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**Migration and Spirituality: The Holiness of the
Church as A Reflection of the Holiness of the
Migrant Covenanted Israelites**

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Abstract

This article discusses the holiness of Christians in relation to that of the migrant Israelites during their wilderness journey from Sinai to the east side of Jordan in the plains of Moab. On the strength of typical stipulations such as those mentioned in Leviticus 11:45 and Deuteronomy 23:12-14, the paper links the expectations of such Pentateuchal laws of holiness with the kind of holy living expected of Christians. Using intertextual links, it shows that the demands of the New Testament (NT) for holiness in particular are clear reflections of what pertained in some of the regulations of the Old Testament (OT) laws. The article concludes with a call on present-day Bible believers who, like the OT believers in God, are also considered as migrants on earth, to strive for holiness throughout their earthly journey.

Keywords

YHWH, Israel, Priest, Migration, Holiness, Pentateuchal laws, Covenant, Old Testament, New Testament, Church.

Introduction

Migration is an old phenomenon usually associated with animals. It describes a locomotory activity usually recognized as ‘an adaptation to resources that fluctuate spatiotemporally either seasonally or less predictably.’¹ Often regarded as preemptive, it may be an individual-based behavior or a group (or population) type of movement that transcends taxon, form, and environment. Migration is a concept that encompasses both its mechanism and its function the phenomenon incorporates immigration and emigration. Dingle and Drake suggest four different but overlapping concepts of migration:

- (1) a type of locomotory activity that is notably persistent, undistracted, and straightened out;
- (2) a relocation of the animal that is on a much greater scale, and involves movement of much longer duration, than those arising in its normal daily activities;
- (3) a seasonal to-and-fro movement of populations between regions where conditions are alternately favorable or unfavorable (including one in which breeding occurs); and
- (4) movements leading to redistribution within a spatial extended population.²

This article agrees with the submission of Dingle and Drake that concept (1) describes a process, whereas the remaining three concepts describe outcomes. Moreover, while concepts (1) and (2) relate to individual animals, (3 and (4) concern populations.³ Migration has generated interest in many fields of study. Biblical studies show that the phenomenon is demonstrated by many individual characters and groups at different times and places. The discussion focuses on the journey of biblical Israel from Egypt through the wilderness to the Promised Land in Palestine which is a typical example of the process and some of the experiences involved in the phenomenon.

¹ H. Dingle, and V. A. Drake, “What Is Migration?” *BioScience*, 57/2: (2007), 113-121.

²Dingle, and Drake, “What Is Migration?” 113-121.

³Dingle, and Drake, “What Is Migration?” 113-121.

The external and religiously-driven migration of Israel is not only a result of “push and pull factors”⁴ where Egypt is less attractive because the Israelites had been enslaved and the Promised Land more attractive because of the freedom and prosperity they would enjoy inferred from the description of the land as ‘a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey’ (Exod 3:8⁵) respectively: but more importantly, in fulfilment of YHWH’s covenant with their forefathers (Gen. 15:12-21; 17:1-8; 26:3-5; 46:1-4; Exod 2:24).

Methodology

This is a comparative study with the objective of examining the concept of holiness and how the call for such a virtue in the body of believers in Jesus Christ, who constitute the Church, could be seen as a reflection of the holiness required of the migrant Israelites by some of the Pentateuchal laws, such as Leviticus 11:45, 19:2; 21:5-6, and particularly, Deuteronomy 23:12-14. Therefore, the focus of discussion will primarily be on Israel as a migrant covenant community, in their journey from Mount Sinai, where they stayed and YHWH entered into a covenant with them, to the east side of Moab, where Moses recapped the stipulations of the Sinaitic covenant with the surviving community.

Then, through intertextuality, the paper links the expectations of such OT laws of holiness with some of the NT Scriptures for holy living expected of Christians, who, like the OT believers in God, are also considered as migrants on earth, to show that the demands of the latter in particular are clear reflections of what pertained in some of the regulations of the former. The article concludes with a call on Christians to strive for holiness in their earthly journey.

Holiness as a Pivot to the YHWH – Israel Covenant

The word “covenant” (Heb. *berit*) is an agreement that binds two parties of equal or unequal status in an inseparable union such that one is identified with the other. The parties could be individuals or groups and could either be restricted to such entities or extended to

⁴Exploring migration causes: why people migrate. Online article: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/world/20200624STO81906/exploring-migration-causes-why-people-migrate> accessed on 2023-27-06.

⁵ Unless otherwise stated, all the texts in this article are from the NIV.

other people connected to one or both parties. Every covenant has stipulations that spell out the conditions for each party. There are usually blessings or benefits for fulfilling the covenant as well as punishment or suffering for failure, depending upon the parties involved. A typical example is the YHWH – Israel covenant, which was also an extension of that which YHWH had made with their forefathers. It was entered into at Sinai after the Israelites came out of Egypt and were migrating to the Promised Land, in fulfilment of God’s covenant promises.

Holiness or purity (used interchangeably in this paper) comes from the Hebrew noun *kodesh*, meaning “set apart.” It is one of the most difficult concepts to define or explain. This observation is supported by a comment by Regev that holiness ‘is the basic foundation of every religion and cult, so differences in definition and characterisation of the concept of holiness have important implications as far as religious ideology and perception is concerned.’⁶ Little wonder that scholars of the OT and the Pentateuchal laws in particular continue to discuss the concept of holiness in the hope of finding a common ground for its definition and interpretation of its related laws.

