

Chapter seven. the paschal community and baptism.

We have seen that Paul's understanding of servanthood is derived from his OT roots where Israel was called into a covenant relationship with Yahweh and appointed to be His servant. Unless Yahweh had redeemed Israel she could never have become the covenant community and so could never have become His representative to the nations. Israel became the covenant people of God as a result of Yahweh's saving activity in the Exodus. I am now going to examine how the Lord God brought into existence the new covenant community, a people who, as we saw in chapter two, have been appointed to be His servant to the world.

contextual determinants.

The background of all that Paul says in Romans 6 is found in chapter 5. In that passage Paul discussed two communities, one in Christ, the other in Adam. The apostle described how the members of these communities shared in either the transgression or the obedience of their representative head. Between this statement of two communities and the statement regarding 'the body of Sin',¹ Paul speaks of the baptism which the Romans have experienced.² I shall argue that the expression 'the body of Sin' is corporate, being an alternative image for the kingdom of darkness. If this proves to be convincing, then it would appear that the opening verses of Rom 6 interrupts the flow of the solidarity concept essential for the argument in chapter 5 and so prevents it having the link with 6:6 that would identify 'the body of Sin' with the unredeemed community that has Adam as its head. If, however, the baptism spoken of in chapter 6.1ff is found to have a corporate dimension it would form a bridge between chapter 5 and 6:6 that continues the corporate theme and so supports the proposed interpretation of 'the body of Sin'.

Baptism has divided the church for many centuries. To this day opinions differ as to the significance of the ordinance and what text speaks of what reality. While support for the view that baptism was derived from the mystery religions has declined,³ nevertheless there is still no clear consensus as to the origin and significance of the rite.

What is generally agreed is that baptism is closely associated with the death of Christ.⁴ Also, there is wide agreement that Paul used the exodus of the Jews from Egypt as a type in his exposition of the significance of baptism. In addition there is some agreement that texts exist in which the emphasis is not so much on the believer's individual baptism in water, but on the believer's inclusion into Christ's baptism into suffering, i.e. His crucifixion.⁵

¹ Rom 6:6. I shall use the higher case for Sin as it has been argued that Sin is a pseudonym for Satan. See chapter 5 note 46.

² Rom 6:1-4.

³ Bultmann, *Theology*, 1:311; Pusket, *Römer*, 125. Petersen "Burial" 217f seeks to argue that Paul's doctrine of redemption is modelled on the practice of double burial which was common in a number of ancient cultures. He acknowledges Paul never refers to the practice, but says it explains the transitional process between dying with Christ and being raised in the resurrection. This argument depends on denying Pauline authorship of Eph. and Col. O'Neill, *Romans*, 109 says that Paul's original argument in ch 6 has been overlaid with commentary that boldly adopts the language of the Mysteries. Contra Ziesler, *Romans*, 155.

⁴ Robinson, "Baptism", 257; Cullmann, *Baptism*, 23; Ridderbos, *Outline*, 400-405; Best, *One Body*, 16.

⁵ Dunn, *Romans*, 1:312 says that the subject is not baptism but death to sin. However, he also says (p.313) that the baptismal ritual is in view in 6:4. Dunn also links the passage with 1 Cor 12:13 and Gal 3:27. This association is close to that suggested by Black, "Adam", 175 who links 6:1-3 with 1 Cor 10:1-2 and 12:13. Black also identifies the imagery in Rom 6:3 as being based on Adamic Christology. If this latter identification is correct,

Furthermore there is widespread agreement that the passage we are considering is a key part of the argument of Paul and not only reflects the theology of the rest of the letter but actually pulls the various themes together.⁶

The range of interpretations of Rom 6:1-4 encompasses those who see the passage referring to baptismal regeneration,⁷ the reception of the Spirit in baptism,⁸ water baptism as a symbol of regeneration,⁹ the Spirit's baptism of the believer into the body of Christ at conversion¹⁰ and referring to water baptism, which witnesses to having shared with Christ in his death on Golgotha.¹¹

Those who hold this latter view are divided into two groups; those who see water baptism as the occasion when the Spirit is given and what was done on Calvary is imparted to the believer,¹² and those who see the Spirit being given before baptism, with baptism being no more than the means of confession and not the occasion of regeneration.¹³

corporate definition.

then it supports our thesis that Paul is dealing with the salvation of man from the consequences of Adam's fall and is continuing the corporate/cosmic argument which we have noted to be running through the earlier part of the letter. Wedderburn, "Structure", 314 points out how difficult it is to fit the passage into water baptism. Robinson, "Baptism", 257 says, *The more closely the imagery of baptism is tied to immersion - the less fitted it is to include the thought of re-emergence from the water (resurrection), all the more so since the correlation to immersion "into Christ" would then presumably be re-emergence out of Christ?* Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 431 says that the origin of Christian baptism is Jesus' statement in Mk 10:38-9. Kay, *Structure*, 62 says *In Rom 6:3 it is not baptism that is developed but the meaning of the death of Jesus for the believer.* Watson, "Justified", 212 says that baptism never became the real theme of any of Paul's letters, so also Shedd, *Community*, 183. However, Watson takes Rom 6 to refer to water baptism. Dunn, "Understanding", 127 says Rom. 6:5: *Does not mean baptism nor death of Christ itself but the convert's experience of death to sin and life to God beginning to work out in himself.* de Lacey, "Image", 7 note 17 sees the passage to be dealing with corporate baptism, but does not explain what this signifies, so also Robinson, "Baptism", 267 but rejected by Wright, "Reflections", 327 and Moore, "Baptism", 515 who says that Robinson does not pay attention to the contexts of the texts he expounds. Interestingly, Moore makes no mention of either Rom 6 or Gal 3. Marshall, "Meaning", 138-9 says Rom 6.1-4 refers to the baptism into Christ at Calvary. Black, "Romans", 122 says that baptism is to do with the "Messianic Affliction" and Wright, *Messiah*, 140 says ch 6 can only be understood in the light of ch 5. Betz, *Galatians*, 123 says that Gal. 2.19-20 is a condensation of Rom 6 and parallels Gal. 3:26-28. Thus Rom. 6 is to do with the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, which is to be expected in view of ch. 4. This is supported by Räisänen, "Conversion", 465 who says that there is no development between Romans and Galatians as many claim. Abraham and David are the two great bearers of the promise in the OT, Danell, "Ideas", 35

