersessionist view of fulfillment in Aquinas’s thought and can be located along Donaldson’s typology. Aquinas’s view of the relationship between Church and Israel in the Romans *lectura* is similar to the defining characteristics of type five, which

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<sup>111</sup> *Ad Galatas* 2.3.86.

Donaldson refers to as *a relationship of co-existence and final redemption*:

The defining characteristic of the last type of relation between Israel and the Church is that it affords a positive status to postbiblical Israel apart from belief in Christ. Because of their adherence to the Mosaic Law and tradition of Torah, the Jewish people remain God's covenant people. This validity exists alongside the theological status of the new community of Gentile Christ-believers. However, type five does not express any necessary conception of how this new community relates to biblical Israel or the status of Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ. This view emphasizes the holiness and prerogatives of postbiblical Israel as God's people but remains silent about the relation of Israel to the Gentile Church.<sup>112</sup>

The significant overlap between this type and Aquinas's views indicates that his thought in the Romans *lectura* is not supersessionist. As I explained in chapter one, Donaldson also points out two subsets of type five. Subset 5.1 is *Israel apart from the church as having some theological validity*.<sup>113</sup> Central to this subset is Paul's statement that "all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26)." Salvation is an end-time occurrence that includes "all Israel" separate and apart from Christ. Donaldson writes, "Because of this future salvation, the covenant people must have some continuing validity." Aquinas would not say that the salvation of the Jewish

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<sup>112</sup> There are also two subsets of type five. Subset 5.1 is "*Israel apart from the church as having some theological validity*." Central to this subset is Paul's statement that "all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26)." Salvation is an end-time occurrence that includes "all Israel" separate and apart from Christ. Because of this future salvation, the covenant people must have some continuing validity. Aquinas is closer to type 5.2 than 5.1 because he would not say that the salvation of the Jewish people could be "separate and apart from Christ." Moreover, Aquinas thinks the Jewish people are God's elect because of God's promises. This is most clear in his affirmation of the theological value of "outward" Judaism, or circumcision, and his insistence that it is of value after Christ, "Much in everyway!" Aquinas does not view the outward Jew as significant because God has predestined the Jewish people for salvation although this is significant. Aquinas actually comes closer to subset 5.2, which emphasizes Israel and Gentile church as co-existing peoples. Donaldson writes, "In subset 5.2, *Israel and the Gentile church are co-existing peoples, relating to God through parallel covenants*. The defining characteristic of this final subset, explains Donaldson, is the belief that both Israel and the Gentile Church enjoy valid relationship with God but through separate means: Israel through the covenant with Moses and the Gentile Church through the covenant with Christ." In the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas's view is similar to subset 5.2 because of his view that God wills that Israel and Church coexist in the world. He differs, however, because though he affirms the theological value of circumcision after Christ he does not say how exactly the observance of the ceremonial law is a spiritual benefit. Nevertheless, Donaldson's language of "valid relationship" is a bit vague and it would require a more constructive project to explain how the Jewish people's observance of the law after Christ can mediate grace. Aquinas could not agree with the idea that Gentiles and Jews were related through to God through "separate means." Donaldson, 24.

<sup>113</sup> Donaldson, 25.

people could be “separate and apart from Christ.” And, Aquinas thinks the Jewish people are God’s elect because of God’s promise to this particular people. This is most clear in his affirmation of the theological value of “outward” Judaism, or circumcision, despite unbelief in Christ. He insists that circumcision is of value after Christ: “Much in every way!”

Therefore, Aquinas does not share the views of subset 5.1, which claims Israel is significant because God has predestined these people for salvation. Though his views in the Romans *lectura* are not completely in agreement with subset 5.2, Aquinas actually comes closer to subset 5.2 than 5.1. In subset 5.2, *Israel and the Gentile church are co-existing peoples, relating to God through parallel covenants*.<sup>114</sup> The defining characteristic of this final subset, explains Donaldson, is “the belief that both Israel and the Gentile Church enjoy valid relationship with God but through separate means: Israel through the covenant with Moses and the Gentile Church through the covenant with Christ.” In the Romans *lectura*, Aquinas’s view is similar to subset 5.2 because of his view that God wills that Israel and Church coexist in the world. Nevertheless, Donaldson’s language of what might constitute a “valid relationship” with God is vague. And Aquinas’s view in the Romans *lectura* of how the ceremonial law is “a present spiritual benefit” to the Jewish people is equally vague.<sup>115</sup> It would require a more constructive project to say precisely how the Jewish people’s observance of the law after Christ constitutes a valid relationship in light of Aquinas’s teaching that the rites no longer mediate grace and remove original sin. Although Aquinas affirms the value of circumcision after Christ he does not say how the observance of the

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> *Ad Rom.* 9.1.744.

ceremonial law as a present spiritual benefit relates to the grace of Christ.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, Aquinas's view of circumcision indeed "affords a positive status to postbiblical Israel apart from belief in Christ" in the Romans *lectura*. And Aquinas's affirmation and defense of postbiblical Israel's positive status is in direct tension with his economic supersessionist views of Israel and the ceremonial law in the *Summa theologiae*, and in his commentaries on Hebrews, Galatians, as well as parts of Ephesians.