Holiness was pivotal to the YHWH – Israel Covenant. YHWH became their Holy God and Israel was to become a holy people of God, and as stated in Leviticus 20:26: ‘You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy...’ In Deuteronomy 23:12-14, holiness was tied up to God’s presence with the people and was a determining factor of their victories over their enemies. Thus, holiness is regarded as a fundamental virtue in the relation between the migrant Israel community and YHWH, their God.

Entities identified with the definition of Holiness in the YHWH-Israel Covenant

Whereas some regard holiness as a primary nature of God, the subject is better discussed against the backdrop of other entities that relate with Him. According to Domeris, holiness should not be seen only as a preserve of the deity, but certain personalities are empowered to function on behalf of the deity. Such functionaries

⁶ E. Regev, “Priestly dynamic holiness and Deuteronomic static holiness.” *Vetus Testamentum*, 51/2: (2001), 243-261. Online article: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1585253>, accessed on 2011-23-02; cf. D. L. Christensen, *Word Biblical Commentary: Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*, vol 6B. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 157.

become 'the holy ones.'⁷ The *Priestly writings* are identified by Wright as materials in the Torah that explicitly tackle holiness. He notes that the Priestly Torah defines holiness as a state of being in objects, places, and times, that is commensurate with God's holiness.⁸ Thus, holiness in connection with the YHWH-Israel covenant, can be defined with respect to priests, Levites, the firstborn, all Israel, temple materials, geographical spaces/places, special days, and the like. In the subsequent sections, attention has been devoted to some of the fundamental entities considered holy in the YHWH-Israel covenant relationship in the OT.

Holiness is the Nature of YHWH

Wright notes that both the Priestly Torah and the Holiness School identify holiness with God.⁹ Holiness is not to be considered as just 'one of the essential and identifiable attributes of God'¹⁰ but also His 'quintessential nature.'¹¹ Indeed, God, according to Hartley 'is the source and the standard of its measure.'¹² In other words, He is both the model and standard for which all holiness is defined. It is so important an attribute that God himself had to iterate it to the people: 'You shall be holy for I the LORD your God am holy' (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26). Thus, God was straightforward with His people about His very self: 'I am holy.' For Wright, 'God affirms God's holiness'¹³ (cf. Lev 10:3; 22:32; cf. Exod 29:43). Ryrie also notes:

God's holiness is a purity of being and nature as well as will and act...not only that He is separate from all that is unclean and evil but also that He is positively pure and thus distinct from all others...holiness of God means that sinners have to be separated from

⁷ W. R. Domeris "The office of the Holy One." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 35: (1986), 35-38; cf. F. F. Bruce, *New International Biblical Commentary*, Based on the NIV. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), 59.

⁸ D. P. Wright, "Holiness in Leviticus and beyond: differing perspective." *Interpretation* 53: (1999), 355-364; cf. Regev, "Priestly dynamic holiness and Deuteronomic static holiness," 246.

⁹ Wright, "Holiness in Leviticus and beyond" 1999, 353-364.

¹⁰ M. F. Unger, *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, rev and updated version. (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1988), 581.

¹¹ Domeris, "The office of the Holy One." 35-38.

¹² cf. J. E. Hartley, *Word Biblical Commentary: Leviticus*, vol 4. (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1992), IVII.

¹³ Wright, *Holiness in Leviticus and beyond*, 353-54.

Him unless a way can be found to constitute them holy.¹⁴

Therefore, YHWH being *holy*, becomes a requirement for anyone who enters into a covenant relationship with Him. This also means that holiness does not end with God; for His presence requires that everything reflects His holy nature, and whoever comes to Him must be holy.

Holiness of the Priests and all of Israel

Wright argues that the priests have a level of holiness that is different from the rest of the people and that the priestly consecration rite as a whole sanctifies them, the High Priest inclusive. He maintains that the Levites must be holy since they are substitutes for the Israelite firstborns (Num 3:11-13, 44-51). The holiness of the priest in particular which has been appreciably examined by Asumang and Domeris¹⁵ cannot be overlooked.

Biblical Israel was a nation that was set apart by God for himself to be like Him in holiness (Lev 20:26). Therefore, He was the model for which Israel was to strive for holiness. Hence, the Israelites' holiness was analogous to the deity: 'You shall be holy for I the LORD your God am holy' (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26). This indicates that holiness is not a pre-existing state but a state that one has to attain. Though attainment and maintenance of holiness is by observing the laws and could also be attained ritually or by contact with something holy (Exod 29:37; Lev 6:27), God is the ultimate source of the holiness of His people (Exod 31:13; Lev 20:8; 22:32).

Wright observes that Israel's holiness in Deuteronomy is based on their separation from other nations. He argues that Israel's separation from other nations does not bestow holiness on them; 'it only sets the stage for consequent holiness'¹⁶ (Lev 20:24-

¹⁴ C. C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 42-43.

¹⁵A. Asumang and W. R. Domeris, "Ministering in the Tabernacle: Spatiality and the Christology of Hebrews." *Conspectus* 1: (2006), 1-26.; cf. J. Moskala, "Categorization and Evaluation of Different Kinds of Interpretation of the Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals in Leviticus II." *Adventist Theological Society* 25-26: (2000), 1-41; cf. Unger, *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 582; cf. H. Adler "Sanitation as taught by the Mosaic Law." A paper read before the Church of England Sanitary Association (1893), 6-7. Online article: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/60240182>, accessed on 2012-08-01.

¹⁶ D. P. Wright, *The disposal of impurity. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series*, (Atlanta Scholars, 1987), 101.