⁶ Referring to Rom 1-5. 6-8 and 9-11 and how some separate them off into almost unrelated blocks of teaching, Wright, "History", 70 says. "But these sections cannot be played off against each other in this fashion, and indeed any solution that shows how they cohere has a strong prima facie claim against views which find them irreconcilable". Wright, *Messiah*, 166 further says chs 1-11 are the same kind of theology throughout. Kuss, *Römer*, 1:131 says that we cannot play ch 1-5 off against 6-8. If this is so, then the categories of covenantal federalism of the earlier chapters ought to govern the interpretation of union with Christ. For the unity of chapters 1-6 see Danker, "Under", 435. Schweizer, "Dying", 4 says that Rom 6 belongs to a pre-Pauline tradition in the light of 5:12-21. De Lacey, *Form*, 153 says that the language is pre-Pauline, whilst Wedderburn, "Structure", 332ff says the *syn* pronouns are unique to Paul. Wright, *Messiah*, 54 sees 1:3-4 to be a baptismal confession and the key to Romans as a whole. If this is so, then the letter is expounding the significance of our oneness with Christ. Ch 6 deals with how the New Man has been created, i.e. through baptism into Christ. This parallels Judaism which saw the Exodus as being a new creation, Wedderburn, *Adam*, 70, draws the exodus theme further into the passage's backcloth. "We must understand this participation in Christ within the context of the covenant made between Abraham and the promises made to him". See also Hooker, "Nomism", 50.

⁷ Robinson, *Wrestling*, 70 says, "Without baptism nothing that has been done for us would have any effect in our lives, for it is only here that it is done in us". See also Krimmer, *Römer*, 157; Pustet, *Römer, passim*; Brunner *Romans* 50; Boers, *Gentiles, passim* and Schlatter, *Romans*, 138.

⁸ So Turner, *Spiritual*, 105.

⁹ Best, *Body*, 47; Murray, *Romans*, 1:214 and Marshall, "Meaning", 138-9. Richardson, *Introduction*, 348 rejects this view as Christian Science, saying that it ignores the reality of the body so making salvation a subjective affair which he describes as: *a disembodied soul-salvation of individuals who have 'enjoyed a certain experience'*.

¹⁰ Lloyd Jones, *Romans*, 35-6

¹¹ Best, *Body*, 47; Wright, "Romans", 197. Boers "Structure" 671 claims that Paul has levels of meaning in his use of the term baptism.

¹² Best, *Body*, 73; Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 140.

¹³ Stott, *Romans*, 173.

What is common to all these views is that they see the passage as referring to the experience of the individual believer, either as being regenerated by the Spirit through baptism or making confession in baptism of what the Spirit has already done for the one being baptised. A third understanding has no link with water but sees baptism to refer solely to the Spirit's baptism of the individual into the body of Christ. However, there is another possibility that the Biblical evidence allows. This alternative view is based on the type used by Paul in 1 Cor 10:1ff, that of Israel's baptism into Moses,¹⁴ in which the whole community shared at the same decisive moment. It is not about water baptism, although that bears witness to it, nor is it about the individual being united with Christ at conversion. What I want to suggest is that this baptism refers to the major redemptive event that happened historically long before the work of regeneration in the individual took place and is the ground upon which the Spirit does His work in the Church or in the individual believer. I shall explain this further as I proceed with the exegesis of key texts.

These observations point again in a New Exodus direction for understanding Paul's understanding of baptism¹⁵, for the death of Christ in the context of the Passover event with all of its associations with the Exodus cannot be missed.¹⁶ The fact that the Exodus was seen in the OT to be the event when the glory and power of Yahweh were publicly displayed,¹⁷ and the Second Exodus, i.e. that from Babylon, was seen as bringing the son of God (Israel) from the dead, naturally links the Exodus with the death and resurrection of the Son of God when the power and glory of God were supremely displayed.

difficult texts and corporate baptism.

Romans 6:1-4.

Rom 6.1-4 contains a problem that all views find difficult to resolve. Paul speaks of being buried by baptism into death (*ebaptisthēmen eis Christon Iēsoun eis ton thanaton autou ebaptisthēmen v3*). The difficulty has been

¹⁴ Ridderbos, *Outline*, 405 says that 1 Cor 10:1ff is the key to Paul's understanding of baptism into Christ. Leaney, "1 Peter", 51 links Rom 6.1-11 with 1 Peter which Leaney says is based on a Paschal liturgy. Longermecker, *Galatians, passim* sees 1 Cor 10:2 to be an exception from the main baptism texts of Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 1:13-17; 12:12; 15:29 which he says refer to water baptism.

¹⁵ Contra Thielman, "Israel" 185.

