

which, together with the *Stuttgarter Elektronische Studienbibel* version 2 (also using the *Logos* format), is the only tool that provides some basic linguistic (i.e., syntactic) search functions for the text of the Hebrew Bible. Obviously, syntax databases are not as clear-cut as morphological databases and require significantly more interpretation than other form-based databases. However, the very existence of such a tool provides a very helpful point of departure and the included glossary is a good starting point for this kind of analysis.

As I already indicated in my opening remarks *LBS 3: Gold* is a powerful research tool with an ever-increasing treasure-chest of texts, having become the de-facto standard of electronic publishing in biblical and theological studies. Currently, *Logos* is working on including the *Anchor Bible* commentary set in its offerings, having already completed the digital versions of the *Hermeneia* and the *International Critical Commentary* series. Their inclusion of basic linguistic research capabilities is a marked plus over other comparative products which focus more on morphological analysis and semantic interpretation. While the price of US\$ 1,379.95 is steep (esp. for those of us living in economically disadvantaged regions of the world) the value in terms of quantity and quality is enormous. Also, *Logos* normally offers a significant discount during the annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature conventions which may be the *kairos* to invest in these helpful tools.

Gerald A. Klingbeil

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

---

*In Granite or Ingrained? What the Old and New Covenants Reveal about the Gospel, the Law, and the Sabbath*, by Skip McCarthy. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2007. Pp. xv + 284. ISBN 978-1-883925-57-4. Paper. US\$ 19.99.

In this book, Skip McCarthy simply but effectively espouses the faith of those who esteem the Old and New Testaments to be a complete revelation of God's process of redemption. He accomplishes this by addressing the origin of the biblical covenant concept and how it permeates the subsequent covenants. He submits that "old covenant" refers to the pervasion of "the gospel into a system of works" (p. 121), a "legalistic reliance" on the law "as a means of achieving salvation," (p. 87) that anybody, whether in Old or New Testament times, may exhibit. In contrast, "new covenant," McCarthy maintains, is the "loving obedience that proceeds from faith" (p. 137) and a response to the law that is engraved in the heart, a level that was attained by some believers in Old Testament times. He concludes his work

with appendices that expose the complementary nature of the two covenants.

MacCarthy's book is divided into twelve chapters. Chapters 1–2 define God's covenant as a legal stipulation symbolized as master-slave, parent-child, and husband-wife relationship. This covenant differs from human covenants: in the former the subordinate is the beneficiary and God, the superior, unilaterally commits himself to the covenantal terms. In the latter, each party strives to gain; the superior rewards or punishes the subordinate depending on the response. MacCarthy argues that "everlasting covenant" refers to a greater, "primordial" (p. 7) covenant that originated in the Trinity and existed from eternity. In this covenant, God's redemptive grace was constituted, and was communicated through human emissaries with whom God ratified the covenant. The emissaries were not exclusive beneficiaries, but conduits of the privileges to mankind.

In chapters 3–5, McCarthy maintains that the old and new covenants are complementary and contain the gospel "DNA markers" (p. 29) in the form of provisions: sanctification, reconciliation, mission and justification. He further stresses that the Ten Commandments—the essence of the Sinaitic covenant—also contain the DNA strand and are God's chosen "vehicle to reveal Himself as a forgiver" (p. 46). He contends against scholars' view that the Abrahamic and the new covenants were both promise/faith based, while the Sinaitic covenant was law/obedience based. He supplies the difference between the covenants by accenting the characteristics of the new covenant: it is a new response, a reinterpretation of the old one and a better revelation. It contains new ceremonies and places Jesus at the center as mediator and a personification of the primordial, everlasting covenant.

In chapters 6–8, McCarthy submits that God modified his covenant into a redemptive one in which humans become instruments of his revelation. The old and new overlap, and owing to this phenomenon, it is possible for one to live historically in the new covenant, yet with the old covenant experience; and conversely one can live historically in the old covenant but experientially in the new covenant (Heb 11). More still, MacCarthy argues that the law needs not be perceived negatively but as "divine communication and guidance" (p. 144), comprising essentials of God's covenant love. Obedience to the Law is a response to this love in the Old Testament (Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18), just as it is in the New Testament (Matt 25:35–40). In the same vein, death as a consequence of disobedience to this requirement in the Old Testament corresponds to "the consequences described in the New Testament for those who unrepentantly continue to disobey God's commandments" (p. 155): no entry into the Kingdom of God (Matt 5:19), reaping the wrath of God (Eph 5:3–6), and condemnation (Jas 5:12).