26). Further, he points out that the people's holiness entails distinguishing entities that are acceptable by the covenant from the unacceptable. Thus, 'God and His people come into dialectical interplay: when the people live a life in accordance with divine holiness, they are, in turn, sanctified by God.'

Holiness of the Camp environment

A significant part of our discussion is the idea that God dwells among the people in the migrant camp (Exod 25:8; 29:45-46; Num 16:3; 35:34; cf. Lev 15:31; 26:11). This, for this article, relates to consecration or otherwise of the place, which is both the sanctuary and the land because of the divine presence. This observation is corroborated by Wright's argument that the sanctuary is holy, meaning that, all sin/impurity must be kept out of it to avoid pollution (cf. Lev 12:4). Wells compares how the idea of holiness occurs in each book of the Torah,¹⁷ thus provides an excellent counterpoint to Wright. Yet, some of his comments are not very different from the latter's position on Israel's holiness. One of such relates to their election where Wells notes how the essence of Israel's election at Sinai is a call by God on them to be holy. He argues that this focuses 'on faithful adherence to God's covenant laws in all aspects of worship and life.'

The Call to Holiness by YHWH

Though holiness is explained by many scholars such as Regev, Domeris, Wright, Wells, and Sprinkle, as the central focus for the enactment of the laws, they nevertheless present different shades of opinions in their reason for such injunctions. Deuteronomy 23:12-14 is one passage that is significant in its demand for holiness, a position symbolically interpreted by Sprinkle to mean a separation of Israel from the Gentiles. For him, Israel was a "holy nation" (Exod 19:6) set apart from all others. He categorizes the priests as "holy" and thus separated from other Israelites, and that the Israelites as a whole were also "clean" and separated from non-Israelites, who were "unclean."¹⁸ His view on "holiness as separation" finds support from other scholars and is of interest to

¹⁷J. B. Wells, *God's Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology*. (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 2000), 7.

¹⁸J. M. Sprinkle, "The rationale of the Laws of clean..." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43/4: (2000), 637-657; cf. J. H. C. Wright, *The Mission of God: unlocking the Bible's grand narrative*. (Norton Street, England: IVP, 2011), 508.

this study since it calls for a similar sense of purity. Sprinkle further argues that the laws inculcated into Israel the concept of “holiness,” creating in the people a sense of identity as a “separated” nation.¹⁹

Holiness of God in contrast to the uncleanness of Humanity

Pertinent to Sprinkle and of relevance to this paper, is the concept of the holiness of God being in contrast to the uncleanness of humanity. It is as a result of the unclean nature of humans that specific instructions of the Torah (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; Deut 23:12-14) were given so that people could relate more closely to the Holy God. Defending his position on the link between ritual impurity and deviations of morality, Sprinkle observes that the use of uncleanness in a metaphorical sense for deviations of morality hints at a symbolic connection.²⁰ He mentions for example, certain ritual practices in the Torah on one side and moral practices on the other, to show such a symbolic link between ritual and moral uncleanness. He argues that everyone by nature inevitably contracts uncleanness from time to time and that by being part of this sin-cursed fallen world, humanity is “unclean” and thus ineligible to approach God. While admitting a strong analogy between “uncleanness” and “sin,” he maintains that just as physical uncleanness can come from within and from without in an analogous way, sin comes both from perverse human nature within and temptations without. So, based on the laws of purity in Leviticus 11-15, for example, man in contrast to God, is contaminated and corrupt.

Holiness is dealing with Pollution

Mary Douglas explains holiness from physical and social perspectives. Worthy of note is her comment on the effect of “pollution” on holiness. She sees pollution as a danger that is not likely to occur unless the lines of structure, cosmic or social are clearly defined. According to her, the whole repertoire of ideas concerning pollution and purification is used to mark the gravity of the event and the power of ritual to remake a person.²¹ For

¹⁹ Sprinkle, “The rationale of the Laws of clean...” 651.

²⁰ Sprinkle, “The rationale of the Laws of clean...” 651; cf. Hartley, *Word Biblical Commentary: Leviticus* (vol 4), IVIII.

²¹ M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo*. (New York: Routledge, 1966), 1-2; cf. C. Owiredu “Blood and Life in the Old Testament” (A Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Durham), 2005), 18;

Douglas: 'A polluting person is always in the wrong...'²² In support of the significance of Douglas' contribution to the awareness of the effect of pollution on man, Cothey comments: 'Douglas highlighted the positive social functions that purity concepts can fulfil and described the diverse forms in different societies that such purity concepts can take.'²³

Holiness is ritual, moral, and functional

Domeris comments on the functional nature of God in relation to other functionaries. He observes that holiness is not just in ritual (or cultic) and moral (or ethical) sense but as a functional office that certain individuals or groups are called to occupy. He quotes Hewett's idea of becoming holy: '[An object] is not holy and therefore used by Yahweh; it is used or possessed by Yahweh and therefore holy.'²⁴ In this wise, the reference point for holiness is God, and that He as the "Holy One" decides who also becomes holy. Furthermore, Domeris argues:

Deep within the idea of holiness, there is a sense of numinous power which may be transferred to the bearer. This idea sees holiness as a tangible positive force associated with God, very much like electricity. At one level, this power equips the bearer to live a life of ethical and ritual purity, but at another level, this power generates an electrical tension which comes to the fore whenever the holy one encounters the realm of the profane'. This is to say, something is holy when the "Holy One" interacts with it; it is profane when He despises it.²⁵

In other words, because only Yahweh is intrinsically holy, any person or thing is holy only as it stands in relationship to him and that the ultimate source of all holiness is God, 'the Holy One of

cf. R. S. Kawashima, "The Jubilee year and the return of cosmic purity." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65: (2003), 372.

²² Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 1966, 12.

²³ A. Cothey, Ethics and Holiness in the Theology of Leviticus. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30/2: (2005), 131-151. Online article: <http://JSOT.sagepub.com>, accessed on 2011-18-03.

²⁴ Domeris, "The office of the Holy One." 35-38; cf. Bruce, *New International Biblical Commentary*, 59.

²⁵ Domeris, "The office of the Holy One." 35.

Israel...'²⁶ Alexander and Rosner's position also identifies with Domeris. They consider holiness as pre-eminently a characteristic of God himself, and that 'the terminology is used to signify that God is wholly other, distinct and separate from everything that he has made, and different from the gods of human imagination.'²⁷

Domeris notes that 'the functional aspect of holiness is connected to the title, "the holy one" which underscores the idea of 'an authorised *representative or agent*' (his emphasis) of the realm of the holy and continues that such an agent is 'one chosen by Yahweh for a particular task, which also involves a certain life style.'²⁸

Theological significance of Holiness to Migrant Israel

The laws on holiness, according to Radmacher et al, were meant to dictate to Israel exactly how YHWH wanted them to live.²⁹ Similarly, Bruce believes that the Law was not intended as a legislative code to cover all possible contingencies but to serve as a guide to the life expected from a "holy" people.³⁰ This is a view that Gaebelien shares. He notes that Israel's national existence as the people of God - external, physical, and material means - had spiritual significance and the laws were used to teach lessons on the nature of their relationship to YHWH and the nature of the holiness that was required of them.³¹ Along the same line, Asumang and Domeris argue that the laws on holiness were designed to preserve the separation of God's people from the other nations and that they were meant to maintain their continued relationship with God, and to prepare them for their inheritance of the Promise Land.³²

Narrowing down on Deuteronomy, Wright notes that it considers the people holy from the beginning, 'prior to any act of

²⁶ Domeris, "The office of the Holy One." 35; cf. P. S. Minear, "Holy People, Holy Land, Holy City: The Genesis and Genius of Christian Attitudes." *Interpretation* (n.d.), 18-31.

²⁷ T. D. Alexander and S. B. Rosner, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 544.

²⁸ Domeris, "The office of the Holy One." 36-38.

²⁹ E. D. Radmacher, R. B. Allen and H. H. Wayne (eds), *The Nelson Study Bible* (NKJV). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 312.

³⁰ Bruce, *New International Biblical Commentary*, 62-78.

³¹ F. E. Gaebelien, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, with NIV: *Deuteronomy - 2 Samuel*, vol 3. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 140; cf. J. G. McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy*. (Trowbridge, Wiltshire; Great Britain: Redwood Burn Ltd, 1986), 18.

³² Asumang and Domeris, "Ministering in the Tabernacle..." 22.

obedience, on account of their election by YHWH³³ (Deut 7:6; 14:2, 21). Specifically, Deuteronomy 23:12-14 does not only connect Israel to the Holy God, but also strengthens their covenant relationship with Him, and maintains their status as a holy covenanted people. Similarly, Radmacher et al note that Israel's distinctive characteristic in the ancient world was underpinned by the fact that they were set apart for God's holy purposes which demanded their absolute allegiance to Him. As a result, they were supposed to be distinct from other nations because He, the God of Israel, is distinct.³⁴

It is not surprising that while the nations that surrounded Israel practiced polytheistic forms of worship, worshipping their gods at many different places, Israel was set apart from other nations to be holy to, YHWH, the Holy God (Lev 20:26) and required to worship the One God at one place which He would choose. So, God asked the chosen people also to be different such that any defect in them was considered unacceptable to Him. Whether at the camp of the whole covenant community with the tabernacle or at the camp of the military, the Holy God was still with His people so they were supposed to observe His presence and keep themselves pure.

Socio-Cultural significance of Holiness to Migrant Israel

Besides theological considerations of the ritual practices associated with the laws, the basis for the directives on holiness in the Torah could be the ethical (or moral) implications for the people. That is, the laws of holiness are meant to promote ethical behaviour since they cultivated some virtues in the people. Indeed, 'Theology and ethics' according to Wright 'are inseparable in the Bible.'³⁵ If the popular maxim: 'Cleanliness is next to godliness'³⁶ is of value, then the strict requirement for the migrant community to maintain cleanliness of their camp, was part of the call to holiness. Though it is a call for separating oneself ritually, the practice was to make

³³ Wright, "Categorization and Evaluation of..." 353; cf. Regev, "Priestly dynamic holiness..." 244-246.

³⁴ Radmacher et al, *The Nelson Study Bible*, p. 312.

³⁵ J. H. C. Wright, *Old Testament ethics for the people of God*, a fully rev updated and integrated ed of *Living as the people of God and walking in the ways of the Lord*. (Leicester, England: IVP, 2004), 17.; cf. Sprinkle, "The rationale of the Laws of clean..." 654-55.

³⁶ For more details, refer Adler "Sanitation as taught by the Mosaic Law," 4.

meaningful the belief that life is lived well when one is conscious of the things that make the person chaste.