¹⁶ Davies, *Rabbinic*, 225. See especially the two articles by Warnack, "Heilsgeschehen", 259ff and "Römerbriefs" 274ff, in which Warnack argues that Rom 6 is based on the Jewish cultus system, the Passover being specifically identified as the source. Nixon, *Exodus*, 24 says that Romans 6.1f reflects the Exodus event so also Knox, *Gentiles*, 91, Cullmann, *Baptism*, 45, 53, 67, Marsh, *Fullness*, 137f. Monte, "Place", 88 says that the expression "the glory of God" is a circumlocution for God's power or possibly *pneuma*. Both concepts are clearly part of the Exodus event when the power of God was displayed and He accomplished his redemptive purpose by the work of His Spirit. Sahlin, "Exodus", 87 says, "What event, however is to be regarded as the starting point of this new Exodus, and the counterpart of the actual departure from Egypt? The answer can only be the death and resurrection of Christ. This is obvious from Rom 6.3f". Leaney, "1 Peter", 244 sees Romans 6:1-11 to be based on a Paschal liturgy. and says, "In the New Testament, as we have seen, the new era is brought about by the Exodus of the Lord in Jerusalem (Luke 18.31) inaugurated by a Passover; consummated by Pentecost when those days have 'fully come' (Acts 2) and entered by means of the covenant of baptism", so also Theiss, "Passover", 27 and Howard, "Concept", *passim*, contra Lamp, *Seal*, 89. If it is claimed that the argument being put forward is of a corporate redemption, i.e., the church, and that Passover was essentially individually appropriated and therefore individualistic, then Morris's comment, "Passover", 67, that the Passover was not an individual ordinance and that there is a Mishna forbidding the slaughter of a Passover sacrifice for a single individual ought to correct the misunderstanding.

¹⁷ Jn 17:5; Rom 6:4; Col 2:12. Davies, *Rabbinic*, 104-7 says, "It is highly significant that in several places in the Epistles, once explicitly, and elsewhere by implication, the apostle compares the Christian life to the Passover festival; he obviously regards the great deliverance of the Exodus and its accompaniments as a prototype of the mighty act of God in Christ."

noted by a number of scholars,¹⁸ for it reverses the order of things in a serious way. If baptism is a symbol of burial, then it is saying that we are buried with Christ to produce or achieve death. This is an abhorrent picture, for burial comes after death and not before it. What the traditional understanding sees is that Paul is saying that believers are baptised into death rather than, as I am claiming he is saying, believers are buried with Christ as the result of a baptism that has united them with Christ as he was dying. Thus it was a baptism into his death. The burial is quite distinct from the baptism in the reality that Paul is speaking about. It takes place as a consequence of the union created through baptism.¹⁹

There is something else happening in the argument of Rom 6:1ff which is not normally identified. It is indicated by the way that Paul uses the plural and the aorist, you, together, were baptised. To this can be added the fact that Paul uses the arthrous form to underline the uniqueness of this baptism, so he speaks of '*the baptism into the death*', (*tou baptisματος eis ton thanaton* v4). Such evidence might be dismissed as inadequate if presented on its own, but when put into the context of the observations about to be made, especially Schnackenburg's observations on the construction of Gal 3:24ff, which is widely recognised as a parallel passage to Rom 6, then the construction does begin to carry weight.

1 Corinthians 12:13.

Another grammatical oddity occurs in 1 Cor. 12:13 where Paul speaks of being baptised by one Spirit into one body.²⁰ The most natural rendering of *eis* with the accusative is 'to form one body'.²¹ This is understandably dropped for the weaker 'into one body'²² as it would mean that the church would never exist until the last member had been incorporated into it to make the body complete.²³ Obviously this would be absurd, for the Church is not only seen to exist, but is declared to exist in the scriptures.²⁴

The mention of the baptism of the Spirit, a baptism that is *to form one body*, is the outcome of an argument that has likened the Corinthian church to the

¹⁸ eg Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 157. Best, *One Body*, 57 notes the intrusion of an individualistic setting into Paul's theology in Rom 6:1-4, he says: "In the Adam-Christ comparison believers are treated as a group in Christ (or in Adam), but here the approach is more individualistic; each dies and rises with Christ, and it is not the Church (or community of believers) as a whole which is said to be with Christ in his death and resurrection. This is a difference of emphasis; each Christian is 'with Christ', so the whole community must be with him also."

¹⁹ For a similar argument but not adequately developed see Wuest, *Treasures*, 86-7.

²⁰ Barrett, *Corinthians*, 289 says that there is no reason to think that 'we were baptised' refers to anything other than baptism in water, contra Dunn, *Baptism*, 127 who denies water baptism but says that it refers to conversion.

²¹ Moule, *Origins*, 71 says: "it is possible, indeed, to take this to mean that Christians were baptised 'into being a single body', and to translate it 'so to become one body', but equally, it could mean 'into' (i.e. into membership in) 'one' (already existing) 'body', and since verse 12 has just apparently declared Christ to be like a body, there is certainly a case to be made for this latter interpretation identifying Christ himself the body into membership in which Christians are baptised." See discussion in Best *Body* 69 footnote citing for support Weiss, *Primitive*, 2.637; Schnackenburg, *Baptism*, 26; Robertson & Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 272, contra Carson, *Showing*, 44 who cites in support for rejecting 'to form' Franz Mussner, *Christus das All und die Kirche im Epheserbrief* (Trier:Paulinus, 1995) 125ff and Lucien Cerfaux, *The Church in the Theology of Saint Paul*, trans Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker (New York, Herder and Herder, 1959)270-77. All of the above acknowledge the grammatical validity of 'into' but reject it for theological reasons. Füglistner, "Passover" 356 points out that the LXX of Jer 31(38).8 says that Yahweh will gather together Israelites from the ends of the earth on the Passover feast. This baptism, the gathering together of God's people into Christ, which is described as taking place in the moment of Christ's death (Rom 6:6) is the Eschatological Passover.