Nevertheless, I am aware that my study has only scratched the surface of Aquinas's thought on the law in his biblical commentaries. My study does not present a comprehensive view of Aquinas's thought on Israel and the ceremonial law in his biblical commentaries.<sup>117</sup> This study also does not provide an adequate account of the rich complexity and detail of each commentary considered nor does it attend to texts in Aquinas's thought that contain harsh punitive supersessionist views that seem to substantiate Jeremy Cohen's criticism of Aquinas.

There are also many questions that require further study. For example, what is Aquinas's view of the Jewish identity of Christ, especially considering he is one of the first Western theologians to articulate a theology of the life of Christ? If the ceremonial law is a present spiritual benefit to the Jews in the era after grace, how exactly does this "present spiritual benefit" relate to implicit or explicit grace when the observant Jew knowingly rejects Christ? Is there a way in which the ceremonial law continues to prefigure Christ even

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<sup>116</sup> Aquinas would also object to the idea that Gentiles and Jews were related to God through "separate means" since he understands Christ as the continuity between the old and new covenants.

<sup>117</sup> In addition to the commentaries, Aquinas's *Catena Aurea* is an invaluable resource for how he understands the Church Fathers' reading of the Gospels, which contain a great amount of material on the law and the Jewish people. How does Aquinas view the Church Fathers' teaching on the Jewish people in the *Catena Aurea*? Such a study would be an illuminating contribution to Aquinas's thought on topics crucial to Christian theology in the twenty-first century.

after the passion, as Marshall has suggested? Is there a way in which Jewish observance of the ceremonial law prefigures Christ's abundant outpouring of mercy at the advent of his eternal kingdom in the age to come? Can the observance of the ceremonial law by Jewish brothers and sisters and Jewish Christians prefigure the consummation of the ministry of Christ defined broadly, in a way that includes Christ's ascension and second coming? Can the observance of Jewish rites figure Christ, the circumcised deliverer who will come from Zion in the age to come?<sup>118</sup>

My hope is that this study has helped fill in the picture of Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law in the context of the Church in the era after grace as well as clarified in a more precise fashion how Aquinas's theology can be described as economically supersessionist. I also hope that my reading of Aquinas's view of the ceremonial law after the passion of Christ in his Pauline commentaries has provided post-supersessionist resources for Christian theology that compliment Marshall's and Boguslawski's findings. I would argue that their work, as well as mine, provides a way to respond to Wyschogrod's Jewish reading of Aquinas. Based on Aquinas's "fulfilled and upheld" view of the ceremonial law, I would argue that it is possible to answer "yes" to Wyschogrod's 1987 challenge to Thomistic studies as to whether or not the teaching on the *mortifera* character of the ceremonial law can be interpreted more benevolently.<sup>119</sup>

Indeed, Wyschogrod and Aquinas seem to me to share more common ground than has yet been realized. They both express a profound awareness and concern with a theological

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<sup>118</sup> *Ad Eph.* 2.2.89; *Ad Rom.* 11.4.918.

<sup>119</sup> Wyschogrod did not use the phrase "*mortifera* character of the ceremonial law" but sees the teaching on the deadliness of the ceremonies as undermining the relationship between the New and Old Testaments as well as Jews and Christians. Wyschogrod, "A Jewish Reading."

claim deeply significant for post-supersessionist theology: the claim that God keeps God's promises. Commenting upon what is now an oft-quoted Pauline phrase, "The gifts and call of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29), Aquinas says that: "it should be noted that 'gift' is taken here for a promise made according to God's foreknowledge or predestination, and 'call' is taken for election." "Because both are so certain," explains Aquinas, "whatever God promises is as good as given and whomever He elects is somehow already called."<sup>120</sup>

Here, Aquinas's rejection of the idea that God's promise of the special election of the Jewish people might be nullified is similar to the Jewish theologian Michael Wyschogrod's reply to Karl Barth in a conversation concerning the transcendent nature of God's promises:

On a sunny morning in August 1966 I visited theologian Karl Barth in his modest home on the Bruderholzallee in Basel. He had been told that I was a "Jewish Barthian," and this amused him to no end. We spoke about various things and at one point he said: "You Jews have the promise but not the fulfillment; we Christians have both the promise and fulfillment." Influenced by the banking atmosphere of Basel, I replied: "With human promises, one can have the promise but not the fulfillment. The one who promises can die, or change his mind, or not fulfill his promise for any number of reasons. But a promise of God is like money in the bank. If we have his promise, we have its fulfillment and if we do not have the fulfillment we do not have the promise." There was a period of silence and then he said, "You know, I never thought of it that way." I will never forget that meeting.<sup>121</sup>

In Aquinas's Romans *lectura*, God's promise concerning the advantage of circumcision is not viewed as a shadow that fades with the dawn of Christ's grace. Rather, even in the face of unbelief in Christ, God's promise to Israel is described as transcending human notions of promise. As Aquinas states in *Ad Romanos* 11.4.926, God's promise to the Jewish people is "as good as given."

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<sup>120</sup> *Ad Rom.* 11.4.926.

<sup>121</sup> Michael Wyschogrod, "Why Was and Is the Theology of Karl Barth of Interest to a Jewish Theologian?" in Michael Wyschogrod and R. Kendall Soulen, *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 211-24.



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