Douglas sees holiness as the attribute of the Godhead, who is also the source of all blessings.³⁷ Not only is God the source but also the connection between holiness and blessings. It is the blessing of God that would make it possible for the land to be habitable. In her opinion, God's work through the blessing is essentially to create order, through which humanity can prosper. Thus, any impurity which will cause a withdrawal of God also means the withdrawal of blessing. Douglas regards blessing and success as virtues that 'required a person to be whole in body, whole-hearted and trailing no uncompleted schemes,' arguing that if holiness means separateness, then holiness equally represents wholeness and completeness in a social context.³⁸ For her, 'morality does not conflict with holiness.' In other words, the law of holiness places a demand for behaviours that lead to it. Therefore, defilement, she argues, is never an isolated event because it cannot occur except there is a deliberate action. Douglas' connection between holiness and "wholeness," "physical perfection," and "completeness" is also supported by Sprinkle.³⁹

Transition from OT to NT: The Post-Sinai migrant Israel-Church intertextual link

One key avenue for how the NT interpreted the OT is through the literary theories of intertextuality. This theory sheds considerable light on the conceptual and theological relationship, which is our interest in the current discussion. It examines how one group of texts is, by way of intra-biblical exegesis, used in another group; and here it shows the fulfilment of an OT promise in an NT event. Such links are established by 'inner-biblical interpretation,'⁴⁰ or what Beale prefers to designate as 'inner-biblical exegesis or inner-biblical allusions.'⁴¹ The use of intertextual links here confirms the

³⁷ M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concept of pollution and taboo*. (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003), 2; cf. Moskala, "Categorization and Evaluation of..." 21-24; M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concept of pollution and taboo*. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 49-50.

³⁸ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 2002, 41-53.

³⁹ Sprinkle, "The rationale of the Laws of clean..." 649-50.

⁴⁰ C. Edenburg, "Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Questions of Readership: Some Preliminary observations." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 35/2: (2010), 131-148.

⁴¹ K. G. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2012), 31-40; cf. Brown, *Introducing*

continuity between the OT and the NT.⁴² It is generally observed that the OT text is intertextually connected to the NT based on interplays of parallels, allusion, typologies, and inner biblical interpretation.

Beginning with a discussion on the OT in general and subsequently and specifically the laws, this section looks at the bond between these areas and the NT before the discussion narrows down to application to NT believers through intertextual links. The OT has been described as ‘an inspired document that finds dynamic unity and fulfilment in the New Testament.’⁴³ Along this line, Kudadjie and Aboagye-Mensah argue that ‘the NT fulfils and enriches the OT teachings.’⁴⁴ Kaiser Jr.,⁴⁵ in agreement, states: ‘We are obligated to search the “whole counsel of God,” from Genesis to Revelation’. Hence, the proposal that ‘both testaments should be read together to obtain a complete understanding,’⁴⁶ is essential for the current discussion.

Another important area of exploration for this paper is the establishment of the post-Sinai migrant Israel-Church relationship. This is significant to our argument that Deuteronomy 23:12-14 and other passages on holiness in the Torah, especially Leviticus, which were given to the migrant covenant community of Israel could be regarded as a template for the call of the migrant church of the NT to holiness. It is in this vein also that Asumang and Domeris used the “Theology of the Tabernacle” to explain the link between the Exodus generation and the congregation addressed in the NT book of Hebrews.⁴⁷

Though God’s new covenant was to be established ‘with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah’ (Jer 31:31), the NT applies such a covenant to Christ and His Church when He inaugurated it (2Cor 3:7-16). By His death and resurrection, Jesus

Biblical Hermeneutics, 225-26; W. Randolph Tate, *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: an essential guide to methods, terms, and concepts*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 219.

⁴² For more details, refer K. J. Brown. *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: Scripture as Communication*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 228.

⁴³ D. T. Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2004), 4.

⁴⁴ J. N. Kudadjie and R. K. Aboagye-Mensah, *Christian Social Ethics*. (Accra, Ghana: Asempa Publishers, 1992), 6.

⁴⁵ W. C. Kaiser Jr. *The Old Testament Documents: Are they Reliable & Relevant?* (USA: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 219-222.

⁴⁶ Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*, 4.

⁴⁷ Asumang and Domeris, “Ministering in the Tabernacle...” 22.

became 'Israel's Messiah, as well as the Saviour of the nations.'⁴⁸ Indeed, Jesus declared the Gentiles "clean" (Mark 7:14-23) before His death and they were incorporated into the Church after Pentecost. No wonder that some of the Jewish laws that created a "separation" between them and the Gentiles had to be addressed (Acts 15:1-31), after the Church was inaugurated.

In support of the view of some scholars that 'the Church did begin in the OT,'⁴⁹ most likely on the basis of Israel being referred to as 'the church in the wilderness' (Acts 7:37-38, KJV), the Church somehow, 'inherited all of Israel's promises, prophecies and precepts as it began on the Day of Pentecost.'⁵⁰ Other proponents, for example, Walvoord and Zuck used Galatians 6:16 to support their contention that Israel was the church in the OT.⁵¹ It is reasonable to deduce that the reference to Israel in Galatians 6:16 is to God's covenanted people in Christ, which is the Church, just as the post-Sinai migrant Israel was God's covenanted people. That is, after the mediatorial work of Christ was applied to 'all flesh' or 'everyone who calls on the name of the LORD', i.e., Israel of the OT and then all other people (Joel 2:28-32; cf. Acts 2:16-21), the Church was born.