²² So also NIV and AV

²³ Best, *Body*, 69 says: "does that not suggest that if one of them had not been baptised there would have been no body? It seems easier to adopt the common interpretation that the body exists and each new convert is added to it by baptism (of the Spirit)."

²⁴ cf Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; Rev 2:1,8,12,18; 2: 1,7,14.

old covenant community.²⁵ The sins of the Corinthians parallel the sins Israel had fallen into.²⁶ The baptism into Moses is the type of the Spirit's baptism to form the one body in Christ. In other words, chapter twelve is intrinsically linked to chapter ten with its assertion that the members of the old covenant were baptised corporately into Moses. It is the historical corporate baptism that is clearly to the fore in I Cor.10. It relates to Israel, not as individuals, but as the designated covenant community. In that historic moment of salvation the nation received Moses as its representative head, and so were baptised into him. Every succeeding generation of Jews, and each individual within those generations, see themselves as actually involved in that act of salvation, and can therefore speak of it as their baptism into Moses.²⁷ It is the antetype of this corporate-historical baptism of the people of God that has taken place to bring Christian community into existence, and it is to this that Paul is referring when he says: *The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one spirit to drink.*²⁸

Thus as in the type the Jews were baptised into Moses and drank of the water from the rock, so Paul goes on to explain that in the antetype the baptism is into Christ, and the Christian Church partakes of the Spirit (represented by the water), who comes from Christ (represented by the smitten rock).²⁹

Thus, after a section which has followed typological exegesis of the experience of the old order, Paul says how the new order has come into existence. The birth of the old order involved the giving of gifts to the Jews,³⁰ gifts that were essential for the building of the tabernacle and so for the worship of Yahweh. So now Paul goes on to show how the gifts of the new order are spiritual and given by the Spirit so that the temple of the living God might be brought to its full purpose, the place where the Lord is found and worshipped.³¹ Consequently Carrington was right to claim that 1 Cor. 10 ff was a Mekilta.³²

That there is a continuing comparison between type and antetype in the mind of Paul can be shown by an examination of the whole section of I Cor. 10-15. Paul has compared the two patterns of salvation in chapter 10, showing one to be type and the other antetype. In chapters 11-14 he goes on to establish the order expected by the Lord in the lives and worship of his people. The whole section is clearly modelled closely on the Pentateuch. As the Exodus was to display God's power and to establish a community through whom the Gentiles could find God, so Paul says in 14:25 *so he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming 'God is really among you'*. As the Pentateuch establishes the divinely ordered role of the sexes,³³ so Paul gives an outline of this in 11:1-16, applying its principle to the church's ordinances and discipline. In 11:17-33 Paul gives instructions for the celebration of the covenant meal of the New Testament, as the Jews had been previously

²⁵ Contra Turner, *Spiritual*, 105 who says it refers to the reception of the Spirit in baptism.

²⁶ 1 Cor 8-11.

²⁷ Jeremias, *TDNT* 4:870 says that Paul coined the baptism into Moses imagery.

²⁸ 1 Cor 12:13.

²⁹ Ellis, "A Note", 53ff sees the reference to the rock to be an allusion to Isaiah- thus reinforcing New Exodus imagery- i.e what happened under Moses will happen in the Davidic Exodus.

³⁰ Ex 12:36; 35:30-35.

³¹ 1 Cor 14:24-25.

³² Carrington, *Primitive*, 6ff. For details of the Mekilta see Moore, *Judaism*, 1:135ff.

³³ Gen. 2:20-24; Lev. 20:7-14.

instructed.³⁴ Just as the Jews were given gifts both by the Egyptians and by the Lord, so the Church³⁵ has been given spiritual gifts, and as the gifts of the Exodus were used by the community for worship, so these spiritual gifts are to facilitate the Church in her worship and service.³⁶ Chapter 13 shows that the controlling principle is not to be the law (the type), but love (the antitype), which is the fulfilment of the law.³⁷ Paul continues in chapter 14 to speak of the need for orderly conduct in worship (14:26-39); so the antitype is to reflect the principle of orderliness contained in the type set up under Moses. This section is brought to its conclusion in chapter 15, where Paul explains the significance of Christ's death and resurrection. This, taken with 11:23-26, shows Paul, the spiritual father of the Corinthians,³⁸ instructing his children of the significance, not of the Jewish Passover, but the Christian Passover.³⁹ This interpretation is reinforced by the opinion of those scholars who see Paul modelling Christ's death on the Passover.⁴⁰ 15:3 says that Christ was raised from the dead on the third day. 15:20 says that Christ's resurrection was the firstfruits of those who are raised from the dead. In the OT the firstfruits were offered three days after the Paschal sacrifice,⁴¹ so suggesting that the reference to the third day has a Paschal significance. In addition, the conclusion of the chapter has Paul exulting over death and the grave.⁴² The OT passage quoted⁴³ is one where the prophet, after speaking of the Jewish exile, which he likens unto death, acclaims that even death itself (exile) will not hold God's people; but that they will return in glorious victory. As this referred to the Second Exodus, it is easy to see how Paul incorporates it into the overall type of the original Exodus. Paul sees the Church militant journeying to the promised land and the wanderings in the wilderness apply to the actual experience of the Church now. Nothing, not even the greatest enemy, can stop her entering the Kingdom of God.⁴⁴ Thus it is appropriate for Paul to make use of the promised eschatological New Exodus material of Hosea 13:14 when speaking of the resurrection of the church, for it is the type of her entering into her inheritance after redemption and pilgrimage. The continuing development of this theme throughout I Corinthians 10-15 vindicates applying typological principles to understand Paul. This in turn supports my claim that I Corinthians 12:13 refers to a corporate baptism of all believers.⁴⁵

While it is not part of our task at this point to demonstrate the existence of the New Exodus motif in Corinthians,⁴⁶ the above argument suggests that it is as dominant there I am claiming it is in the text of Romans.⁴⁷ Indeed, my argument would become even more persuasive if it could be shown that the New Exodus theme is present throughout the New Testament writings as it

³⁴ Ex 12:24-28.