Chapters 9 and 10 discuss the covenant signs: the rainbow, circumcision, and Sabbath. The creation Sabbath, MacCarthy suggests, represents "God's covenantal Lordship over the world" (p. 180) and is a sign that God makes his people (in the Old and New Testament times) holy. It symbolizes the "covenant rest" (p. 219) that is realized when one rests in God by internalizing his saving grace. Because of rebellion, Israel did not realize this true Sabbath rest, and based on thi, the new covenant provides opportunity for true believers to enter into this rest (Heb 4:9). MacCarthy observes that "by declaring that a Sabbath rest remains for the covenant people Hebrews rescues the true Sabbath observance from the faithless legalism into which it had fallen" (p. 227). By contrast "sabbath" in Col 2:16, 17 refers to the ceremonial services and activities that pointed to and ended in Christ.

In chapters 11 and 12 (pp. 235–42) he recounts the "ten timeless, universal gospel truths that are taught in both the Old and New Testament" (p. 237). These truths include the following: (1) God's law was inscribed in Adam's heart; (2) when Adam abrogated the covenant he (Adam) subjected all to death; (3) the sinful nature manifests itself in an old covenant experience; (4) God's everlasting-covenant response to sin was the covenant of redemption; (5) the covenant of redemption encompasses his four promise/provisions; (6) God has prepared every heart to receive the gospel; (7) on the cross, Jesus gained forgiveness and justification for every sinner; (8) the Holy Spirit is the divine agent in the conversion of sinners; (9) the Holy Spirit is the divine agent in the sanctification of believers; and (10) all believers are missionaries. He then discusses the covenant lifestyle as a movement: from adherence to mechanical doctrines to perfectly conforming to the will of God; from compliance to the law to a growing relationship with Christ; from *laissez-faire* (p. 248) condition to spiritual transformation; and from habitual sinning to a spiritual life that pleases God.

MacCarthy concludes his work by way of appendices A, B and C. In appendix A he provides a summary "comparison of the Old and New Covenant" (p. 251) in Heb 7–10 that exhibits Christ's termination of the obsolete covenant. He shows the presence of the gospel in both the Old and New Testaments and the concurrence of the two covenants in the dispensation of the second and superior covenant. In appendix B he clarifies that "under law" refers to the phenomenon of relying on one's efforts for righteousness while "under grace" refers to dependency on the efficacy of the righteousness of God for "inclusion in God's eternal kingdom" (p. 281). In appendix C he argues that Paul's concern in Col 2:16–17 was not the creation Sabbath but an attack on observance of sacred days as a criterion for righteousness, while in appendix D he provides tables and charts that explicate the overlapping nature of the two covenants.

MacCarthy's work is credible in a number of ways. First, it is characteristically presented in a pastoral aura, employing a simple language style that may be understood by people of all levels. Second, the book is well arranged in chapter divisions, subdivisions and topics, each with clear transitions for the reader to follow the argument easily and be inspired to keep on. Third, his work is extensively documented and reflects a conscious attention to issues he submits. Fourth, the use of the "DNA strand" rightly illustrates the implicity of the eternal purposes of God in the Old and New Testaments and thus dispels the tendency of lumping together the Old Testament, the old covenant, and the law, and discarding them on account of an alleged archaism. This is typical of scholars like Femi Adeyemi, who demarcate the dispensation of the new covenant from the crucifixion and regard the New Testament believers as the beneficiaries (cf. Femi Adeyemi, "The New Covenant Law and the Law of Christ," *BSac* 163 [2006]: 438–39). In opposition to this opinion MacCarthy stands with Steven R. Coxhead who submits that "the concept of *God's law in the heart*... in the OT... is a highly significant expression used in describing a person who is covenantally righteous," even in the Old Testament times (cf. Steven R. Coxhead, "Deuteronomy 30:11–14," *WTJ* 68 [2006]: 309).

In advancing his argument MacCarthy is not immune to textual injustice. The idea of "the greater, primordial everlasting covenant of love that existed from eternity past within the trinity" may not be seen in the texts he quotes (Gen 17:3–7, 13, 19; 2 Sam 23:5). From the context, "everlasting" seems to refer to the future not "eternity past." Second, "know the Lord" (Jer 33:34) does not seem to match with "knowledge of him" (2 Cor 2:14, 15) because the former appears to inhibit intra-community ministry while the latter is outreach focused. Third, defining "old covenant" as the "bond of God with man before Christ," and conversely the "new covenant," as the bond after Christ, seems to erode the "DNA strand" illustration as well as his basic proposition that "God's call for an obedient, sanctified life was embedded within the Sinai covenant itself and enabled His holy law to be *ingrained* in the hearts of His people, not just inscribed in *granite*" (p. 42, emphasis supplied)—the very premise on which the title of this book (*In Granite or Ingrained?*) stands.

Despite the above comments MacCarthy's work is a profound exposition of the relationship of the law, the covenants and the gospel and strengthens the basis of the use of the Bible (both the Old and the New Testaments) in a generation engulfed in skepticism.

Simon Bwambale

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

---