To a large extent then, this work agrees with Christian reconstructionists like Gundry that the Church is not the same as Israel but 'another phase in the history of God's people,'⁵² though the two bodies are linked intertextually. What Scripture says of Israel 'might be applied to the Church'⁵³, especially in terms of history and theology. For instance, Luke is understood by Wright as bringing the whole OT story of Israel to its climax and destination in the Church.⁵⁴ Thus, God's purpose for creating Israel to be the blessing of all nations 'now becomes a reality through the mission of the Church,'⁵⁵ and He is fulfilling the remaining promises to Israel through the church.

⁴⁸ W. J. Hendryx, "Progressive Covenantalism." (2012), ¶3, §3. Online article: <http://triablogue.blogspot.com/2012/09/progressive-covenantalism.html>, accessed on 2014-14-03.

⁴⁹N. Woodbridge, "A Biblical critique of the twofold theory of dispensationalism: the distinction between Israel and the Church." *Conspectus*, 2: (2006), 92.

⁵⁰ For more details, refer Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*, 6.

⁵¹ F. J. Walvoord and B. R. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. (Colorado: Victor. 1984), 611.

⁵² S. N. Gundry (ed), *Five views on Law and Gospel*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996) 104-5, 151; cf. Hendryx, "Progressive Covenantalism," ¶3, §2.

⁵³ For more details, refer Kudadjie and Aboagye-Mensah, *Christian Social Ethics*. 6.

⁵⁴ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 2011, 514.

⁵⁵ Woodbridge "A Biblical critique..." 92; cf. Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*, 4-6; Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 322.

How the Holiness of Migrant Israel is intertextually linked to the Holiness of the Church

The Church is a body of believers in Jesus who the Lord himself described as being in this world but not of this world (John 15:19; 17:14 and 16). So, they are not only sojourners in the world (1Pet 1:17, KJV) but are pilgrims (1Pet 2:11, KJV) who are migrating to a place regarded as better, in the hope of going to be with the Lord eternally (John 14:1-3, 17:14; Luke 24:51).

There are enough parallels and typologies between the post-Sinai Israelite community in the Torah and the body of Christians, i.e., the Church. The similarity between the theology of the OT camp of the wilderness migrant community and the NT temple of Jerusalem is noted by Asumang.⁵⁶ Moreover, Asumang and Domeris' discussion of 'the migrant camp in the Torah as a uniting theme for the Epistle to the Hebrews'⁵⁷ shows the parallel between Israel as a migrant community in the OT and the Church as a migrant community in the NT. The argument by Johnsson that the Christians addressed in the book of Hebrews should be seen as a 'cultic community on the move'⁵⁸ clearly supports the foregone observations. This means the NT Jerusalem in Hebrews reflects the camp of the OT (Lev 24:23; Num 15:35; 19:3; 31:12; Deut 24:12-14) in the spiritual sense in that both represent a place of holy living.

Similarly, there are passages which lend support to the argument that the theological and moral principles of holiness in the Torah compare to that in the NT, though not in the literal sense. Particularly, the call to Christians to pursue holiness 'without which no one can see God' (Heb 12:14) can be intertextually linked to the command by God for the Israelites to be holy (Lev 11:44-45; cf. Lev 10:3); thus, establishing an indirect link between Christians (the Church) and the OT migrants. Additionally, Liu identifies some of the OT passages on holiness which are indirectly applied by Paul in some NT passages. He provides insights into Paul's letters to the Corinthians based on the socio-historical backgrounds of the book. Some of his observations focus on Paul's holiness

⁵⁶ A. Asumang, "The Tabernacle as a Heuristic Device in the interpretation of the Christology of The Epistle to the Hebrews" (A Thesis submitted to the South African Theological Seminary in candidacy for the degree of Master of Theology). *Conspectus*, (2005), 29.

⁵⁷ A. Asumang and W. R. Domeris, "The migrant camp of the people of God: a uniting theme for the Epistle to the Hebrews." *Conspectus*, (2007), 1-33.

⁵⁸ W. G. Johnsson, "The pilgrimage motif in the Book of Hebrews." *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 97: (1978), 249; cf. Asumang, "The Tabernacle as a Heuristic Device..." 128.

metaphor in passages such as 1 Corinthians 3, 5, 6, 7, and especially 2 Corinthians 6. For him, the contexts of this text and other similar ones provide ample evidence of holiness for the Church at Corinth. Liu establishes that holiness conveys the idea that 'the authentic worshipping community is the dwelling place of the Spirit of God.'⁵⁹

Specifically, Liu shows a high degree of relationship that exists between the holiness requirements of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 and that of Deuteronomy 23:12-14, though there is no direct proof that Paul had the OT text in mind. Along the same tangent, Briley posits that Paul's call for a separation in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is 'in the language of the OT ritual purity laws.'⁶⁰ These observations are irrespective of the debate on whether or not 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is non-Pauline and interpolation, as some scholars have argued.⁶¹ In 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, the Christian community that constitutes the Church is addressed as a unit/camp situation and not as single individuals. By referring to the Christians as the temple of the living God (2Cor 6:16), Hafemann argues that Paul was equating them as a unit to the OT temple situation, so that the church, 'both in regard to its individual members (1Cor 6:19) and in its life together corporately (1Cor 3:16-17; cf. 6:19), is now the place of God's presence in the world.'⁶²

Once the OT temple requirements and lifestyle are observed to have developed from the wilderness camp setting which began in the Pentateuch, envisioning Christians as a temple could be an allusion that travels back to the Israelites of the Pentateuchal context. Similarly, Paul's message in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 could be explained from the context of the wilderness migrant camp where the community life of the recipients of the message of Deuteronomy 23:12-14, for example, was in focus. Since the wilderness was a 'location where God is encountered, where personal transformation takes place and where community is formed,'⁶³ the life of Christians is also expected to manifest in a transformed community living. Like the migrant camp where

⁵⁹Y. Liu, "Preview of 'Purity in 1-2Corinthians in the Context of the Jewish and Greco-Roman World.'" *Trinity Journal* 33/2: (Fall 2012), 289.