³⁵ 1 Cor 12-14.

³⁶ Eph 4:9-13.

³⁷ Rom 13:10.

³⁸ 1 Cor 4:15-16.

³⁹ 1 Cor 5:7.

⁴⁰ Bruce, *Corinthians, passim*; Broadhurst, *Passover*, 82-3.

⁴¹ Lev 23:11.

⁴² 1 Cor 15:55.

⁴³ Hos 13:14

⁴⁴ cf Acts 14:22, Rom 8:35f. For exegetical details of the Romans 8 text see the authors commentary on Romans.

⁴⁵ Contra Rabens "Development" 176. "Whatever else 1 Cor 12:12-13 is about it still contains elements which we have seen in Rom 12:3-5 and 1 Cor 10:1", so Wright, *Messiah*, 30.

⁴⁶ see chapter 6 for some discussion on this.

⁴⁷ See my forthcoming commentary on Romans.

would clearly demonstrated that this was the Old Testament substructure in the reasoning of the New Testament writers.⁴⁸ Such a demonstration is beyond the scope of this present work, but chapter 6 demonstrates its presence in the Pauline literature.⁴⁹

Galatians 3:24ff.

Galatians 3:24ff also has a significance not generally recognised. The construction Paul uses suggests that he sees all of the Galatians being baptised at exactly the same moment. This point is brought home clearly in the comments of Schnackenburg when he says: “*It would be possible to interpret the whole baptismal event as a unity in which the baptised are plunged; it represents Christ as a Pneuma-sphere into which they are removed. All (π?ντες v 26, ?σοι v 27a, π?ντες v 28b) are immersed into Jesus Christ, without respect to national, social and sexual distinctions. But this exposition causes misgivings. The imagery would attain its complete effect only under the presupposition that all were immersed unitedly into the baptismal water, but that is hardly possible.*”⁵⁰

Schnackenburg’s Catholic theology hindered him seeing anything else but water baptism⁵¹ in a passage, nor indeed a letter, that makes no mention of water whatsoever. Others have also noted this corporate dimension for baptism in the passage without understanding the theological model I am putting forward.⁵² What is also significant is that the passage clearly parallels Romans 6:1-4 and 1 Cor 12:13 for it is the Spirit who is the agent of all three baptisms and the outcome of union is the gift of the same Spirit and sonship which His presence establishes.⁵³ This corresponds to Israel’s experience where she became the son of God as a result of her deliverance under Moses leadership and was given the Spirit to guide her through her wanderings.

I am going to argue that this same corporate dimension lays behind 1 Cor 6:11.⁵⁴ There is no mention of the word ‘baptism’ in the text but there is the reference to washing, sanctification and justification. We will eventually see

⁴⁸ I want to argue that both a New Exodus and corporate baptism is behind 1 Cor 6:11. I won’t deal with it here as it requires the support of concepts that we have not yet considered. Consideration of this text is found in chapter 8 where I deal with the presence of the New Exodus in the Pauline corpus and in chapter 9 where I deal with Paul’s understanding of justification.

⁴⁹ For evidence of its presence in the Gospels see Klijn, “Origins”, 7; Daube, “Structures”, 174-87; Piper, “Unchanging”, 16; Stahlin, “Exodus”, 82; Watts, *Exodus, passim* and Wright, *Victory, passim*. For Hebrews see Johnson, “Pilgrimage”, 239-51.

⁵⁰ Schnackenburg, *Baptism*, 24. Earlier Schnackenburg had spoken of Gal 3:27b as “*describing a profound ontological event*” op cit 21. Burton *Galatians* 169 says, *The tense of the verb ?ξηγ?ρασεν itself an argument for taking the deliverance referred to not as often repeated individual experience but as an epochal event-- the apostle is speaking not e.g. of the forgiveness of the individual, his release from the penalty of sins, but of the result once and for all achieved in the death of Christ on the cross. It is therefore of the nature of the ?πολ?τρωσις of Rom 3:24 rather than of λ?τρωσις of 1 Pt 1:13.* Burton, *Galatians*, 203 noted that v25 is “not an experience of successive individuals.”

⁵¹ So also De Witt Burton, *Galatians*, 201; Bruce, *Galatians*, 185; Christiansen, *Boundaries*, 317 and Longenecker, *Galatians*, 155. Betz, *Galatians*, 187 warns of importing water into the text, so also Dunn, *Baptism*, 111. Robinson, “Definition”, 1ff argues that water is not present in the vast majority of texts in the NT dealing with baptism.

⁵² Best, *Body*, 68 and Betz, *Galatians*, 187

⁵³ “The all and the reference to transcending the Jew-Gentile, males-female, slave divisions of Paul’s day reflect the reference to baptism in Galatians. 3:27-28”, so Thiselton *Corinthians* 1000. See also Dunn *Baptism* 109-13, 117-120 and 127-31 for evidence of links between 1 Cor 1:10-12, 12:13 and Gal. 3.:27-28. The Exodus association of the text is supported by the following argument which is Exodus based. “It is clear that Galatians 4:5 is set within a context framed by Exodus typology (Gal 4:1-7).” Scott, “Adoption”, P16.

⁵⁴ See chapters 6 and 9.

that these terms are found in 1 Cor 1:30 and that they form part of the vocabulary that the OT prophets used to describe the New Exodus.

Ephesians 5:27.

Ephesians 5:27 is a corporate baptism,⁵⁵ for it is the cleansing of the church as the bride in readiness for her presentation before the father. The reference to water in the passage seems to be based on Ezek 16:9⁵⁶ in which Yahweh describes the defiled condition of Israel when He took her for his own and washed her to purify her to be his bride. The mention of cleansing by the word probably reflects Ezek 37:4 where Israel in her exile is described as being a pile of dry bone. It was the word of the Lord that was proclaimed to her that brought her to life, and by implication cleansed her from the defilement of death to become the resurrected community. Paul has already explained the natural condition of the church before her regeneration in 2:2 as being dead, and here in chapter five he explains the means by which the defilement is removed and the bride is cleansed for her presentation. Here Paul describes her glorious future and how it has been secured. The New Exodus pattern is supported by other sections of the letter, but I must resist going beyond our immediate study of baptism in Paul and restrict my comments to those passages that deal specifically with baptism.⁵⁷

Ephesians 4:6.

This proposed corporate baptism explains the meaning of 'One Lord One faith one baptism' in 4:6. To put water baptism into a statement which is to do with the great foundational realities that the confession declares is obviously misplaced. It cannot be claimed to have the sort of significance which the eternal truths Paul has listed here have. If, however, the one baptism is not a reference to water, but to the one great event in which the Spirit made the Lord one with his people in the event of his vicarious atoning death, then it fits logically and naturally. It is certainly in harmony with 5:27 where the cleansing is clearly the consequence of the death of Christ. That text refers to the baptism of the Church, i.e. the bride, and as 5:24ff we have seen, it is corporate. This pattern is exactly that which we have observed in Romans 6:1ff⁵⁸ which must not be separated from the conclusion of the section in 7:1ff which is about how a new marriage takes place as a result of dying to the old marriage relationship and therefore brings the significance of the death of Christ for his bride together, as we have observed in Ephesians.⁵⁹ If it is argued that the point of reference for the Ephesian baptism is marriage, but that of Romans, Corinthians and Galatians is sonship, then it must be pointed out that marriage is in fact also present in the three letters mentioned,⁶⁰ and that sonship is referred to in Ephesians.⁶¹ In other words, just as Israel was called the son of God, she was also described as the bride of Yahweh, a description that is decisively eschatological. Thus it would seem

⁵⁵ Robinson, "Baptism.", 267, Beasley-Murray, *Baptism*, 202-3, contra Abbott, *Ephesians*, 168.

⁵⁶ So Dunn, *Baptism*, 163.

⁵⁷ See my forthcoming *Paul and the Spirit* for the New Exodus in Ephesians.

⁵⁸ Indeed we have noted the link between Rom 6 and 1 Cor 12:13. Fee, *Empowering*, 701 says that 1 Cor 12:13 is reflected in this statement about one baptism here in Ephes 4:5 yet thinks that it is speaking of water baptism and the work of the Spirit in that context. This does not tie up with Fee's other statements for elsewhere (*Empowering* 180) he has said that 1 Cor 12:13 is a metaphor and not speaking of water baptism

⁵⁹ For further details of this see the authors commentary on Romans.

⁶⁰ Rom 7:1-6; 2 Cor 11:2; Gal. 4:24-31.

⁶¹ Eph 1:5.

that sonship is reserved for the present state of being members of Christ's kingdom, and the bridal imagery is reserved for the eschatological fulfilment when the kingdom of God is finally consummated.

This corporate baptism fits the exposition that I have been following. It is most clearly seen in that Romans 6 has developed out of the argument expanded in chapter five⁶² of two communities bound in solidarity with their representative heads. To establish the freedom that the people of God have been brought into, Paul is now forced to demonstrate that the believer is no longer part of the old solidarity of Sin and death and has to show that a new solidarity now exists. In this discussion he has explained how this new freedom has been achieved. The whole of the argument of Romans is not related to the believer as an individual, but to the community of believers, the church (see my commentary on Romans for how this works out throughout the letter). This perspective in no way alters the need for personal repentance and regeneration, but it puts the individual response in the context of the covenant community, as it was in the OT.⁶³

Pauline use of the preposition *syn*.

Linguistic analysis has revealed a carefully followed pattern in the way Paul describes the believers' relation to one another and to Christ in the resurrection event. Best⁶⁴ has noted that Paul used the preposition *syn* (with) to speak of the fellowship of believers. He has also noted that there is a corporate dimension to the statement in Gal 3:25-27.⁶⁵ This left his conclusions in a state of tension for he held that the baptism passages we have considered referred to water baptism. Best was not able to reconcile the fellowship allusions, which were clearly corporate, with the individualism that water baptism inevitably imposes.⁶⁶

Best also noted that Paul deliberately designated select prepositions to convey the concepts of the state of the Church at different moments of its inception and development. For the experience of the Church sharing in Christ's death and resurrection Paul uses the phrase *with Christ (syn Christō)*,⁶⁷ whereas he speaks of the life lived in fellowship with Christ as being *in Christ (en Christō)*.⁶⁸ Best summed up the evidence of the use of these two prepositions thus: *The formula 'with Christ' has, thus, not the same social nature as the formula 'in Christ'. Christians are not brought so close together by it, not*

⁶² "Ch 6 grows out of 5.12-21 and can only be understood in this light, Wright, *Messiah*, 140.