⁶⁰T. Briley, "The Old Testament 'Sin Offering' and Christ's Atonement." *Stone-Campbell Journal*, 3: (Spring 2000):89-101.

⁶¹S. J. Hafemann, *2Corinthians: The NIV Application Commentary from biblical text...to contemporary life*: (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 278-282; cf. P. R. Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: 2Corinthians*, vol 40. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986), 191-204.

⁶²Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 278-282.

⁶³T. Dozeman 1998:43. The wilderness and salvation history in the Hagar story. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117:23-43.

impurity must be avoided, Paul was concerned with the kind of practices that defile the purity of God's people and must be avoided.⁶⁴

Just as the OT migrant covenant community addressed in Deuteronomy 23:12-14, the holiness required by 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is the removal of anything unclean from amongst believers, because 'the LORD is in their midst.' Unlike the OT community, however, the defilement of the Christian community is in connection with idolatrous practices of the Greco-Roman world (2 Cor 6:14-16). As Paul instructed in 1 Corinthians 5, ensuring purity is to not associate with any defiled entity (vs. 9), but to 'get rid' (vs. 7), or to 'expel' anything evil (vs. 12) from the "camp" of believers, a position that Liu⁶⁵ identifies with.

Again, the use of 'not being unequally yoked' (2Cor 6:14) is first expressed in Deuteronomy 22:10 and is one of the links of the text to the holiness tradition of the Torah. Besides, the messages of Isaiah seem to be recalled by Paul, an observation also made by Liu.⁶⁶ To live holy lives, Christians are exhorted: 'Touch no unclean thing and I will receive you' (2Cor 6:17), which is a call for holiness traced to Isaiah 52:11. Domeris mentions Paul's description of Christians as "holy ones" (*hoi hagioi*) in the world (1 Cor 1:2) serving on behalf of YHWH.⁶⁷ Moreover, just as migrant Israelites by the covenant were to serve as priests and had to remain holy (Exod 19:6), Paul, according to Hafemann, 'views the Corinthians as priests fulfilling Israel's role.'⁶⁸ Paul's call for holiness (2Cor 6:18) is also on the basis of God's promises (2Cor 7:1), as similarly indicated in Deuteronomy 23:12-14. Once again, Hafemann notes that Paul's call to such a life is grounded 'in the present exercise of God's sovereignty to deliver and protect his people [Deut 23:14] as their father'⁶⁹ (2 Cor 6:18). In other words, a life of holiness needed to be maintained by the Church community to guarantee God's presence amongst them.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 292, 295.

⁶⁵ Y. Liu, *Temple Purity in 1-2Corinthians*. (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 145.

⁶⁶ Liu, *Temple Purity in 1-2Corinthians*, 214.

⁶⁷ Domeris, "The office of the Holy One." 37.

⁶⁸ Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 292, 295; cf. Sprinkle, "The rationale of the Laws of clean..." 642; S. Madeleine and M. J. Lane, *Harper's Encyclopedia of Bible Life*. (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1978), 270-271.

⁶⁹ Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 285-286.

⁷⁰ Anonymous, "Review of Temple Purity in 1-2Corinthians by Yulin Liu." (2014), §1. Online article: <http://www.mohr.de/en/theology/subject-areas/all-books/buch/temple-purity-in-1-2-corinthians.html>, accessed on 2014-09-08.

It is also worthy of note that the use of “temple” in 2 Corinthians 6:16 which underscores God’s dwelling among His people (the Church) emphasises the body of believers as a place for God’s presence in the world. It underlines the link between 2Corinthians 6:14-7:1 and Deuteronomy 23:12-14 where the phrase, ‘I will live with them and walk among them’ is considered to be parallel to ‘the LORD your God moves about in your camp’ respectively. This observation finds support in the commentary of Martin that: ‘The people of God are the temple of God, for he dwells in their midst and walks among them.’⁷¹ Keener also strikes this connection when he observes concerning “God will *live* with His people” (Gk. *skenoo*) in the NT that it was ‘a frequent Jewish hope that ultimately points back to a promise of God’s covenant for Israel’⁷² (Exod 25:8; Lev 26:12; Ezek 37:27; Zech 2:10-11), and connected to the temple (Ezek 43:7, 9).

What completes the description of the NT believers as a migrant community is their link to the saints of the Eschatological age. Liu is of the view that the kind of community living as indicated by Paul concerning the Corinthians ‘serves as a good testimony of unity and holiness and has an eschatological identity by representing the new people of the age to come.’⁷³ He concludes that ‘by preserving its purity, the community leads an ongoing sanctified life in the worship and service of God toward its consummation.’ Hafemann connects 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 with the past, present and the future by his argument that the passage makes Christians of today ‘to recover the covenant and eschatological perspective of God’s plan.’⁷⁴ Just as obedience to the laws on holiness (Deut 23:12-14) was the underlying factor to the fulfilment of the promises of YHWH to the OT migrants, the promises of 2Corinthians 6:14-7:1 are indeed for the future ‘but conditioned on holiness and driven by obedience.’⁷⁵

⁷¹ Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 204.

⁷² C. S. Keener, *Revelation: The NIV Application Commentary: from biblical text...to contemporary life*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 487.

⁷³ Liu, “Preview of ‘Purity in 1-2Corinthians...’” 289.