⁶³ Shogren, "Entering", 179 says: "The NT concept of redemption is almost always corporate rather than individual. This historical movement then provides the basis for the latter individual conversions." Käsemann, *Romans*, 39 also states that Paul does not start with the individual. This is similar to Hays, *Echoes*, 103 who, coming close to the perspective being presented here says that Paul relates the Exodus to the Church and not to the individual. The corporate dimension of the OT is followed in the NT, so Ellis, *Prophecy*, 107. None of these scholars is consistent for they all follow an individualistic based exegesis applying the text directly to the experience of the believer rather than to that of the church. An exception to this is Stendahl, "Introspective", who holds a form of covenantal nomism and says that Paul is not concerned with the individual in his argument and that ch's 9-11 are the climax of ch's 1-8. The link of the Exodus with the Cross is enforced by Cross's (pun unintended) comment "Peter", 7 that when Easter appears in early Christian writings it always bears the Semitic name *pasch*.

⁶⁴ Best, *Body*, 62.

⁶⁵ op cit 47/68.

⁶⁶ Commenting on the presence of the *syn* prepositions in Rom 6 Dunn, *Romans*, 1:313 says: "As the *syn* compounds later confirm (8.22), this is not a merely individual experience, but a shared experience which involves creation as well." Dunn does not however suggest an oecumenical baptism.

⁶⁷ Rom 6:8; Eph 2:5; Col 2:20; 3:1; 3:3.

⁶⁸ Rom 3:24; 8:2,39; 12:5; 1 Cor 1:2;15:22; 2 Cor 3:14; 5:15; 12:2; Gal 1:22; 2:4; Eph 1:3; 2:6,10,13; Phil 3:14; 4:21; Col 1:28;1 Thess 4:16; 2 Tim 1:9,13; 3:12; Phm 6,23.

*given mutual duties by it; it emphasises the relationship of each believer to Christ rather than the relationship of each to the other.*⁶⁹

Best's observations need further clarification. On closer examination of the texts we find that a pattern clearly emerges. There is no mention of being baptised together, but only of being raised together and seated together.⁷⁰ The fulcrum for this change from an individualistic to a corporate dimension is clearly the event of the death of Christ. The believer is baptised into His death, as an individual, and consequently raised, together with all other believers, to share in the blessings of the eschatological community. The question that must be posed is when did this baptism take place and what was the nature of it?

Confused chronology.

It is very important to realise that if these texts refer to water baptism, then it means that before the believer's oneness with Christ was established, believers were seated in the heavenlies.⁷¹ Hodge⁷² was aware of the need to emphasise that the raising up of the believer with Christ is an historic fact, that believers were actually raised with Christ when he came out of his grave. What Hodge, nor any other commentator to my knowledge do not ask is how could this actual historical exaltation take place without any prior union. In other words, the logic of Paul's thinking requires that the unity is established long before water baptism is administered, even before the experience of conversion and the reception of the Spirit. Indeed, if the believer (or better the church, for the language Paul uses of being raised is corporate) was raised with him, then the unity had to be in existence even before Christ left the tomb.

Illegitimate inclusion.

Robinson has noted the believer's union with Christ in his death.⁷³ However, Robinson sees water baptism in texts which have no mention of water, and then inadmissibly uses the same texts to claim that the writer is referring to the one baptism of Christ into suffering in which all believers share by virtue of the union set up between them and Christ *in their baptism*. But this not only assumes the presence of water in passages that make no reference to water, but more importantly, does not adequately explain how the vital participation in the post resurrection events can have been achieved if the union was to be forged centuries later. Also, Robinson's exegesis puts the emphasis on the *one baptism of Christ*, rather than on *the one baptism into Christ*. Because of this he missed the corporate nature of the baptism.

Exodus and baptism.

This time scale problem is overcome once it is realised that alongside the baptism into Christ is the type of the baptism of the Israelites into Moses in

⁶⁹ op cit 59.

⁷⁰ Rom 6:1-4; Eph 2:4-7; Col 2:12.

⁷¹ Eph 2:2ff. Allen, "Exaltation", 105 points out that Eph 2:6 speaks of the believer's past resurrection with Christ without any reference to baptism in the context.

⁷² Hodge, *Ephesians*, 113.

⁷³ Robinson, "Baptism", 257. So also Best, *Body*, 47 who says, "For Paul men are concerned in Christ's death even before baptism; they died with him on Golgotha and rose with him at Easter. In baptism this inclusion of men in Christ's fate is witnessed to and carried out; emphasis is therefore not on the correct execution of the rite, as in the mysteries, but on the act of God in Christ." Contra Wright, "One Baptism", 327.

their Exodus. All Jews, according to Gamaliel the second,⁷⁴ of all preceding and subsequent generations were present in the coming out, and shared in the baptism that made Moses their leader. It was then that Israel became the Son of God and Spirit was given her to lead her through her wilderness journey. This explains why Paul has been so decisive in his use of the preposition *syn*. There is no unity of believers, neither with each other nor with Christ, until they have been united together through baptism. Paul has been careful to define this baptism in terms of its occasion, for it was a baptism *into Christ's death*. As Moses, in the Exodus out of Egypt, took the people of God, for they were united with him through baptism, so Christ takes those who have been baptised into union with him from the realm of sin and death. This baptism into Christ took place in his exodus,⁷⁵ in his coming out of the realm of Sin and death. It was a baptism into his death that all believers experienced, in the same historic moment.

Spirit baptism.

There was no union either with each other or with Christ until it had been created by the Spirit. It was this baptism that brought the covenant community into existence. Therefore if one asks when did the church historically come into existence, the answer is at the moment of Christ's death,⁷⁶ for it was then that the Spirit baptised all members⁷⁷ of the covenant community into union with their Lord and Saviour. Once this union had been established, Paul was free to use the preposition '*en* (in) which speaks of the fellowship of believers in Christ. From then on, in terms of ultimate reality, no believer could experience anything apart from all other believers, for their union with Christ is such that all other believers are also partakers in Christ's saving work.⁷⁸

What I am arguing for is that the baptism passages which we have considered are speaking neither about water baptism nor even of Christ's baptism into his sufferings, even though these are important related themes, but about a baptism modelled on the baptism of Israel into Moses when Israel came into a covenant relationship with Yahweh through the representative He had appointed. In Romans 6 (and in 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3.:5ff ; Eph 4:6 and 5:25f) Paul is demonstrating how the old order has been brought to an end and how the new eschatological order has come into existence. It is because believers have shared in the death of Christ, with the consequence that they have died to all the covenantal demands of the old relationship that bound them mercilessly to Sin and Death (Satan),⁷⁹ that they are now free to live lives unto God who has made them his own through Christ his Son.

Common concepts.

In Romans 6; I Corinthians 10:2; 12:13 and Galatians 3:27 there is a further link to establish common concepts of a corporate baptism apart from the grammar of the texts. In each passage sonship is part of the setting. Romans 6 links with sonship in chapter 8:14 ff. In I Corinthians 10 the establishment of

⁷⁴ Best, *Body*, 57 who quotes from Leenhardt, *Sacrement*, 18.

⁷⁵ Lk 9:31- not departure as NIV but Exodus as AV.

⁷⁶ Contra Dunn, *Baptism*, 51 who says at Pentecost.

⁷⁷ Individually, yet because at the same moment they became Christ's body, corporately.

⁷⁸ Gardiner, "Note", 172ff points out that Paul never speaks of being raised in baptism and that baptism is linked with Christ's death.

⁷⁹ See chapter 5.

sonship is clearly part of the type. It was through the Exodus that Israel became Yahweh's son.⁸⁰ Being basic to the type, it must be a part of the antitype, and 1 Corinthians 6:1 ff. supports this claim. Here Paul urges the Corinthians to exercise their Messianic authority, i.e. their authority as sons of God. The Galatians passage (3:27-28) could not be any more explicit in expounding the relationship between baptism and sonship. In addition, in each of these three letters there is a claim that the distinction between Jew and Gentile has been ended. In Romans this is expressed in Chapter 4:11-12 where Paul argues that all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, are children of Abraham. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:27 it is expressed even more explicitly; Paul says, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*. Just as the baptism into Moses at the Exodus established a covenant community in which all Jews had equal standing, so the baptism into Christ creates a community in which all distinctions are abolished, and in which all believing Jews and Greeks, males and females have an equal standing before God.

Colossians 2:1-13.

The argument I have based on Romans 6 is fully supported in Colossians 2:11-13: *In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried (syntaphenete) with him in baptism and raised (synegethete) with him through your faith in the power of God, who was raised from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins.*

Here it is confirmed what has already been noted, the raising/quickenings is clearly corporate, the preposition *syn* being used to convey this. It might be thought that *syntaphentes auto en to baptismati* is an exception to what has been said regarding baptism not being of the body, but to form the body. However, Paul is not saying, as it is so often interpreted, that we have been buried with him in baptism, but that we have been buried with him, by, or because of, *the* baptism. Here again Paul has used the definite article with baptism (*to baptismati*) and for a correct understanding of *en* in this phrase I appeal to the immediate use of it by Paul in the passage we are considering. This shows that it can clearly have the meaning 'by' as well as 'in'. Thus, the passage is saying the same as Romans 6:3-4. By baptism (accomplished by the Spirit) we have been united with Christ in his death. Because this union existed we were buried together with Christ and with all other members of the eschatological community, and together we have been raised with him. This exegesis also points the way to understanding what the circumcision of Christ means. In the Old Testament circumcision indicated entrance into the covenant that separated Israel from the nations. Here it is spiritual circumcision that has been done vicariously on the representative head.⁸¹ His suffering is applied to the church in her regeneration in which she and her members are given a circumcised heart.

⁸⁰ Hos 11:1.

⁸¹ Similar to what was done to Moses vicariously through his firstborn (Ex 4:24-26) so that the people could celebrate the Passover. After the initial Passover all had to undergo circumcision before they were allowed to partake. See chapter 8 for further details.

conclusion.

Once again we have seen that Paul has stayed within the corporate categories of the OT. He has modelled the creation of the NT community in the same terms as Israel's inauguration when she was brought out of Egypt. In reverting to the original exodus Paul has not abandoned the New Exodus motif, he has simply merged the two exodus's of the OT to form his model. This allowed him to use the Paschal sacrifice of the Egyptian exodus to interpret the death of Jesus. The Babylonian exodus was not based on a sacrificial rite and therefore needed augmentation. He joined the sacrificial element of the Egyptian exodus with the promises of the prophets of a New Covenant to produce his New Exodus paradigm. It was this merger that was unique to the NT for the Jewish material did not look for a suffering Messiah whose death would bring about the salvation of the new covenant community. Paul saw the death of Jesus to be his exodus, possibly a tradition he had received (Lk 9:31 where his coming departure so NIV, is literally his coming exodus- *exodon*), and identified the moment of the birth of the community under its new representative to be in the moment of its Messiah's death. Thus all Christians have been baptised into his death. To be outside of that event is to be outside of Christ.

Again we see the clear use Paul made of the prophets New Exodus model that had been enriched by the sacrificial threads of the original exodus and fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus. We will see in chapter 8 that the Passover is fundamental to Paul's understanding of the death of Jesus.