⁷⁴ Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 293.

⁷⁵ Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 293.

Implications of the Holiness required of Migrant Israel for the Church

In agreement with Smith,⁷⁶ an exegetical work which does not address any current issues of significance can be described as incomplete. Thus, in our effort to address how the call for holiness of the church reflects the holiness required of the migrant covenant community of Israel, it is needful to consider the church not only as a body of believers in the NT period but including the contemporary time and even beyond into the Eschatological Age.⁷⁷ This is irrespective of the fact that the practical application of some disciplines of life in the OT occurred in specific contexts that are far removed from our contemporary context.⁷⁸ The objective is to show how the holiness of the migrating Church reflects that of migrant Israel.

There is no doubt about the current argument of some scholars (theonomists) that the OT Laws have relevance for Christians,⁷⁹ since they metaphorically symbolised moral purity which, according to Sprinkle, 'is still a Christian idea.'⁸⁰ Indeed, the moral undergirding of the laws has continuing importance, if not for everybody, at least, for the Church,⁸¹ just as Douglas also argues that 'morality does not conflict with holiness.'⁸² There exists enough impact of some OT laws in the study of ethics from both non-Christian and Christian perspectives with implications for other areas of life.⁸³ The laws, the gospels, and all the underpinnings of the epistles 'express God's moral will within the framework of the covenant of redemption' since by special and natural revelations, 'God's casuistic expectations, anchored in his

⁷⁶ K. G. Smith, "How to do an exegetical study." *Conspectus*, 10: (2010), 6.

⁷⁷ For more details, refer W. E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. (London: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 40, 307; H. J. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, rev ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 487-88.

⁷⁸ Bruce, *New International Biblical Commentary*, 7.

⁷⁹ For more details, refer Gundry (ed), *Five views on Law and Gospel*, 93-143.

⁸⁰ Sprinkle, "The rationale of the Laws of clean..." 654-656.

⁸¹ For more details, refer Wright, *The Mission of God*, 2011, 508.

⁸² Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 2002:53; cf. J. Klawans, "Ritual purity, moral purity, and sacrifice" in Jacob Milgrom's *Leviticus. Religious Studies Review*, 29: (January 2003), 19-28; Moskala, "Categorization and Evaluation of..." 1-41.

⁸³ cf. Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*, 6; S. V. Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1991), 139.

own holy character, are revealed to all human beings⁸⁴, as Paul argued in Romans 1:18-2:1.

While Christians are guided by the fact that they are not bound by the ceremonial requirements of the laws they should accept that their moral obligations are still active. Especially, since the OT migrant camp has been argued as parallel to the “spiritual Jerusalem” of the NT, Christians, as “holy ones,” are equally enjoined to a life of moral purity that parallels that of the OT laws. Since Paul’s call for holiness in 2Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is ‘in the language of the OT ritual purity laws’⁸⁵ the call to a holy living in the OT is also applicable to the Church. Indeed, just as Paul instructed the NT believers (1Cor 5) to live holy lives by dissociating themselves from any defilement (vs. 9), and getting rid of (vs. 7) or expelling anything evil (vs. 12) from among them, even so the present migrant community of believers should remain holy.

The migrant Israelites were called to reveal YHWH to their world⁸⁶ for which some of the laws had to address specific issues of their lives, particularly, holiness. Similarly, as a migrant community of believers (1Cor 3:16-17; cf. 2Cor 6:14-7:1), regardless of the period and place, the requirements for holiness specify the type of behaviour that ‘always is the duty of God’s people.’⁸⁷ Not only the believers at Corinth but Christians everywhere anytime are called to a life of holiness ‘so that it could be sanctified as the dwelling place of God.’⁸⁸ Just as migrant Israel by virtue of their covenant with YHWH was to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod 19:5-6) in the place where He was leading them, the Church is not only a kingdom of priest but also addressed as a holy nation (1Pet 2:9) and therefore called to pursue holiness (Heb 12:14).

Conclusion

The foregone discussions have established that the instructions on holiness given to the Church in the NT and looking forward to the Eschatological age, reflect the kind of holiness in the Torah,

⁸⁴ K. D. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 262.

⁸⁵ T. Briley 2000:100. The Old Testament ‘Sin Offering’ and Christ’s Atonement. *Stone-Campbell Journal* 3 (Spring):89-101; cf. Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 282.

⁸⁶ I. D. Block, “Bearing the Name of the LORD with honor.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 168: (Jan-Mar 2011), 25; cf. J. H. C. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s grand narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 224-25, 329-33.

⁸⁷ Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*, 17-21.

⁸⁸ Liu, “Preview of ‘Purity in 1-2Corinthians...’” 289.

especially Deuteronomy 23:12-14 and Leviticus 11:45, which is spelt out to the migrant covenant community of Israel. This article has argued that the Church, as a migrant community of God's people like the migrant Israelites, is privileged to be called a holy nation (Exod 19:5-6; Deut 22:10; 23:14; cf. 1Pet 2:9). Moreover, like the migrant Israelites who were YHWH's treasured possession out of all the nations, the Church is the "salt" and "light" of the world (Matt 5:13-16). Therefore, not only should there be a distinction between Christians and non-Christians (2Cor 6:16), but believers in Christ should remain tasteful as salt and also let their light shine wherever they are. In this way, they will not only enjoy YHWH's presence, but just as the migrant Israelites enjoyed a fulfilment of His blessings in the Promised Land, they also will enjoy the promises that godliness holds for the present life and the one to come (1Tim 4:8).